

Tidy Towns Competition 2009

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Rathkeale** Ref: **466**
County: **Limerick** Mark: **225**
Category: **C** Date(s): **07/07/2009**

| | Maximum Mark | Mark Awarded 2009 |
|--------------------------------|-----------------|----------------------|
| Overall Development Approach | 50 | 28 |
| The Built Environment | 50 | 34 |
| Landscaping | 50 | 34 |
| Wildlife and Natural Amenities | 50 | 22 |
| Litter Control | 50 | 20 |
| Waste Minimisation | 20 | 12 |
| Tidiness | 30 | 15 |
| Residential Areas | 40 | 24 |
| Roads, Streets and Back Areas | 50 | 31 |
| General Impression | 10 | 5 |
| TOTAL MARK | 400 | 225 |

Overall Development Approach:

The adjudicator would like to welcome Rathkeale to the 2009 Tidy Towns Competition and thank you for your entry form. The entry form was rather sparsely completed. The Committee is made up of four people, which is too small for a town of this size. No agencies appear to be helping your work according to the entry form. Limerick County Council has a big role to play with the Tidy Towns Committee and other local organisations in upgrading the overall presentation of Rathkeale. Have you tried to have a meeting at senior management level with the County Council? Is there now a need for a representative grouping from the town that can discuss the problems with the Local Authority and other organisations? Perhaps, the Community Council is the organisation to take this on. What happened with the Limerick County Council Rathkeale Urban Design Appraisal of May 2007? It is hard to believe that the County Council is not getting involved with the community to try and resolve the local environmental issues of which there are many. The entry form indicates that you engage with the Schools through the local newspapers. What about having a meeting with the Principals instead? The adjudicator noted that a 3 Year Tidy Towns Plan for Rathkeale was not enclosed. Given the level of the local presentational difficulties such a Plan is considered essential. It should cover the period 2010 to 2012. Perhaps, LEADER can advise you on this? The Map provided was of little assistance to the adjudicator, as it did not name streets or roads or housing estates.

The Built Environment:

Derelict property is one of the two major problems in Rathkeale from a Tidy Towns point of view. It is hard to understand that the County Council will not engage with this problem. They have powers under The Derelict Sites Act and you should ask them to invoke these powers immediately. A few of the derelict houses have been handled well and cosmetic work carried out. The Grotto was visited and the natural landscaping here is really superb and provides a fine backdrop. At the Scoil Naisiunta, it is suggested that the timber sign be replaced by a proper sign worthy of the School. One of the properties in Rathkeale that caught the eye was An

Seabhac, though the landscaping at the gable wall needed to be trimmed. A good colour scheme was admired at Tadhg O'Connor Furniture and the sensitive new extension to the Library is most satisfying. Nearby, the large abandoned building with the corrugated iron roof needs urgent attention. The grounds of the Mercy Community College were admired. The Palatine Museum did not appear to be open and the green bollards along the road here needed to be repainted. The prominent Community Centre building was well presented, apart from the white railings that needed to be repainted. Perhaps, white is not the best colour? Apart from the weed growth, the Fire Station was well presented.

Landscaping:

The Riverbank walk could be a most pleasant area, but some of the growth here needed to be cut back. However, littering was the main problem along the pathway. On the bridge, holders for hanging baskets were noted, but no baskets were in place. Some property owners have taken great trouble to provide colourful hanging baskets, window boxes or flower tubs. Once again this year, the Square looked abandoned in terms of landscaping. There are great opportunities here to make this area the highlight of Rathkeale in TidyTown terms.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

No projects were entered under this category for this year. Have you considered a wildlife survey of the Rathkeale area? However, the adjudicator is of the view that work on the dereliction and litter problems have a far greater priority.

Litter Control:

You mentioned the litter clean up that was carried out by the School children. When did this take place and what parts of Rathkeale were covered? The litter control situation in Rathkeale was extremely poor and was the worst that this adjudicator has seen in Ireland this year. The adjudicator does not want to give a long list of problem areas, as they are probably known to the committee, but approach roads, streets and some housing estates were the main areas of difficulty. Is there a street sweeping and litter collection programme for Rathkeale? Whether there is or not, this issue needs to be discussed urgently with the County Council as a matter of great urgency.

Waste Minimisation:

Congratulations to the three Schools on achieving a Green Flag. Can you talk with them and help them in their work towards their next Green Flag? This category is about reducing the amount of waste generated in Rathkeale and the encouraging of recycling. If you can talk to the County Council they may be able to assist you in this regard.

Tidiness:

No projects were entered under this category on the entry form. In terms of tidiness, weed and grass growth at the base of walls and at kerbs was a serious problem on the day of the visit. Terrible weed growth was noted at the paved area in the Abbey grounds and in the Abbey building itself. The derelict property issue has been discussed above, but also impacts on this category also. It was good to see that the old petrol pumps have been removed from the Square and that is great progress for this area. Many of the small black fingerposts need to have the lettering repainted.

Residential Areas:

No projects were entered under this section for this year. A number of housing estates in Rathkeale were visited and the standard varied enormously. Orchard Avenue is an attractive open estate quite well presented, while some excellent gardens at Sli Na Halaoise stood out. On the road to the R523, some excellently presented private houses were noted. It is suggested that the TidyTown Committee and the Community Council call a meeting of representatives of all estates in Rathkeale to agree on what steps can be taken to improve some of the estates in the town. The County Council should be involved in this also.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

The entry form indicated that clearance work had been done at the Askeaton Roundabout and new shrubs and trees planted. The adjudicator examined this area and notices a number of good trees here, but did not see any that appeared to have been planted in the past year. Perhaps, they were missed on the day. Work was necessary on all approach roads in terms of controlling weed growth at walls, cutting of banks and verges, and controlling litter.

General Impression:

The adjudicator would like to wish you well as you work for 2010. Major efforts must be made to engage with

the Schools, housing estates and the County Council.