

Tidy Towns Competition 2009

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Spink** Ref: **419**
County: **Laois** Mark: **226**
Category: **A** Date(s): **22/06/2009**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2009
Overall Development Approach	50	36
The Built Environment	50	27
Landscaping	50	29
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	23
Litter Control	50	38
Waste Minimisation	20	8
Tidiness	30	11
Residential Areas	40	22
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	25
General Impression	10	7
TOTAL MARK	400	226

Overall Development Approach:

You have a very extensive area of country to keep in good trim with a very small population to do it – and you do it brilliantly. One would like to see more housing to give more of the appearance of a village, but that is not the nature of the place. The Development Plan: it is very good that you have set yourselves annual objectives: this is the best way to proceed. Some projects will take longer than expected, others will take less time; the point is to have a basic programme well thought out that can be as flexible as conditions determine. It is encouraging to read about the support you receive from official and voluntary bodies. Congratulations on your sensitive approach to householders, who do not match up to the rest.

The Built Environment:

The church, which stands out as a landmark in the countryside, when viewed from the top of the hill at the picnic area, has been beautifully painted – and also its roadside wall and the small house in the grounds. The School and the Hall looked well, but their boundary walls will need freshening up with paint before next year. The Glanbia Factory will also need its corrugated iron roof to be repainted. Headon's Bar is painted in first class style. The GAA sports pavilion is well presented; a good start had been made on its new entrance by the date of the visit.

Landscaping:

The extensive bank alongside the road at the Glanbia factory was well planted with shrubs and bedding plants; the latter were not making such a good show at the time of the visit – plants of this kind need a lot of attention and you might be better to concentrate on flowering shrubs, which are easier to manage and, as with evergreens, do well year-round. The bedding did not make a great impact at the bridge either. Have you thought of planting bulbs at salient points on verges for spring showing? – they are very easy to deal with and

really look after themselves. The church grounds were very nicely kept and the graveyard was looking lovely with its background of mature timber. The picnic area was being made good use of by visitors: the beech hedges appeared to be due for clipping.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

You are blessed with your scenic walks. The '10 km walk' was not indicated on your map; is it used by dedicated walkers/hikers? It would be interesting if you were to tell us what use was made of the bird boxes, how many families were known to have been raised and of what species? What excavations were going on at the river bank? It is good to read that school children are involved in wild life projects.

Litter Control:

It is disappointing to learn that rubbish is thrown from passing cars: have you any way of knowing why this locality is targeted and would it be possible to trace offenders? There is nothing like a well publicised prosecution to deter some potential offenders. It is good that you have a voluntary litter pick each week, but you will agree that it would be better if this were unnecessary. Litter control was good on the date of the visit, but it is of course a variable.

Waste Minimisation:

It is good to read that you are active in waste segregation and that the LCC supplies bins and removal. The recycling centre, including a clothing bank, was seen to be well maintained. You do not say if the school is involved in the green flag scheme – the adjudicator does not recall seeing a green flag, but if this status has been achieved you would certainly be due for additional marks.

Tidiness:

It is understood that as many as 70 lorries a day carrying stones and gravel for motorway construction have an adverse effect. This problem is shared with several other villages in the County. Because the Spink location is so extensive, it might be preferable to concentrate on the four main areas of focus – the picnic area; Headon's Bar; the church/school/hall; and Glanbia/Sports field, possibly even to the neglect of the rest. This is not a suggestion, just a thought. There was considerable weed growth along the kerb at the church. Certainly, one would expect both sides of the road at Glanbia to have tidy verges and these should extend at least to the name stone and possibly even to include the cross roads; the fact is, this section does not look well looked after.

Residential Areas:

Several well kept individual homes were seen spread throughout the locality. A very fine example was the house next to the Community Hall.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

The surface of the main road was reasonably good, considering the amount of heavy traffic and side roads were really as good as can be expected. The car park at the Sports Field was undergoing improvement on the date of adjudication. The car park at the Church was spic and span.

General Impression:

This has been an interesting locality to visit and it is obvious that a great deal of hard work is ceaselessly being put into its maintenance and development. The plans for the future read imaginatively and challengingly. Every good wish for your continued success.