

Tidy Towns Competition 2009

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Bridgetown** Ref: **61**
County: **Clare** Mark: **250**
Category: **A** Date(s): **12/06/2009**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2009
Overall Development Approach	50	33
The Built Environment	50	37
Landscaping	50	39
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	21
Litter Control	50	34
Waste Minimisation	20	6
Tidiness	30	20
Residential Areas	40	28
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	25
General Impression	10	7
TOTAL MARK	400	250

Overall Development Approach:

We were delighted to receive Bridgetown's 2009 Tidy Towns entry form, including the very helpful sketch map and we noted that your Tidy Towns Association has managed to retain 4 members and hold 4 meetings per year. It is not clear from your form whether your meetings are attended by Committee Members only or if the wider community are included. We would certainly recommend that the latter option is used at least once a year. The use of a local newsletter and your direct contact with teachers in the local school are very appropriate means of communication.

Your involvement with the County Council and FAS is very encouraging because far more can be achieved by organisations working in co-operation with each other.

Festivals and Events are excellent ways to promote community spirit and it is good to know that you continue to hold the Bridgetown Show (South East Clare Agricultural Show). We hope the 2009 event will be very successful.

We note that you did not get an opportunity to submit a 3 year plan as recommended in last year's report. Apart from offering an opportunity to gain valuable marks under this category, it would help you to identify key areas for action and to remain focused on achieving the goals you set. Remember that it doesn't have to be a complicated document – in fact you would probably find it easier to action if you keep it simple and ensure that the targets are attainable within your resources.

The Built Environment:

Bridgetown is a wonderful haven of peace within an otherwise bustling and traffic-ridden society and it was a pleasure to take time out to enjoy its tranquil amenities.

Our first introduction was your lovely national school with its pretty window boxes and little vegetable garden. The school building itself was well painted and clean. The nearby Church with its lovely grounds and graveyard were fine examples of a caring community.

Business premises were appropriate for a small village and we admired Cooney's Bar in its enviable setting beside the bridge and river. Horgan's Pub was very inviting with its bench seat surrounded by lovely potted geraniums and pretty hanging baskets. We noticed the interesting location of a Sarsfield's Ride sign on the pub wall. Bridgetown Co-Op Creamery had a tidy forecourt.

The beautiful bridge at the centre of the village had very colourful hanging baskets and provided a lovely link between the two halves of the village but we did notice that a little remedial work was required at the steps beside the bridge.

The range of homes within Bridgetown was ideal providing a good mix of older individual properties with nice small new developments

Like many other towns and villages around the country, Bridgetown does have a few problems with derelict properties on the outskirts but the only way to improve the situation is to keep in contact with the County Council and try to negotiate with the property owners.

We agree with last year's comments about the need for balance between the commercial demands and the leisure needs of the village but you are certainly succeeding with this aim to date and we are confident that you will continue to achieve the right balance, congratulations to all involved.

Landscaping:

The Village Greens were absolutely gorgeous with manicured grass, picnic seating, neat path leading to the storage building with the colourful flowerbed alongside and lovely planted circular containers. Trees planted throughout the village were healthy and well trimmed.

Raised flowerbeds on the roadside, outside the Church grounds, created a lovely splash of colour for visitors arriving at the village. We would strongly recommend that the Millennium Shrubbery receive some urgent attention. It is in a prime location and could create an amazing vista if new planting was undertaken.

The green areas located at Clonboy and Riverdale developments were beautifully presented with appropriate name plaques and lovely displays of bedding plants.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

The provision of nesting boxes for birds at the riverbank is an excellent project but it is also important to ensure that the range of trees and plants available in the area provide the most suitable food chain for resident species. As recommended before, it is advisable to consult a wildlife expert or enthusiast – perhaps the County Council could suggest possible contacts. When you have the necessary guidance, a survey of existing wildlife and bird species could be organised with the aid of local schoolchildren.

We noted that this year's application did not mention progress on your planned walking route and we sincerely hope that the project has not been abandoned as it could provide great opportunities for improved marking under several Tidy Towns categories. We wish you well with the project.

While the swallows were missing during our visit, a couple of ducks were having a great time preening themselves beside the river. Our visit was a very enjoyable and relaxing experience.

Litter Control:

Your Tidy Towns Association and the National School pupils and teachers are to be commended on the success of your spring cleanup work, the village was almost litter free while we were there. We just spotted a small amount of litter - a crisp bag on the Green nearest to the river and a couple of items in Clonboy estate. The proposed additional litterbins at the Village Greens would provide additional protection for the beautiful area.

Your application did not refer to regular litter patrols but we do recommend them in order to keep up the good work. It is possible to achieve additional marks in this category by ensuring that details of litter control

programmes are submitted with the Tidy Towns entry form.

Waste Minimisation:

It was encouraging to note that the National School plans to participate in a Green School initiative and we look forward to seeing a Green Flag flying over the school on a future visit.

It is vital that everyone in the community plays a role in the Race against Waste and although a recycling bank may not be feasible for your village, there are still many actions which could be taken to reuse, recycle and reduce waste. For example, waste collected during your clean up session could be segregated and waste minimisation leaflets could be circulated to homes and businesses in the area. A Race against Waste brochure containing guidelines should be available from the Tidy Towns Unit.

Tidiness:

The excellent landscaping and maintenance of the kerbs, footpaths and green areas, have ensured that Bridgetown is a tidy and very appealing village. A couple of small areas needed attention -a few kerbside weeds at Clonboy and a narrow grass verge which required trimming near the houses in Riverdale.

We note your plans to paint the Co-Op Creamery wall and screen the treatment works in the Riverdale Estate and we would recommend that these jobs be prioritised as they would make a major impact on their respective areas. The white wall at the back of the riverside Village Green (Fahy Road) would also benefit from a fresh coat of paint.

Residential Areas:

Bridgetown is blessed with a fine selection of beautiful individual homes including the lovely properties looking down on the Village Green. Clonboy Estate was impressive with its new name plaque, trees, green areas and flower beds at the entrance. The lovely cul de sac of detached homes opposite Cooney's and the Riverdale estate, with the attractive planted containers, name plaque at the entrance and open green area, were fine developments. The proposed screening of the treatment works will be very worthwhile.

Well done to everyone on the hard work undertaken to maintain your homes in good order.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

The access routes and roads within Bridgetown were in fairly good condition. The bilingual Bridgetown sign was clearly displayed but a 50km sign needed to be cleaned. Some signposts also needed to be cleaned and painted. Two redundant posts should be removed from the area of the raised flowerbeds outside the Church grounds.

We hope your ongoing negotiations regarding the removal of overhead cables in the village will be successful. This would have a major impact on the appearance of Bridgetown.

General Impression:

Your links with the County Council, ESB and FAS are crucial to ensure that the infrastructure of Bridgetown continues to be maintained at a high standard for the enjoyment and appreciation of residents and visitors.

We were very impressed by the work undertaken to date by your Tidy Towns Association and the community of your beautiful village. We look forward to following Bridgetown's progress in the Tidy Towns Competition over the next few years.