

"Caring for our environment"

Centre : **ATHEA VILLAGE**
County : **LIMERICK**
Category : **B**

Results

Date of Adjudication : 23-06-96

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded
Overall Developmental Approach	50	33
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	25
Landscaping	40	28
The Built Environment	40	30
Litter Control	40	29
Tidiness	20	13
Residential Areas	30	25
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	30
General Impression	10	7
TOTAL MARK	300	220

Adjudicator's Comments

OVERALL DEVELOPMENTAL APPROACH

Although you did not submit a 3/5 year work programme, you seem to have a very clear idea of what you would like to achieve in the future for your town. Your relationship and level of communication with both FAS and Limerick County Council are to be commended.

WILDLIFE AND NATURAL AMENITIES

Perhaps the best approach to this issue of wildlife/natural amenities would be to contact local environmental groups and experts who could advise you and provide you with the information you need to tackle this broad-ranging issue. From there you can then identify the wildlife habitats of your area and see what varieties of animals, birds, fish and plantlife these attract. Involve the local schoolchildren in this project - they will hopefully bring a fresh enthusiasm for the wealth of wildlife in their locality.

LANDSCAPING

The standard in this category was high, with great efforts being made both in terms of general maintenance and private endeavours. The stone wall surround with its inset seating area to the monument on its cobble stone base looked very well. The crenellated stone features to the road signs were admired. Countess Markievicz Park was well maintained, although some bare patches were obvious to the grassed area. The landscaping along the main street (in the vicinity of Nolan's) with the lowered footpath is most effective. The bridge area is well maintained with the new trees. There is an ideal opportunity for developing amenity spaces to either side of the bridge. The new trees to the hall and the riverside area will be a great asset to the town in years to come.

THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Both public and commercial buildings in the town were presented to a high standard this year. The Carnegie library is a fine building and looked quite fresh. The Garda station is another attractive piece of architectural heritage, which could be freshly painted and its gate repaired. The church and grounds looked very well, although the boundary wall could be freshly painted - the colourful tubs in front were admired. The modern memorial hall was admired although it could be freshened up before next year's competition. It has been beautifully landscaped, with new trees, although the sand and gravel to the rear area should be removed and the oil tank camouflaged in some way. The old schoolhouse could be freshened up. The Tops of the Town, Lyon's lounge bar and Casey's should replace their plastic signage with more traditional timber ones. E. O'Connor's sported some most profuse hanging baskets and attractive window boxes, as did Collins. Stapleton's was also admired for its colourful window boxes. Browne's hardware and drapery looked very fresh with its hanging baskets. The extension to the back of the Village Inn badly needs a fresh coat of paint, and Griffin's appeared a little flaky.

LITTER CONTROL

There was little evidence of litter on adjudication day, although some was apparent outside the premises with the curved canopy, and a little along the Main Street.

TIDINESS

The general level of tidiness in the village on adjudication day was very good. However, when considering this issue it is important not to neglect such items as car parks, forecourt areas and messy yard areas. There is an area of open space on the right hand side of the Abbeyfeale road (approaching the town) which is just crying out for a purpose. Also along this road a weedy forecourt area to a bungalow was noticed. The telephone boxes in front of Griffin's butchers shop were badly stained. There were several messy and weedy yard areas in the village which gave a bad impression and should be tidied up and/or screened from public view. These were the area between the two houses opposite

Browne's, the weedy yard area up the Lane, and the yard/storage area filled with abandoned cars & tractors etc. between the doctor's and the funeral home. The yard to the Creamery was neat but the outbuildings behind looked unfortunate. The car park areas between the Top of the Town and the funeral parlour and that to the G.A.A. grounds were quite weedy, while the latter's bare concrete block wall should be plastered and painted.

RESIDENTIAL AREAS

The standard in this category was very high indeed with houses generally appearing very fresh and clean. However, some boundary walls needed painting. The attractive thatched cottages on the Abbeyfeale road were admired, in particular for the occupant's extensions of their attentions to the roadside areas in front of their gardens. The lovely garden with the Easter lilies on the village side of the bridge looked very well, as did the green house on the bend on the right hand side of the road coming into the village with its beautiful display of roses and magnificent hanging baskets. Another glorious garden was spotted to the terraced houses. The doctor's house and boundary wall had been freshly painted. The properties along the Lane looked splendid - the grey house with hanging baskets used as window boxes, the low white-washed wall with aubretia and sumptuously scented wild roses opposite and the beautiful 'secret' house at the top of the lane. All in all a fantastic effort!

ROADS, STREETS AND BACK AREAS

The streets of the village were presented to a high standard also. The Abbeyfeale road looked well with its abundance of wild flowers such as wild hazel, foxgloves, buttercups, rhododendrons and wild clover. The verges had been cut relatively recently and the signage was quite fresh. The Listowel road also sported wild flowers including wild sage, foxgloves, roses and wild ferns in the hedgerows. The Glin road was admired for its new trees, reasonably well cut back verges and attractive stone walls. However, the village nameplate sign was rather grubby. The verges had been cut to the speed limit signs on the Rathkeale road. The stone walls at the back of the memorial hall were admired for their unusual angled patterning. The boundary wall to the Giant's garden should be washed, and some weeds were noted at the kerbside.

GENERAL IMPRESSION

As it was this adjudicator's first visit to the village, I was suitably impressed by its many charms! The attractive village of Athea looked well on Adjudication Day and with more attention to detail could do extremely well in the Competition in years to come.

SECOND ADJUDICATION

The second adjudicator had not visited Athea since its first year of entry into the competition and the change has been extraordinary. The whole village is looking so much better cared for. The two most noticeable improvements are the building and restoration of stone walls and the planting of various kinds. (The old cement ball alley is something of a blot, though not a serious one, in the midst of this). On second adjudication day there was considerable weed growth along the Newcastle West road; so much effort has been put into this area that it is a pity a small thing like this can be left to chance. Congratulations on a very fine achievement.