

Tidy Towns Competition 2012

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Hacketstown** Ref: **39**
County: **Carlow** Mark: **241**
Category: **B** Date(s): **16/06/2012**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2011	Mark Awarded 2012
Overall Development Approach	50	35	37
The Built Environment	50	27	27
Landscaping	50	32	33
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	20	20
Litter Control	50	29	30
Tidiness	30	18	18
Waste Minimisation	20	9	9
Residential Areas	40	27	27
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	33	33
General Impression	10	7	7
TOTAL MARK	400	237	241

Overall Development Approach:

The adjudicator welcomes Hacketstown to the 2012 National Tidy Towns Competition. Thank you for your detailed submission including your annotated map highlighting areas which you particularly wanted to draw to the adjudicator's attention to. Your town plan has a very optimistic tone and positive statement of intent which we hope to see progress in works on the ground in the years ahead. Keep up your dual focus on maintaining what you have and your aspirations for the future in terms of short and long term goals. We would encourage you to build on this for next years plan by perhaps breaking the town down into specific areas with any current problems noted, any potential projects or activities identified, an actions list together with a times scale and a note of who can be responsible for the works. This will help you really focus on achieving your aims.

Perhaps you could publish a link to your plan on the Hacketstown.ie website to let the community as a whole see what your objectives are and maybe have a section where residents can suggest areas they feel could do with some input from your group. This could be done in conjunction with the CRISP Computer Training Centre, a great knowledge resource to have in your community.

The Built Environment:

Once again the many of the premises in the village have presented their facades to a good standard with well tended planted beds at the Fires Station forecourt and the vibrant colour treatment of the Corner Bar and more traditional tones of Bolands Bar. However the treatment of vacant and untended spots is something you as a committee need to keep an eye on. Have you compiled a list of sites to identify owners of premises with a view to commencing dialogue if short term treatments can be devised to maintain and improve the current standards of repair of empty premises? Would establishing planting pits for a quick growing climber like virginia creeper to the old stores along Mill Lane be an option as part of your planned tidy up here. The empty shop window beside the corner bar could also be used perhaps for community displays or local notices to enliven the street. We see that works are in progress at the school and we look forward to seeing this

completed for next years visit.

Landscaping:

As noted in last years report we would encourage you to develop a landscape plan as part of your longer term tasks for your town plan. This will allow you highlight specific planted areas for development, such as the lovely job that was completed this year at the Hill Pub. Thank you also for the before and after photographs of this area which were included with the submission. This really lets us see how much work was achieved. You should identify the main landscape components of the village and then recommend improvements that can be made within your overall schedule of works. This would include the pedestrian environment as well as the planted landscape. By having a set plan with specific goals you can then gain funding from agencies such as leader and the Carlow county development partnership. The landscape plan can help create an identity for the village that will only help enhance its setting. Focus on tree planting for the long term benefit of the village.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

There are a rich range of habitats surrounding the village. Have you made an attempt to map these? This is a simple wildlife project that could perhaps be done in conjunction with the local school. There is some excellent advice in the Tidy Towns Handbook on how to progress this or you can get advice from the Local Authorities Environment Officer. This will give you guidance on how to best approach the management of the habitat types and help you progress in this category. The management of the grass areas within the residential areas and at Hill View and Marion Terrace is an example. This in itself is a habit type and how you mow it can impact on its richness. Have you considered taking part in Birdwatch Irelands Countryside bird survey? Anyone with a reasonable working knowledge of Ireland's common and widespread birds can take part and it will help you gain more knowledge of your area while promoting an appreciation of wildlife in the community.

Litter Control:

While there was very little listed in your submission on how you approach this category, on adjudication day there was very little litter evident. We felt that a good place to start in this category would be to do an audit of the location and types of litter bins present in the village. Use the plan submitted as a basis for this and plot the position and condition of all bins in the village. Then a litter audit can be carried out to see if they are being used, and if not, they should be removed or repositioned. For example we wondered at the bin at the bottom of the steps at Marion Terrace. This somewhat spoils the setting here and if it is not used regularly it should be removed. Likewise the old bin attached to the telegraph pole at Penny Hill. The bins on your main street need to be power washed annually to keep them well presented especially given the amount of traffic borne dust that is spread by the busy road here.

Tidiness:

In general the adjudicator was impressed at the tidy impression given by your village given its location on a busy main road. As has been said previously the management of the vacant sites in the village is an area you should keep on top of. Could black painted boards be fitted to the windows of the old cottage beside the church to improve its appearance? Also take care of gable walls where they are especially viewed by oncoming traffic. The gable wall of the Supervalu is prominent when viewed from Mill lane and could do with a wash.

Waste Minimisation:

As you are aware waste minimisation is about more than the control of litter it involves the prevention of litter in the first place. Consider organising or attending a waste minimisation workshop with your local authority. Look at simple ways you can start to address this issue. Do you take part in the Earth Hour Initiative or the Cycle to School Week? Are there any auctions held locally for the sale of unwanted items or is there a scheme for school uniform swaps? These are all low impact schemes which can help you gain marks in this category. Ensure your new school is built to the highest eco standards.

Residential Areas:

Residential properties are generally well presented and maintained to a good standard. There seemed to be a stone folly or feature being built to the open space at Hill View so we hope this will be completed for next years visit. The planting to the name stone at Marian Terrace could benefit from some pruning as it obscures the lettering somewhat.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

The standard of verges and approaches to the town were good with road signs clean and legible. Finger posts in the town centre are becoming congested and ensure old signs are removed as appropriate. We wondered if the area to the front of the school is to be included in the building works here. This would be a

prime space to reorganise the car parking to gain space to plant some feature trees or perhaps install some bike racks to encourage cycling to school?

General Impression:

The committee is working hard to address issues that can be sensitive in a small community and identifying and contacting owners of some of the vacant properties is perhaps the first step to stop problem areas occurring. All involved in this entry are applauded for their efforts and wished well in 2013.