

# Tidy Towns Competition 2011

## Adjudication Report

Centre: **Adare** Ref: **440**  
County: **Limerick** Mark: **301**  
Category: **C** Date(s): **29/06/2011**  
**02/08/2011**

	<b>Maximum Mark</b>	<b>Mark Awarded 2010</b>	<b>Mark Awarded 2011</b>
Overall Development Approach	50	46	46
The Built Environment	50	38	38
Landscaping	50	43	44
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	30	30
Litter Control	50	33	34
Waste Minimisation	20	10	10
Tidiness	30	18	18
Residential Areas	40	33	33
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	39	39
General Impression	10	9	9
<b>TOTAL MARK</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>299</b>	<b>301</b>

### Overall Development Approach:

The adjudicator is delighted to welcome Adare to the 2011 Tidy Towns Competition and it is great to see that one of the competitions most consistent performers continues to impress. Your excellent rate of participation (with 29 members) is perhaps a reflection of the high regard for your efforts in the town and in the opinion of the adjudicator, this recognition is fully deserved. It is noted that your communications strategy does not include a website as yet and it is recommended that this should be considered as it would increase the profile of your group and its activities as well as help to reduce the need for printed material for communication purposes.

It is not surprising to see that your contacts with support agencies are very good as the evidence on the ground indicates that your approach involves a range of organisations and local businesses. However, have all the potential agencies that could offer support been contacted? There is no reference to Fas or a Community Employment Scheme and both should be able to provide valuable assistance in terms of materials and labour. There is also no reference to the agencies such as West Limerick Resources which are an excellent source of funding and advice. Your links to the schools are to be commended and well done on your initiative to appoint a liaison officer to contact the schools. This appears to be an excellent means of involving the schools and teachers in your efforts. Thank you also for your comprehensive entry documentation pack. The completed entry form and the map (complete with names of approach roads – as suggested by the adjudicator last year) were very useful. The plan and addendum of photographs were read with interest and while the Plan has been improved since last year (with all competition categories now included as suggested), a further improvement would be identifying the time frames for each project – i.e. which projects are scheduled for 2012, 2013 and so on. This will improve the action plan as it can then be used as a work programme.

## **The Built Environment:**

Adare is a charming town with a wide range of features of interest. However, in the view of the adjudicator, it is the built environment of Adare that truly sets it apart from other towns in Limerick and other counties. The number of notable buildings located in the town makes it a delight to visit and the level of maintenance and care shown towards those buildings is normally of the highest standard. Adare also has a lovely mix of historical and contemporary buildings, many of which were admired on adjudication day. The cluster of buildings on the Limerick approach provides an excellent introduction to the town. The formal gate of Adare manor (now not in use) was observed and the Holy Trinity Abbey, the Heritage Centre Building and St Nicholas Cemetery were also admired. The Dove Cot to the rear is a particularly charming and original structure. The uses that are now accommodated in the Heritage Centre (of Heritage Centre, Library and busy tourist office) are excellent and this is a wonderful way to ensure that an important historical building remains in productive use. The row of thatched cottages opposite the Heritage Centre are charming and the quality of presentation of Roccas, Good Food, Lucy Bridge, The White Sage, The Wild Geese, the Blue Door and the Gift Box – all meet the highest standards. The wash pool and the monument are also attractive features for the centre of the town. On the Kildimo Road, the modern units accommodating the Medical Centre, the K Boutique and Village Fayre were nicely presented while the appearance of the Adare ironworks was improved by a carefully planted bed to the front. Further out, the old rail station was observed and it is a shame to see this in disrepair. Are there any plans or proposals for it?

Continuing down Main Street, the standard of presentation of the vast majority of premises is to be commended. The attention of the adjudicator was particularly drawn to; the Arches, Isobel, Centra (which was a nice modern infill development), Draiocht, the Hall and the thatched cottage opposite, the Blue Willow and Coileans. The Garda Station with the Gerry McCabe commemorative plaque was also observed. All of these buildings with their high standard of presentation make a very significant and positive contribution to the appearance of the Main Street. On the Askeaton Road, the Old Creamery Building was noted and it is heartening to see a productive reuse of an important former industrial building. The cottages on Black Abbey Road were also admired. The Rathkeale Road was no less impressive. Perhaps the highlight here is the lovely row of cottages and the mature trees which provide a distinctive identity to Adare. Their importance (and their conservation) cannot be underestimated. Other buildings of note include the residential dwellings on the Avenue and the a number of very well presented commercial premises such as Sean Collins and Sons, the Pink Rabbit, the Adre Village Inn and Aibhail of Adare. Further out, the school and its grounds also impressed.

Your projects for 2011 were also noted and they include the clean up of the village hall; which looked very well on the day and it is an excellent building to have in this pivotal location in the town. The continuing restoration of the Holy Trinity Abbey was also noted and work was ongoing at the time of inspection. One hopes that the work will be completed soon. The work on the pedestrian crossing was also observed. Your entry form has also referred to the restoration of the Adare Village Farm House and out houses, but this was not included on your map and unfortunately, the adjudicator was unable to locate it on adjudication day. It is also noted that it is not included in your addendum of photographs. Nonetheless, it sounds like a very worthwhile project and you are commended on it.

## **Landscaping:**

It was clear during adjudication that considerable attention was given to this category by the Tidy Towns Committee as numerous examples of attractive landscaping were observed and admired. The Committee are to be commended on their use of landscaping in highly visible areas such as the approach road from Limerick. The landscaping (of red roses), the mature trees and very well maintained grass look very well and help to create a very good first impression for the visitor. The shrubbery at the Dunraven Arms Hotel was also observed and it looked very well on the day. The grounds of the Heritage Centre also add interest for the visitor with the attractive seating areas and decorative hedging clearly visible. Opposite, the town park was perhaps the highlight under this category for the adjudicator. This amenity area was excellent as it had a fantastic range and diversity of planting on view and the standard of maintenance observed was also of the highest standard. In the car park to the rear of the Heritage Centre, landscaping beds were visible and it was good to see that the advice of the adjudicator from 2010 was followed with respect to the landscaped beds at the front of the Adare Ironworks. However, the beds to one side of the Ironworks along what appeared to be a shared boundary wall was untidy looking. High quality landscaping was also observed in individual gardens, particularly on the Kildimo Road (in the gardens of a group of B&B's). Further out the landscaping at the entrance signage was also observed and the landscaping along the river walk was noted. On the approach from the Askeaton road, an opportunity for landscaping was spotted at the Adare sign. On the Rathkeale Road, the mature trees and the grounds of the School were admired. A little further out, the shrubbery at the pitch and putt club was noted. The Committee are also to be commended on their projects for 2011 which included an upgrade of planting in the town park, wash pool and village fountain. These landscaping projects were also admired on adjudication day.

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

According to your entry form, the river walk is a key project under this category and the adjudicator was most impressed with this project as rivers are generally a rich habitat for flora and fauna. It is further noted from your plan that the interpretative signage produced in 2008 is expected to be added to, with the aid of Coillte. Has there been any further progress with this? Are there any plans to link your river walk up with other walks in the surrounding area? The wildlife section of your Plan was read with interest and it is clear that a lot of information has been collated on wildlife throughout Adare. Are there plans to create further interpretative signage based on this information? It is noted from the comments of the adjudicator last year that you planned to plant wild flowers in the park – has this taken place? If so, it is not listed in your projects. Remember also to include details of how your planting schemes are influenced by their contribution to wildlife.

### **Litter Control:**

Well done on your standard of litter control as it was quite impressive on adjudication day. This is quite an achievement as the number of visitors in the town and the volumes of traffic during the adjudicators visit were significant. It is clear that your litter patrols are working and it is great to see that the school children are also involved. A very small number of incidences of litter were spotted however. In the car park behind the heritage centre, a small amount of litter was noted and the bottle bank was overflowing – which clearly indicates that the facility is being used on a regular basis. Be sure to arrange collection of the bottle bank receptacles on a more frequent basis during the peak summer season. The parking area at the lake close to the old railway station on the Kildimo Road also needed a sweep while evidence of dumping behind one of the walls was visible. In general, however, this is a very good performance under this category.

### **Waste Minimisation:**

We note your projects under this category and it is encouraging to see that the residents of Adare have embraced recycling and home composting. However, it is recommended that the Committee try to complement the initiatives by Limerick County Council at a local level. This could be achieved by implementing the ideas suggested last year – and they should include organising a workshop on waste minimisation and surveying local businesses to see how much waste is being generated and exploring ways to reduce this. Other ideas include composting your grass cuttings and waste from your planting projects and growing your own plants. Other ideas can be found in the Tidy Towns hand book.

### **Tidiness:**

The work of the Committee is very obvious under this category as the appearance of the town on adjudication day was excellent. It is clear that a determined approach has been taken to weed removal and any other form of untidiness and this was particularly evident on the Main Street and on busy thoroughfares. The work on the old stone markers was also observed, while the new pedestrian crossing on the Main Street looked very well. There are two areas however, that should be considered for next year and they are litter bins and signage. On the day of adjudication, litter bins in a number of areas were untidy looking and in need of cleaning or paint. Examples of poorly presented bins include; the green bin outside the Lucy Bridge premises, the black and green bins outside the heritage centre, the black bins beside the seating area (close to the entrance in the car park for the heritage centre) and the black bin outside the Black Abbey Farm House. Untidy signage was observed at the Abbey estate where a black and yellow children about sign should be cleaned up and the signage at the wash pool (the yield sign and the roundabout signs) were in need of a wash and a traffic sign and pole opposite Chapel Lane was also in very poor condition. On the Kildimo Road, the pedestrian gate at the walk entrance could be painted and the timber fence should be treated. The red and white markings on the railway crossing were also faded and untidy looking. On the Rathkeale Road, the untidy verge opposite the school was noted and it is acknowledged that this is a project proposed for next year.

### **Residential Areas:**

The adjudicator inspected a number of residential areas in Adare and was generally impressed with the standard of presentation observed. The Abbey estate is quite a pleasant residential area with nicely trimmed grass, weed free pavement and roads and semi mature trees noted. Has additional landscaping been considered here? Abbeyville was impressive as the landscaping on view was of a high standard and grass cutting was in progress during adjudication. Manor Court was not quite at the same standard and the construction entrance visible was a little untidy looking. Chapel Lane is quite a nice scheme with a good standard of presentation and this is despite the fact that it is not finished as yet. One of the highlights for the adjudicator was Deer Park which had attractive landscaping at the entrance and a very well maintained (and elevated!) green area. The avenue, off the Rathkeale Road, was perhaps the most impressive, with its lovely traditional housing, narrow lanes, perennial landscaping and mature trees combining to make this a very attractive residential area. The newer section of this estate was also quite nice but it could benefit from

additional landscaping and what appears to be a small pitch beside No. 6 could be cleaned up and the untidy fence beside No. 1 needs attention. The weedy and overgrown verge at the entrance also needs to be trimmed. Nearby, Park Avenue was also considered to be a highlight with effective and colourful landscaping at the entrance, a well maintained green space and very well presented houses and gardens. Estuary Close and the Village were also quite nice, although no sign was spotted for the village.

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

The approach roads to Adare were generally very good. The entrance from Limerick reaches a high standard due to the attractive landscaping, the very impressive buildings (in particular, the thatched cottages!) and the mature trees. The signage is also clear and highly visible. The approach from Rathkeale is no less impressive due once again to the mature trees, the presence of the Cottages opposite the Avenue and attractive landscaping – although the verge opposite the school is a little untidy looking. The Askeaton road is reasonably good but it could be improved by additional landscaping while the Kildimo road could also be improved by close attention to verge maintenance and tidying up the railing level crossing.

### **General Impression:**

Adare is a lovely town and a delightful place to visit. As your town receives consistently high marks each year, it should be noted that at this level of the competition, it is much more difficult to increase your marks and even retaining a high mark can be a significant achievement. Notwithstanding these points, this was considered to be an excellent performance in the Competition and your Committee should be very proud of their efforts this year. Best of luck for 2012!

### **Second Round Adjudication:**

Your signature thatched cottages continue to be a delight and it is pleasant to note that some are being re-thatched as necessary. The delightful houses along The Avenue are no less picturesque but it is a pity that so many have dispensed with their traditional timber sash windows in favour of plastic/metal ones. The 69 houses in Manor Fields are a significant addition to the housing stock of the town and were very well presented, many with excellent individual gardens. Here and elsewhere - in common with many centres - there are indications of the enormous damage of last winter's frost. Black Abbey Gate, a development of substantial houses, features a splendid entrance area while the tall hoarding to the left would benefit from painting before next year's competition. Through traffic volumes continue to be very heavy and surely intrude in a material manner. The mature trees on Killarney Road are excellent. The manner in which the grass here seems to be 'retreating' from the kerbs on the school side may need to be given remedial attention. The Park is a real joy and very well presented as always. Note that one of the cap stones overlooking the small river just inside the gate has worked loose. The planting around the village is a credit to all, opposite the tall wall of Adare Manor the roses are most colourful and the amenity area at Deerpark is a delight. Some of the road signs would benefit from washing and the sign at the Methodist Church would be enhanced by painting before next year's competition. Embury Close is a most pleasant location, perhaps the residents would enjoy the creation here of a bird habitat to give added interest to the visita.