

# Tidy Towns Competition 2013

## Adjudication Report

Centre: **Athy** Ref: **354**  
County: **Kildare** Mark: **270**  
Category: **E** Date(s): **01/07/2013**

	<b>Maximum Mark</b>	<b>Mark Awarded 2012</b>	<b>Mark Awarded 2013</b>
Overall Development Approach	50	39	40
The Built Environment	50	38	39
Landscaping	50	36	37
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	28	29
Litter Control	50	30	29
Sustainable Waste And Resource Management	20	11	12
Tidiness	30	17	17
Residential Areas	40	29	30
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	29	30
General Impression	10	7	7
<b>TOTAL MARK</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>264</b>	<b>270</b>

### Overall Development Approach:

Athy is welcomed to the Tidy Town's competition for 2013. Thank you for your comprehensive entry, map, copy of development plan and supporting documentation. Funding is a problem for small towns and villages. Hopefully it will improve and provide you with the funds to progress further. Your committee of eighteen members are engaging well with schools, waterways Ireland, county councils and local businesses that support you through sponsorship and other assistance. Your communication method of distributing copies of your newsletter to all homes has a high cost factor. A more economical way would be to post a letter on your website and try and set up a mailing list to distribute your newsletter electronically to save on time and money. This method is encouraged by Tidy Towns to reduce paper used under the waste minimisation category. Delegating members of your committee to look after different sections like the schools is a good method of progressing the work forward. Your way forward of having four key stakeholders to support you works on sharing the workload to help realise your goals for the town is commended.

### The Built Environment:

Athy is similar to most towns today with unfinished estates and unoccupied houses for one reason or another. This has put a greater workload on Tidy Towns groups to address any issues that arise. It takes time to negotiate with council, developers and owners, as the saying goes Rome wasn't built in a day. Negotiations do not happen quickly either. Athy has some fine buildings. The courthouse is a beautiful building dating back to 1857 and was admired. Emily square is impressive. The library is a lovely building and amenity with nice stone tubs of flowers, lanterns and signage are superb. The sun dial in the square is a lovely feature. St Michaels church of Ireland built 1840 is a well preserved and maintained building. Footsteps homework club across from the church is an attractive welcoming building. The Quaker meeting house, now Athy youth café built 1780 is also a lovely building. The people's park is a great amenity with many fine specimens of trees, seating and a lovely play area for children. The train station is another attractive building; I hope your award is achieved. Kanes building with lovely hanging baskets looks good. Information boards in Emily and at the station were noted and admired. Whites Castle built in 1417 is a superb building. Boortmalt Enterprise Ltd is a great enterprise for the town. One only has to look at all the corn fields around the town to tell you what goes on in Boortmalt. There are many more buildings of interest. Anglers Garden of Remembrance, Fire Station and Athy Presbyterian Church. The red brick church is a change of look but still draws the eye. Athy has to be proud of its built environment. Look at the dates on some of the buildings and then realise how well preserved and

maintained they are not to mention two castles.

### **Landscaping:**

The landscaping at the square had nice stone tubs of flowers. On the road to the men's shelter project in the enterprise park, a nice avenue of trees was noted. The people's park is a lovely amenity for the town with trees, seating and some landscaping. Sadly there was some litter noted here. Edmund rice square had some nice landscaping with lovely lanterns and hanging baskets. The adjudicator was not sure of the black plastic used in the hanging baskets as it did not look to fit in with the surrounds. The Anglers Garden of Remembrance was well landscaped around the memorial. The town has lovely mature trees, hedging, tubs of flowers, hanging baskets and window boxes which all added to the streetscape. The roundabouts were also admired. Your campaign, to find Athys oldest tree in very interesting. I hope you have it located for next year's competition.

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

The bank along the river Barrow is a great natural habitat for wildlife. On day of adjudication the numerous swans were happily swimming on the river and it is great that you are ensuring that appropriate habitat can be fostered. The walk along the canal is a lovely amenity and was thoroughly enjoyed and admired, with all the natural habitats for wildlife. The walk down by the river was taken from slightly by empty bottles and litter on day of adjudication on the way to Supervalu from Edmund Rice Park. The mural on the wall looked well. This is a lovely area but spoilt somewhat by litter. The nesting boxes were also noted at the courthouse.

### **Litter Control:**

Your policy on combatting litter through weekly clean ups and national spring clean ups with Tidy Towns, Residents, Schools and businesses is noted. You have a number of volunteers that assist weekly in picking litter. The best results on a litter free town are for the entire community to come on board to assist the Tidy Towns in all their hard work. Unfortunately litter is still a problem. Areas of the town where a lot of people meet were bad such as Peoples Park and Edmund Rice Square. There were also bags just dumped at the bottle bank. The Tidy Towns do not consider fresh litter as too bad but litter that is old is a more serious matter. Continue with your work on combatting litter and hopefully you will get full support from the community, County Council and the businesses in the community.

### **Sustainable Waste And Resource Management:**

Engagement with the schools on the green schools programme is helpful in reducing waste in the community. Household surveys will identify what type of waste householders produce most of and then try work on the results to reduce the overall waste in the community. Online surveys such as [www.greenhome.ie](http://www.greenhome.ie) is a great help as it allows you to get a measure of environmental, best practice and awareness in the community. It looks at waste energy, water and transport. This area is not only about recycling as some groups think. It is about reducing waste, recycling and reusing. Food is one area where waste can be reduced. By using rainwater is also a way of reducing water usage. By using public transport where possible, sharing transport or walking are also helpful ways of reducing transport. The list is endless. The Tidy Town's handbook is also helpful in this area.

### **Tidiness:**

There was untidiness around the town of Athy. At the side of the Courthouse the boarding and gate were in need of painting. At the train station the railing and rusty gate here looked bad. The bottle banks looked untidy with bags of rubbish thrown on the ground. Athy tennis club sign was rusty and also in need of some attention. There was some weed growth along kerbs. Some of the directional signs in places needed cleaning and graffiti was also noted. There were some positive areas of tidiness and we hope these positives areas will overcome the negatives.

### **Residential Areas:**

Your engagement with the residents association is commended with the residents association taking care of their own areas. This is helpful to the Tidy Towns in preparing the town for the national competition and is commended as given the number of estates it is difficult to maintain all of them. The awards for best kept estate is encouraging and rewarding for all residents. There were many fine areas through the town. The single storey houses down from the church were attractive and caught the eye. Andrew meadows housing development was also visited. This area was well presented with nice open green areas and well maintained gardens. Bothar Bui Estate was also visited and admired. There were many different houses, some of a different era and more modern developments. They all blended well together and all added their own attractiveness to the streetscape.

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

The approach roads to Athy are maintained to a high standard. The new roundabout with the canal theme was admired. The road to the people's park is a lovely tree lined road with fine stone walls. The bridges, part of the history of this lovely town are attractive features and add greatly to the overall appearance of the town. The road to the enterprise centre was also admired with more avenues of trees. Along Offaly Street a row of painted bollards looked fresh and clean.

**General Impression:**

The adjudicators visit to the historic town of Athy was enjoyed. The town has some lovely areas of interest. Hopefully your funding will be forthcoming and you will be able to continue the good work you are doing. There are areas that need attention such as litter and untidiness, but these areas won't cost much to address. They will take time however if addressed will add a lot to this lovely town. Wishing you every success in the future and thank you for your participation in the competition.