

Tidy Towns Competition 2009

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Dunlavin** Ref: **517**
County: **Wicklow** Mark: **203**
Category: **B** Date(s): **16/06/2009**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2009
Overall Development Approach	50	24
The Built Environment	50	30
Landscaping	50	29
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	17
Litter Control	50	20
Waste Minimisation	20	6
Tidiness	30	16
Residential Areas	40	26
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	29
General Impression	10	6
TOTAL MARK	400	203

Overall Development Approach:

Thank you for your application for the TidyTowns competition 2009. There is a committee of 7 but the level of involvement is not clear from the application. It is apparent that you need more help from the wider community and I wish you the best in garnering further support. There is support from Fas and Wicklow Co. Council so you are fortunate to have this. There may be more going on than that included in the application. You are welcome to submit supporting documents and photographs that further show the work going on in your community. In particular, point out projects undertaken that have achieved results, so you can be awarded credit where its due. Not everything can be tackled at once, so it would be a good idea to have community involvement in setting out priorities for what to improve in the town. This could be initiated with a survey or a public meeting, asking for suggestions, and wish lists. The results should feed into a 3, 4 or 5 year plan. The plan should set out realistic targets, timescales and where possible, outline costs for projects. Have you had input from Heritage Council on historical aspects of the town to promote? You could also go for funding from Wicklow County Council under the LA21 scheme for certain other projects. There are many organisations that can help you along. With consistent efforts and a bit of organised planning you will see things get better in time. Good luck!

The Built Environment:

There are lovely broad streets and some excellently presented houses and cottages side by side. The market house in the centre is the prominent feature, and it is good that it has had new lights fitted. If it could be painted and repaired in places in future, that would be great. Continue to lobby the Council for doing these works, as its such an impressive landmark building for the town. Its almost like the way this is treated, reflects on the whole town. Some shopfronts require repairs to doors, there are derelict vacant houses. The Garda station looks well. Dunlavin Credit Union and the cottages alongside are very good, as well as Doyle's

butchers and the Caplis Bar. A bright blue and white house was admired, and also an orange coloured one opposite the bring banks. The Church looked well, the community college is very modern and clean but could be softened with planting to settle into the surroundings better. The pharmacy and Plum Tree bakery deserve a mention also. Houses across from the fire station and just down from it are all well presented. The primary school looks great and has nice gardens. The houses across from the church are very well cared for and so is their green area in front with lots of benches.

Landscaping:

The park opposite the Garda Station was lovely and the old gravestones incorporated in an interesting way. Trees on Main St look well, but as they are small in relation to the broad street scape will look better once they've matured. The lamp-posts here were also noted. Is there a plan to extend this renewed look streetscape to other parts of Main Street? The library building is such a prominent feature that larger displays with more spacing would have more impact. Please consider reducing the number of planters, and increasing the impact with bigger floral/ foliage displays in each. The green area in front of the church is very well presented. The mature trees are an asset.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

The planting at St Kevins College has taken wildlife into consideration and this is commended. Has there ever been a habitat survey done for the area? Developing walking trails and promotion of local wildlife with complimentary information panels would be one way to approach this section. Putting up bird and bat boxes and engaging with wildlife groups for whats appropriate to your area would be good. What are the local schools working on in the area of wildlife and biodiversity that would be complementary? There is a biodiversity focus in 2010 by the heritage council so there could be events to join in with and gain marks in this section.

Litter Control:

There was quite a bit of litter scattered around the town at time of visit, including some black refuse sacks left at a street litter bin. Bring banks are fine but there was no signage there, and several bags dumped. Plenty of broken glass was seen around the town, even on footpaths. Litter control was an issue at previous adjudication reports and recommended as the main issue to focus on for this year's competition. However, there is no litter management plan provided for this adjudicator to consider how it is being approached. You are commended on visiting schools, businesses and requesting assistance from the litter warden, but how is this co-ordinated on an on-going basis within an overall strategy? Where a town suffers from litter, and it is all too common, there is no overnight solution. It has to be tackled with a long term strategy involving all partners. You should consider bringing all parties together and integrating cleaning schedules, education and enforcement. Are you participating in the National Spring Clean and gaining media coverage? Try some innovative events to gather attention and persist in requesting enforcement support from the council. Providing evidence of efforts, and co-ordinated planning will gain you marks in this section.

Waste Minimisation:

It is good that the TidyTowns committee works with schools on waste and litter, and assists schools towards Green Flag. Well done to Jonathan Swift NS for achieving theirs already. What is being done to promote waste prevention to the community? Is there any co-ordination of waste management with the business community? There are national targets to particularly divert biodegradable waste from landfill so a specific focus on not wasting food, buying what will be used, cooking appropriate portions, composting leftover uncooked food and garden waste in a composter, and promotion of other types such as wormeries for cooked food, etc. may be an interesting angle to take in this section for next year. There are limitless opportunities here so refer to Race Against Waste website, and environmental NGOs for ideas.

Tidiness:

The lovely broad main streets could do with a tidy up of litter and weeds from kerbs. There is room for improvement with cleaning, painting and weeding. A working drinking fountain on Kilcullen Street is a lovely feature and deserves to be enhanced with a fresh coat of paint. The name signs on the approach had not yet been cleaned and some are obscured by vegetation, same for the speed sign and St. Nicholas graveyard brown sign near the school. Pay attention to signs, especially on approaches as they form a major part of the first impression. Some plates on bins also need to be washed and others need repairs such as the one

outside the shop. The clock on the market house is discoloured, but efforts to have council carry out repairs here were noted. There are many derelict houses which detract from the town but the committee is limited in what it can do directly. Have there been approaches to owners to have some windows/ doors painted? This can have great effect on improving how derelict sites appear. Please provide more information on efforts to deal with neglected buildings in next years application. Occupied houses are presented to the highest standards, and street furniture is generally well kept.

Residential Areas:

There aren't many name signs present at entrances to estates so its hard to know which is which. They present opportunities to make the area more attractive and welcoming. It is great that new residents associations are forming and they should provide energy and enthusiasm to make improvements. For litter collections especially, more volunteers would greatly help. Improving entrances and green spaces and general maintenance will add marks here. Perhaps a little inter-estate competition with sponsored prizes from local businesses would provide a good stimulus. Good luck!

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

Streets were generally in satisfactory condition, with some uneven patches in places and some broken pavement at road edges. The general maintenance of roadside verges is not too good at the time of adjudication. Signs are obscured. On the approach from Blessington one is greeted by a 4x4 sales yard without any screening of vehicles from the road, although its freshly painted. The vehicles are practically on the road in front of the shop. Is there any way to move these back from the road and put some planters in front, for example?

General Impression:

There is a good structure to the town. It is in a prominent location with excellent views and equally can be seen from far and wide. There are some prominent buildings but an overall sense of neglect, with much room for improvement. There is a sense that the area lacks community cohesion and possibly all the TidyTowns work is left to a few. With some effort and focus on preparing a shared vision for the town, there will be success to enjoy in years ahead. Please do stick with it and the future rewards will be worth it. Well done on work to date and best of luck in future.