

Tidy Towns Competition 2012

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Stradbally** Ref: **235**
County: **Waterford** Mark: **303**
Category: **B** Date(s): **15/06/2012**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2011	Mark Awarded 2012
Overall Development Approach	50	46	47
The Built Environment	50	39	39
Landscaping	50	41	41
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	33	35
Litter Control	50	39	38
Tidiness	30	19	18
Waste Minimisation	20	10	10
Residential Areas	40	28	28
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	39	38
General Impression	10	9	9
TOTAL MARK	400	303	303

Overall Development Approach:

Congratulations to Stradbally TidyTowns Committee for entering the Tidy Towns Competition for 2012. It is our wish that your participation will be of benefit to your committee and your village. Thank you for the beautifully presented submission which detailed your work throughout the year in a concise and clear fashion, the photos giving an insight into village life during the year. Your 3 Year Plan is targeted and time lined and shows that your group have a clear vision of what you wish for Stradbally. You are an experienced group of people who have learned much about presenting your village for your enjoyment and the satisfaction of Tidy Towns adjudicators over the years. One loved the 99.9% support estimate and wondered who the two were. Your website gives a fine overview of work carried out in the recent past and must be an important tool in keeping the people of the village, home and abroad, abreast of your activities.

The Built Environment:

It is a great advantage to the visitor to read about the development of the village, from whence it came, how it came about and the original plans of the landlord. The rector was placed in a central location. What a pity that that building is off limits. The Church of Ireland Church, the ruin, the cemetery is the highlight of the visit for this year's adjudicator. The fact that the area is still presented with such care and pride speaks volumes for the Anglican community. The adjudicator was intrigued by the windows at the original school. The new building far from disappointed with its sun catching bay windows. All a charming experience. The businesses at the junction help create the genuine village atmosphere with their vibrant colours, their fresh paint, their attractive shop signs. This adjudicator feels that the handball alley is a most important element of your built environment. What role does it now play in the community? The design of the Catholic Church intrigues also. How did two styles so much at variance with one another happen to gel in this Church building? The sign on the door bade: 'Fáilte isteach'. The Lord has the cúpla focal too it seems in Stradbally. The adjudicator

prayed in Irish and the rain held off. The youth of 1806 were fortunate to have such a generous benefactor as would open a school, years before the national schools became common. Well done on its preservation and on ensuring that it is in meaningful use to-day. The first school on the way up the hill looks beautiful. The soft surface on the playground, though not examined for obvious reasons, is a wonderful development. Up further the murals are a big help. Well done on your new shed. It gleams.

Landscaping:

The landscaping design of Stradbally has been developed over the past thirty years. You are the present incumbents and your contribution is a worthy one. The adjudicator is particularly pleased to read that you are not planting for the adjudicator visit but for all year round colour, to read of your concern that planting should not be an eye catching presentation only but should contribute to the wellbeing of the wildlife of Stradbally. The half barrels add colour and excitement to the wall up the street. Roses seem to be the preferred flower of the village. The miniature rose beds also delight. The limestone theme for your picnic furniture is a great idea not just from an aesthetic viewpoint but also the limestone is more durable in the rough conditions down at the coves. The many shrubberies and planted beds that are speckled throughout the village delight for their design, often raised but always colourful as by the Credit Union. Your work at the school was well worth the effort. You have cut some trees at one of the shrubbery at the entrance to the Church car park. That bed is beginning to show its age and could benefit from revitalisation.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

The adjudicator is impressed firstly that your group took the initiative of professionally formulating a biodiversity action plan. Secondly that this plan would be your guide in your annual activities. Of great interest is the section listing the habitats of the area and listing appropriate actions that need to be pursued. It is great to note that the school pupils and people with expertise participate in your activities. Those young students are privileged to be made aware of the wildlife reserves in their midst by people who care for the environment. Projects for the year show your commitment to creating awareness of the wildlife in Stradbally. One notes your concern about Japanese knotweed and your reactions. The two coves were a delight on a wild day with spray flying like shrapnel. The information panels are praiseworthy. The limestone picnic tables are ideal. The lime kiln a surprise discovery. Keep up the maintenance of the kiln. You have advertised your Slí na Sláinte route very well in the village but the adjudicator could only find two directional signs in my travels.

Litter Control:

Stradbally presented itself very well in this category. Your constant vigilance is paying dividends. Signs were seen at the ball alley and on a roadway into town. The tone was humorous while at the same time making a firm statement regarding dropping litter or dog fouling. It is great to read that you do not do your work in isolation but that you promote it through the local media. Raising litter awareness is as important as clean ups. The results are obvious. It seems incredible that those quaint ladies who were observed walking their doggies would leave dog poo lying around. Well done on the appearance of the Bring Centre.

Tidiness:

One notes straight away the uninterrupted skyline. No cables. Great work done by someone sometime. It is a miracle that you have succeeded with removing the auctioneer signs and well done. It seems dreadful that the limestone furniture would be tarnished. Again well done on your efforts though the table at the Stradbally Cove needs attention. The toilets are gleaming as a result of the enthusiastic support. But there are some issues. Painting of old farm walls is not consistent as up the cul de sac. Old farm homesteads are now a rarity in villages and so they are much admired in your village. But the presentation of the corrugated roofs is of utmost importance. Ó Faolain looks as if it is in the heart of the Gaeltacht. Are the other signs necessary? Speed limit poles and others could be given greater personality. A number of signs need to be washed. You will understand why you are losing a mark.

Waste Minimisation:

A Green Flag merits great credit for any school so working to a sixth Green Flag is a magnificent achievement. Well done to staff, students and parents. It seems that TidyTowns too in Stradbally shares in the achievement through your tangible support for the process. You have succeeded in engraining the composting psyche into the gardening habits of the community. Using left over timber is a good example of reuse. You mention energy saving bulbs and rightly so. But energy saving bulbs are surely the norm nowadays. The adjudicator feels that you can be more ambitious in your waste minimisation projects. As much of your work in this section is related to the home this year's adjudicator will confine himself to encouraging you to stimulate other waste elimination projects in the household. You are encouraged to visit the greenhomes.ie website and to register your group. Then urge members of your committee to register and see where this will take you.

Residential Areas:

The adjudicator arrived from the Dungarvan side and was, therefore, unaware that the vast majority of the residential estates were hidden from view. It appeared that that delightful terrace of beautifully painted houses on the way to the village was the main residential quarter. On most of the roads the residential stock is made up of individual houses. The residents of these houses make their TidyTown's contribution through the presentation of their fronts. There are some divine houses, divine because of the painting and general upkeep as in the house above the school, the thatched cottage on the road from Stradbally Cove, Myrtle Lodge. But the vast majority of the residents seem hidden away from view. The estates are fine also in their presentation. One reads on an information panel of the difficulty of growing trees in this area due to the salty air. It is noticeable that trees do not flourish in the estates, despite a policy of constant effort. In some cases the trees are planted too far apart to provide shelter for one another. Promote another approach to landscaping in the estates. Promote also the founding of Resident Associations and inter estate competition as there is a certain blandness in the presentation of some of the estates. Why has the grass grown wild at Whitewell? Your submission makes but one mention of the unmentionable problem. Are you powerless in this regard?

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

Stradbally announces itself with fine name stones on the major approach roads. An tSráidbhaile is not a translation but the original it would appear. Beautiful. The charm of the approach roads to Stradbally is to be found in the wilderness of the hedging along the roads and in the wonderful dry walls that lead one to the village centre from various directions. The hedging is so often of native growth. You have a policy of not interfering to too great an extent with verges and this is commendable policy. But once you create a verge the visual expectation has been created. That verge maybe just a foot in places. It does create a tidy image. The residents along all of the approach roads help out with their own imaginative walls, planting and hedging. Project No 28 is well worthy of urgent consideration. Gates do not just need colour coordination but in many cases they are in need of repair. A gate on the way from the Stradbally Cove is the standard to which to aspire. Bóithrín na Cearta was another highlight of the visit.

General Impression:

Didn't that landlord long ago do a great favour to the descendants of his tenants by creating a village for them in such a beautiful location as Stradbally and didn't he make heaven on earth with the planting along the coast. Celebrate your thirty years in the TidyTown's not as much for the marks you achieve as much as a tribute to all who bequeathed this wonderful legacy to you. The biodiversity enthusiasm of your group has become the most dynamic venture of your TidyTown's ventures.