

Tidy Towns Competition 2009

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Crinkle** Ref: **530**
County: **Offaly** Mark: **251**
Category: **C** Date(s): **08/07/2009**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2009
Overall Development Approach	50	38
The Built Environment	50	33
Landscaping	50	34
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	24
Litter Control	50	31
Waste Minimisation	20	10
Tidiness	30	18
Residential Areas	40	23
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	32
General Impression	10	8
TOTAL MARK	400	251

Overall Development Approach:

Go raibh maith agaibh go leir! Thank you to all the voluntary workers who have gone to so much trouble this year and in previous years to make Crinkle an ever improving place in which to live and work, and to enjoy.

You have a huge membership – well done! You are very busy with your monthly meetings in the winter and weekly meetings in the summer. You only mention local businesses in the list of those who support you. Do you get any help from agencies or other bodies? We are glad that you are helped by the Offaly County Council – the area engineer is a very important person to have on-board.

You use the newspapers, and thank you for the cutting from the Midland Tribune - to communicate your message. You also use posters to advertise your social events.

We are delighted that you have a subcommittee which liaises with the school and that you are involved with the School's Green Flag Committee.

We are glad that the competition has encouraged you to think about a plan. We will be looking forward to seeing a 3 or 5 year plan produced in time for next year's competition. A plan need not be prepared professionally. However, you should try to get the views of the community at large when preparing the plan and take into account other plans for the area such as Local Area Plans / County Development Plans prepared by the Local Authority under the Planning and Development Act 2000/ County Heritage Plans/ Agenda 21 Plans etc.. Unfortunately, not having such a plan automatically loses you marks in this section of the competition, as per the adjudication guidelines issued to each adjudicator.

Your enclosed photographs show the male members hard at work painting the hoarding!

Thank you for your clear plan of the centre of Crinkle, with your projects clearly marked. This was very helpful.

The Built Environment:

The school is excellently presented.

The bilingual signage is very good, consistent and clear.

You have painted up the lovely, though uninhabited row of cottages at the top of Swag Street beautifully with their bright yellow and blue doors, and they look charming. We hope they will find new appreciative owners who will conserve them.

You have well interpreted the Military Barracks history in the on-site notice board. It was fascinating to read. It is really worth maintaining, as a little water ingress seems to have taken place. It was interesting to read of the schoolchildren's involvement in the collection of names.

The Post Office was neat, but Crinkle Super stores had many objects placed on the path. It has a lot of clutter outside including bins, gas containers etc. Not only does this look untidy, but it makes it difficult for people with special mobility needs to negotiate their way around these obstacles. The shop also had an awful lot of signage both externally, and on the window, which causes a cluttered look.

There is a lovely house with interesting bargeboards on the road from the Birr Mountmellick junction to Crinkle Road.

The Thatch is a charming village pub, and is a great meeting place locally.

There are some lovely gates on the Military Road, off farm gate and big house gate variety.

The Christmas light on the premises in Barrack Street does not look good in mid summer
!

Landscaping:

Your adjudicator last year questioned the wisdom of planting flowers underneath trees, and asked you to get advice on this. This year, not alone are flowers planted under all the Military Road trees, but they are also planted under all semi-mature plantings. It is this adjudicator's advised opinion that it is bad for the trees to have their nutrients taken from them so. It also looks fussy and urban in a very rural village. We congratulate you on your tree planting programme, but we expect you will look into this in the next twelve months.

Have you also considered the spacing issue, as was referred to in last year's report, and if so what is your plan in this regard?

The gravel path by the trees is pretty.

School Road is a leafy residential road. At one house on School Road, there is a lovely lavender and rose display.

The new deciduous trees fronting the GAA grounds looked well. The GAA boundary wall was freshly painted, but the plinth painting needs completion.

The stone wall opposite the grounds was admired.

Well done on your landscaping project at Whiteford.

The planters outside the Barracks, in the neatly mown grass, looked well, but do not overdo the planters. You

have a rural, small town. Don't suburbanise it!

We noted the "outshots" for the new lighting poles, yet to arrive in Barrack Street.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

It is a real pity that you did not fill in anything under this heading in your application. You live in a very unspoilt area which is full of habitat types.

There is much that you can do to increase the enjoyment and educational value of local areas. Perhaps, your local school could help you with this? You will be well advised by, for example, The Heritage Section of Offaly County Council. Do you have a young person studying Environmental Science in a 3rd level institution from the area who might require a thesis topic? The provision of a wildlife survey and management plan contributes to the marks in this section. Remember to endeavour to do this for 2010! Findings can subsequently be made public on information panels. This more detailed information would add to the enjoyment of your town for local and visitors alike, and would serve good educational purposes. In relation to this, please be sure to put design research into the proposed notice boards themselves. Be consistent in having such new street furniture designed in an innovative and appropriate fashion. And you should also ensure that the Irish names for all species are included. Do remember too that when you are choosing any street furniture, that black is the most difficult colour for visually impaired people to see.

The hedge along the Military Road appears to have been cut fairly recently, as does some hedging along the approach from the Mountmellick/ Birr Road. You are reminded that it is an offence under the Wildlife Act 1976 and Wildlife(Amendment)Act 2000 to cut vegetation in a hedge or ditch, or on lands not cultivated between the 1st March and 31st of August annually. This is for the protection of nesting birds. The cuttings have not been fully removed and there were some dead branches around. These should be removed for composting.

The Barracks cemetery must be a haven for wildlife, and is accessible to the town. It was full of lovely wild grasses, and it is bounded by a nice stone wall.

Litter Control:

We are glad that you have established a relationship with your Litter Warden. You have regular weekly pick ups show results. There were a few pieces of litter in the trimmed margins on the Military Road. The "Bye Gum" cleaning solutions van was visiting the town on adjudication day. We wondered if you had invited them or were they just passing through. You do not appear to have a problem with gum. We wish the school luck with the Green Flag. How do you propose to raise litter awareness?

Waste Minimisation:

Your sponsorship of reusable lunch boxes for the schoolchildren is a good idea. The use of low energy Christmas lights is good. Waste minimisation is about the prevention of litter accumulation in the first case. It is really what it says – to minimise on waste production before we, as a community, private or public create it in the first case. You might refer to the Race Against Waste booklet available from the Tidy Towns Unit of the Department of the Environment, Heritage, and Local Government. Consider organising or attending a Waste Minimisation Workshop with your Local Authority. In your local school, there will be opportunities to involve the students in an effort to work towards this end. Perhaps, you might prepare a flyer/newsletter on this subject? As a local community you could look at some innovative and simple ideas such as organising a "Bring and Take Day". This would involve using a local hall / Community Centre for instance for a day - where everybody brings items they have no further use for, but which other people might want (and which under normal circumstances they might get rid of as waste), and puts them on display. The corollary is that somebody else needs these items. No monies change hands. Website versions of this idea have been set up in places also. Another group collected all broken crockery, and made a mosaic in their local park. You can gain marks by doing some of these things for 2010.

Tidiness:

There is one vacant site on School Road with overgrowth. The properties along the road are well presented,

except there is a gable facing the road area requiring paint, with a cracked pillar and an old wall notice adjacent.

The Grant premises were well screened, but a little tidying of signs would help it further.

We hope that your systematic weed control is environmentally friendly. Talk to the Heritage Section of your Local Authority about this.

Tidiness was not a major attribute of Boherdeel Road.

Residential Areas:

Ely Place on Swag Street is very well kept with lovely leafy gardens that have mature trees.

Southgate has very poor surrounds along its front boundary, roadside. There is nice planting within the estate, but too many evergreen plantings of leylandii. These should be replaced with native deciduous trees, as visually or from an environmental point-of-view they are not good wildlife habitats. They also obscure light and growth elsewhere. There were weeds along the footpaths in the estate also. The fence at the town end was broken.

The (no name) estate of single storey houses near Grove Street on Boherdell Road has some gardens running wild, and there are weeds in places in the estate. Some road area is unfinished. The access is well screened. The ESB substation is called An Corraun, so perhaps this is the name of the estate?

Grove Street estate looks well, but there was some graffiti at the entrance. It faces towards the mature area of the Military barracks enclosure, with its good stone walls and mature landscape. The unusual hard surface play space could do with landscaping, as it looks a bit crude.

There is some nice new planting along the road inwards towards the town. Cribben Terrace was well planted with trees, but the same issues arise as on Military Road. The turning circle was nice with trimmed grass and tree. The graffiti on the wall facing the exit proclaimed "Up Offaly", so we tried to ignore it as graffiti, and count it as local heritage! No, this is really not the place to celebrate the county team!

Hawthorn Drive was looking very well and cared for. The newer estate uphill of this needs to mature. Hillbrook View is a lovely leafy banked estate and nice roses, copper beech etc. were admired there.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

The Military Road on the approach from Birr has nice stone walls, and trees and has a lovely rural feel to the entire length of the road.

There is an unfinished footpath on Boherdell Road beyond Southgate and a very weed filled road edge/ path edge all along the frontage of Southgate. The other side of the road at this point also requires trimming. The timber fence could do with woodstaining/protector, as it is looking rather weathered.

The Crinkle sign at the Southgate area is surrounded by untidy dead weeds, which were probably not dealt with in an environmentally friendly fashion. The Crionchoill signage is good, but it is against a very poor backdrop.

The Polydome frontage is planted at the town side, but on the country side requires tidying. The edges need surfacing, and walls need painting. There are nice deciduous trees planted between An Corraan(?) and Grove

Street.

The approach from the Birr – Mountmellick Road (from the e38 KV station) looked very well, and your new landscaping project there was admired.

Your resurfaced roads look well.

General Impression:

Your project to focus on Barrack Street, as a focal point, is a good one. Do ensure that you obtain good architectural /landscape architectural advice.

You yourselves are a focussed community, with a great sense of place and separateness from the nearby bigger town of Birr. You intend to keep your own identity. Well done, and we feel that you will go from strength to strength.