

Tidy Towns Competition 2009

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Knockananna** Ref: **247**
County: **Wicklow** Mark: **237**
Category: **A** Date(s): **17/06/2009**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2009
Overall Development Approach	50	38
The Built Environment	50	32
Landscaping	50	35
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	18
Litter Control	50	35
Waste Minimisation	20	7
Tidiness	30	15
Residential Areas	40	26
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	25
General Impression	10	6
TOTAL MARK	400	237

Overall Development Approach:

Thank you for the application, map and posters. You have provided a list of planned activities for 2010 and 2011. It is perhaps timely to get together community input into a 3, 4 or 5 year plan to get a clear vision of where the village is going, and to prioritise what's most important. That is unfortunate that there is no longer a Fás worker in the village, however, many villages are in the same position and in fact quite a few have never had paid workers and still have done well in the competition. Don't be disheartened, and strive for more voluntary participation. With 16 people on the committee, that is a good number for a village of this size. There is also support from Wicklow County Council, local shops and pubs. There is also links with the local school.

The Built Environment:

There are some very well presented private houses and gardens notably the thatch cottages. The school is a nice building but should be painted in the coming year if possible, or least the front walls powerwashed to spruce it up. Is the fence permanent – or perhaps this whole facility is in transition with the building work going on behind. Wagon wheels pub is well maintained and there are some flower baskets adding colour outside, however some of the poles are slanted over and should be straightened up and secured if continuing with this style. Benches at centre are well maintained and in prime location for watching the goings on. Phone box also looks well. Community centre is clean but the doors are due for a coat of paint. Jacob's looks well but its sign could have more impact if enlarged. Perhaps its so well known locally that is not required. Consider the use of Irish in village signs too. Nice pumps and benches and stone troughs throughout. The post office is smartly painted. The old and new churches are bright and clean, the graveyard is interesting with all the old headstones. Have any of the family histories been researched? The health centre wall is freshly painted, same could be done for the building itself.

Landscaping:

There are quite a few features at the village centre. The grotto has some native trees and nice shrubs planted which give year round interest. The purple colour seems a little inappropriate, until one sees the community centre carries a similar colour. There are cleaned up walls and plantings with benches here and there which make for good rest stops. Some gates and fences are well looked after – if more could be painted that would be even better. Grassed areas are trimmed but some are quite rough and this could be improved with earlier and more regular mowing.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

There is great potential to develop a walking route across the bog, as proposed, with promotion of nature and biodiversity. I did take a walk to look for the duck pond, as outlined in the application but in spite of several attempts, could not locate it. It is a very suitable project under this section.

The bogs of Knockanna, a landscape of beauty as celebrated in the poem and published in the local history book, how wonderful. There seems to be quite a bit of preparation work on-going by committee members here. Have you contacted the Heritage Council, local rangers and biodiversity officers for advice? There may be funding you could go for through heritage grants, particularly for information panels or education workshops.

Litter Control:

There was no litter whatsoever on day of adjudication, and this is a credit to you. The awareness campaign with the schools, regular litter patrols and clean-ups are paying off. Keep up the good work.

Waste Minimisation:

The school is commended on its involvement in the green schools programme – does it have the green flag yet? The posters on litter and recycling show a lot of creativity and desire to make the world a better place. There are good links with shredding materials for use as animal bedding. It is good that there is now a segregated waste collection for recyclables. There are many ways to promote waste prevention and further improve sustainability of the village. Explore Green Communities, Race Against Waste and Change.ie for projects in this section. The council environmental officers can also assist.

Tidiness:

The GAA grounds entrance is nicely done with fresh paint and the entrance and shrubs along the wall. Keep an eye that they don't encroach onto the road too much and it may be a traffic management measure as well. Pay attention to signage as some could do with a spruce up (such as the yield sign before the wagon wheels and one or two at the main junction) Unfortunately a few bits of graffiti appear here and there, and a flag pole is missing its flag, left flying the remnants of the last one! Most kerbs are free of weeds.

Residential Areas:

All residential areas are well maintained and presented. It is great that the new estate is taking an active role in keeping the estate tidy.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

On the approach from Tinahely, there are some neat hedges and good fences with painted gates along the way. However, there's no name sign to indicate when you're entering the village. One or two boundary walls, if painted, would greatly enhance the approach. Surfaces are a little uneven on this road. Another approach did have a name sign, enhanced with floral beds which gives a warm welcome. Some building work underway and once their boundary is put in it will be an improvement. Improvements with the man-hole at the cross were noted, as were plans for improving footpaths in this area.

General Impression:

Knockanna is putting good work into maintaining standards. There is a need to set the bar higher, perhaps, and aim for really having impact on one or two key areas where you could gain more marks. A community consultation on finding out what people want and how its to be achieved, would greatly take things forward over the next few years. Do look for outside assistance, think of media attention for events, get creative. There is potential here to do well. I look forward to visiting again and finding that duck pond!

