

Tidy Towns Competition 2008

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Strokestown** Ref: **715**
County: **Roscommon** Mark: **204**
Category: **B** Date(s): **18/06/2008**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2008
Overall Development Approach	50	31
The Built Environment	50	27
Landscaping	50	27
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	16
Litter Control	50	21
Waste Minimisation	20	9
Tidiness	30	14
Residential Areas	40	23
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	30
General Impression	10	6
TOTAL MARK	400	204

Overall Development Approach:

Welcome to this years competition and thank you for the completed entry form, map and detailed schedule of items you wish to draw the attention of the adjudicator. The fine Famine Museum within Stokestown House is very well presented as are the extensive grounds themselves. The provision of the numerous small historic reference plaques throughout the centre adds considerable interest.

The many splendid long stone walls are a feature on most approach roads and add considerable character to Stokestown. The extent of loose stone and spoil on some roads detracted materially from this positive image. The Roscommon Heritage and Genealogical Centre housed in the former St. Johns Church is a delight and especially significant as it closes the view on these approach roads. The extent of signage in some locations requires comment. We counted fifteen signs at one junction! The number of abandoned buildings is a cause for concern and efforts to restore them to gainful uses wherever possible are important. In this context we are pleased to note the major work in progress at the significant shop premise at the main junction. The Centre shopping complex looked well while the Garda Station in its smart blue and white livery, complete with access ramp was very well presented.

The Built Environment:

Stokestown House, itself a major destination would benefit from being painted before next years competition. Bawn Street features many splendid buildings both historic and elegant. Standards of upkeep however varied. The Percy French Hotel was bright with flying flags but some letters from the name have become dislodged. Ann's Bar with its rendering removed is certainly eye catching but many feel it is a mistake both visually and perhaps structurally as well believing long term detrimental effects follow for the structure itself. This view is not shared by all.

MacAuliffe Chemist has also got a letter missing in its title. The Bank of Ireland was excellent but do wash the protective screen over the cash point. St. Mary's National School was well presented, the impressive stone wall at the front being diminished by the weeds at the base of it. The Library in its pivotal location looked very well while the Church and Priest House to the rear was very well presented. The Heath Centre embellished by hanging baskets and equipped with a litter bin looked well as did the Convent of Mercy. The eye catching Blush was bright brash and delightful. The sizable premises of M.F. Butler would benefit from being painted before next years competition. Dean's Décor was looked lively and colourful.

Landscaping:

The fine broad Market Place and Church Street with the imposing entrance to Stokestown House closing the view helps to establish the high standard to which Stokestown can aspire. The arrangements within the grounds of Stokestown House are well ordered with car, bus, and toilet facilities to hand. The gardens are well set out with the grass suitable but not excessively cut. Hanging baskets on many private houses and shops throughout the centre contributed their share while the small grotto and park does have additional potential.

The GAA with its strong yellow colouring might with advantage be painted before next year's competition. The triangle at the entrance gate, with its raised garden, delineates this road corner in a very satisfactory manor. The stone planters in the Market Place are a pleasant feature. The new pitch development looked well while the shared entrance to it, the Community Centre, Convent and housing estate does need attention. While Hevlin Court in general is fine, the communal grass area would benefit from better presentation and sweeping the loose spoil between the road and pavement would add greatly to the overall impression. The name plate here also needs painting. The splendid town centre roundabout is a triumph while the new flowerbeds within St. Mary's Primary School coupled with the increase in hanging baskets all contributed to an overall colourful presentation.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

While there is some carry over from landscape issues to the wildlife category there is a need for a separate emphasis. While fast growing, the choice of hedging materials at Centra is not conducive to the promotion of native bird life. In recent years addition emphasis has been giving to the promotion of wildlife especially bird life which is being accorded greater attention as an important element within the overall TidyTowns programme. Your plans for the development of the slip way and the grotto area are worthwhile and we look forward to their completion with interest. Perhaps a local wildlife enthusiasts or a member of Bird Watch Ireland would be willing to create a worthwhile 3 to 4 year programme designed to enhance the presents of bird life throughout the centre.

Litter Control:

Although not totally eliminated, litter does not feature as a material difficulty in Stokestown. It is never possible unfortunate to lower ones guard but your activities and the response they have engendered from the community are clearly beneficial. Some bins were over flowing, noticeable at the Heath Centre. Good sensible sized and well designed litter bins are on display at the Convent of Mercy while, the Longford Road did display minor amounts of litter on the day of adjudication.

The somewhat sad Walsh's Mushroom display continues to attract its percentage of litter.

Waste Minimisation:

Sadly your Bring Centre has been abused by a minority of users. Closer monitoring may help eliminated this unfortunate scourge. Although recycling is of course important, to reduce the incidents of waste in the first place also need attention. Discuss the options for a waste reduction workshop or forum with the environment department of the Roscommon County Council. Highlighting these difficulties and issues with the savings both in service costs and to individuals, can have a beneficial effect on public attitudes.

Tidiness:

The Westward Garage although very large was neat and orderly. Some spoil was noted between the new pavement and the road leading to the GAA Park. The green and yellow building on the corner of Bawn Street has grass growing high in the top gutter. There is a major problem to be overcome with Brogans Tractor Company both in respect of the signs and in the layout of their forecourt. Removal of some items clearly redundant should be encouraged and marking out the foreground in say yellow lines would help to put some semblance of order on this location in respect of machinery which are work in progress.

In may parts of the centre please just sweep the pavement especially opposite the Heritage Centre but not just there. The Stokestown Community Centre (1981) needs repairs to the boundary fencing and the removal of graffiti. Weeds have been permitted to gain a strong hold at the base of both the inside and outside of the

walls.

Residential Areas:

The new housing on Roscommon Road (R368) featured many individual excellent gardens. The development near Church View is excellent and will add valuable housing stock to the town. The minor road opposite the Heritage and Genealogical Centre featured many very imposing private houses. Dun Maeve was well presented while Forge Hill was most attractive. Kildalogue Heights was a delight with the road and pavement recently swept offering a delightful overall impression. Suitable, low level bedding plants have been placed under the trees to provide an overall excellent effect. The estate featured a number of very well presented private gardens.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

The new pavement extending as far as the GAA entrance is excellent. Sadly some of the curb stones close to the town have been broken. On this road also the speed limit signs have been interfered with and some have been reversed. On the Roscommon Road the same has taken place. The village name plate would benefit from simple washing. It would also benefit if the grass cutting around it could be improved to its overall enhancement. A pallet dumped at the junction jarred somewhat.

On the Tulsk Road., spoil between the pavement and the road was disappointing while the extent of loose stones, requiring simple sweeping, was surprising. Further out this road the large triangle at the corner is crying out for additional treatment. Could it be taken in hand by volunteers from the fine new houses nearby? As it marks the entrance to Stokestown it is visually important and its enhanced presentation would pay large dividends. The road surface although normally not requiring comment is very rough at the Garda Station and leading to Forge Hill.

General Impression:

This adjudicator looked forward to his visit to Stokestown which has an enviable reputation as an interesting historic location. The visit was not in anyway disappointing as the general presentation of the area and its obvious desire to project its interesting past is very much to the fore. During the coming year do give attention to the creation of a 3-5 year plan of action identifying the priorities for attention and allocation them a clearly defined time span during which they will be completed.

Your town has a great deal to offer and all involved with its agreeable presentation are applauded. Our thanks to all your volunteers and the committee for their efforts in the present year. All are wished well in 2009.