

"Caring for our environment"

Centre : **CASTLETOWN**
County : **LAOIS**
Category : **B**

Results

Date of Adjudication : 16-06-96

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded
Overall Developmental Approach	50	40
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	14
Landscaping	40	35
The Built Environment	40	33
Litter Control	40	37
Tidiness	20	15
Residential Areas	30	24
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	33
General Impression	10	9
TOTAL MARK	300	240

Adjudicator's Comments

OVERALL DEVELOPMENTAL APPROACH

It is salutary to read in the answers to the questionnaire of the support given by so many sectors of the community to the Tidy Towns Association. It is also good to note the co-operative effort involving the County Council and the FAS employment training scheme. The proposal for a wildlife garden for as early as next year emphasises the attitude of this committee to imaginative initiatives. Thank you for the copy of "Our Place Past and Present", an unusually comprehensive parish record. There is little to say in praise of Castletown which has not been said before, save to comment briefly on achievements of the past year. Thank you for your helpful map and notes.

WILDLIFE AND NATURAL AMENITIES

A nominal mark is being given to committees which have not yet entered a project or projects under this new heading. The start of your wildlife garden will be looked forward to next year. You might also consider the signposting of existing walks or nature trails centred on the village.

LANDSCAPING

The expansive lawns and beautifully trimmed roadside verges are once again an outstanding feature. The planting of 1,000 quickenwoods and 350 beeches for hedging this year has been very favourably noted. Flowerbeds in public spaces are both colourful and appropriate to the village setting. For example, the choice of mixed herbaceous plants, perennials as well as annuals, seemingly arranged at random in the triangular bed at the top of the town is so much better than regimented bedding plants which might look better in a city park. The waterside amenity, and the landscaping of the salient elements, is a lesson in environmental simplicity and usefulness. This amenity will be entered for the Waterside Award.

THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

The church, schools and monastery buildings are all maintained to a remarkably high standard. Business premises are also well looked after.

LITTER CONTROL

There was virtually no litter on adjudication day, even though there were large crowds visiting the swimming place and the park beside the Nore.

TIDINESS

As well as an absence of disposable litter, there was no kerbside weed, and weeds were not seen in other places. Untidy signage and wirescapes are also conspicuously absent in Castletown.

RESIDENTIAL AREAS

It is the older houses which give Castletown its special charm. (This years adjudicator echoes the view of last years in suggesting that the installation of PVC glazing bars should be resisted when renovating windows of Georgian houses). Householders are complimented on gardens where trailing plants are encouraged to cascade over boundary walls and fences. The cottages in the trim estate facing the Borris road were well presented on adjudication day, as were the houses in the estate next the castle ramparts.

ROADS, STREETS AND BACK AREAS

Surfaces and paving are generally good. There are no black spots. Street furniture is adequate.

GENERAL IMPRESSION

In a few places is rural charm so well nurtured in the village situation.

SECOND ADJUDICATION

The approach to the village from the Portlaoise side is excellent. It is recommended that the entrance for Borris-in-Ossory be examined, particularly as new houses have back gardens to the N7 main road. There was no evidence of litter and tidiness was very good. The absence of overhead wires was particularly noticeable. It is recommended that the village green be defined more by the completion of the horse-chestnut perimeter plantings on two sides, leaving the third side open. There was a good use of colour on buildings. The forecourt area of the Girl's School should be examined both inside and outside the railings as the present arrangement is rather bland. The outer parking area should be defined more strongly. Overall, a most impressive village with a great sense of local community pride.