

Tidy Towns Competition 2012

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Rathanna** Ref: **44**
County: **Carlow** Mark: **276**
Category: **A** Date(s): **22/06/2012**

| | Maximum Mark | Mark Awarded 2011 | Mark Awarded 2012 |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Overall Development Approach | 50 | 35 | 35 |
| The Built Environment | 50 | 36 | 36 |
| Landscaping | 50 | 36 | 36 |
| Wildlife and Natural Amenities | 50 | 27 | 28 |
| Litter Control | 50 | 41 | 43 |
| Tidiness | 30 | 19 | 20 |
| Waste Minimisation | 20 | 7 | 7 |
| Residential Areas | 40 | 31 | 31 |
| Roads, Streets and Back Areas | 50 | 30 | 32 |
| General Impression | 10 | 8 | 8 |
| TOTAL MARK | 400 | 270 | 276 |

Overall Development Approach:

The adjudicator would like to welcome Rathanna to the 2012 National TidyTowns Competition. Thank you for your detailed submission and annotated map. The structured approach to your committee is certainly bearing fruit for you and well done for your continued dedication with 15 active members a great number for a small community. The level of voluntary commitment is excellent and shows the amount of hard work and dedication needed to advance in the competition. Your continued good relations with the local school and your support of their work is also to your credit. Good luck with your annual events and have you considered holding a local event like a BBQ or table quiz, these are a great way to reinforce your message within the community and can be used as a useful fundraising opportunity.

The Built Environment:

You have a charming village set against the stunning backdrop of the Blackstairs Mountains. The church and school are such key buildings for you and both were presented to a high standard with the stand alone belfry a lovely feature. There was such a lovely use of small scale sculptures in the village core that brought a smile to this adjudicator during a pleasant stroll around the village. The small touches such as many of the field gates on the approach to the village being painted a muted shade of green or grey really gives a neat and ordered impression to the visitor. The resurfacing works at the village core only reinforce the ordered appearance. Have you considered installing cycle racks in the car park in addition to the car parking spaces for both residents and touring visitors?

Landscaping:

The seasonal displays around the town were again to a high standard with individual residences obviously putting significant resources into their individual displays. Thank you also for including pictures of Rathanna in

the springtime with your submission as this gives us a flavour of what you are achieving in your floral displays through the year. As part of your future works consider developing a tree planting strategy and identify key feature areas in the village to plant specimen trees along with completing any avenue planting. Try to keep the number of species used in the village to a minimum to create a coherent approach. Keep a record of when and what type of trees have been planted for future records. This will help when replacing damaged trees. For example some of the avenue trees from Codys House to the water feature have failed and should be replaced with species to match those previous planted here. Where trees have recently been planted remove tree ties and stakes before they damage the tree bark.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

Well done to all who took part in the walking festival and we hope learnt much from the stroll through your lovely countryside. Build on this by organising a dawn chorus walk or a night time bat walk. All low impact ways of highlighting the wonder of the natural world that surrounds us. We note that you plan to plant a native thorn hedge as part of next year's works. Well done in this as it enhances both the landscape structure of the village but also extends the valuable hedgerow habitats within the village. Keep natives in mind in all planting schemes. For example it was a pity that some native hedging was not installed to the car park rather than the more ornamental species.

Litter Control:

Once again the standards of litter control in the village core were high and no wonder you were so successful in the Carlow Litter League. Congratulations to all involved. Have you considered carrying out a litter audit? This can be done by periodically examining how often your bins are being filled and assessing what type of litter is being gathered in your cleanups? This will allow you target for example food packaging waste or drinks cans if they are the most prominent type of litter in the village. Build on your success's in this category.

Tidiness:

In general the village and its surrounds were once again very tidy. One of the ball sculptures at the car park was broken and only really stood out because of the high level of attention to detail in all other elements of the village. Be careful in the use of hanging baskets and temporary tubs as they can, if overused, detract from the rural village setting. Concentrate these elements at focal areas like the water feature or car park. We felt the tubs with bright annuals to the top of the wall opposite Mountain View took away somewhat from the simple beauty of the stone wall here. Perhaps perennial planting with more muted tones would be a more appropriate solution here. Geraniums perhaps to match those within the school could be considered as a more muted alternative.

Waste Minimisation:

The bring bank was very well presented given its central location in the village. Good luck with your hopes to get a paper recycling facility. Have you considered participating as committee members in the Green Homes scheme run by An Taisce? This is a sister programme to the Green Schools initiative and many centres take part. See www.greenhomes.ie for more details.

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 forecourt areas. Well done in your efforts to encourage residents to plant native species and put emphasis on nectar rich flowers which have maximum benefit for our insects.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

The standard of verges and approaches to the town were good with road signs clean. The finger sign at the junction at the Borris road by the pub was somewhat obscured by the boundary hedge behind it and a little pruning is required to open it up to view. The welcome signs were well presented and village hedges were trimmed neatly. Keep up the good work.

General Impression:

As a committee you seem to have a positive approach to your participation in the Tidy Towns Competition. The enthusiastic approach to the work being done is a credit you all and contributes to the sense of community pride on the ground. Well done to all involved in this year's submission and we wish you continued success in 2013.

