

"Caring for our environment"

Centre : **HACKETSTOWN**
County : **CARLOW**
Category : **B**

Results

Date of Adjudication : 08-06-96

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded
Overall Developmental Approach	50	30
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	18
Landscaping	40	24
The Built Environment	40	24
Litter Control	40	16
Tidiness	20	14
Residential Areas	30	21
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	20
General Impression	10	6
TOTAL MARK	300	173

Adjudicator's Comments

OVERALL DEVELOPMENTAL APPROACH

Firstly, a warm welcome to the Tidy Towns Competition, and good luck in this your first year of entry! Obviously, as your committee was formed a mere two months ago you are not in a position to submit a 3/5 year work programme. Perhaps for next years competition you could prepare a strategy for developing the towns strong points and tackling problem areas based on this report. The enthusiasm is obviously there, so your next step should be to establish as strong a working relationship as you obviously have with FAS, with your other local statutory bodies.

WILDLIFE AND NATURAL AMENITIES

There is obviously a 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, wild flowers, etc. Local environmental groups should be able to advise you in this regard. On this note, this adjudicator was pleased to observe the presence of many wild flowers, both cultivated in gardens and in their wild state along the hedgerows surrounding the townland. Also the presence of wild lilac and clover in the open green to the front of the housing estate on the Knockananna Road.

LANDSCAPING

There is obviously great scope for effort in this regard. The towns major amenity space, at the moment would appear to be the picnic area by 1798 monument. The raised stone bed of permanent planting set against a magnificent view gives it year round appeal (even in un-picnic weather!)and was beautifully maintained. However, the scratched litter bin and weeds to the base of the monument made a bad impression. As did the abandoned piles of gravel and stone that should be removed when work is finished. Perhaps the open space between the Esso and the health centre (which currently looks rather desolate)could be used as a wild flower garden project for the school? It was encouraging to note the civic minded nature of some members of the community in terms of individual landscaping projects within their own open spaces e.g. the stone and timber planter to the white house beside Supervalu which looked most attractive.

THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

The first impression of the town was of a lack of consistency in terms of presentation of buildings, commercial premises in particular. There appears to be quite a lot of dereliction and neglect, a problem which needs to be addressed. There is a particularly fine detailed house on main street opposite Bolgers pub. It would be well worth the effort and cost of restoring it to its former glory. Some of the towns commercial premises should be encouraged to replace the inappropriate curved plastic canopies with more traditional fabric awnings, and to paint their premises. The Esso station, Byrnes Electrical shop and the video shop in particular looked quite neglected. Some public premises could also be freshened up, such as the Garda Station, where the paintwork to the sills in particular was badly cracked. The boundary wall to the graveyard and sports ground beyond the town looked in need of attention also. The busy Community Centre could be freshened up for next years competition as the flagpoles are causing rust stains to the gable wall. The school and its grounds, on the other hand, looked very well cared for. The forecourt area, however, looks rather bleak and would benefit from some landscaping. The fire station was in the process of being painted on adjudication day, perhaps some thought could be given to replacing the metal fence to the side boundary with a hedge? The prominent Gothic church is a fine building. The neglected buildings to the town end of the Knockananna Road should also be attended to. Further along this road, the buildings, forecourt and entrance area to Duffy Meats looked very unsightly.

LITTER CONTROL

Litter control seemed to be a problem on adjudication day. There was a light scattering of papers around the town and quite a lot was apparent along the main street particularly opposite Bolands pub. Along the Knockananna Road there was some opposite Kavanaghs garage and by the phone boxes. Some was also visible at Marian Terrace.

TIDINESS

The town, in general, appeared quite neat on the day. However, care must be taken not to neglect the scourge of weeds. Some were visible in places such as the footpath to the Kiltegan approach road and quite a few were generally apparent to the base of buildings and at boundaries. It is also important to screen from public view such backyard areas as those which are by their nature untidy, particularly those at the town end of the Knockananna Road. The entrance area to Kepak and Duffy Meats looked quite neglected - the rusty metal frames which obviously once held signage looked particularly unfortunate.

RESIDENTIAL AREAS

Again there was a lot of inconsistency regarding the presentation of houses in the town centre -some appeared very fresh, while others were very neglected. Both the housing estate on the Knockananna Road and Marian Terrace was presented to a high standard. Some individual houses showed great pride in their gardens, those opposite the Fire Station with their fine display of irises and peony roses being particularly admired.

ROADS, STREETS & BACK AREAS

The standard in this category was quite good. However, one pitfall to watch out for would be to try to strike a balance between conservation of the hedgerows and giving an impression of care. Other aspects of this category would be street furniture - the perspex of the towns phoneboxes was badly stained, the Hacketstown and speed limit signs were obscured by overgrowth in places and the directional signs in the town centre were very grubby. The recently planted trees on the Knockananna Road and the progressing stone wall on the Clonmore Road looked well.

GENERAL IMPRESSION

This adjudicator's impression was of a most attractive town set amongst magnificent scenery. The approach road from Kiltegan over the stone bridge on the River Dereen, under a canopy of trees with Hacketstown perched above on the hill set the standard of beauty that the rest of the town should try to live up to! However, the town should try to achieve a greater consistency through active participation of all the townspeople (the business people in particular) and by putting together a plan of campaign for tackling the weak areas and promoting the strengths! Congratulations to all those involved in a fine first effort and best wishes in future years!