

Tidy Towns Competition 2009

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Chapelizod** Ref: **166**
County: **Dublin(City)** Mark: **258**
Category: **C** Date(s): **12/06/2009**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2009
Overall Development Approach	50	40
The Built Environment	50	38
Landscaping	50	32
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	27
Litter Control	50	26
Waste Minimisation	20	10
Tidiness	30	16
Residential Areas	40	28
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	33
General Impression	10	8
TOTAL MARK	400	258

Overall Development Approach:

Welcome to the 2009 National Tidy Towns Competition and well done on all your hard work! Your committee's commitment to the competition including the regularity of your meetings and Saturday morning cleanups are commended. The Adjudicator notes that you have good relationships with the numerous associations and groups in your village. It gives the impression of a community that has a very healthy social and community emphasis and involvement.

The range of opportunities you employ to advertise your work is commended including the leaflets and prominent position in the Chapelizod CHAT newsletter. Another method of communications you might consider is to leave a 'suggestions box' in the local shop to allow residents comment on issues they may think need addressing in the area.

The map you provided was very helpful– thank you! You should think of now taking your submission a step further by preparing a brief, outline plan which would also be a good basis for gaining extra support and sponsorship. Again, this need only be a simple list of tasks you will carry out and you can use this report, and a simple map, as a basis for doing these. Your Committee should meet and identify the tasks you would like to take on in the short-term (year 1), the medium term (year 2) and the long term (years 3 to 5). The preparations of a simple plan will undoubtedly help you to gain both extra marks in future years and also additional support in your community.

The Built Environment:

The centre of your village is a credit to you all with the completion of the improvement works. It has transformed the village centre and the quality of the materials used has enriched the space. St Laurences

Church is particularly well presented and a credit to your local community. The laneway to its gates has been sensitively treated with its use of cobbles. The laneway to St Laurence's school seems to have only been partially power washed leaving the final stretch at the school and the school steps looking a little dull compared to the rest of the lane. Saint Patrick's National School is also beautifully presented and the paint job has certainly enlivened its façade. In the village, Chapelizod Pharmacy and the Villager pub are excellently presented – many congratulations to their owners for the interest they show. Some of the other premises facing the main square are now suffering from the contrast with the new surroundings. Perhaps owners could be encouraged to make sure empty premises are kept well presented with the green hoarding particularly needed a new lick of paint. The retention of the telephone box is commended and although the glass panels have been restored it was looking a little dirty and could perhaps benefit from a wash. The new raised space, enclosed by railings, looks a little bare. Maybe the addition of a piece of art reflecting on your village's history would be appropriate here. While you are awaiting the development of St Martins Row perhaps the doors could be given a lick of paint as a short term measure to improve their appearance on the approach to the village. In addition the presence of an old white van at the entrance to Main Street, parked on the path, is an eyesore and the owner should be encouraged to remove it.

The grounds of The Church of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary were also beautifully presented. Temporary signage at the party shop over the bridge was a disappointment on such a prominent façade and we hope by next year a more attractive permanent sign will be in place on such an important corner.

Your efforts at improving the entrance to the Industrial Estate were noted and unfortunately the proliferation of signs and poor treatment here really lets the village down. Perhaps the low blue wall would benefit from power washing or it could be given a new lick of paint in a more sympathetic colour?

The proposed designation of Chapelizod as an ACA should ensure that all future developments in your village respect the unique setting and only contribute to its improvement.

Landscaping:

The works undertaken by residents at St Laurence's Grove is to be commended. There is certainly a contrast between the wild area to the east of the entrance and the manicured lawns and flower beds on the eastern side. Perhaps some specimen trees could be planted to the lawn area to help enrich the space. As has been done in Belgrove Park the trees could be an opportunity to mark a person or event which has local significance.

The location of Chapelizod beside the Liffey gives it unique opportunities and the viewing area at the Island Apartments is a prime spot to view the areas mill heritage. Perhaps signs could be put in place here to explain more about this aspect of your history? We understand that this area is to receive attention from the OPW and DCC this year.

The window boxes and hanging baskets within the village were a welcome splash of colour and New Row in particular looked well.

The new trees planted as part of the village square scheme will form such an important backdrop for the space as they mature but will need particular attention as they establish for the first few years. Ensure they are well watered and cared for to ensure their successful growth.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

It is interesting to note how local school children are encouraged to visit and study the different habitats in your village environs and how they are used as teaching aids. Perhaps they could be encouraged to undertake surveys of the flora and fauna which could be used to learn more about the wildlife in the area. This need not be particularly complicated or expensive exercise and will earn you extra points in this category. Many studies can be carried out by local school children as a joint project. You should examine the advice set out for surveying your areas in the Tidy Towns Handbook and discuss this with the school authorities. Advice on surveying birds can also be found on the Birdwatch Ireland website and through the Dublin City Council Biodiversity officer.

The existing wild area such as the space at St Laurence's Grove could be a pilot study area with scope for installing bird or bat boxes. Undoubtedly this will give you a better understanding and appreciation of the natural characteristics of the area and you will also score better marks in this section in future years.

Local stone walls are a key wildlife habitat in the area and these are a feature that you need to recognise and protect.

The development of the pathways and fishing station along the Liffey were certainly well used on adjudication day and the new pedestrian bridge will help you develop circular routes through the village and along both sides of the river. Perhaps you could contact the Sli na Slainte organisation at the Irish Heart Foundation to develop a signposted route? They can provide funding to set up a walkway and signage.

Litter Control:

As befits the new village centre it was litter free on the day of adjudication. Some litter was noted on the margins of the approach roads. At the bridge opposite the new apartment blocks on the Chapelizod Road some litter and cans were thrown into the shrubs at the start of the bridge and were particularly noticeable to people walking along the path. A bin may be needed in this location. The steps you are taking to tackle the litter problem in your areas are commended. In addition to your overall regular clean ups, establishing a regular litter patrol is the most effective way of addressing litter. You should identify Committee members who can take responsibility for particular areas and who can commit to doing small-scale pick ups a few times a week – perhaps while walking the dog or while out for an evening walk.

Good luck with the siting of a Bring Centre on the north side of the village. The bring centre in the grounds of the West County Hotel was clean on adjudication day.

Waste Minimisation:

While the use of the brown bin collections are an important part of this category have you introduced any measure to encourage residents to install compost bins in their own gardens? You should encourage residents to order their own compost bin. Subsidised Home Composting Starter Kits are available from Dublin City Council. As part of the Green schools programme the schools should be encouraged to begin waste awareness campaigns. There is much scope to gain more marks in this category by moving beyond just collecting litter and take steps to actually reduce the production of waste in the community. Have you considered taking part in An Taisces National Spring Clean and using this as a platform to bring across a waste minimisation message? Your annual community festival could be another platform to bring this message across.

Tidiness:

The village refurbishment scheme has done much to improve the appearance of the village core. However, on adjudication day, the new lighting poles were side by side with the old poles. By next year we hope all the lighting and poles will be properly installed and old poles removed in order to reduce visual clutter. The committee needs to ensure that derelict buildings are kept in a presentable condition even if they are awaiting redevelopment. Some graffiti was noticed around the old post box on St Laurence's Road and you should try to address this issue and remove graffiti as soon as it appears. Dublin City Council promotes an anti-graffiti message through the Green Schools including information on the impact of graffiti vandalism, how it can be prevented and how everyone can do their part to help.

The impact of traffic and illegal parking is a real issue within the older streets in the village especially since the oil spills from illegally parked cars can stain the new footpaths. We hope the introduction of the pay and display system can help improve this situation.

Residential Areas:

Residential areas were presented to a high standard with most areas well maintained. The privately maintained complexes at the Island/Weir, Knockmaree and Northcliffe were neat and tidy. Outside of the village core the entrance signs at St Laurence's Grove and the pots at the end of the internal cul de sac were admired. The entrance signs to Glenaulin were poorly presented with garden waste dumped and poor planting. This area should be addressed as part of your Saturday morning clean up and planting sessions.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

We look forward to seeing the five entrance signs upgraded. In the meantime the sign along the Chapelizod Road on the approach from the east requires some attention with no planting in the hanging basket and some weed growth evident. If there are no plans to plant this basket, it should be removed. The use of the black and gold street signs is an effective way of unifying the streets to both sides of the river. Some areas such as Maidens Row had both blue and black and gold signs and a cohesive signage system should be put in place. We hope to see the signage regularised with consistent signage throughout.

The development of your information signs will also be a great benefit to the town. Ensure that their final placements do not detract from the items they are addressing. They should be discreet and well designed and we hope to see them in place next year.

There were weeds on the path along Mullingar Terrace on the main Chapelizod Road. Again this may be addressed during one of your Saturday morning clean ups and residents encouraged to keep the base of their boundary walls weed free.

General Impression:

Chapelizod is a lovely urban village and the Committee should be very proud of the excellent job you are doing. Your efforts to secure the Architectural Conservation Area designation for the village and the proactive approach to securing this is to be commended and we wish you luck with progressing this. Well done for your hard work and we look forward to seeing you again in 2010!