

# Tidy Towns Competition 2012

## Adjudication Report

Centre: **Borris** Ref: **35**  
County: **Carlow** Mark: **267**  
Category: **C** Date(s): **22/06/2012**

	<b>Maximum Mark</b>	<b>Mark Awarded 2011</b>	<b>Mark Awarded 2012</b>
Overall Development Approach	50	40	42
The Built Environment	50	33	35
Landscaping	50	34	36
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	27	29
Litter Control	50	36	36
Tidiness	30	18	19
Waste Minimisation	20	7	7
Residential Areas	40	27	28
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	27	27
General Impression	10	8	8
<b>TOTAL MARK</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>257</b>	<b>267</b>

### Overall Development Approach:

Welcome Borris to the 2012 National Tidy Towns Competition. You have put forward a very comprehensive submission and the excitement and advances generated by your towns involvements in the competition were palpable from the enthusiastic ideals laid out within its pages. All of this information gave the adjudicator a flavour of what to expect on the ground before arriving in Borris. The changes made within your group this year to advance a more democratic and formalised approach to the competition seem to be working well for you. Thank you for including your annotated schematic map, although perhaps this could be supplemented with a more geographically accurate street map for ease of navigation when strolling around your town. Distances and adjacencies were more difficult to glean on the schematic map. From your St Patricks Day parade to the upcoming National Country Fair the town seems to have a lively social calendar, all evidence of a vibrant community. In addition you hold a number of smaller events which contribute to your fund raising and so help you progress with all your planned projects. Keep up all you good work as we are well aware of the time and effort needed to progress these plans.

### The Built Environment:

You have a lovely town with an architecturally rich core area and a variety of interesting sites and buildings of interest. The presence of Borris House and its impressive entrance and boundary walls gives you a setting that is the envy of many other centres and its character has been preserved to great effect. Many of the newer developments have been designed to be in keeping with the overall village character, and a particularly nice modern extension to an older residence was admired on Bog Lane. The Step House Hotel, given its central location, was buzzing with activity on adjudication day and so nice to see a key building retain its position on the main street. The works you have done to aid the start up of no less that 11 new businesses is a striking way to address empty premises and we commend all involved and wish all the proprietors every success. The history of commercial premises in the village is preserved nicely with some lovely old shop fronts with

muted traditional lettering and classic facades. Protect these and recognise their value and history. This visitor was so impressed by the range of architectural styles and would so liked to have learnt more about some of the towns gems during their walk. There is such scope to develop a town architectural walking guide taking in all eras from the towns highlights in the 1800s with the development of the mills and viaduct to the history of the magnificent Borris House and all eras in between. Use new technology, links from your facebook page and QR codes on discreet signage, to make this possible.

### **Landscaping:**

Landscaping is at a high standard and the numbers of carefully maintained beds scattered throughout the village offer bursts of colour and high visual impact. Consider a restrained use of seasonal planting in addition to a consistent colour palette to complement your historic setting. As you say you have a rich collection of mature trees in the village core and we would encourage you to work with the local experts to develop a long term tree planting strategy for the town with an emphasis on a simple palette of classic trees, both natives and naturalised. This type of long term investment in the landscape structure of the town will be appreciated by the next generation and can be tied into your tree planting ceremonies held during national tree week. Also consider an audit of the tree stock that you have, so that areas of mature trees can be interplanted with new stock to ensure a continuation of tree cover. There was a lovely old oak tree at the junction of Bog Lane whose tree roots were interlinked with the old stone wall here. That is real landscape history. Be careful when considering works in the vicinity of existing trees. The stone wall to the tree at station court may have damaged the root system here and generally try not to disturb ground within the canopy of retained trees to prevent long term damage.

### **Wildlife and Natural Amenities:**

Congratulations on the works that have been carried out at the Majors Green Area over the last year. We are glad that your members gained from their attendance at the biodiversity workshop hosted by Carlow County Council. Have you considered developing a Borris biodiversity plan to allow you develop a considered and structured plan of action in this category? As part of this process compile a baseline study of what is present in your locality and then you can begin to assess what actions need to be taken to either protect or improve the habitats identified. We look forward to your progress on the viaduct walkway. What a view could be gained from this vantage point. Good luck with this.

### **Litter Control:**

You have a structured approach to litter collection and well done on your successes in this area. Litter management is currently at a high standard as very little litter was noted in the town on adjudication day. Unfortunately there was some obvious litter in the play area which as you say is attracting much use including visitors from outside of the town. Keep an eye on this area especially over peak play times and warm summer weekends.

### **Tidiness:**

The standard of tidiness is excellent and a reflection on the hard work of the committee. However this high standard unfortunately means that the condition of the Leinster marts is especially notable and we wish you well with your efforts to address this problem area. The adjudicator noted 4 separate locations with traffic hazard cones along the main street. Please ensure that any repairs are carried out as soon as possible and these cones are not left in place for any length of time. Remove or remedy the hazard as they tend to look unsightly. Signage is an integral part of our towns and we felt that in general it was sensitively done and ensure any news signs are considered so that they add rather than detract from the town. However we felt the signage at the Borris Golf Club could be reconsidered as it looked a bit haphazard and temporary and not quite befitting the reputation of this long established and respected club.

### **Waste Minimisation:**

This is a category that many centres find hard to address and one where we feel you can really gain marks. How many residents' compost and do you compost your green waste? Expanding on this theme could you approach the Step Hotel or local cafes/takeaways to consider a study to address the issue of food waste in the hospitality industry? This could be followed up with a strategy to encourage traders to use biodegradable food packaging and compost where possible? You could discuss this with the hotel and takeaway operators. This is especially relevant to you as the numbers of visitors to the town is expanding as it grows as a tourist destination.

### **Residential Areas:**

In general residential areas in the village are presented to a very high standard and well done to all your residents for the efforts involved in presenting both individual homes and communal areas. The adjudicator particularly liked the planted beds and name stone at the entrance to Pound Lane. Have you considered a best garden event to encourage some healthy competition between residents? Perhaps next year a simple

plan could be developed indicating each residential area and highlighting the location of any competition winners to be visited by the adjudicator.

**Roads, Streets and Back Areas:**

The standard of verges and approaches to the town were good with road signs clean and legible. The welcome signs were well presented and provide the visitor with a good sense of arrival. We especially like the simple stone trough at the town sign when travelling from Graignamanagh. We have to say that the wall hung planters to the fine stone wall on the approach to the main street at Upper Cottages, were not to this adjudicators taste. They detracted from the simple beauty of this fine masonry feature. Also the hanging baskets and bird boxes attached to the ESB poles here should be reconsidered. No works should be undertaken in close proximity to any ESB infrastructure, especially poles where there is a danger of coming into contact with live wires when installing or maintaining these features.

**General Impression:**

Borris has just recently reengaged with the Tidy Towns Competition and in this time has developed close working relationship with all the key stakeholders in the town. We are happy to see that in assessing your performance over the past few years you have the ability to see where you need to focus attention and then take positive actions to advance both your knowledge and practical application in projects on the ground. Well done to all involved in this years submission and we wish you continued success in 2013. We see no reason why you cannot go from strength to strength in the competition.