

*"Caring for our environment"*

Centre : **OCALLAGHANS MILLS**  
County : **CLARE**  
Category : **A**

**Results**

Date of Adjudication : 01-07-96

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded
Overall Developmental Approach	50	30
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	19
Landscaping	40	30
The Built Environment	40	29
Litter Control	40	29
Tidiness	20	15
Residential Areas	30	22
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	29
General Impression	10	7
<b>TOTAL MARK</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>210</b>

## **Adjudicator's Comments**

### **OVERALL DEVELOPMENTAL APPROACH**

The village is back in the Competition and the new Community Development group is to be commended for reviving the interest in Tidy Towns. Much has been achieved already and the new group should consider drawing up a three/five year plan or work programme for the period, identifying the areas or problems to be tackled, setting clear targets or objectives and a schedule of work for each year to involve the whole community. The village has the disadvantage of being so fragmented, with two distinct areas at either end, two off centre areas - one around the vicinity of the Mill Tavern and the other on the Kilkishen road around the mill and old forge, together with the link road in between. These areas are quite distinct and perhaps the development plan suggested could consider each area in detail and identify their strengths and weaknesses to enable you to develop a strategy not just to deal with each individually but to bring them together as part of an integrated development programme.

### **WILDLIFE AND NATURAL AMENITIES**

The village is pleasantly located in typical East Clare countryside and the Tidy Towns effort should attempt to reflect its rural setting and respect the wildlife and natural amenities of the area. The possibility of developing water features (at the Mill); nature trails and hedgerows (path to the well); a wildlife or wild flower garden (School project) are some ideas that might be considered. There is potential for even greater nature conservation in the village. A good starting point would be to identify the wildlife habitats of your catchment area and see what species of animals, birds and fish these attract. Look to your local environmental experts and groups to get involved.

### **LANDSCAPING**

The treatment of open spaces throughout is critical to the overall presentation of the village. This is improving and includes not just the maintenance of grassed areas and roadside verges but other hard surfaced areas e.g. around the school/church/hall, at the Pub and elsewhere and these are equally important. Planted trees, shrubs and flowers, either in window boxes, tubs or beds, as seen on the day of adjudication are an improvement on the previous occasion when OCallaghans Mills was in the Competition (1994), notably in the area around the Church, Community hall and school; around the post box near the pub; at the Post Office and village pump and at individual houses and their gardens throughout the village. However, a number of flower tubs are broken and some need re-planting - the problem here is really one of setting a standard and having it evenly applied throughout.

### **THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT**

The public and commercial premises are generally well presented. The Community Hall and the handball alley are to be commended in this section; the Church and the church grounds and the School next to it are most attractive. The Mill Tavern is an important focal point in the village and, as such, a brighter, colourful scheme might be considered by the owner. The Post Office and the nearby village pump are both well maintained and presented. However, Telecom Eireann could be approached to replace the old phone box with a more modern easier maintained model. Campbells Self Catering premises is another nicely presented premises. Smiths premises on the Kilkishen road was being re-painted at time of adjudication. The old water mill (1772) is an important heritage property in the village which has again fallen into disrepair. It was restored previously in the mid-70s and the new development groups plans to rescue it once more are to be commended - the project should include greater visibility or public access to the river as a feature of the mill operation. Also, the nearby old forge could be better presented as an interesting feature. Some more thought might be given to the artifacts, seating and landscaping. The well project is developing nicely although the sign is still missing. With some additional work around the entrance and the well itself, it will be another interesting feature.

### **LITTER CONTROL**

Litter control is reasonably good and obviously the provision of litter bins, involving the youth club and the School is having an effect.

#### TIDINESS

The village was generally neat and tidy throughout but back lanes or entries and rusting or broken galvanised roofs/sheds take from this. The number of derelict buildings are a problem that the development group are aware of and your approach is probably all that can be done at present.

#### RESIDENTIAL AREAS

In the residential section of the adjudication, most private houses throughout the village are making a commendable contribution to the overall appearance of the village, particularly on the immediate approaches from both Tulla and Broadford. In the Doonaille estate, individual house are all neatly kept and nicely presented with but a few exceptions, notably the house on the entrance to the estate. The proposed amenity area at the approach to this estate and the other open spaces further in and at the back of the estate will greatly enhance this area.

#### ROADS, STREETS AND BACK AREAS

The main approach roads are reasonably well maintained from Broadford and Tulla. The other, minor approach roads, from Bodyke and Kilkishen could be improved. The village signs and other signposting in the village are alright but these should not be allowed to be obliterated by overgrown grassy banks. Finger post signs and speed limit signs also should not be allowed to become dirty or rusting. The link road between the two ends of the village should be considered as an inner approach to either end and it should be treated as such.

#### GENERAL IMPRESSION

The overall impression is that OCallaghans Mills is improving even though there are a number of problems and difficulties facing the new Community Development group. However, it should be possible to successfully overcome these with a planned integrated approach over time. The advice of the Local Authority, Shannon Development and the other Agencies should be sought in preparing that plan.