

Tidy Towns Competition 2010

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Inistioge** Ref: **394**

County: **Kilkenny** Mark: **296**

Category: **B** Date(s): **24/06/2010**
29/07/2010

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2009	Mark Awarded 2010
Overall Development Approach	50	46	46
The Built Environment	50	40	40
Landscaping	50	45	46
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	26	27
Litter Control	50	32	32
Waste Minimisation	20	14	14
Tidiness	30	19	19
Residential Areas	40	26	26
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	37	37
General Impression	10	9	9
TOTAL MARK	400	294	296

Overall Development Approach:

Welcome Inistioge to the 2010 TidyTowns Competition. It is very encouraging to see such a high level of participation in TidyTowns and with 18 members on the Committee, this is clear reflection of the level of enthusiasm and commitment in Inistioge. Your development approach is to be commended as you continue to work closely with key organisations and agencies such as Kilkenny County Council, Fas and Coillte. We see no mention of the local Leader group – have you considered approaching them for additional support and funding?

We are delighted to see that you have a school liaison officer and that the schoolchildren (and scouts) are involved in some of your projects. This is considered to be a key part of the competition as it fosters an awareness of the TidyTowns competition among young people and helps to encourage participation. Thank you for your detailed entry form, photos and map, they were most helpful during adjudication. Surprisingly, no action plan was submitted despite a reference to one in the 2009 report. Please remember to provide a copy of your action plan next year.

The Built Environment:

There is no doubt that Inistioge is a very attractive and picturesque village. Its riverside setting, its distinctive bridge and the architecture and built environment all combine to give a lovely first impression to the visitor. The built environment is a major strength of Inistioge. The village square in the centre with its mature trees, seating area and monument forms a lovely focal point to the village and the traditional style buildings that frame the square on three sides are also very impressive as the terraces they form are largely intact and virtually all the structures are original. Despite a small increase in vacancy levels of commercial buildings in the village centre, the standard of presentation of the individual premises remains high. Buildings that caught the attention of the adjudicator included O'Donnells, the Woodstock Arms and Walshs. Opposite the Square,

the Circle of Friends Restaurant and adjoining bar were also well presented. High quality buildings are not confined to the square however, with the Catholic Church and the Church of Ireland Building are both very attractive and well maintained buildings. The rows of the tightly knit dwellings on High Street (and the small enclave of Stoneybatter) and Mill Road have their own charm and the standard of presentation observed was also very high – with the exception being the poorly maintained buildings on Hatchery Lane. The newer buildings in the village were also observed with the new building opposite the Church of Ireland nearing completion. We look forward to seeing the finished product in 2011. The new dwellings at the entrance to the village from the Thomastown Road (Black Church Square) were also observed. At the riverside, the two storey medieval structure and adjoining building were observed in poor condition, although the landscaped helped to soften their impact somewhat. The projects for 2010 under this category are noted and we look forward to seeing the booklet on the architectural history of Inistioge, while the boarding up the derelict building on the square is perhaps the most sensible solution in the current economic climate and one hopes that this building will be occupied again soon.

Landscaping:

The Committee have been working hard on their landscaping projects for 2010 and there were many examples of your good work on adjudication day. The large planting bed at the junction of the Rock Road was most impressive as its diverse range of plants produced lovely summer colour for this approach. The riverside park is a delight. It was very nicely maintained on the day of adjudication with the neat and tidy grass area, seating and planting combining to give a lovely space from which to enjoy the views of the river. The landscaped boat which is used to screen the untidy tower and adjoining building was also observed. In the village centre, fine floral displays and hanging baskets on commercial premises added a lovely splash of summer colour. Particularly impressive displays could be found on the Circle of Friends Restaurant and neighbouring Bar and in planters outside the Woodstock Arms. This was also the case on high street, where planters and flower baskets of individual properties were most attractive. The landscaping at the pump outside the Heritage Museum was also eye catching and colourful. Attractive and mature landscaping was also observed in the grounds of the school on the Thomastown Road. We are also delighted to read about your tree planting programme, which includes your participation in the Kilkenny 400 programme and the planting of birch trees in the GAA grounds.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

The linear riverside walk and wildlife area is a lovely amenity for the village and there is no doubt that it is a hot bed for wildlife. The information panels here are considered to be most important for interpretative purposes. We note your proposal for the nature walk down Poyntz Road, which sounds very interesting given the variety of bird and wild life that have been spotted here. The bilingual information board is also a very good idea. Your plans for Locks Quay are also noted, and while it is a good project, its contribution to wildlife and natural amenity is less clear. Your proposal for the Mill Stream were also read with interest and we look forward to seeing these projects progress in 2011. You are also commended on using planting that is attractive to wildlife in the riverside park as the promotion of bio diversity through landscaping is highly desirable

Litter Control:

A very good standard of litter control was observed in Inistioge on adjudication day and it is clear that your spring clean with the school children and scouts and litter picks referred to in your entry form are being enthusiastically implemented! On the day of adjudication, the village was virtually litter free and the bring centre was well presented. There was one exception to this as some litter was noted in the stream beside the Woodstock Arms.

Waste Minimisation:

Your efforts to become self sufficient in compost are noted and you are commended for your actions on segregating litter and for encouraging households and business to reduce waste and recycle. Other actions are possible however. Have you considered producing your plants for your landscaping projects? Also, have you considered undertaking a survey of the households and businesses in Inistioge to ascertain how much recycling is taking place? The results of this survey could then be used to uniform your future actions under this category.

Tidiness:

The standard of tidiness observed in Inistioge was reasonably good as footpaths were generally free from clutter and weeds were not a particular problem in roadside verges and planting beds. However, a number of areas were observed during adjudication that contributed to a somewhat untidy appearance. Untidy and dirty signage was an issue in a number of areas, in particular on the approach from New Ross (especially the river Nore Brown sign) and the sign poles for the directional signage at the junction of the Rock Road would benefit

from paint. The grounds of the two storey Medieval Tower immediately beside the riverside park was quite untidy with weeds and litter evident. In the Village square and centre, the lampposts are in urgent need of repainting, while the wall, sign post and bin nearest the Woodstock Arms were in need of a face lift. . At the National school, a railing to the side of the building facing the Thomastown road was very untidy looking, while the pump to the front was in need of repainting. Graffiti was also observed on the Inistioge sign on the Thomastown Road. The landscaping beds at Black Church Square were a little weedy and overgrown and at the bring bank, a very untidy and dirty yield sign and pole needs replacement. The entrance to Woodstock was also untidy looking due to rough surfacing in part and weed growth.

Residential Areas:

In general, the small number of residential estates in Inistioge were maintained to a reasonable standard. The former Council estate, the Orchard and Ard Aoibhinn looked quite well but levels of maintenance at Black Church Square could be improved. The presentation of individual houses and gardens in Inistioge was high however and the owners / occupiers should be proud of themselves. Well done.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

The approaches to Inistioge are generally of a reasonable standard. The New Ross approach road was quite good while the Rock Road was of a lower standard due to untidy signage and some rough weedy areas beside the 50 kph signs. The third road here (immediately opposite the Bridge) is quite poorly presented. The approach from Woodstock could also be improved as the 50 kph signs were obscured by growth. The Thomastown approach road was reasonable.

General Impression:

In general, this is a reasonably good performance from Inistioge but slightly below the normal high standard in the categories of tidiness and Roads, Streets and Back Areas. Congratulations on once again securing an increase in your overall marks in the competition, but please remember that at this level, it is an achievement to maintain high marks and any increase in marks must be entirely justified. Best of luck in 2011.

Second Round Adjudication:

Inistioge is always a pleasure to visit and it was wonderful to read about the various activities that have been underway since this adjudicator's last visit. As pointed out by the first adjudicator, it was disappointing to note that you are not working off a three-year plan. This would certainly be expected at this level of the contest. Such a plan would set out your long-term vision for the town and identify actions under each of the headings in order to achieve this vision. You are directed to the very useful TidyTowns handbook for further guidance in this regard. There was no mention in your application form of the school's participation in the Green Flag programme. This is a most important distinction for schools and can set a valuable example for the whole community in reducing your environmental impact. The village centre is beautifully presented and the lovely flower displays wonderfully compliment the mature trees. It was great to note that you are planting lots of native Irish trees – this is wonderful for both landscaping and wildlife. I would have to concur with the first adjudicator on issues of tidiness and it would be great to see these issues comprehensively dealt with. Cigarette ends outside pubs are a litter issue while the faded map near O'Donnell's pub should be replaced or removed. The shady green is beautifully manicured. The riverside park is excellently presented but watch out for Himalayan balsam which has taken root – this is an alien invasive species and very detrimental to our native flora. Ideally it should be removed but you should consult the National Parks and Wildlife Service on the best way to do this.