

"Caring for our environment"

Centre : **CARLOW**
County : **CARLOW**
Category : **F**

Results

Date of Adjudication : 13-06-96

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded
Overall Developmental Approach	50	36
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	21
Landscaping	40	31
The Built Environment	40	30
Litter Control	40	31
Tidiness	20	15
Residential Areas	30	22
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	30
General Impression	10	7
TOTAL MARK	300	223

Adjudicator's Comments

OVERALL DEVELOPMENTAL APPROACH

Although you have not submitted a 3/5 year plan of action for Carlow, you would appear to have a clear idea of what you would like to achieve for your town in the future. 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 programme for the town. The enthusiasm is obviously there, although there are a mere six members on your committee and your established relationships with Carlow County Council, SERTO and FAS will, hopefully, be of great benefit to the community as a whole.

WILDLIFE AND NATURAL AMENITIES

Perhaps the best approach to this issue of wildlife/natural amenities would be to contact local environmental groups and experts who could advise you and provide you with the information you need to tackle this broad-ranging issue. From there you can then identify the wildlife habitats of your area and see what varieties of animals, birds, fish and plantlife these attract. Involve the local schoolchildren in this project-they will hopefully bring a fresh enthusiasm for the wealth of wildlife in their locality.

LANDSCAPING

There is great scope for further development in this area. The Potato Market, and the square at the Dublin Street/Burrin Street junction are both crying out for sensitive landscaping or creating a successful urban space. The riverside areas with its lily pads and old warehouses across the water could be utilised more successfully. A dramatic space could be created between the Castle and the river. The town park looked very sad and somewhat desolate. The entrance area is not exactly inviting; in fact unless you knew of its whereabouts you would be entirely oblivious to its existence. The entrance gates were rather rusty, while the park itself was very overgrown. The playground looked particularly sad and abandoned with an abundance of weeds and rusty play things. The litter bins were full and the swimming pool had been abandoned. The park was empty apart from one couple, and in fact there were more people using St. Dymphna's Hospital grounds for leisure purposes.

THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

The standard of both public and commercial buildings was very good on Adjudication Day. Reddy's was very fresh. Scragg's Alley in black with cream windows was admired. The Carlow Bookshop and Corcoran's are both simple traditional fronts. Quite a few inappropriate plastic signs were noted as were a number of dated facades. Deighton Memorial Hall is a fine classical building. The Castle looked strong and majestic against a cloudless blue sky. The immediate area detracted greatly from it, as it was in sharp contrast to the fine Castle in terms of presentation and will, hopefully, be landscaped in the near future. Carlow Vocational Education Committee was very flaky in a pale pink-the boundary wall was particularly bad. The landscaping to the Garda Station is beautifully maintained and very simple in its presentation with an abundance of permanent planting.

LITTER CONTROL

Litter control is always a problem in a town of Carlow's size. Some litter was noted on Tullow Street, at the Dublin Street/Burrin Street junction, at Centaur Street, Dublin Street, to the green space adjacent to the Methodist Church, on Dublin road and along College Street.

TIDINESS

The first impression created was a tidy and neat one. However, closer inspection revealed a few problem areas. Weeds were noted to the base of the boundary wall down from Tougher oil on the Dublin road and to the Driving Test Centre. More weeds were apparent along Grave Lane and in the vicinity of the

Castle. Both of the areas also had quite a lot of dereliction. The aluminium and perspex telephone boxes at the Potato Market and at Court Place were badly stained. Flyposting is a practise which should be discouraged.

RESIDENTIAL AREAS

The standard in this category was good. There were a great many attractive houses in the town centre-on Montgomery Street and College road. The charming stone and brick cottages on the Dublin road were also admired. As was an attractive house on the corner of Haymarket. The public area to Hill View Drive housing estate was well presented, although the sign was quite rusty and should be replaced. St. Killian's Terrace was well presented with its combination of plaster and stone boundary walls. However, its nameplate was also in need of freshening.

ROADS, STREETS AND BACK AREAS The standard of roads and streets in the town was very good. The Dublin road had far too many hoardings which gave it a rather cluttered appearance. The verges had been cut on one side only, but the bright red wild poppies and fresh signage was admired and the new trees are coming along nicely. The Wexford road also sported wild poppies and daisies to the grass verges, but the speed limit and junction signs were quite grubby. It was quite overgrown to the "welcome" sign on the Tullow road and the roundabout sign was grubby. All of the roundabouts around the town were well maintained with an abundance of permanent planting.

GENERAL IMPRESSION

Carlow has improved greatly in its presentation since this adjudicator last visited the town. It looked very cheerful with its colourful bunting for the Eigse festival. The riverside areas should be developed further. Traffic control is another issue which needs to be addressed. Carlow Heritage Society is certainly busy to judge from their signage throughout the town.

SECOND ADJUDICATION (12/08/96)

The improvement in Carlow in recent years has been recorded in encouraging terms in the previous adjudications, with due recognition of the difficulties encountered in a town of this size. These reports suggest general directions for action and it seems that the key will lie in the preparation of a 3-5 year plan. The experience of other towns of comparable size will help to set targets. I am familiar with the town and its recent growth and the visible improvement to the town centre. There are many areas, however, where there is ample opportunity for improvement. The Kilkenny entrance is a model of its kind for mature planting, but its coherence breaks down where new residential development is under way and a conscious policy for all the entrances would be most beneficial. The riverside areas have incomparable potential, some of which is presently being realised, but it is difficult to envisage an outcome along its length. Litter was the worst I have seen in any Irish town in recent years, both in and approaching the centre. Thus, whilst I share in the enthusiasm for what is being achieved, it seems necessary to create a thorough and comprehensive vision of the town for the future and to work steadily for that objective.