

Tidy Towns Competition 2009

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Rhode** Ref: **286**
County: **Offaly** Mark: **252**
Category: **B** Date(s): **06/07/2009**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2009
Overall Development Approach	50	35
The Built Environment	50	37
Landscaping	50	37
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	22
Litter Control	50	30
Waste Minimisation	20	6
Tidiness	30	15
Residential Areas	40	30
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	34
General Impression	10	6
TOTAL MARK	400	252

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 Rhode an ever improving place in which to live. You have a huge membership of 20 - for a small village. Are all your members active? You meet monthly. The only body that you mention who support your activities is Offaly County Council. Have you approached other bodies, agencies, and local businesses?

You appear to make good use of your local communications channels. Don't forget to let all church denominations represented in your area know about your activities.

You work with teachers in the 3 local schools. You maybe could have elaborated a little more on this.

You have no comments to make about the competition itself – negative or positive, and you do not hold any festivals or events.

To increase your marks it is also very important to prepare a TidyTowns Plan. A three or five year plan is recommended. 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 / County Heritage Plans/Agenda 21 Plans etc. prepared by the Local Authority under the Planning and Development Act 2000. 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.

Thank you for your map which was helpful and fairly comprehensive.

The Built Environment:

The Catholic Church looked very well with its very carefully tended grounds and nice stone wall. However, its railings could do with repainting in places due to some rusting. The school also looked well. There is a well presented good ochre house on the edge of the village at the Portarlinton Road. The large house beside the Surgery (Portarlinton side) has nice railings and gates, good sash windows, and good bargeboards.

The Health Centre/Surgery is neat, but the gate and wall between it and the Hair Salon could do with painting. The take-away was clean.

The Criostoir O Floinn butcher's sign was admired. There is an Irish sign also at the GAA, An Rod.

The Village Inn and Doyles are well presented at the core of the village.

The Water feature is very neatly maintained, but is somewhat inaccessible to passing traffic, as there is really no adequate parking on a continuous bend. However, it is accessible to the residents, by a footpath from the village or those who know that it is there, before they arrive at the site, and can park in the village.

The Community Centre is on a mature site, and beside this is the completed new training centre. The parochial house is well landscaped.

A lovely old 2 storey house in the dip in the road (near Ryan's Pharmacy sign) was admired. The Garda Barracks walls need repainting. We understand that the "derelict site" is on hold due to the recession. Just try to keep it screened. We sincerely hope that the users proposed are successful in securing the site.

Landscaping:

The school has good floral displays. There is nice planting at the end of the school lay-by beyond the recycling bins. There is nice tree planting on the left hand side of the final approach from the Portarlinton Road. There is a nice flower bed in the area of the Health Centre/Surgery.

There is a lovely hedge and flowers between Marian Terrace and the church.

Some more details of your "Village Green" proposals would have been helpful. You do not show the space you refer to on your map.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

Having a wildlife area at the school is a good one because this is where your future members are learning about their environment.

There is much more that you can do in this regard to increase the enjoyment and educational value of your village's native wildlife and natural amenities.

You could be well advised by, for example, The Heritage Section of Offaly County Council. The provision of a wildlife survey and management plan contributes to the marks in this section. Perhaps, your local school could help you with this? Do you have a young person studying Environmental Science in a 3rd level institution from

the area who might require a thesis topic? 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 village for local and visitors alike, and would serve good educational purposes.

Litter Control:

There was a cardboard box, and plastic bottle thrown in the area of the recycling bins

Otherwise, the village was mostly litter free on adjudication day. You collect litter within a radius of a half a mile of the village, and this is good.

However, you need to tell us more as to what your litter control planning consists of for the entire village and not for a single project, like the Ballybrian School, which is outside the main village area. We would also like to know what your anti-litter promotion consists of. Have you been liaising with Offaly County Council Environment Department?

Waste Minimisation:

The recycling area at the school is of course good, and you have no other projects planned under this heading. However, waste minimisation is about more than recycling. 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. Perhaps, you could consider organising or attending a Waste Minimisation Workshop with your Local Authority – perhaps in conjunction with neighbouring villages?

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 area. You can gain marks by doing some of these things for 2010.

Tidiness:

The village itself was neat at its core.

The Old Hall on the Portarlinton approach looked very neglected. In last year's adjudicator's report, this was also commented upon. Have you tried to deal with this, and if so what are the issues that are stopping it happen? Even a reference to how you tried to deal with this would have been important. The murals look awfully neglected and the grounds of the hall look equally so. The whole building needs repair and painting, and the grounds require cutting. There is a nice stone wall in front which is intact. There is a wall opposite the end of the hall site, which also needs painting. This is a very poor first impression which the visitor gets on approaching the village from the Portarlinton side. The recycling area is very grubby, both signs and bins.

Ryans Pharmacy sign on the Daingean side of the village is on a tall rusty pole, which should be painted or removed.

The Gala shop is a little cluttered outside with gas, briquettes etc. on the footpath. The yard beside with broken gates needs screening. The vacant site beyond this looks poor.

We are glad that one of your planned projects is to renew your village name signs. This is timely, as the broken or dirty and faded signs create a very bad first impression.

Residential Areas:

The houses in the village and on approach roads were generally well maintained.

Priory Lawn estate is neat with good trees on the approach to the village from Daingean. On the same approach Marian Terrace looked well, but there was a van parked on the grass, and one boundary wall needed painting.

Woodville has good semi mature trees on its approach and the natural vegetation has been maintained.

The Cloinn estate is in good order, and St. Patrick's Avenue has nice hedging along the road frontage.

Some weeding is required in the Lawencetown Estate.

Your efforts to organise signage is good, but do remember to include the Irish names for the estates also.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

The Portarlington approach is poor.

On the Portarlington approach, the 60kph speed limit sign is tilting. The 50 speed limit sign is rusting. The house for sale next door needs weeding in the area of the roadside front gate, as does the gate opposite.

The school has the Green Flag, and the green space at the back is nice. However, opposite the school there is very poor lack of weeding and trimming and also rough surfaces, which are water logged. There is a "headless" sign opposite the school, and the village name sign is very poor – bent and bashed, and is to be found in long growth.

There is one nice grassed area beyond the recycling area on the community hall side. The turquoise gates require repainting.

The old hall is not well presented in any way. Please refer to "Tidiness" section above.

The Daingean Road approach is a much better approach than the Portarlington approach. There is a good stone entrance to a house at the 60 kph sign area, which has lovely mature trees. The water feature site looks well with its grassed area and planting.

The GAA boundary wall could do with softening/planting. There is a good green area in front.

The new footpath is weed free out to the water feature, but needs weeding out beyond the water feature, (the area between the fence and inner footpath).

On this approach, the Rhode sign is obscured with vegetation, and some gates need painting.

The green space/ rest garden on the Rochfortbridge / Mullingar Road just beyond the 50kph limit looked

reasonably well with its nice seats. The "Stop" sign at the adjacent junction was dirty, as was the Rochfortbridge directional sign.

The Rhode Peaking Capacity Power Plant entrance is poor with dirty barriers, but as it appears to be undergoing renewal, hopefully this will improve. The wall in the splay entrance opposite is broken.

There are nice hedges and semi mature trees on the approach along this approach with natural hedging. The road is residential in character, with grass margins between houses well kept. Some surface repair is necessary.

On the Edenderry approach, the Rhode sign is good. There are nice banks and trees on this approach.

General Impression:

The general impression of Rhode is that it is a village which has a committed community, but which lacks a plan to move forward in the competition. Prepare a plan, and focus on getting the things that need attention completed before you launch into new projects. You have a very big membership. Use each person's skills well.