

# Tidy Towns Competition 2012

## Adjudication Report

Centre: **Rathkeale** Ref: **466**  
County: **Limerick** Mark: **236**  
Category: **C** Date(s): **28/06/2012**

	<b>Maximum Mark</b>	<b>Mark Awarded 2011</b>	<b>Mark Awarded 2012</b>
Overall Development Approach	50	30	30
The Built Environment	50	35	36
Landscaping	50	35	35
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	23	22
Litter Control	50	23	23
Tidiness	30	16	16
Waste Minimisation	20	13	13
Residential Areas	40	24	24
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	31	31
General Impression	10	6	6
<b>TOTAL MARK</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>236</b>	<b>236</b>

### Overall Development Approach:

Welcome Rathkeale Tidy Towns to the 2012 TidyTowns competition. Your entry is very much appreciated. About the entry form, please feel free to add pages if you need more space. You do not have to confine yourselves to the entry form. A committee of 10 - 12 seems adequate for the population you have and it shows that you have wide support in the community. Your meetings are at an appropriate frequency. You do not include Limerick County Council among the agencies/bodies that support you. The local authority does support other entrants in Limerick. Your communications media are the newsletter and local paper. Please include copies of the newsletter or a cutting from the paper which mentions TidyTowns as it may influence your marks and they will be returned to you when the competition is over. Your liaison with the school is noted. Events noted.

### The Built Environment:

Rathkeale has a considerable amount of built heritage and is adding to it all of the time. Rather than go through them individually your adjudicator will group them if there is a common denominator. Religious buildings include St. Mary's Church which is impressive and very well presented with tall mature trees and neatly maintained grounds. The Convent has well maintained grounds. Holy Trinity C of I and graveyard are well presented. Neat and tidy. The Augustinian Abbey looks well although it is a ruin. Grotto with extensive landscaping looks well. Clean seats, bollards and chain. Local authority buildings include its new Library, Arts Centre and offices. Grounds a mixture of grassed areas, landscaping, trees and shrubs. All to a high standard and well maintained. The Fire Station looks well, clean and tidy. Shrubs at entrance. Sports facilities include St. Mary's/Sean Finn's GAA club which is well painted and its parking area was clean, no litter. Some shrubs in raised beds. Rathkeale Sports Complex has a large pink building which needs to be freshened up; extensive grassed areas which are reasonably maintained; trees; seats and a band stand. It

also has a raised bed near its entrance but nothing growing in it. The new playground was very busy, a terrific new amenity for Rathkeale's children. Very colourful. Lots of happy laughter. The Matrix Way seems to be the Sli na Slainte. Your adjudicator walked as much as time allowed. Very good amenity. Schools include Mercy Community College which was very neat and tidy. Extensive grassed areas, trees and shrubs - all well maintained. Nice stone walls, gates well painted. Parking area spotless. School adjoining convent/ St Mary's church is well presented and has lots of colourful murals on the school walls. It has 2 Green flags flying. Is this the girls school? Should it not have 6 Green Flags flying. Congratulations to all involved. Very well done. The boy's school is neat and tidy and has 2 Green Flags. Extensive grassed areas to rear - bird boxes, flower pots, shrubs. The Famine Graveyard was an excellent project. The result is an attractive amenity which is also very moving. Well done to all concerned. No visit to Rathkeale is complete without a visit to it so it should be well signposted and promoted. Community Centre is looking very well. It is nicely painted as are the gates and railings. Inside the railings are well filled planters with flowers and a tree. A residence near The Holy Trinity C of I has a plaque on its wall saying it was the birthplace of Christopher Lynch "renowned tenor". The house was well presented and had attractive window boxes. Street furniture that was eye catching included the elegant black and gold signs on the equally elegant pole outside The Holy Trinity C of I. In your entry form you mention in the Tidiness category that you are contemplating new signs. I do hope that they will be as elegant as these. Outside the Rathkeale House Hotel is an old mile stone with mileage to Killarney, Newcastle West and Limerick. It must be kept. Opposite the Augustinian Abbey is an old street water tap. Near the Grotto is another old fashioned street water tap nicely painted. Derelict Buildings: Rathkeale seems to have more than its fair share of derelict/abandoned buildings but you are taking action to enhance them.

### **Landscaping:**

The town bridge looks very well with its 10 hanging baskets. Flower containers of various kinds are sited on the stretch of road leading into town towards the bridge. Large planters, flower pots and seats on footpath outside Holy Trinity C of I. Landscaped roundabout at junction of New Road and N21. The landscaping at the Grotto is impressive. Your adjudicator noticed a FAS plaque that said that Rathkeale Community Council Development Association and FAS sponsored it. Well done to both. Opposite St. Mary's church there is a row of trees and seats. Very useful for an adjudicator to take notes and photos of nearby items of interest, including the school with 6 Green Flags - a first for this adjudicator. Texaco filling station: landscaped area at junction opposite it. Also, a two-storey residence with a hair salon extension has an impressive display of flowers and shrubs. Large well filled planter on footpath nearby. Perhaps the most attractive landscaping this adjudicator saw in Rathkeale was at a junction on the approach from Ballingarry. Extensive grassed areas on right hand side approaching Rathkeale. On it are 3 raised stone faced beds with a very colourful display of flowers and shrubs. They were being attended to by a bearded gentleman in a high viz vest and it gave me pleasure to compliment him on his work (anonymously). Large, well filled planters at other locations in the town.

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

Bird boxes seen at national school, at the Famine Graveyard and Sli na Slainte. Noted that you have planted wild flower seeds at selected locations in the town. On the roadside near the GAA club stood a sign saying "Caution hedge cutting in progress". A tractor with a cutting arm was at work on a hedge. It is an offence to cut hedges during the nesting season from 1st March to 31st August under the Wildlife Act. Your adjudicator realises that this is not the direct responsibility of your TidyTowns group but please use your influence to ensure that this does not happen again. The tractor's registration number is available on request.

### **Litter Control:**

On New Road an anti-litter sign was noticed in a prominent position. There was very little litter evident on adjudication day. Your weekly litter picks and the signs are having the desired result.

### **Tidiness:**

Your over-painting of graffiti is noted and the painting of murals on derelict buildings was seen and photographed. Very creative. Christmas lights are left hanging across Main Street. There were no other tidiness issues on adjudication day.

### **Waste Minimisation:**

The sports organisations are commended on their scrap collections. This is a difficult category for some entrants. The TidyTowns handbook has advice and tips. Rathkeale TidyTowns is expected to be proactive in promoting best practice to the community, not only for recycling which you are doing but for other aspects of waste minimisation. An aspect of this topic is reducing the amount of material, including food, that is brought into Rathkeale but ends up as waste. A useful web site is [www.stopfoodwaste.ie](http://www.stopfoodwaste.ie). An entrant not far from Rathkeale did a survey of 10 families in their village over an agreed period of time. When the survey was completed the families and the TidyTowns committee were surprised at how much waste was eliminated. The TidyTowns committee is now briefing the rest of the community. The girls school with its 6 Green Flags will have a number of waste minimisation programmes underway continuously to minimise waste in electricity, heat, water, paper, etc.

### **Residential Areas:**

Cois Deel: a new single/2storey housing development has a name stone and grassed area with row of trees at the entrance. Internally, grassed areas are well maintained, young trees planted but no flowers. An interesting piece of sculpture is prominently displayed. Sheltered housing: hanging baskets, flower pots of various kinds and general landscaping were admired. St. Mary's Park: mature neighbourhood. Lots of trees and well kept verges. Stone walls. Playground on one of several grassed areas. Lots of houses have window boxes and hanging baskets. Clean, tidy, no litter. Well done to all involved. Unfortunately, at the entrance opposite St. Mary's church there is a derelict cottage. Beside the bridge is a new housing development without a name that this adjudicator could find. Landscaped entrance. Grassed areas well maintained. Neat, tidy, no litter. Residential area opposite the Fire Station is well presented. Green in front of it well maintained. Trees. One flower container. No litter.

### **Roads, Streets and Back Areas:**

Approach roads give a good first impression of Rathkeale e. g. on approach from Askeaton one is greeted with a town 'Welcome' sign on a neat grassed margin with a flower bed. There are well maintained grass margins with neatly trimmed verges. In addition to the traditional black and white town name signs there are also signs in Irish -"Failte go Rath Caola" which are good to see. Irish should, of course, be used whenever possible. Road surfaces are good and clean.

### **General Impression:**

Your adjudicator echoes your feelings about the Famine graveyard. It is such an inspirational and moving place that it merits being promoted to all who visit Rathkeale. All of its elements are in scale, in balance and in harmony. The modern altar contrasts so poignantly with the simple rusty crosses in the grass. Very well done to all involved. You mention our neighbours - the Travelling community. Rathkeale is, to this visitor, one community that has pride in its place. This adjudicator saw for the first time a school with 6 Green Flags. What an achievement. There are categories in which Rathkeale could, and should, score more marks. You know what they are. Please focus on them and improve your score. Limerick County Council should be one of your support agencies and your adjudicator suggests that you start discussions with them in time for your 2013 entry. We look forward to receiving your entry in the 2013 Tidy Towns competition. Thank you Rathkeale TidyTowns.