

Tidy Towns Competition 2009

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Stradbally** Ref: **235**
County: **Waterford** Mark: **299**
Category: **B** Date(s): **09/06/2009**
23/07/2009

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2009
Overall Development Approach	50	47
The Built Environment	50	37
Landscaping	50	39
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	30
Litter Control	50	39
Waste Minimisation	20	10
Tidiness	30	20
Residential Areas	40	29
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	39
General Impression	10	9
TOTAL MARK	400	299

Overall Development Approach:

Welcome to the 2009 National Tidy Towns Competition. Thank you for your submission, which included a detailed application form outlining your full programme of work and objectives this year. The Stradbally committee are to be congratulated in engaging the help of the broader community. It is noted that the net is widening in relation to applications for development assistance from many agencies and this approach is already paying impressive dividends, illustrated by your signing up to become a member of the Green Villages. The three year Biodiversity Plan is a wonderful undertaking and will clearly outline and give focus to your development approach under this heading in the years ahead. The map submitted with the application form was partly three dimensional and very clear and was of great assistance in the task of adjudication.

The Built Environment:

The village green is clearly one of the visual focal points of the village and much has been written about this area and its charm over the years. High standards have been maintained to the visual presentations of the commercial buildings and suffice to say that the buildings in this area are worthy of long term preservation. The period terrace along Main Street has a wonderful subdued pastel colour scheme and this residential area contrasts nicely with the more vivid nearby colour scheme of the commercial area. The Garda Station here, a pleasant building, is beginning to look somewhat tired and is in need of freshening up. The Holy Cross Church is an imposing structure on arrival at the village from the Dungarvan Road and has a well laid out car park with wheelchair access and attractively maintained burial ground. The roof of the nearby Barron Hall is in need of some attention. The retention of the handball alley is a lovely feature and, because of their importance in social history, perhaps a story board here would be appropriate. It was noted that ongoing construction is continuing at St. James School and we look forward to its completion. At the nearby St. James Church, the lawn was being edged in circles around individual trees by the entrance pathway and looked very impressive. The reconstruction of the gate lodge at Woodhouse is very successful and the window

replacement is appropriate to this charming building. The thatched Cove Cottage looked majestic as did the crimson red roses trailed along its whitewashed front. It was noted that development is continuing at both Coves at Stradbally and Ballyvooney. The introduction of the limestone table and seating together with wheelchair access at Ballyvooney Cove is a commendable scheme. Well done on this initiative! The wildlife board here and, indeed, the varying information boards at Stradbally Cove are great points of interest and bring the story of the planned woodlands to life.

Landscaping:

Stradbally has a wonderful array of well presented private gardens and well maintained incidental open spaces. The linear development in front of An Rós Bán Dearg with the diamond shaped flower beds and hanging baskets on a nicely maintained grass area, edged with Lobelia, was admired. There are many strategic ornamental displays of flower beds, window boxes, hanging baskets and planted tubs located throughout the village complimentary to the wonderful centrepiece of the Village Green. Your future plans for landscaping under the biodiversity plan are welcomed.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

As mentioned in last year's report the village and surrounding areas has a myriad of wildlife habitats which would be the envy of many other locations. The committee has been very proactive in advancing the wildlife agenda particularly in the areas of conservation of natural amenities and the development of amenity walks and nature trails. Your liaison with the schools has a truly beneficial educational value and augurs well for the years ahead. The biodiversity project 2009-2011 was noted. Well done in your developments under this heading!

Litter Control:

The litter campaign in Stradbally continues to reach a very high standard and, on the day of adjudication, the village centre and surrounding areas were litter free. A small scatter of litter was in evidence in the car park of the GAA grounds. Well done in this effort! There are numerous private houses throughout the village which have an array of individual colourful gardens presented to a high standard. Residential housing schemes continue to be well presented. Whitewell has a semi-circular layout enclosing a very attractive space. This scheme would benefit from a name sign and perhaps this issue will be resolved in due course. Marian Terrace has a magnificent site elevated over the village and the presentation of this scheme with its high quality maintenance, and its individually well presented gardens, is a highlight. As mentioned by last year's adjudicator, the Comeraghs and Cill Aodha are maturing nicely and Rockville also has some nicely presented gardens and open spaces. Stradbally More has an attractive layout with a fine, well maintained green area. This scheme would benefit from further planting to create additional enclosure. Viewmount Drive has a spectacular entrance created by the very attractive circular rose bed. The stone walls here continue a fine village tradition. At the Credit Union the linear flower and shrub planting looks well but the good quality Credit Union name sign needs to be freshened. At St. James Wood new stone walls were noted and it was good to see that some houses now appeared to be occupied.

Waste Minimisation:

The committee has been innovative in adopting a number of pilot schemes under the waste minimisation heading. Although your initiative with the recycling of paper bags was not successful locally, the members showed great initiative in involving the nearby Dungarvan shopping centre in this effort. Your further involvement in the recycling of mobile phones, glass and clothes is commendable. The Bring Centre at the Church car park is well located. The raised stand is nicely presented in cobble lock paving with clear, good quality signage, adorned with two planted containers. CCTV cameras provide security and this is a good initiative.

Tidiness:

The village generally presents an ambience of tidiness and it is noted from your report that you are continuing to have discussions with the Local Authority and other organisations to tackle some of your remaining problem areas. The Public Toilets were well maintained externally but were badly in need of cleaning and refurbishing internally. A number of planning notices for both new developments and redevelopment were noted throughout the village. It is to be hoped that when the derelict thatched cottage at Church Lane is renovated that the opportunity is also taken to restore the original sash windows of this building.

Residential Areas:

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Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

Stradbally has a variety of well maintained approach roads with attractive and welcoming announcement signs. There is an abundance of stone walls, well maintained hedgerows, fine mature trees and strands of wild flowers lining these very fine approaches. Internally, the streets presented a variety of character and charm appropriate to the various locations. The Nunnery Lane is a splendid presentation lined with a magnificent variety of trees, and grass maintenance was being carried out here on the day of adjudication. The adjoining Forge Boreen looked spectacular with an abundant array of multicoloured Valerian in full bloom.

General Impression:

Stradbally is a historic village with a high architectural quality and the continued hard work of the committee will ensure the retention of its charm and character. Well done on your continuing efforts!

Second Round Adjudication:

I approached Stradbally where I turned off the Dungarvan to Tramore road, and immediately I found myself travelling on a very tidy road where the grass margin was manicured to a high degree for a few hundred yards, and this raised my expectations. The standard was further raised on reaching the church where I admired the beautiful stone signpost for Stradbally. I drove into a large, well laid out, car park with a first class tarmac surface and there I observed the bottle bank and clothing bank which were spotlessly clean, and the area was adorned with appropriate shrubs. It is good to find that this area is protected by CCTV, this is an unfortunate sign of the times, but necessary action. The church was beautifully presented and there is a well kept graveyard nearby.

Driving down into the village there is an excellent footpath all the way down on the left hand side which was notably tidy and clean. I travelled on down to the beautiful square and parked outside the Garda station, and I agree with the first adjudicator that this building needs some attention. The square is special and I admired the traditional water pump which was set off nicely with attractive flowers plus an old cut stone trough. I would like to see the pump painted a softer colour such as black or dark green, but this is a preference and not a criticism. The sundial is wonderful and I was particularly impressed with the cut stone seating. There is great history on the peace pole which was erected in 2006 reminding us that the TidyTowns are in operation in Stradbally since 1982. The variety of mature trees, hedging and shrubs around the village are a lasting testament to the previous TidyTowns committees, and your present committee are keeping up the high standards that are set. Relaxing in this area across from Whelan's bar, Stradbally post office and the Cove bar one enjoys a freshness of aesthetics which is helped greatly by the lack of overhead cables in the village.

The three business premises mentioned each have their own particular charm as if in competition for "man of the match" award. The finger signposting for Bonmahon, Dungarvan and Kilmactomas gets the message across without detracting from the beauty of the area.

The Dungarvan road is dominated by traditional stone walls and mature trees. I admired the bridge, the gate lodge and private entrance which are well appointed and are a reminder of a bygone day.

The beautiful thatched houses are a good example of traditional building methods, but unfortunately the one in Church lane is in a state of disrepair, I noticed it is for sale and hopefully the new owners will restore it to its former glory. I read the remarks of the first adjudicator in relation to the sashes. The development of about fourteen thatched houses in St James's Wood is most unusual and it is disappointing to find that none of the houses have been sold.

I took a stroll in the grounds of the Church of Ireland, St James's, Stradbally and the graveyard is maintained in wonderful condition. The slanting headstones have their own distinctive flavour and I understand that they should not be straightened up as we see in other locations. It was great to see the old ruins being renovated and the dangerous walls propped up while restoration is taking place. I admired the traditional stone wall outside.

Páirc Ui Chuimín is a well presented sports ground with some attractive shrubs. The housing estates are well presented and the signage is great where the stone signpost for Rockville estate is a good example of this.

The first adjudicator describes your place very well and he has increased your marks above last year and I am delighted to confirm this. It was a pleasure to spend a few hours in Stradbally and walk along in the "footprints" of an imaginative and progressive people. Congratulations for a superb performance.