

Tidy Towns Competition 2009

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Arklow** Ref: **264**
County: **Wicklow** Mark: **262**
Category: **F** Date(s): **19/06/2009**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2009
Overall Development Approach	50	41
The Built Environment	50	31
Landscaping	50	38
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	28
Litter Control	50	35
Waste Minimisation	20	9
Tidiness	30	15
Residential Areas	40	26
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	31
General Impression	10	8
TOTAL MARK	400	262

Overall Development Approach:

Thank you for your application for 2009 TidyTowns. The good size map and locations highlighted was very helpful. There are very few volunteers for a town of Arklow's size. How have you tried to garner more support? Well done to those involved who are making a huge difference. There is input from Fas scheme for the first time this year. This must mean a lot more help and volunteers must be pleased that they can get more of what they want done. Its noted that the committee is supported by Arklow Town Council, An Taisce, Ballyrane Special Needs, Church gate collection/ Bag packing, Ballyraine Rural Enterprise and Sheldon Abbey. There are visits of the committee to schools along with the litter warden. There are also on-going links with the schools by students taking on worthy projects in doing the boat, and the Sunday night youth project doing the dispensary garden. Its good you find the TidyTowns competition a motivating force behind committee and community. I hope this continues! Best of luck to all.

The Built Environment:

There is a nice row of coloured houses near the Baptist church that caught the eye. Private houses are mostly very well looked after. There are some lovely ones on Seaview Avenue. St Kevin's CBS was bright and fresh looking. St Josephs Church and grounds are well presented, although there were a few crooked planters and an unused pole noticed at one side which could be improved. The adjacent school looks terrific and it was great to see the Green Flag flying proudly. St Saviours church and grounds are beautiful. Carysfort NS looks well and its yellow railings are very smart. Arklow senior college is freshly painted and has some good trees in the grounds. They could do with having the parking lines redone when possible. There were some well looked after private houses on this road. Your efforts to increase bilingual signage and address derelict sites were noted. The main street is attractive with the following shopfronts all looking particularly well: Arklow Market, Old Shop, Gail's flowers, Joanne's, Hoey's, Bridgewater Centre.

Landscaping:

The new beds and anchor feature on Pound Hill were really nice. The bridge has been well cleaned up. The dispensary/ small garden is a peaceful, secluded retreat off the busy road. It was quite plain at time of visit but I see from the application there are plans for a youth group to enhance this area. The shrubs across from Safeways were admired. The area around the swimming centre is much enhanced by the beautiful boat flower bed. It was a joy to watch the swans, geese, ducks and many water fowl by the pond. There is a lot of work gone into planting beds – such as the ones at St Michael's Terrace and St Hudson's square. If the black and yellow kerbs could be repainted it would do the beds more justice. The memorial garden is beautiful. Well done to all for its upkeep. The reuse of plants at qualcram is very good use of resources. Planting of shrubs at Glendale estate was noted and I hope it continues to deter illegal dumping at this spot. It looked very nice on day of adjudication. There is obvious pride in the local area, and no doubt it will be monitored closely.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

The pond area near the swimming pool is great. Are there interpretive panels on the birds and plants around? The panel on dragonflies, damselflies and butterflies is excellent. What is meant by a 'path for access to duck feeding'? Be sure to leave areas undisturbed for the visiting geese so they are not too bothered by people.

Litter Control:

Mostly very good in terms of litter control, with a light scattering along the north quay and around the sailing club. There was some dog fouling noticed in the harbour area (south quay) and no doggie bins or anti-litter signs seen. Areas previously marred with dumping have been given lots of attention and turned into low maintenance gardens by the community. These should be monitored closely and any further incidents reported swiftly. The exit from town onto N11 was quite heavily littered in this area, along the roadside. Town centre was clean.

Waste Minimisation:

The work with schools and planned competition on waste minimisation is commended, as is the collection of bikes and electrical items for recycling. There will be further segregation through the Fas scheme. Has there been any work with businesses on this? Try to link with the chamber of commerce or do a community survey to increase marks. Any promotional work will count so perhaps organising workshops or other methods of communication could be done. Well done to all the schools for their green flags.

Tidiness:

There is a problem with graffiti along the north quay, with lifebuoys and kerbs all defaced. Give attention to signage at junctions and be shrewd with whats necessary. In some areas, signs were doubled up. If they must be kept, try to have them cleaned once in a while, eg. Arklow leisure centre, and others need to be straightened, eg. Accident black spot one opposite safeways. Safeways garage keep the forecourt and adjacent green area very well. There was a broken wall noticed under billboard in adjoining lane. There's a badly treated building across from Liam Mellon's park that's had all the windows smashed. Nicely painted railings at Wood business at the harbour.

Residential Areas:

Templeraíneay and Highfield looked well. Carrigmore had some mounds of soil out front, maybe for new beds, it wasn't clear if it was waste or not. The lawn areas at Inbhear Mor Park hadn't been mowed in a while. It was a shame to see the broken wall and graffitied bollards on greenspace at one residential area near Abbeyville. Churchview had a lovely entrance and great work done in the community garden with heathers. Cherryfield has lovely planters and is well maintained. Glendale fence and entrance stone looking well but some general weeding would enhance it inside. Continue to encourage residents to maintain this. Arklow is a town with many estates so overall it looks fairly good and efforts are being made across the board. Well done.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

The anchor and beds planted on Pound Hill (approach from Dublin) were much admired. The roundabout at this end, however, is quite neglected and this forms part of first impression coming off the N11. The Vale Road approach from Avoca is good. Clean paths, mowed verges, most signs clean (some near the name sign need attention), beds prepared but not yet planted. The presentation of the factory is fine. The wall at GAA covered in creepers is excellent visually and as a graffiti deterrent, if this was the intention. The road from the bridge in town up towards the shops is well surfaced and marked, and has nice lampposts with floral displays.

General Impression:

For a town this size, there is a certain level of integration which is helped by consistency of planters style (eg. Boats) which obviously ties in with the location on river and coast. The challenge would be to have even more integration by bringing other people on board. Involvement of the business community could be stronger and there are many other opportunities of mutual benefit that could be explored. The sponsored furniture is a good initiative, and perhaps there could be further partnerships on waste minimisation projects. Well done and best of luck in the 2009 competition.