

Tidy Towns Competition 2012

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Rathvilly** Ref: **45**
County: **Carlow** Mark: **285**
Category: **B** Date(s): **16/06/2012**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2011	Mark Awarded 2012
Overall Development Approach	50	45	45
The Built Environment	50	37	37
Landscaping	50	39	39
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	27	27
Litter Control	50	36	35
Tidiness	30	18	18
Waste Minimisation	20	9	9
Residential Areas	40	33	33
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	31	34
General Impression	10	8	8
TOTAL MARK	400	283	285

Overall Development Approach:

The adjudicator welcomes Rathvilly to the 2012 TidyTowns competition and thank you for your submission. Your map was most useful on adjudication day. You have an active TidyTowns committee and it is encouraging to see that you work with other groups in the village to gain support and achieve shared goals. You gain support from FÁS and Carlow County Council. Look to create links with as many agencies as can help you, for example An Taisce, Birdwatch Ireland or the National Tree Council. The most successful TidyTowns groups tend to be those that are able to harness the skills and support for their work from as wide a range of disciplines and agencies as possible. You did not include a copy of your last three year plan with the submission. How has this plan helped your group? This should be a tool to help you set out and achieve goals for your committee, and can help you assess the success of the plan and evaluate your short and long term objectives on an annual basis. We wish you luck in your long term aim of advancing the Phoenix Centre project.

The Built Environment:

The facade of Hallian Brother Garage was smartly presented and is a lovely example of a simple façade with elegant 1950's lettering. It was a hive of activity on adjudication day and how great to see a core village commercial premises still thriving. Again the church was beautifully presented and the works to the railings and upkeep of the gardens and forecourt of the Catholic Church were admired. Well done to all involved with the efforts here. We wish you luck with the long term aim of developing the Phoenix Centre. In the short term the wooden barrel planters should be either repaired or removed and the climbing shrubs pruned back to keep them neat and tidy in advance of more significant actions here. The Old Water Mill is a delight and a brightly painted feature to welcome the visitor to the town. It is a pity the interpretative panel on the opposite side of the river here did not include information on its history, as there is a great view of the mill and river from this

vantage point within the Slaney Bank Housing Estate. The wildlife information here needs updating as it is starting to fade so perhaps the next version could include some additional facts to fill this gap?

Landscaping:

Well done in your efforts to encourage the planting of roses around the village and indeed the roses to the church gardens were in full bloom on adjudication day and added so much to the setting here. What a great idea to establish roses to the entrances of the residential areas to create a common planting theme through the village. Remember to plant some native dog roses as well as the more showy ornamental varieties as these will especially suit your rural setting and have greater habitat value than non natives.

The open space at St Patricks Park was beautifully maintained and I wonder if the old hanging basket supports are required here? Once the trees mature they will provide a very appropriate setting and perhaps the seasonal show of annual planning would be better placed in core village areas where other types of planting can't flourish.

The mature lime trees between the church and the sports grounds were showing excessive amounts of growth from the base and young shoots which distract somewhat from their elegance as an avenue approach to the village. As part of your annual maintenance ensure the new shoots are cut back as, in addition to improving the appearance of the trees, it will direct growth back to the crown where it is put to best effect.

Would you consider planting some trees or extending the hawthorn hedge used elsewhere in the village, to the grass bays within the car park at the sports/tennis courts car park? This would help screen the extent of hard surfacing here and also improve the setting of this important community resource. Keep in mind the location of overhead cables when siting trees. This could be done in conjunction with National Tree week and could perhaps involve local children or teams from the sports ground to give them a sense of ownership over the plants? National Tree week is an event you could become involved with, as we see you had no events organised for this year.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

It is a pity that you have no firm plans for a project in this category as you certainly have scope to add to your marks here which are quite low given the riverside setting of your town and enthusiasm of your committee. Key to this category is an understanding and appreciation of existing habitats and species within your area. To aid this we would encourage you to consider carrying out a habitat survey. This will help you gather baseline information on the species and habitats found in Rathvilly and along the river Slaney. There may be local wildlife experts who could help you out with this. Even a basic survey will help you identify the most important habitat areas and species as well as recommendations for their correct management. This can help you plan how best to protect and or improve these habitats as part of future projects and gain you marks in this category.

You talk of developing a riverside walk and we look forward to seeing progress with this.

Litter Control:

Unfortunately there were two overflowing litter bins in the town centre on adjudication day. This was no doubt due to the fact that the visit took place on a Saturday lunchtime and the bins were obviously filled from local takeaways used the night before. But it suggests that maybe you need to have additional litter collections at weekends. Or can you talk to local businesses about perhaps using less packaging or moving to biodegradable packaging to reduce the amount of litter generated?

Tidiness:

Well done in all your recent efforts in this category and in maintaining your standards here. The school and its boundary wall were very neatly presented and perhaps the wall to the health centre opposite could be power washed to fit in to the high standards set by its neighbour. You along with many other villages have the issue of unfinished housing estates to contend with and we acknowledge how difficult it can be for committees to address this. Try to get developers to remove old and damaged signs advertising housing schemes. They are a real eyesore at the entrance to estates and developments. They should be removed as some are beginning to fall apart and could become a hazard and are certainly visually intrusive. They were only ever meant to be temporary structures.

Waste Minimisation:

You do not say if your school participates in the Green Schools Scheme? This gives communities a head start in addressing waste and sustainable issues in a practical focussed manner. Have you considered promoting participation in the new Green Homes initiative? As you are aware this category is about more than just recycling but should focus on the prevention of waste accumulation in the first place. Well done in your efforts

as a TidyTowns committee in composting. Do you know if many villagers compost at home. Householders without bins should be encouraged to contact Carlow County Council who supply bins at a reasonable cost. Also contact your local Environmental Awareness Officer. Talks can be arranged with them to discuss a wide range of environmental issues including tips on composting.

Residential Areas:

Once again the standard of communal open spaces and individual gardens areas was high. The neat grass areas and boundary planting to Father Cullen Terrace was admired. Perhaps in next years submission you could include a picture of the winners in your annual competition for the best garden or estate? It is good to see that healthy competition is raising standards and this is done by many communities as a way to recognise the work done by residents. The stone post feature to the open space at Slaney Meadows was admired as was the freshly painted flanking walls at the entrance to Slaney Banks and lovely individual gardens within this estate. Well done to all your residents for the works undertaken and the obvious pride in your homes.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

Approach roads were generally well maintained helped no doubt by your regular litter patrols. The resurfacing and re-lining of the roads in the village have helped greatly in the appearance of the village. There was some weed growth evident at the base of the wall between the village and the sports ground but nothing a few hours hoeing wouldn't solve. The historic lights to the impressive granite terrace of housing on the Hackettstown Road could do with some attention as some of the lanterns are missing. This again could be one of your longer term goals to be discussed with your local area Engineer.

General Impression:

Rathvilly is set on a busy road but this has not diminished the sense of pride obvious to the visitor. Well done to all involved in this year's submission and best of luck in the competition for 2013 as your long association with the TidyTown organisation continues.