

"Caring for our environment"

Centre : **STRADBALLY-LAOIS**
County : **LAOIS**
Category : **C**

Results

Date of Adjudication : 19-06-96

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded
Overall Developmental Approach	50	39
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	13
Landscaping	40	31
The Built Environment	40	28
Litter Control	40	27
Tidiness	20	14
Residential Areas	30	20
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	32
General Impression	10	7
TOTAL MARK	300	211

Adjudicator's Comments

OVERALL DEVELOPMENTAL APPROACH

Fund-raising activities, as outlined in answers to the questionnaire and the widespread co-operative effort with other groups and official bodies, are exceptionally impressive. Your future projects show a spirit of enterprise and imagination. Your remarks about changes in the format of the competition have been taken into consideration; these changes are partially experimental and will be reviewed at the end of the year, depending on feedback such as yours. Thank you for the ordinance survey map with recent developments very clearly marked - but did you know that Woodview is not shown? Your work and achievement over the past year is well beyond the usual.

WILDLIFE AND NATURAL AMENITIES

Your proposals for the future of Oakvale seem very sound. (This section is being marked with an "average" figure as several committees do not have wildlife projects in hand yet).

LANDSCAPING

Court Square is splendid - it is some years since this adjudicator was in Stradbally and the improvements here are a delight. It is with real pleasure that this project will be entered for the national award; the layout, the judicious mixture of plants, the finely mown lawns, all contribute towards a gracious urban prospect, with the handsome courthouse and the well kept mainly 19th century houses as background. The river amenity did not seem to reach the same standard of excellence. Planting at Woodview was also noted, as well as the shrubs and bedding plants at various places throughout the town. Several small tubs did not seem to have been planted, but adjudication day may have coincided with changing from early to late annuals.

THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

The chief public buildings - churches, schools, courthouse - are all well maintained. The Minch Norton warehouse is certainly a problem - it is extremely handsome and to the casual passer-by does not look particularly unsightly, but the fact is it is deteriorating. (It is difficult to find new uses for large old buildings such as this and the convent, except in more populated areas where hotels and apartments have been created. The warehouse at Graiguenamanagh is an outstanding example of this). None of the business premises proposed for the shopfront awards were sufficiently remarkable to be entered; as well as high quality design and craftsmanship on the frontage, the criteria included absence of mass produced or plastic signs, absence of window stickers, absence of "bathroom type" tiles, and upper stories, including roofs and chimney stacks, must be in perfect condition.

LITTER CONTROL

This was disappointing. In spite of the "litter alert" on Mondays, there was a considerable amount of litter (on a Wednesday) and some may have been there for some days. The lane beside the Parochial House (down to the back of the Woodview), the bricked area in the centre of Woodview, and the area around the public toilets were the worst places. There were even cans and wrappers in the basin of the Lambert sculpture!

TIDINESS

Litter was the main problem on adjudication day. There was also kerbside weed in some areas and hay should always be removed from grassed areas at time of cutting. In general, however, Stradbally looked tidy - there are not too many projecting signs and wirescapes are not over-dominant.

RESIDENTIAL AREAS

The older street and terrace houses, which give Stradbally such character, were almost all well kept, with many pleasing floral displays and the delightful touches such as the Methodist chapel. (Disguised derelict cottages might be rehabilitated by the Local Authority - apparently this has been done elsewhere, with two cottages made into one, at less expense than building council cottages). The new estate off the Timahoe road was coming along well - some gardens were already laid. Woodview was very spruce on adjudication day, except for the litter referred to above. There are a number of excellently kept suburban properties - one single example: the house on the Portlaoise road with the wonderful crimson geraniums.

ROADS, STREETS & BACK AREAS

Surfaces and paving were generally good - very good in Court Square and up to the GAA park. The upgrading of the area around the toilets will be looked forward to. Approach roads were reasonably kept; the Portlaoise approach was very good.

GENERAL IMPRESSION

Very good indeed. This committee is very much aware of problems and is coming to grips with them in an orderly way.

SECOND ADJUDICATION

The immediate impression on entering this fine town is the presence of some of the public buildings in very good condition. It is also obvious that a huge effort is being made to up-grade and improve the streetscapes, and particular mention must be given to the O'Briens and It's Here shops. The main problem is associated with the core elements of the competition - litter and tidiness. Litter was present in a number of places, including the sculpture basin. The central grass area needs cutting/edging and the flower beds were in need of weed control. Broken panes of glass were noted in the Courthouse and the galvanised side gate should be replaced. Some housing estates show substantial efforts being made. However, it is never advised to paint over brick walls, as was evident in some places.