

Tidy Towns Competition 2012

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Ardattin** Ref: **31**
County: **Carlow** Mark: **285**
Category: **A** Date(s): **09/06/2012**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2011	Mark Awarded 2012
Overall Development Approach	50	38	38
The Built Environment	50	40	40
Landscaping	50	39	39
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	27	27
Litter Control	50	38	38
Tidiness	30	19	19
Waste Minimisation	20	7	7
Residential Areas	40	31	31
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	38	38
General Impression	10	8	8
TOTAL MARK	400	285	285

Overall Development Approach:

The adjudicator would like to welcome Ardattin to the 2012 National TidyTowns Competition. Thank you for the carefully completed entry form and accompanying material. Your town action plan is a great basis for your works and we would encourage you to assess this on a yearly basis. This can be included with each year's submission to the competition. A simple comment beside each planned project and aspiration will let us know how you have proceeded, if events outside your control have prevented progress or indicate when your aims have been achieved. This lets both us and your community know how you are faring in your scheduled works. You have a dedicated committee of 10 given the size of your community, and also seem to also enjoy a good level of voluntary support at peak time. You are liaising well with a number of agencies and bodies, the most successful villages tend to be those that look beyond their town land boundaries for advice and inspiration. We particular like the theme of your art competition asking residents to draw what they would like to see in the proposed town park. We hope some exciting new ideas were generated!

The Built Environment:

Your village has a pleasant mix of private and public building. The older buildings have been complemented by newer homes and the school and church are a very well maintained focal point of the village. The proposed wildlife amenity area has the potential to become a lovely set piece if sensitively designed and planted as a true village green. A number of buildings round the village caught the eye including the Old Forge with its colourful display of planters and wooden bench, the Church with its distinctive sculpture and the old out building opposite the forge which was obviously recently white washed. Perhaps next year the shop could add some floral displays to enliven its shop front given its prominent position in the village?

Landscaping:

The use of herbaceous perennials, including lovely geraniums, rather than a dependence on resource hungry annuals, in the planting bed to the car park is to be encouraged. As you can see already in the village, they provide a more interesting and subtle colour to an area and should require less maintenance. Thinking this way is a more sustainable approach to landscaping. In this context the annual bedding plants to the planting bed at the ball alley could be reconsidered for next year with some perennial planting to provide constant structure and then an area which can accommodate annual planting for bursts of colour in this feature location. Would you consider planting a native hedge to the fence between the car park and adjoining site to improve the boundary here in advance of works commencing on the wildlife/amenity area? Or perhaps an edible hedge of currants and other fruit bushes could be considered? Where the extended car park is being planned perhaps the use of a reinforced grass could be considered so as to reduce the amount of hard surfacing in this key spot in the village, especially at times of low use of the car park.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

The focus your group has put in to this category and your obvious long term commitment to this issue is seen by your plans but has yet to be matched by works on the ground. Key in this category is to follow through on your habitat proposals and continually assess their successes. As you await works to commence on the wildlife areas, you could encourage local people to take part in some nationally organised online surveys. Look at www.biodiversityireland.ie run by the National Biodiversity Data Centre for a range of survey types including species forms and site based forms. Keeping track of all these results will let you see how your existing habitats are performing and help inform plans for habitat enhancement. We look forward to the development of the wildlife area and feel there is great potential for gains in this category in the future.

Litter Control:

As ever the standard here was high with little litter evident in the village area so well done to all involved in litter collection. The bins in the village were clean and emptied. There was some windblown litter evident at the corner of the playing pitch by the school so ensure this area is part of regular litter patrols especially during the summer months when the school is unoccupied.

Tidiness:

As you note in your submission the proposed amenity area is somewhat outside of your control and you are dependent on the local authority to advance works in this area. In advance of the area being developed as a park could perhaps a wildlife meadow be sown here rather than just grass as suggested in the submission? This could be done in conjunction with the school perhaps and would be a short term, low cost measure which would greatly improve the appearance of the area as well as being a haven for bees and butterflies. One of the timber seats at the ball court picnic area was damaged and in need of attention. There are a number of anti graffiti treatments which could be painted on to the interior of the ball court to prevent the accumulation of graffiti here and make it easier to remove. Perhaps these low cost treatments could be discussed with the owner to help fight the graffiti problem here?

Waste Minimisation:

Thank you for the inclusion of the waste minimisation leaflet, focusing on domestic food waste, as this is a great approach to getting your message across to residents. Have you considered carrying out a litter audit to see how much and what kind of litter is placed in the village bins? This can help focus your waste message. It can also help identify where bins are needed. There may be a need for a bin at the parking area opposite the church but it is a pity that it has been placed right beside the pump feature as it somewhat detracts from its setting. If an audit shows this bin is underused, perhaps it could be moved to a less intrusive spot?

You have a proactive approach in organising outside speakers to come to the village for talks on litter control etc. Have you also considered holding a seed or plant swap as part of your village's bring and buy sales in April? If the use of self seeding or spreading perennials is being proposed in the village common areas then cuttings/seedlings of these could be taken and sold on to villagers or visitors for use in their private garden areas, and help raise funds for you. Remember that gardens areas are a really important wildlife resource and an important source of food and nectar.

Residential Areas:

As ever the residential properties in the village were presented to a high standard so well done to all your residents. The name stone at Temple View and its surrounding planting bed was being tended to by a resident on adjudication day so well done on the efforts here. The boundary hedges to the residences on the approach roads were well maintained and the planting bed to the timber fence opposite the car park entrance was looking particularly well with a muted purple colour scheme. As mentioned in the previous section, encourage residents to plant nectar rich plants in garden areas as part of an overall habitat enrichment ethos. Gardens are one habitat we can easily control and enhance. Would you consider devising a suggested plant list for the

village, which could be distributed to residents, giving the reasons why native or naturalised species are more appropriate for your rural location and giving a suggested list of species for garden or tree planting? This could perhaps be done with the support of a local plant nursery giving their name as a local supplier?

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

Well done on the maintenance of the verges on the approaches to the village. Ensure the areas immediately in front of the village signs are kept trimmed to allow the signs to be read from approaching road users. Do you know if there is a need for bicycle racks in the village, either for school children, mass goers or passing tourists on cycling tours? Have you considered giving over some of the parking bays in the village car park to bike stands or including their provision in future car park extensions? This could help promote cycling to school and perhaps reduce the congestion you state is a problem in this area at school drop off times.

General Impression:

This adjudicator enjoyed their first visit to your charming village and the potential to improve the village core with your proposed village green, is an eagerly awaited development. All involved with this year's entry are warmly thanked and congratulated for their efforts and wished well in 2013.