

Tidy Towns Competition 2011

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Fenagh** Ref: **1440**
County: **Carlow** Mark: **240**
Category: **B** Date(s): **05/07/2011**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2010	Mark Awarded 2011
Overall Development Approach	50	28	29
The Built Environment	50	33	33
Landscaping	50	35	36
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	16	16
Litter Control	50	32	33
Waste Minimisation	20	8	8
Tidiness	30	19	19
Residential Areas	40	28	29
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	28	30
General Impression	10	7	7
TOTAL MARK	400	234	240

Overall Development Approach:

Thank you for the concise and informative application form and excellent sketch map which was much appreciated by the adjudicator as this was my first time to visit your very picturesque village. The Village Improvement Group model is something that is very much favoured within the County as a whole as other centres have submitted applications under this umbrella. The inclusion of the 3 to 5 year plan was welcomed as it indicates the work that you have earmarked and that can be achieved with the resources that Fenagh as a community has access to. The plan is straight forward and the indicated actions can be achieved within the timescale outline.

One of course has to bear in mind that we are living in changed times economically and that public funds may be at a premium that said the spirit of true parish volunteerism may come to the fore to take up the slack. The village has some very appealing features that are associated with the Quaker family of Lecky Watsons which one found very interesting. I also seem to recall that there was a dispute over one of your local GAA players declaring for the neighbouring county of Wicklow! As a committee you have built up a very fruitful relationship with a large number of agencies such as Carlow Tourism, Carlow County Council and FAS. Judging by the number of local organisations that are supporting your work it looks very like that community is behind the TidyTowns movement in the village. Building a good relationship with Dunleckney National School will make sure that local children are well versed in what you are trying to do for the village.

The Built Environment:

Fenagh has some very fine architectural heritage in the form of granite buildings and there are some fine examples of stone work to be seen throughout the village. Given that you have so many stone structures it is fair to assume that there was a tradition of stone masonry in the village, one wonders if there are any descendents of these trades people left in the area. I would concur with last year's adjudicator in pushing to have the wonderful distinctive stone structures included in the record of Protected Structures and you have

indicated in your application that this is planned for the year ahead. The main street scape has very inviting appeal as you approach from the Borris/Bagnelstown entrance. The road structure is very good with speed deterrents at appropriate intervals, footpaths are in good condition overall and this makes it easy for people to access areas freely without having to encounter cracked or broken remnants. Your mission to have cables put underground may have to wait because of the lack of Local Authority funding but they are not that obtrusive as it stands, this doesn't mean that you give up on reminding the authority via your local public representative. The following are a number of positive features that this adjudicator observed on his walk about around the village; The local GAA club has an excellent grounds which is maintained very well, the granite cottages have been already commented on, commercial premises such as the Hunters, Kearney's and local shop were well maintained but the fence opposite the Hunters Rest needs to be painted. It was good to see that Kearney's still retain the old shop front format on their premises. The Church of Ireland and graveyard were interesting to visit as it gave the visitor an insight to the history of family names in Fenagh. The local crèche which of course is a much needed resource in the area might consider toning down its sign and still be effective and appealing.

Landscaping:

The landscaping and planting arrangements viewed in the central area and on the outskirts were very simple in design, ideal for a village the size of Fenagh. The mix of perennial shrubs and annuals such as busy lizzies give balance and these combined with the plans to plant more perennials will ensure an all year round effect. Caring for planting arrangements is an onerous task and credit is due to those that do this work on a continuous basis. It is good to note that a tree audit features prominently in your landscaping arrangements, in time this will be a legacy for a future generation. The picnic area at Wellbrook Lawn was noted and is an excellent facility for the locals and indeed visitors if they wish to stop and relax. Finally, the plan to plant wildflowers at approach roads is most welcome; this is something that the adjudicator observed in one or two other villages in the county.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

The embankment at the side of the GAA grounds is an ideal area for wildlife conservation and this should be examined by the committee. The river bank, which was a little overgrown, is ideal for the development of a river walk. Is it possible for one committee member to engage with the Local Authority Wild Life Ranger or equivalent to look in to the possibility of devising a dedicated wildlife plan for the village or a basic biodiversity survey that can be used as a platform for any future works under this category? It is also important to get the local school children involved as they will learn about the wildlife in their locality and also put together mini projects that will contribute to the main plan.

Litter Control:

Litter control was good and the work that you are doing in terms of informing the local community and organising regular litter picks is paying off. There are one or two areas such as the riverbank near the treatment plant that could become hidden litter traps if not patrolled regularly. Keep up the good work in this important category.

Waste Minimisation:

Additional work has been undertaken in this category since last year, Joining the Green Home programme will not alone help you in your quest to get additional marks but also will have practical benefits for the local residents. The works undertaken such as home composting, segregation of litter and relaying information to the community on the need for waste reduction are very much in keeping with the objectives of the National Programme. Well done for your positive reaction to suggestions in previous reports and your plans for the future are very achievable.

Tidiness:

Overall the standard of tidiness was quite good with the basics very much adhered to. The Car Park on the main street was a little weedy as the surface lends itself to the proliferation of weed growth so it is important that it should not get out of control. There were a few rusty gates to be seen in and around the village, owners should be approached and asked if they could give these a basic coat of hammerite or its equivalent. Plans to replace damaged signs are on the agenda for next year and the overhead cable issue has been commented upon in a previous section of this report.

Residential Areas:

For a village of its size Fenagh has a larger number of housing developments that one would have imagined maybe the proximity to Dublin had something to do with this. It looks like one of these estates will not be completed for some time to come so it's incumbent on its residents and the committee to make sure that the unfinished area is kept tidy. Woodglade, noticed a few Dub flags flying here, is a nicely kept relatively new development that will mature over time, just keep an eye on the condition the planted trees one or two which

seemed to be failing. Wellbrook Lawn has been enhanced by the recent addition of an excellent picnic area. Overall the standard was very good and residents are playing their part in maintaining this standard.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

The entrances into the village were good and the internal link roads and back areas were also well presented. The Kildavin entrance was particularly inviting with overhanging trees but the road surface was a little rough in patches and could do with re surfacing.

Even though it might be a little fruitless exercise at the moment I would urge the committee to keep onto their local public representatives to have that road resurfaced. Entrance from Newtown area was also good with prominent name stone complemented by a bed of annuals dominated by the old reliable Alyssum and marigolds. Road and traffic signs were clean and visible.

General Impression:

The village is making steady progress in the competition and one hopes that this will be sustained and indeed improved upon in the years ahead. Keep up the excellent work that you as a committee are doing and no doubt further success will follow. It was a pleasure to visit your village for the first time but I need to come back to Carlow for a more leisurely call.