

Tidy Towns Competition 2009

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Strand** Ref: **469**
County: **Limerick** Mark: **271**
Category: **B** Date(s): **30/06/2009**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2009
Overall Development Approach	50	41
The Built Environment	50	38
Landscaping	50	40
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	22
Litter Control	50	35
Waste Minimisation	20	8
Tidiness	30	19
Residential Areas	40	28
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	32
General Impression	10	8
TOTAL MARK	400	271

Overall Development Approach:

Welcome Strand Village once again to the National Tidy Towns Competition and it's good to see you entered again in 2009. Thank you for your completed entry form prepared by Strand Community Development Ltd. on behalf of the village with a population of less than 1,000. Your completed entry form and map were very informative and provided an introduction to your lovely village. For this adjudicator it was the first time I've had the pleasure to visit Strand Village. It is good to note that your work continues to be supported by Limerick County Council and during our visit it was very evident that your committee of 8 members and the wider community have been working extremely hard to protect and develop the area.

Your communication strategy of holding public meetings is obviously proving fruitful, but it might be no harm to examine other methods of making contact with the community including the use of newspaper articles, internet messages. Your engagement with the local school through combined participation in the spring clean-up is positive.

It is recommended that your committee examines the possibility of preparing a very concise Three Year Action Plan for Tidy Towns activities in the village for 2010-2012. This would enable you to establish Aims and Objectives and set Targets on an annual basis. This plan could be used to discuss planned activities with funding partners. Consultation with the community of Strand and with the local authority should take place during the plan preparation. There is no need to get a professional to do the plan; some committee members would be very capable of this plan preparation.

The Built Environment:

The whole built environment and streetscape of the village was quite enchanting with a nice mix of the old and

new residences, the lovely floral displays of hanging baskets and containers, excellently crafted stone walls, neat pavements, spotless streets, peaceful and quiet ambiance, and relatively traffic free surroundings. Other lovely features include the fountain and park on the bridge-side, both stepped areas near the river, the Grotto area, the Rambling House, the Liscannor stone seated areas near the Endeavour Award, the lovely maintained seats within the fountain park, well trimmed evergreen hedges around the park boundary.

What a pity to see the abandoned boarded up cottage right across the road from the lovely Grotto. The wonderful walls continued in the evocative Grotto area, which was superbly maintained, with lovely wrought iron seating and kneelers. The landscaping is excellent at the Grotto

The Rambling House - An Tigh Bothántaiochta an Trá, is a lovely feature even if the renovations are still not complete. We look forward to seeing it in its completed state. It was nice to see the key in the front door which enabled the visitor to have a look around. It must be a lovely venue for a session of Ceoil agus Craic on a winter's night. The use of Irish with lovely lettering on the cottage was admired. It was good to see that a section of the thatched roof is being protected by a tarpaulin cover, pending the receipt of funding for the planned repair work. The nice memorial plaque to the late owner and donor family was so appropriate and a tribute to their generosity. The brightly painted house and surrounding wall in brilliant white complemented the lovely red of the windows and half door. The containers of colourful flowers matched the wonderful water pump painted green, located outside the front door area of the cottage. Hanging baskets at both sides of the front door were an inviting welcome to this lovely relic of times past.

A lovely feature in the centre of the village is the stone wall that surrounds the fountain, bridge and river. This stone wall feature is seen throughout the centre of the village. The village water pumps were wonderful to see in such excellent condition.

The Endeavour Award from the 1999 Tidy Towns Competition was well earned.

Buildings to impress, apart from the lovely residences, also include O'Seanacháin's Pub.

The streetscape on the Ballykenny Road is charming, with nice footpaths, hanging baskets, and the road again crossing the River Hernic.

Landscaping:

Landscaping throughout Strand village was both eye-catching, in full bloom, and well maintained and complementary to its surroundings. Nice green tubs of pansies, fuchsia and begonia were seen on the footpath outside a private dwelling on the Tournafulla entrance to the village. This complemented other similar landscaping features of this house.

The "Our Lady of Lourdes" Grotto is quite a lovely structure, surrounded by beautiful flowers and shrubs. Set in a well constructed stone walled area, this is a wonderful colourful feature right in the heart of the village. It is a credit to those responsible for its maintenance.

The small lawn next door to the Grotto and the Rambling House is kept in excellent condition. The large mill grinding wheel nearby was an eye catching presentation and good reminder of times past.

Some lovely hanging baskets are seen on the stone parapet of the bridge, in addition to the individually placed hanging baskets on the telegraph pole. The Fountain feature, with bench seating, well cut hedging, shrubs and neat paving, provided a lovely focus in the heart of the village. It was lovely and relaxing to see a water feature that actually works and is well maintained and clean. The entrance gate was well painted in black and in good condition. Co-ordinated green flowerboxes throughout the village were well planted and appealing. The green village pump by the bridge was noticed.

There are some lovely stand alone trees along the Newcastle West Road; it might be worth-while considering retaining the evergreen trees that are found behind these trees at their current height, as they have a tendency to become overgrown and to really dominate and take over an area.

Many individual houses had lovely landscaping, with the cottage across from the lovely town park showing some fine examples of topiary.

Landscaping features throughout Strand were a credit to your community.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

The repair work carried out as a result of summer 2008 flooding is a credit to the diligence of the community

and the ongoing work will pay dividends for the people of Strand. A Wildlife Habitat Survey could be investigated as to the feasibility of preparing such a survey for Strand village. The advice of an expert on indigenous Wildlife could be sought.

The planned erection of wildlife Information Panels is noted, and with the river flowing through the town centre there is great potential to make the community aware of the wildlife in the area. As some strategically located property is in the ownership of the County Council, it is positive that you are in discussion as to the appropriate seating, planting and landscaping of the areas near Cois Abhainn. The planned picnic area at this location will be quite appropriate.

As was stated previously, it was encouraging to see the work you have commenced along the riverbank in preparation for a bird sanctuary. The young berry bearing trees will provide a suitable food chain for your intended guests. The timber handrail and tree bark surfacing on the steps ensured that they blended seamlessly with their surroundings.

Litter Control:

On the Tournafulla approach road, there were some small amounts of litter (soft drinks bottle and discarded paper bag, plastic sheet,) which spoilt, otherwise, a very tidy entrance to the village.

Black litter bins were seen at the bridge and the pub, and were clean and recently emptied.

Credit is due to all who voluntarily participated in your spring clean and ongoing maintenance work.

Waste Minimisation:

There is no recycling depot in the village, and your comments about the Limerick County Council bin and recycling household collection are taken on board.

The plans of your committee to encourage individual households to start home composting is positive and brochures on waste minimisation could be circulated to all homes. For other suggestions, you should consult the Race Against Waste literature, available from the Tidy Towns Unit.

Tidiness:

The neat kerbing on the Tournafulla side of the town gives a nice impression of tidiness on entering the village. The Fáilte/Slán bilingual signs are nicely presented on the main entrance/exits to the town, as was the Gleann Mór sign; a nice feature on the stone wall.

The footpaths on the Gleann Mór side of the village, and indeed throughout the village generally were spotlessly clean and tidy on the day of our visit, with no weeds in evidence on the kerbside.

It was a pity to see overhead cables catching the eye against the backdrop of the near-by green hills. While obviously, it is difficult to avoid this, a long term plan might be to consider removing these cables and placing them underground instead.

Another lovely feature of the town is the two lovely painted green water pumps at the bridge and the rambling house.

Residential Areas:

The village is mainly made up of some lovely individual private houses, with nice external walls, and good landscaping in most of these dwellings.

The Cois Abhainn cluster of two storey semi detached houses was nicely decorated with black windows and white front walls, and a mixture of very bright attractive front doors, varying from green to wine to blue. The houses in the vicinity of the Rambling Houses were all marvellously maintained, with nice pastel shades and/or appropriate pebble dashing on exterior walls. Throughout the area there were very well maintained homes with excellent landscaping. The corner property by the Tidy Towns Award plaque was in good condition. The rural appeal of the village continues to be a positive feature. The external walls of most residences are well maintained and painted in appropriate colours. The little disused cottage, if possible, should be renovated in some manner, if at all possible.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

The approach road from the Newcastle West side was in good condition, with neatly trimmed hedges and immaculate hedges.

The approach road from the Tournafulla side was also in good condition, except at one spot where there was a drain for road surface water, but it was good to see a warning traffic cone on this spot. The 50Km/h signs were in good condition and clearly visible, and the hedges were neat and tidy.

General Impression:

A picture postcard describes this attractive village. The lovely forty shades of green fields on the hillside serve as a landscape portrait backdrop to the brightly coloured residences and other features of Strand. Your village is a most impressive and restful place to spend some time and it was our pleasure to adjudicate and visit for the first time. The river area has great potential for increasing your marks under TidyTowns and we are certain that over the next couple of years your work in that area will be very fruitful. Well done to all concerned and keep up the hard, but rewarding work. We wish you further success for the future.