

Tidy Towns Competition 2013

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Charleville** Ref: **734**
County: **Cork(North)** Mark: **246**
Category: **D** Date(s): **10/06/2013**

| | Maximum Mark | Mark Awarded 2012 | Mark Awarded 2013 |
|---|-------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Overall Development Approach | 50 | 31 | 35 |
| The Built Environment | 50 | 33 | 35 |
| Landscaping | 50 | 29 | 29 |
| Wildlife and Natural Amenities | 50 | 22 | 21 |
| Litter Control | 50 | 32 | 32 |
| Sustainable Waste And Resource Management | 20 | 10 | 10 |
| Tidiness | 30 | 14 | 14 |
| Residential Areas | 40 | 28 | 28 |
| Roads, Streets and Back Areas | 50 | 28 | 36 |
| General Impression | 10 | 6 | 6 |
| TOTAL MARK | 400 | 233 | 246 |

Overall Development Approach:

Charleville TidyTowns committee is heartily welcome to the TidyTowns competition for 2013. Thank you for your submission which is not only beautifully presented but it also makes the task of the adjudicator more enjoyable in travelling about the town because the map is manageable and targeted, you include your 3 Year plan, you present a summary of recent work undertaken and the photos give a flavour of the town experience. It must be helpful in your work that your committee is representative of many interest groups in the town. Your submission suggests that there is a real 'pep in your step' regarding TidyTowns in Charleville. There appears to be a refreshing renewed dynamism with regard to TidyTowns activities in the town. 'The ethos of volunteerism' you mention raises the spirits of a community group like yours and also improves the community psyche at large. The interaction between TidyTowns and various other clubs is bound to translate into positive results for you in your planning and activities. The support of the Mens' Shed group is novel in this adjudicator's experience. Engagement with the schools provides immediate assistance to the TidyTowns committee in a town but also has long term effects. You took the advice of last year's adjudicator and have worked on a 3 Year plan. There is a lot more work to be done on this plan. The Plan is based on work in specific areas of the town, very good. Take another look at what you plan so as to include all categories of the competition. For instance there are no references to wildlife activities or no projects included regarding waste management. The inference is that these two categories are not high in your priorities. Lets hope that the buzz one gets from your submission will soon be reflected in the appearance of Charleville.

The Built Environment:

Stroll along the main street in Charleville and you will read a history of Ireland since the eighteenth century. If your knowledge of Irish history is poor you will be helped along by a most informative information panel in the central plaza on this main street. Years of the construction of buildings are given and the original use of these buildings is described. Wonderful. You will read of the influential people that have had connections with Charleville and you will read of the development of the buildings on the street over four centuries. De Valera went to school on this street. What a pity that his former national school lies so forlornly dilapidated today. Even the fly posting on the railings add insult to injury. But cheer up for there are many other treasures to savour along the street. Last year's report made a list of these buildings and this year's adjudicator gives the nod to all mentioned. But the adjudicator would like to mention the Gaelige on 'Poitigéir' with suitable lettering to compliment the ársaíocht' and at 'Teach Ráth Luirc'. Buildings proudly display the year of construction. Years

like 1868, 1839, are still prominent on the fronts of buildings and are part of wonderful facades. Lána an Ghabha evokes memories of a time not so long past but is meaningful to many of the older residents of Charleville. This street is now challenged by the priorities of modern Charleville and is more a through road than a busy shopping street. In fact other streets off the main street need a facelift also.

Landscaping:

Charleville does not achieve high marks in this category, not because there is not wonderful landscaping around the town but that it has been left to nature in so many cases to soften the harshness of man's interference with the landscape. Not that there are not highlights as for instance the laurel hedging at the junction on mainstreet. It is just that there is not sufficient colour to make an impact. An example is one of the schools which has plenty of space for planting and landscaping but there is nothing. The approach roads will be dealt with later, on which there is impressive tree planting. There is a lovely bed as one approaches town on the Limerick Road. Many of the streets would benefit from a coordinated plan that bring colour to the fronts of the tall buildings with planting. There are stark walls crying out for a planting programme.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

The adjudicator has to admit to a sinking feeling when reading the input on wildlife. The saving feature of the submission was that two members of the group attended a workshop that was informative and may lead to a survey. No reference was made to the fine suggestions in last year's report but that report also expresses satisfaction at the prospect of a wildlife survey. Your group seems to be going round in circles with this category and definite action needs to be taken. Ring the Cork County Council and inquire as to what they might do for you.

Litter Control:

The adjudicator is impressed by the content of your submission with regard to litter awareness programmes and litter control projects. Under the roads section you mention the commendable efforts which produced astonishing results at Charleville train station. Were it not for those efforts one can only guess at what the situation would be in Charleville. The adjudicator visited many estates and in general the standards are very high. The streets present a different type of challenge and the litter lout is not challenged by a neighbourhood watch surveillance and streets do suffer. There are a number of pockets of litter, as behind the library or in the park, for instance. Charleville is a busy through road from Limerick to Cork and one suspects that passing traffic is an influence on littering so motorists need to be made aware of their responsibilities.

Sustainable Waste And Resource Management:

Well done on the various projects that you describe. You are working well with regard to 'reuse' and 'recycle'. Engagement with the schools is hugely important in this section of the competition. You will notice that the report of this year's adjudicator is similar to that of last year's. This suggests that what was praiseworthy last year is being continued, very good. But the encouragement given to broaden your activities seems to have fallen on deaf ears. One wishes to read of 'Resource Management' awareness programmes or evenings that will increase awareness of resource management in the home and in business. The overriding sense that one gets is that your group has not yet come to terms with this section. You retain your mark, but barely. Well done to St Joseph's primary School where the Two Green Flags fluttered proudly in the breeze.

Tidiness:

This is another section of the competition in which your marks can leap. One notes your frustration with regard to the condition of the garage on the Cork Road and sympathises. Do you have any influence over the appearance of the area after the cheese cow on the limerick approach road? One also acknowledges the painting of many vacant houses and buildings around the town but there are other prominent ones that need attention. Your submission mentions the condition and cleaning of road signage. Now there is a priority. The adjudicator met one 50 limit sign that seemed to be lying up against a wall for support. Some of the bins around the town are forbidding in their appearance. There is a lot of advertising hoarding that needs to be surveyed and have decisions made in its regard. The portraits of historic figures from Charleville needs a touch-up as their present condition creates an impression of grubbiness in a delightful and central area of town.

Residential Areas:

One would not guess it when driving through but Charleville is a densely populated town with residential areas along the streets, on the approach roads, in the many estates that seem to stretch endlessly from town. There is a wide age range in the housing which varies from older local authority housing to 1970's estates to bungalows from the 50's to to-day and then modern estates. As a general observation residents make a great effort to maintain their properties and many of the approach roads are adorned by the colour and texture that the home owners provide in their front gardens. You mention residents' associations in your submission. One is glad to read that there are such groups, that you interact with them, that you have provided paint for one such association. The adjudicator will not mention the name in case you are inundated with requests but that should not happen because the colour of these estates is for the most part bright and cheerful. Last year's report mentioned inter estate competitions. Were they a success? Have you continued with them?

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

The approach roads to Charleville create an early impression that one is approaching a town with pride in its appearance. The best example for the adjudicator is the Kilmallock Road approach road. For ages before one meets the speed limit sign care and attention has been devoted to both sides of the road. Not only are the grass verges maintained but the tree planting is impressive and continuous. The enterprises along this road go to great lengths to landscape along the roadside and are to be commended for this civic minded concern. Other approaches are more dominated by housing and property owners make the approach colourful and interesting with hedges and tree planting. An example is the long stretch of road from Ballyagran. One feels that this is a very old approach road as the surviving cottages provide a glimpse of what this road looked like just a few generations ago. This road contrasts with the Newmarket approach roads which is populated by more modern housing and suggests the prosperity of recent times, also beautiful. Another impressive aspect to the town is the manner in which recent planning and development has provided acres of offstreet parking with easy access to the main street and also to the town park. The area at the back of the town library is also impressive and well maintained. The adjudicator sneaked up along by the convent wall at the back of the HSE buildings to find further areas of interest that retain much of the atmosphere of old Charleville.

General Impression:

While an old town the size of Charleville has many irreplaceable treasures which would be the envy of any town in the country such old treasures provide their own challenges. Hence it is difficult to enliven streets that may not fit into the modern concept of millennium town planning. But therein lies the challenge, a very demanding challenge for a TidyTowns group which demands that you have meaningful and continuous engagement with the agencies that shape your town.