

Tidy Towns Competition 2009

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Adare** Ref: **440**
County: **Limerick** Mark: **294**
Category: **C** Date(s): **25/06/2009**
27/07/2009

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2009
Overall Development Approach	50	46
The Built Environment	50	37
Landscaping	50	42
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	30
Litter Control	50	33
Waste Minimisation	20	10
Tidiness	30	17
Residential Areas	40	32
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	38
General Impression	10	9
TOTAL MARK	400	294

Overall Development Approach:

Welcome Adare to the 2009 National TidyTowns Competition. Thank you for submitting your completed entry form. Also thanks for the detailed and very comprehensive Five Year Work Programme 2008-2013, and for the Location Map & Work Programme for TidyTowns Competition 2009, both hardcopy and softcopy versions. The documentation was excellent, and well articulated. The helpful location map and work programme for 2008 was most informative for this adjudicator. The detailed and dedicated preparation of your Five Year Plan has already translated into some superb projects throughout the town. Your Mission Statement "To foster a spirit of co-operation and pride in Adare community, in caring for the environment of our town of Adare and thereby improve the quality of life for all who work, shop and live in Adare" is so evident as one walks through this lovely town.

Much credit must be directed to the 30 members of your committee, who represents Adare Tidy Towns & Development Association, who in turn aim at the conservation of the heritage & development for the future. Well done on your dedication in holding monthly committee meetings and preparing church newsletters, and on your partnership and support from Adare Business Association, Limerick County Council, FAS, and the schools and from the general public and community. Your ongoing engagement with the schools through the Liaison Officer is very positive.

The Built Environment:

The people of Adare are fortunate with their inherited legacy of magnificent historic buildings and it is to their credit that the community and the supporting organisations, both public and private, have responded to the task of caring and maintaining these buildings. The work on the Desmond Castle conservation and restoration carried out by OPW is complete and the Castle is looking splendid. I look forward to a return visit to observe

the Castle floodlit at night. The splendour of the Augustinian Priory / St Nicholas Church of Ireland adds to the stately scene along the river Maigue. The completion of the adjacent St Nicholas Church of Ireland School complements the overall picture, with its attractive 'living roof' and playground. The Trinitarian Church/Holy Trinity Catholic Church, the Grotto nearby, with its recently painted railings and planted containers and the Methodist Church were all very well presented. The Town Hall, at the top of the street, looked well and a point of attraction as one walked up Main Street. The Village Fountain was an excellent feature, complete with working water spouts.

The Adare Manor Golf Club on the Limerick road looked like an inviting attraction, as we made our way to the town. Adare Manor Hotel and Golf Resort entrance seems to blend with the older estate walls and is well finished. The actual Manor House and its magnificent grounds are unique. The world renowned thatched cottages on the main street are worthy of special praise and credit to their owners for the excellent conservation and maintenance, for the benefit of all. One note of disappointment is the spider's web of apparent telephone wires on one particular pole outside the cottages. These few remaining overhead wires need to be removed and placed underground. The Heritage Centre, complete with clock, was a hive of visitor activity and looked well with its recently improved garden. One area of potential improvement is the yellow awning, overhanging two premises of the Centre, which needed cleaning or renovation, the names of the premises on the awning were fading. The Tourist Office, Library, retail units and car park, all looked well. All the village schools were in good order and had neatly presented grounds. The Dovecot looked complete with its new signage.

AIB premises and complex looked well with new pedestrian entrance but the grass pavement outside was in need of attention, the grassed pavement area was not complete and the kerbs in need of some repair.

The Pitch and Putt Course grounds looked neat and tidy. The GAA grounds were well presented, even if the boundary wall concrete appearance could be better. The Post Office was an attraction in itself. The Credit Union building looked well. The Garda Station was well maintained. The memorial plaque to the late Detective Garda Jerry McCabe was poignant and a fitting tribute. Many business premises, some with signage in Irish, in the village are in excellently maintained condition and a credit to their owners. These included; the businesses located in the thatched cottages; The Arches Restaurant; Aunty Lena's Pub; Stacpoole Fashion; Catherine McCormack Fashion; Isobel Fashion; Adare Pharmacy; Vokes Hardware; Centra; Kitty Off Licence; Blue Willow Lifestyles; Costellos Butchers; O'Coileain Pub and Restaurant; Sean Collins&Son Bar; Adare Village Inn/Seomrai; Chawkes Pub; Aibheil Bridal Shop One particular business complex on the outskirts of the town impressed, this is the Adare Old Creamery Co. The former premises of Blackabbey Co-Op looked resplendent in the wine and black colours. On the main Limerick road, the Dunraven Arms Hotel looked excellently presented. Its landscaping was so attractive. The refurbished Gazebo with new thatch roof in the Town Park is an excellent feature.

Landscaping:

'O sweet Adare, O lovely vale,
Oh soft retreat of sylvan splendour,
Nor summer sun, nor morning gale,
E'er hailed a scene more softly tender'

The little verse, depicted in the Town Park, from the Gerald Griffin poem, sums up the lovely atmosphere that is Adare, with its soft retreat of sylvan splendour. The scale of beautiful landscaping in Adare varies from large scale projects seen in the Manor, the golf courses, the wonderful Town Park, the River Bank Walk, the public display of lovely hanging baskets to the smaller scale, but equally impressive landscaping in common grassed areas adjacent to the residential estates, right down to many wonderful garden displays in the individual private homes and in individual businesses. Landscaping in the wider town is indeed simply splendid. The time and effort spent on the various landscaping projects throughout the town is reflected in the wonderful displays.

The two golf courses and the gardens around the Manor are surrounded by magnificent trees. There is a beautiful display of red roses opposite the entrance to Adare Manor and these rose beds are situated beneath some majestic mature trees.

The roundabout at Lantern Lodge looked well with its new shrubs and trees. The Main Street and Rathkeale Road were a picture with colourful hanging baskets and flower tubs.

The front gardens of the Dunraven Arms Hotel were splendid. The Heritage Centre and AIB gardens were beautifully landscaped. The River Bank walk, which we had the pleasure to complete, was a joy; an oasis of calm beside the Maigue. New signs at the entrances, new wildlife information panel, new improved footpath, lovely seating, well trimmed linear grassed areas, and while there was no litter bins, the walk was litter free. The Town Park is a credit to all concerned in its refurbishment and its ongoing maintenance. Attention to detail

was great. New seating, new litter bins, new floral displays. New shrubberies with stone features were covered in weed suppressive material and with bark mulch. The new railings painted black fit in well. The river was clean with no litter or rubbish except for one piece of a timber plank seen in the water. The thatch covered Gazebo was a splendid feature, as was the attractive Pergola. The Wash Pool area looked so lovely with its new floral displays. During our visit the park was clear of litter. One area for improvement was some telegraph wires which were hanging low along the perimeter hedge and looked untidy. Overall, the Town Park is magnificent. The new landscaping is also splendid at the Heritage Centre garden, the Car park and at AIB complex.

The floral hanging baskets and tubs, and containers throughout the public areas of town, in business areas and in the private residential areas were so colourful and in abundance. Mature trees are a magnificent feature throughout Adare and a living legacy, and tribute to forward thinkers of times past. Splendid Stone walls, both old and new, are in evidence.

The area around the Old Station House has potential. It would be nice to see the Station House renovated into the future.

Well done to all involved.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

As already stated, the Riverbank Walk was most enjoyable. The tarmac footpath, well painted white benches and fencing nearby were all of a very high standard. The mixture of trees and shrubs planted along the riverbank walk should certainly provide suitable shelter for a wide variety of wildlife. The wildlife display information panel, which we admired during our visit, is sure to enhance the visitor experience.

The new shrubbery at the Station Road entrance will further improve the attraction of the Walk. The golf courses and the many splendid private gardens also act as a catalyst for attracting wildlife and birdlife.

Litter Control:

Much credit for the litter free Adare on the day of our visit must go to the energy, diligence and hard work of the gentleman employed by the County Council, who with quiet application and attention to detail went about his task of litter picking, road sweeping and in general keeping Adare tidy as a new pin. Well done to him.

Your litter control programme, in operation in all housing estates, is obviously paying dividends. All housing estates were exceptionally clean and litter free. Main Street was litter free and clean.

The large number of litter bins throughout the village was handling the volume of litter well. The Town Park was generally clean. The number of new litter bins available is very much in evidence. The Washing Pool area was clean and litter free. We noticed the cigarette bins available at the entrances to the Heritage Centre and these seemed to be working well as the streets areas were litter free of cigarette ends. The Heritage Centre Car Park and Recycle Banks area were absolutely litter free. The River Bank Walk was also clean and, apart from one stray crisp bag, it was litter free.

Waste Minimisation:

The County Council Recycling Centre, consisting of two clothes banks and five bottle/can banks, at the back of the Heritage Centre, was clean and tidy, in fact it was absolutely spotless and a credit to all concerned. We noticed in our walk through Adare the recycle bins located at the rear of Dunraven Arms Hotel.

Congratulations to your schools which have already achieved their Green Flag status. It is very encouraging to note that your schools are all involved in recycling projects. Well done to the Adare Business Association and their promotion of best practice. The fact that Adare Manor, Dunraven Arms and Woodlands House Hotels have all achieved waste minimisation awards is also a very positive sign. The recycle bins at the front and rear entrances to the Heritage Centre for Aluminium and Plastic were also impressive. These were well maintained.

Tidiness:

As was highlighted last year, the telephone pole outside the Blue Door restaurant had numerous wires coming from it and looks quite untidy. Some telephone wires adjacent to the Town Park were hanging low and required attention. In contrast, all electricity wires were underground, the wirefree image was so positive.

Traffic signs on the approach roads were generally in good condition and it was good to note the new signs at the Heritage Centre. New signs for Adare on the Limerick and Kerry Roads were impressive in their design

and colour.

While the village was fairly well presented overall, there were a few areas requiring attention. Near the front of the AIB bank premises, there was a small section of broken kerbing which should be replaced.

While it might seem a small point, some barrels stored outside some pubs looked untidy, it probably was delivery day from suppliers. The whole question of signage is something to address. The directional finger signs were so impressive. However, other directional signs were not in as good condition and need either replacement or painting. The appearance of the Bus Eireann timetable on the bus stop near the Heritage Centre could be better. The new milestones for Limerick/Rathkeale on the outskirts were a lovely feature, but there was one older milestone near the Manor entrance which required painting.

Graffiti was non-existent throughout the town!

In spite of the large volume of daily through traffic, estimated at 16,000 vehicles, the traffic management of the Adare seems to work well.

Residential Areas:

During our visit, there were many well laid out, clean and litter free, residential areas to be seen. The mix and blend of the older cottages, both thatch and slate roofed, and the more modern houses all seem to work well together and these provide a high standard of accommodation. The standard of landscaping was very impressive throughout, with some wonderful mature trees; a feature in the older residential estates.

Manor Court and Abbeyville impressed us with displays of Silver Birch trees and nice flower beds at the entrance. On Station Road, one two storey semi-detached home with manicured lawn and red rose beds was very attractive. The old thatch cottages are simply unique. Also impressive were the cottages on Blackabbey and Rathkeale Road. The quiet cul-de-sac of the Avenue was an oasis with all houses well maintained and adorned with hanging baskets and lovely gardens. Lime Tree Avenue was in excellent condition. Across the main road, the Park Avenue build in 1956 is such a lovely estate, with the clean grassed area and the wonderful mature trees is such a feature. In the attractive, new Black Abbey Gate development, it was good to see that landscaping is maturing well. Desmond Drive was a well established estate with good landscaping. Embury Close was very tranquil with neatly planted gardens.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

Approach road, near the Lantern lodge, appears somewhat untidy, with some grass/weeds on verges at base of walls. As we approach the entrance to Adare Manor Golf Club (est.1900), the approach roads are much tidier. The main approach roads to the village were in good condition and the Rathkeale approach was appealing.

On the approach road from Tralee, there was a Limerick County Council employee working hard cleaning up the streets on the day of our visit, which was good to see.

At the 60Km/h zone entering Adare from the Tralee side, some of the weeds at the base of the Stone wall needed cleaning. The milestone indicating "9 miles to Limerick" was quite impressive, as was the new stone wall and footpath.

In contrast to the excellent display of lamp standards, the unsightly overhead, what appears to be telephone wires, while there are not that many, spoil the entrance to the town to a degree.

Again the wonderful mature trees along the approach roads add so much to the town and help create a welcome to the visitor.

The Estate wall along the Limerick approach was litter free and had relatively few weeds at its base. The bridge near the Desmond Castle was very impressive. Back areas and streets in residential developments were in excellent condition.

The various commemorative plaques in and at the outskirts of town are appreciated and a nice thought. These include the one to the late great Sheain Ui Riada and his time in the town; Adare Youth Club 25th Anniversary in 1993; the Tidy Towns success in 1976 and other years; and the little verses of poetry in the Town Park and the River Bank Walk.

General Impression:

Our visit and walk through Adare on a lovely sunny June day was most enjoyable. The through traffic is heavy, but was well managed. Your exceptional work being carried out in the town is a credit to all concerned. Both, public and private, organisations are obviously working very well as a partnership. Adare is a joy to visit, as it must be as a town in which to live and work. From our visit and from the documents you submitted, it becomes possible to appreciate the care and attention to detail with which all involved in Adare Tidy Towns carry out their work. Well done on all the achievements to date and success with future endeavours. It was simply a lovely experience to spend time in Adare.

The poet was right!

'Where glides the Maigue as silver clear
Among the Elms so sweetly flowing
There fragrant in the early year
Wild roses on the banks are blowing'

Second Round Adjudication:

The D&B premises on the Kerry side of the village appeared a little stained and moss was apparent to its roof. Weed control was a problem at one gutter in the centre of the village, and some weeds were apparent on the Kerry side of village. Don't neglect tin roofs when considering overall presentation. One of the bollards on this side of the village was damaged and the others were in need of a fresh coat of paint. The attractive rustic timber-columned cottages on this approach were as well maintained as ever. Signage at the junction appeared a little faded. Commercial and public buildings looked well, of note being the well maintained national school grounds on the Kerry approach, the freshly painted Garda Station in the centre of the village and the modern Heritage Centre. However, the awnings to the latter appeared very grubby and created a negative impression. The thatched cottages are the landmarks most associated with the identity of the village and these were very well maintained, as ever. B&B's and hotels contribute well to the residential category of the competition. The roundabout at the Limerick end of the village and traffic lights at Kerry end were new additions, since this adjudicator had last visited Adare. How successful have these been in terms of traffic-calming? The amount of through traffic seems to be as great as ever. The floral displays, opposite the Dunraven Arms at Adare Manor, were admired, as were the rosebeds and grassy verges, and spaces were immaculately maintained throughout. In terms of litter control, one or two papers were noted on the Limerick side of the village, and a shopping bag on the far side.