

Tidy Towns Competition 2012

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Stratford-On-Slaney** Ref: **849**
County: **Wicklow** Mark: **292**
Category: **B** Date(s): **25/06/2012**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2011	Mark Awarded 2012
Overall Development Approach	50	40	40
The Built Environment	50	34	34
Landscaping	50	41	41
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	28	30
Litter Control	50	40	39
Tidiness	30	19	19
Waste Minimisation	20	14	14
Residential Areas	40	28	28
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	38	38
General Impression	10	9	9
TOTAL MARK	400	291	292

Overall Development Approach:

Thank you for your entry to this year's TidyTowns competition, together with helpful map and a copy of the town plan for 2010-2015. You are very welcome to the competition for 2012 and the TidyTowns movement values your participation. Your committee of 14 engage well with the local authority and other agencies and your engagement with the local School through the Community Garden is a superb way of getting all the community involved. Your communication through the use of parish newsletter and flyers is excellent. Having regular meetings and using your meeting as a work night during the busy time engages the community at large in whatever projects you are working on. Well done on your work to date on the restoration of the old School, your lighting system and landscaping all add greatly to this most attractive village.

The Built Environment:

There were some superbly well presented buildings. John the Baptist Church and graveyard is a well maintained structure with fine planters at the gate. Stratford Arms is a focal point in the village with superb floral displays. The closed shop and house across the road tells its own story of a changing Ireland. The Pre School/After School and community gardens area is an excellent example of a good committee working well with the community. The school was well presented showing its green flags. The adjudicator liked the lanterns and the pump in the green area, all of these features added greatly to the streetscape of the village.

Landscaping:

On entering the village the four stone beds of box hedging and lupins really stood out. The planters at John the Baptist Church were a nice feature. The screening around the bring bank and the new sign highlighted the facility. The village has lovely mature trees and the addition of new ones each year is building on the landscape. The area around the community gardens was a mix of herbaceous and trees which gave a great

splash of colour. The adjudicator admired your planting of herbaceous plants and this is encouraged by TidyTowns, as it provides year-round seasonal interest through planting of hedges, shrubs and trees. The cultivation of seedlings in the polytunnel as plants for use in the village is admired. Your many planters throughout the village were very colourful. When using planters try and be consistent in the type used like if you are using stone or wood maintain this type throughout the village.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

The artist's impression of the nature and wildlife that can be observed in the area was a grand welcome to the village. The village is a haven for wildlife in its hedges and mature trees. Your nature trail that takes you down the mass path is a lovely amenity and should be further developed. The area has great scope to develop more walks. As you mentioned in your entry you are in talks with mountaineering Ireland re the development of riverside walks. The wildlife that exists in the river and along its banks could be researched and documented on information boards. The riverside walks and the nature trail would serve as a dual purpose for the area as a natural haven for wildlife and an educational walk for the community at large. Your nature conservation area in the community garden which includes bird boxes is admired. It is good to see natural timber being used for the styles for walks.

Litter Control:

Litter in the village is controlled by organised litter picking patrols. The School children as part of your patrol are the start of a good plan to combat litter in the area. It is good to see that the parents are also so involved with the education of wrappers used for lunches. Through the School is a good means of informing the community to ensuring the village is free of litter. On the day of adjudication overflowing bins were noted. Do try and have bins emptied on a regular basis.

Tidiness:

The village had a good sense of tidiness. The bring bank was neat and the nice hedge screening was noted. The new direction sign for the bring bank was good. The wooden boarding gates at the playground looked untidy. The area of the house and shop needed some attention. It can be difficult for committees where a house is unoccupied and owners not available to address the problem.

Waste Minimisation:

In this category entrants are encouraged to move beyond just collecting litter and to take steps to reduce the amount of waste actually produced. Your village is working in the right direction in reducing the amount of waste by working with the local school in obtaining their green flags. This is a great achievement. The composting of grass and leaves and using this compost for landscaping is one way of reducing waste. You could also cut the grass regularly and leave the cuttings on the ground thus feeding the grass. Cutting down on the wrappers used for lunches is another great way of reducing waste. Also work with businesses to encourage waste reduction programmes and recycling initiatives. Prepare and distribute a local newsletter which could highlight waste minimisation plans that could include information of the TidyTowns annual work programme.

Residential Areas:

The residential areas in the village were presented to a high standard. The village looked splendid with nice lanterns and well maintained open spaces. There was a good mix of houses, from farmhouses to many private houses and estates all making a very attractive streetscape.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

The approach roads to the village were well presented with some nice stone walls, mature trees and hedges. The road surface was uneven in places. The trees topped on the main street were very attractive. There were also some shed roofs that were in need of painting. The old building beside the Church also needs painting. Entrants in this category are reminded that hedge cutting is not permitted between the 01st March and 31st August as per section 40 of the Wildlife Act 1976. The beautiful bridge with its number of arches over the Slaney is superb.

General Impression:

Stratford-On-Slaney was a very pleasant village to visit and adjudicate. The adjudicator looks forward to the continued restoration of the old School building and the adjudicator is confident that this will be achieved with the hard working committee that is in place. You have done good work in all categories for this year's competition and the adjudicator wishes you every success in 2012 and in the years following.

