

Tidy Towns 1996

"Caring for our environment"

Centre : **BAGENALSTOWN**
County : **CARLOW**
Category : **D**

Results

Date of Adjudication : 12-06-96

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded
Overall Developmental Approach	50	37
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	21
Landscaping	40	31
The Built Environment	40	31
Litter Control	40	30
Tidiness	20	16
Residential Areas	30	22
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	30
General Impression	10	7
TOTAL MARK	300	225

Adjudicator's Comments

OVERALL DEVELOPMENTAL APPROACH

Although you have not submitted a work programme, you would seem to have a very clear idea of what you would like to achieve for Bagenalstown. However, a strategy for developing the town's strong points and, indeed tackling problem areas is important for next year's competition. This should be based on the constructive remarks made in this report and formulating a 3/5 year plan of action for the town. The enthusiasm is obviously there, and your established relationships with both Carlow County Council and FAS will, hopefully, be of great benefit to the community as a whole. Nine members on the committee seems rather small for town of Bagenalstown's size.

WILDLIFE AND NATURAL AMENITIES

Your actions in relation to the maintenance of the osiery area for ducks and wildlife is to be commended. There is potential for greater conservation in this area. Perhaps the local schoolchildren could participate in identification of the wildlife habitats in your environs in order to establish the various species of animals, birds, fish, wildflowers etc. Local environmental groups should be able to advise you in this regard.

LANDSCAPING

The standard in this category was good. The picnic /amenity area to the Barrow/canal-side area looked magnificent on a sunny June day, with its lively ducks. The new trees to the bank opposite were admired, although the adjacent grubby nameplate sign looked unfortunate. The new planting to the area on Market Square adjacent to the map was noted, although perhaps further sensitive landscaping is required. The playground in the former Fair Green looked very well. The new trees to Long Range and the silver birches to the Tullow Farm Machinery grounds were also admired.

THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

The standard in this category was quite inconsistent. The public buildings of the town were presented to a high standard. Both the library and the National School were very fresh although the railings to the former and the tower to the latter could have been fresher. The plaster boundary wall of the GAA grounds needed painting. The pink Daniel Mc Grath Memorial Hall looked magnificent, as did its grounds. The forecourt area of the attractive Neo-Classical Train Station looked rather bare, forlorn and weedy. The charming Post Office looked very well. The Fire Station, Health Centre and Catholic Church all were reasonably well presented, although the railings to the latter could be freshly painted. The Church of Ireland was presented to a high standard. The commercial buildings of the town were rather inconsistent in relation to standard of presentation- some were well maintained, others need to make more of an effort. Some work is required to the Market Square area. There are an abundance of inappropriate plastic signs and bargain shops displaying goods outside which give the streets a very cluttered appearance. However, the shopfronts to the main streets of the town seemed to be much fresher. There is a heritage of fine buildings in Bagenalstown, including the attractive old mill/warehouse building on the Leighlin road and some fine buildings on Regent Street - one with a flat arched fan-light and another stone building at the end of this street. Some fresh buildings of special mention were the Manor House bar, restaurant and hotel, the red Kilree Arms and T. Ward's with its delightful hanging baskets.

LITTER CONTROL

The general standard in this category was good, although there was quite a bit of litter along Main Street and around the telephone boxes.

TIDINESS

The overall impression created by Bagenalstown on adjudication day was a neat and tidy one. However,

closer inspection revealed a few problem areas. The area around the Avonmore lodge was quite forlorn with a wide expanse of bare tarmac. The wire fence with barbed wire on top of the wall to the swimming pool and another fence to the Bagenalstown Auto Centre looked unfortunate. Quite a bit of work is necessary in relation to the presentation of industrial buildings and their immediate environs. The unique Carlow fence walls throughout the area were admired. Some dereliction was noted to the riverside area and diagonally opposite the Church of Ireland. Weed control is also an issue that needs addressing. Some weeds were apparent to the kerbside and at the base of a pole opposite Pairc Mhuire, to the carpark area adjacent to the Catholic church and to the kerbsides to the school. More weeds were apparent behind the Fire Station whose yard area should be screened from public view, and to the bases of the majestic mature trees of Bachelor's Walk. The bare concrete forecourt/car park area to the courthouse and Fire Station needs some attention in terms of sensitive landscaping. The telephone boxes were rather badly stained.

RESIDENTIAL AREAS

The private residences both within the town and along the approach roads were generally presented to a high standard. The charming ivy-clad houses opposite the fire station, were particularly admired, as were those to Kilree Avenue, although in the case of the latter some of the plastered boundary walls were quite grubby. The East Wood housing estate was reasonably well maintained, although some boundary walls needed attention. The green open space looked well, although the open space to the red brick cottages further along was very overgrown, with an abundance of rubble and no grass evident. The delightful gardens to Royal Oak were admired for their colourful displays of flowers.

ROADS, STREETS AND BACK AREAS

The standard in this category could have been better. The Leighlinbridge road sported quite a lot of weeds to the bases of boundary walls. The Carlow/Dunleckney Manor road was also quite weedy to the kerbsides, although the new landscaping feature was admired. It was also quite overgrown by the town nameplate sign on this road although the wild daisies further out were magnificent. The signage throughout was generally good but some signs needed freshening.

GENERAL IMPRESSION

The town of Bagenalstown is one of great charm, with a wealth of attractive buildings which created a good impression on a sunny June day. However, more attention is required in relation to details of presentation such as signage, unattractive back yard areas and weed control.

SECOND ADJUDICATION (12/08/96)

Bagenalstown is striking as a planned town with a fascinating historic urban tissue, added to during this century in a 'garden city' style. Its location beside the river is a unique and beautiful characteristic which has been recognised and developed in a very successful way. The architectural heritage is also unique and needs a self-conscious and coherent approach at a planning level to ensure that it is given both protection and investment. The mill buildings are an extraordinary asset at a national level. The efforts of the Improvement Group are admirable. Other projects which you might try to persuade others to do is to reconsider and intensify the landscaping to the Business Park, and to persuade owners of drably-painted houses to participate in cheering up streets. The absence of road markings throughout the town was disconcerting - presumably as a result of sewerage works - but for a visitor it seemed quite dangerous, but, hopefully, only temporary.