

"Caring for our environment"

Centre : **LEIGHLINBRIDGE**
County : **CARLOW**
Category : **B**

Results

Date of Adjudication : 12-06-96

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded
Overall Developmental Approach	50	39
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	24
Landscaping	40	32
The Built Environment	40	31
Litter Control	40	31
Tidiness	20	16
Residential Areas	30	24
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	31
General Impression	10	8
TOTAL MARK	300	236

Adjudicator's Comments

OVERALL DEVELOPMENTAL APPROACH

Your aspirations for Leighlinbridge as expressed in your work programme are extremely laudable. From your responses to the questionnaire, you obviously have a clear grasp of the unique historical and environmental heritage of the locality. However, your work programme seems to express an emphasis on the landscaping aspect of the programme. Perhaps for next year's competition you could concentrate on formulating a work programme which covers all aspects of the town's presentation. Many thanks for your precise work plan and map, both of which were very useful on Adjudication Day.

WILDLIFE AND NATURAL AMENITIES

You have also expressed, in your questionnaire, a very clear knowledge of the wildlife that is unique and special to your immediate surroundings. Your aspirations to keep these areas as natural as possible are to be commended, particularly in relation to the riverside area. The ducks spotted in the river were a delight. Perhaps the local schoolchildren could participate in wildlife projects in their environs, in order to give them an enthusiasm for the wealth of ecological delights of their immediate environment. In relation to an environmental awareness video, I would suggest contacting ENFO, or your local environmental groups, who could advise you on the matter.

LANDSCAPING

The standard in this category was excellent, although care must be taken to ensure that the result is not over-manicured. The natural grass bank on the Old Leighlin road with its abundance of wild poppies, daisies, and clover looked magnificent and is a project which could be extended in other areas of the village. The trees in their cut stone bases throughout the village were delightful. The amenity area to the riverside looked magnificent with its surrounding granite wall with limestone coping, and beds of cheerful pansies. However, the litter bin was rather rusty, the benches and picnic table could be freshened where graffiti was noted and one or two papers were spotted. The riverside walk was beautifully maintained, the silver birches looked very well and the actual walkway was cut, while the rest was allowed to remain natural. However, there appeared to be evidence of dumping further along the riverbank. The far bank and riverside area, with its stone priory ruins was also well maintained. The Fair Green is attractively presented with a combination of new copper beeches and mature trees. The rose bed opposite had yet to show its full glory on the day. The two village pumps were simply presented with their horseshoe-shaped limestone surrounds. The open space to Ballyknockan Hill was also well maintained, with its mature trees and new copper beeches coming along nicely. However, more graffiti was noted to one of the picnic tables. The wild daisies on the opposite bank were admired.

THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

The standard in this category was quite high, as most of the buildings to the main streets of the town looked fresh, although one or two could be repainted before next year. The Post Office is a charming traditional front and should be restored to its former glory. The Garda Station was quite fresh, although the boundary wall needed freshening. The Church could be freshened before next year's competition. The attractive cut stone boundary wall and relatively new trees to the grounds were admired. The boundary wall to the adjacent Day Care Centre needed freshening up. An overgrown empty space opposite looked unfortunate. The school was fresh, and the grounds looked well with the children at play outside. However, the boundary wall badly needed painting. St. Mary's Convent of Mercy was well presented. One or two buildings along the village's main streets could be freshened up, including Meaney's pub and Kelly's facade. The charming stone warehouse/mill buildings of the village should be cherished, and where necessary restored to their former glory. Keegan's was very fresh although some weeds were noted to the gutter.

LITTER CONTROL

The standard in this category was high, the village was virtually litter-free on Adjudication Day. One or two papers were noted to the amenity area by the riverside. The litter bin here was quite rusty, indeed those throughout the village required freshening as they looked quite battered.

TIDINESS

The standard in this category was also quite high. The metal barrier to the riverside area was quite scratched but as the metal bridge was being painted on the day, perhaps this was next? The sign to Leighlinbridge Hire and Sales Services badly needed a wash, and the storage area with timber and weeds outside looked unfortunate. P.J. Doran's also had an unfortunate yard area, while the adjacent boundary wall could have been fresher. Flyposting is a practice which should be discouraged. There was evidence, on the day of many posters advertising a concert that had taken place two weeks previously.

RESIDENTIAL AREAS

Most of the houses within the village and along approach roads were well cared for, although some on Main Street were quite grubby. The gardens in particular looked magnificent. A especially beautiful and unusual garden on Cross Lane with a majestic presentation of flowers including irises and pansies set in a gravel bed was quite breathtaking. There were some particularly lush gardens opposite the rear entrance to the Lord Bagenal on the Carlow road with a magnificent displays of lupins, snapdragons and pansies. The houses to St. Lazerian's Terrace were very fresh although one or two boundary walls which created a bad impression at the entrance to the terrace, needed freshening. The gardens looked very attractive. Another delightful garden was that with the water feature opposite the Church.

ROADS, STREETS AND BACK AREAS

The standard in this category was quite inconsistent, with greater attention needing to be paid to details. The Old Leighlin road off the dual carriageway sported an attractive green space with copper beeches. Some piles of building materials created a bad impression. Some boundary walls along the Seskin road could be freshened up. Some weeds were evident to the base of boundary walls each side of the Rathvidden road and it was quite overgrown near the junction with the dual carriageway. However, the trees overhanging the stone walls looked magnificent, as did the abundance of wild flowers including daisies, buttercups and clover. The signage was generally well presented, although some could be freshened before next year's competition. The Carlow road was well presented with its rose beds in limestone surrounds, although the town name plate sign was slightly obscured by overgrowth. The Bagenalstown road was quite weedy at the kerbsides. A white timber fence was very grubby in appearance.

GENERAL IMPRESSION

The winding and meandering town of Leighlinbridge is a very charming one with an abundance of buildings of historical and cultural heritage. The centrally located river and canal area was very calm on Adjudication Day, creating marvellous reflections in the water. Leighlinbridge was virtually litter-free and neatly presented on the day. However, greater attention should be paid to particulars for next year's competition.

SECOND ADJUDICATION (12/08/96)

Leighlinbridge offers a quality and character both in landscape and building terms which is outstanding. The village's history and form, and its great visual charm give it an enviable status as a genuine heritage village. The by-passing of the village is a most successful example of the advantages of removing heavy traffic, and the treatment of its approach roads is exemplary. In Tidy Towns terms, there is much achieved, and plenty of potential. Good planning control, evidenced by the stone wall frontages on the new houses, is an essential component. The re-use and conservation of excellent buildings is a much more difficult and an urgent priority. Design advice on the treatment of the centre village junction could help sort out the confusion there. With so much work achieved, it is worth concentrating on detail and

finish and making the village more visitor friendly through discreet signing and information