

Tidy Towns Competition 2009

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Craanford** Ref: **132**
County: **Wexford** Mark: **280**
Category: **A** Date(s): **02/07/2009**
22/07/2009

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2009
Overall Development Approach	50	36
The Built Environment	50	38
Landscaping	50	41
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	29
Litter Control	50	39
Waste Minimisation	20	9
Tidiness	30	20
Residential Areas	40	29
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	31
General Impression	10	8
TOTAL MARK	400	280

Overall Development Approach:

Welcome to the Tidy Towns Programme for 2009 and thank you for the detailed Entry Form, expanded details of your 2009 programme and outline of the next four years in a clear and concise format. Thank you also for the images of some of the wonderful areas and displays that have been created. We enjoyed the series of 'before' and 'work-in-progress' photographs.

Your five year plan is realistic and realisable over time but as you make clear, external forces and events may well expand the time frame involved. Do you have any concerns about repositioning the school car park on the opposite side of the road to the school itself? (Given we have read your proposals correctly.) The long term plans for the walk along the river as far as the Grotto is wonderful and wished well. However do you feel the grotto itself will be adequate as the finish focal point after two miles?

A visit to Craanford is to bring contact with a mindset where the community and its welfare is paramount and pride of place is a daily, lived experience. It is a good feeling, warm, welcoming and exciting.

The Built Environment:

Each of the flagship buildings in the village are presented in an exemplary fashion, as is their surroundings. The delightful thatched pub looked inviting and was very well presented. The Old Mill was as always a joy and reflected well the attention it continues to receive. Cooney's pub and the shop Gala were neat and orderly while still being busy. The fine wall opposite the newish houses on the 'slip' road, on the approach road from Enniscorthy is itself an important element in the built environment, while being also a positive factor in the hard landscaping

Landscaping:

It is in the splendour of its landscaping that Crannford comes into a class all of its own. The setting of the village itself; the tasteful use make the river so well utilised to create this splendid Aqua Park, which, each year continues to mature and develop; the contribution made by the excellent individual gardens all combine together to present a wonderland of colour, movement and sound. From the treatment of the triangle, at the junction of the slip road inwards, not an opportunity is lost to create a series of pleasing vista, each thumbing into each other in a delightful cornucopia of colours, sounds and floral scents. The wooden railing of the Aqua Park needs attention as you indicate and hopefully that will not be long delayed. The park itself is just an absolute triumph of landscaping and careful maintenance over time.

The treatment of the area at the junction on the opposite side of the road is maturing very well. Skilled design has been wedded to a high level of execution, to again, provide an interesting, not to say, arresting display.

Further up the village the same high standards have been achieved at large set piece, and smaller incidental displays, each contributing to the overall success of Crannford's fine display.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

The proximity of the rural world, to the village, makes it easy to create linkages to the bird life and wild life of the area. We welcome the fine pictorial displays of the flora and fauna of the area, as creating an awareness of the creatures we share this world with, is surely part of the task of increasing appreciation for them. The provision of bird boxes is an important and valuable action in this regard. The planned river side walk (to the grotto) clearly has the potential to include strategies' to bring frequent contact with bird and wildlife. We await its completion with great anticipation. Discuss the options with a local bird life enthusiast or consult the Wild Life Officer attached to the Office of Public Works for a range of ideas as to how best to progress this project.

Litter Control:

The 'take your litter home' concept – so successful in other countries – works well in Crannford, perhaps augmented by your own frequent litter patrols. One or two carelessly discarded items were noted in the Aqua Park. The school going population involvement from an early age will ensure that they become part of the solution over time and not part of the future's litter problem.

Waste Minimisation:

The specific programme in position in Crannford to drive home the message about the need for, and methods of recycling, are specific and well targeted. You have clearly identified the dual nature of this category- it is as much about encouraging a change of mind-set in respect of waste minimisation as it is about dealing with material recycling as such. Again, the involvement of the children – who in turn, more and more teach us, the parents, – is a vital and successful method of spreading the concept. It will ensure, like litter prevention, that reducing waste, reusing where appropriate and recycling where ever possible becomes part of the makeup of us as a nation. As in previous years the recycling facility by the school was not without a small number of items which had not been inserted into the required containers, a practice that needs to be firmly stamped out. Well done on the scrap metal and clothing recycling date. These have proved a great success in many centres

Tidiness:

The gentle air of order and neatness in Crannford is not something stilted or restricting. There is no sign of litter or neatness storm troupers here. Rather is it a tangible air of all doing the correct thing seemingly unconsciously. The result is a delightful absence of any jarring location or view. Your practice to physically remove weeds rather than resort to chemical means is welcomed, if only because, post spraying treatment, dead vegetation, continues to be unsightly. The decision to rationalise the signposting is welcomed as all too often these can reach a point when they are almost self-defeating.

Residential Areas:

The long established individual houses are leading the way in their presentation both in terms of the house itself – painted and crisp – and their gardens - colourful and inviting with a wide range of plants and shrubs. Also the new developments, especially Toilean, at the sports grounds, which is growing and maturing in a satisfactory manner, while the individual houses on the slip road set a standard that is rarely seen and is a sight to enjoy. No doubt the proposed new houses will be carefully slotted into their allotted locations with equal care and attention to their suitability. A big thank you is due to the individual house holders for the manner in which so many of the houses are presented, thus contributing so much to the overall image that is Crannford today.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

The main road – Gorey to Carnew (R725) is the ideal introduction to the passing motorist of this special place. The major attraction of the Aqua Park is fully visible and much cause to pause a while. Each of the verges and

ditches are suitably cut and trimmed while leaving ample cover for bird life. The maturing trees are growing in attractiveness with each passing year. The village name signs, in wonderful stone, are outstanding within each case and suitable low level planting to enhance their impact and appeal. Can there really be a case for each of the many finger-post signs at the Monaseed junction? Within the village, at the church sports grounds and around the shop and mill, ample and suitable car parking is provided in litter free and neat parks.

General Impression:

Having discovered Craanford many years ago and watched it grow in self-belief and presentation, it is positive joy to revisit the village today. It is clear that the collective will and determination of the area has been brought to bear on the continuing enhancement of the village, both as a charming place to visit, and especially as a privileged location in which to spend your allotted span of years. To everyone; club, school, organisation and even external agencies associated with this year's entry, our best thanks and applause. Please keep up the good work and you are wished well in next year's competition.

Second Round Adjudication:

I approached Craanford from the Camolin side and could not find a signpost for the village. There is a very attractive stone for Kavanagh Crane Hire and I thought it was announcing the village. There are two excellent stone signposts for the village, adorned with appropriate flowers, on the Carnew to Gorey road, that give a welcoming effect to the village. The larger County Council signpost at the junction for the main road is faded considerably and needs a freshening up. On this busy road I admired the traditional horse cart festooned with flowers, the old wheel, the horse trap and the traditional water pump and these are a reminder of a bygone age. The grass margins on entry to the village on the main road are very well maintained with some neat shrubberies and tubs of flowers.

I went into the Aqua Park and it is a credit to all concerned. I noticed that this park was opened by President Mary McAleessee on the 7th of May 2002 and there is an appropriate stone to commemorate this event. The grass was neatly trimmed there with adequate seating for picnics and rests. Here there are a selection of beautiful trees and shrubs. The jubilee 2000 AD peace stone nestles beneath some trees that are developing very well such as beech and oak. The river is a central point of this area and is joined by the lovely little stream and it is most relaxing to listen to the water babbling along. The water here was crystal clear but I did not notice any fish life in it. The small three-arch bridge is a very picturesque structure. Driving over the bridge I feel that maybe the ivy could be removed from these beautiful stone walls. This ivy is in its infancy but eventually it could cause damage.

The business houses were well presented and sported some nice displays of shrubs and flowers. The 17th Century watermill is very well restored. There are some wonderful agricultural antiques in this building plus great photographs of the people who worked in the mill. I admired the thatch houses, and it is great to see the traditional building methods still employed. There are some wonderful houses around the village and some with spectacular displays of trees shrubs flowers and lawns which bolster the efforts of the TidyTowns committee to present the village so well.

Baile Thiobóid is a very well finished housing estate with an attractive entrance. A second housing estate "Millford" is very attractive from the road and is well secured with a wrought iron gate. The third housing estate that I saw "An tOileán sports a few attractive houses to the front but now the work seems to be abandoned leaving the place in an unfinished state. Unfortunately there is no sign of anybody living in those houses. It really is a scar on the village to see the unfinished footpath. Regrettably this is a sign of the times and is to be seen in many parts of Ireland, but hopefully work will soon resume on the houses.

The school is absolutely beautiful and it is wonderful to see the green flag outside. This tells us that the children, parents and teachers are well briefed in best practise in relation to the local environment.

The small GAA pavilion is very neat and tidy and I loved the stand in the fine sports field. I took a stroll around all the pitches in the new path and this is a wonderful amenity. It is great to see the large amount of space left available for young people to engage in outdoor pursuits.

The church is absolutely beautiful and alongside it and behind it there is a wonderfully maintained graveyard, and congratulations to all concerned with its upkeep.

Craanford community centre is a splendid pavilion sporting colourful hanging baskets, tubs of flowers and shrubs to the front.

Across the road from the church there is a white shed with a rusted galvanised roof and this takes from the visual amenity of the village. I appreciate that this is a private property and there is little one can do in such circumstances.

I could see the footsteps of an imaginative and enthusiastic community all around the village. I note the first adjudicator has increased your marks and I am pleased to confirm this situation.

Well done for a splendid effort.