

"Caring for our environment"

Centre : **ROSCREA**
County : **TIPPERARY NORTH**
Category : **D**

Results

Date of Adjudication : 03-07-96

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded
Overall Developmental Approach	50	35
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	19
Landscaping	40	29
The Built Environment	40	31
Litter Control	40	25
Tidiness	20	12
Residential Areas	30	19
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	24
General Impression	10	7
TOTAL MARK	300	201

Adjudicator's Comments

OVERALL DEVELOPMENTAL APPROACH

Over the years Roscrea has proven that it is a Town that puts immense effort into its submission. Last years adjudicator credits it with being the best in the country. This concerted effort has been translated into practical results, Roscrea was Super Valu Endeavour Award winner in 1992 and has a beautiful plaque erected to commemorate the occasion. This year competition saw a number of changes in format and criteria and as a result a very comprehensive application /entry form was prepared and forwarded to all competing towns and villages. Once again Roscrea responded by forwarding one of the most detailed submissions that this adjudicator has encountered.

When I received all this information I felt a little daunted about the task that lay ahead of me . My first reaction was could this submission have been condensed into more concise format as follows : Application Form and Map plus an up to date copy of the most recent Work Programme that would encompass all that was ongoing . While not wishing to downgrade the efforts of such a dedicated committee, I would suggest that for next years competition that a much more concise application be submitted. Personally I feel that it serve the towns cause just as well and would also help the adjudicator to do a better job. Having said all that there is no doubt that the developmental approach ethos is being put into practice by the committee. There is excellent harnessing of support from all sections of the community in terms of fund-raising and voluntary work. The interaction between the local authority and other statutory bodies again has resulted in practical support as outlined in the application form. Thanks for a very detailed map which was extremely helpful in identifying all the areas in and around the town. All and all an excellent example of development work at it its best but consider the poor adjudicator when submitting next year's entry form.

WILDLIFE AND NATURAL AMENITIES

Roscrea again was one of the applicants to the forefront in submitting a planned programme under this new section. The Whitepark Wildlife Centre in honour of the European Year of the Environment will be a added attraction to the town when complete. The Riverside Garden will give a vibrancy to an area which to say the least is rather dull and needs revitalising; there will be more comment in relevant sections to follow.

LANDSCAPING

The landscaping programme already in place and at present being undertaken is effective in certain parts of the town and its surrounds but not so effective in other parts. This may not be because of the choice of trees, shrubs or flowers but because of other determining factors which may militate against good planting. I cite an example which may not be obvious to the committee: Roscrea GAA Grounds has 16 rowan trees planted in front of a boundary wall which to say the least is grubby and unsightly. This seems to be a question of the cart before the horse; many clubs have availed of FAS schemes to upgrade their grounds and build clubhouses and boundary walls. The Kinnity Road will benefit from the planting that has been done when these trees mature and provide a good shelter belt in years to come. Favourable comment also on the shrub and flower planting especially at the Grotto, there is a good mix of perennial and annuals in place here. Great efforts have been made, in terms of planting, on the Ashbury Road to give the place a more appealing look; unfortunately this is offset by other negatives which will be referred to in a further section.

The Railway Bridge area is benefiting from the ongoing work that is at present taking place, but Iarnod Road need to put in a little more effort to complement this. Planting should be continued all along the wall at Freshland Foods. The `Old Dublin Road` was excellent combining copper beech trees with lovely shrub and flower beds. The award winning ICA roadside garden was once again excellently maintained. The core area around Rosemary Sq. and Abbey Street was beautiful with a combination of stone flower beds individual tubs and baskets and a selection of rowan and lime trees. Dohertys Hardware deserve special mention for their overall development which has a beautiful flower bed on top of a 10 ft wall.

Unique. Other individual areas that deserve mention for effective planting are St Cronans Church and Round Rower, St Cronans Parish Hall, and the whole area around Gaol Road, Glebe View and the Mall. Unfortunately there are more examples of the cart before the horse scenarios notably in the Assumption Park area on Ashbury Road where you have an embankment well planted, but weed ridden, totally negated by the appalling condition of the footpaths. I have no doubt that even greater effort will be made to rectify these issues.

THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

The main impression that one forms having traversed the town and its environs is that there seems to be a slight gap in the standards of presentation between the town per se and the outlying areas. Certainly the main core of the town seems to have benefited more than the environs which I suppose is to be expected. The standard of buildings in the centre of town is excellent especially around Rosemary Sq., Rose Street and Main Street. There are some lovely examples of old shop fronts in and around Rosemary Sq. `Phillip O Rourke's` and `Moneen House` come to mind as being particularly impressive; these have been complemented by the impressive wall at `Dohertys Hardware`. The fountain when completed will be beautiful and will further enhance this already attractive area. The following business premises caught the eye in Main Street for their originality `Supermacs`, `Mick Delahunty's`, `The P O` on the corner of Castle Street, `Garda Station` and `Roscrea Credit Union`. The houses on Grove Street are slowly being denuded of their originality by the removal of the original facades; in fairness some looked well preserved particularly one in the centre of the street with lovely hanging baskets. `Hogans Cairpead Siopa` and `The Railway Bar` in this area looked very well. The footpaths and kerbing on this street were in poor condition and need to be addressed. One could go into great detail in commenting on each particular area of the town and end up writing a mini tome, suffice to say that Roscrea did not earn its high rating without good reason. Personally I feel that the overall standard of building presentation is very high but as stated in the beginning of this section there is a gap between the core and the environs. Other selected buildings that deserve mention are the lovely ivy clad house on Church Street Junction `Ivy Nook`, `St Cronans Workshop` on the Templemore Rd, `Roscrea Youth Club Building` which is exceptionally restored as is the `Courthouse` in this area. The `Methodist Church` and `R C Church` are a credit to the people responsible for their upkeep. There are a number of derelict buildings which have been identified by the committee as problematic; hopefully the problems will be solved. Again like the houses on Grove Street the Victorian houses on Limerick Road are slowly falling into a bad state of disrepair.

LITTER CONTROL

The town was certainly not free of litter on the adjudication day; allowance has to be made for the size of Roscrea but the level of litter was still unacceptable. The Kinnitty Road had far too much litter by Assumption Park down to the Railway Bridge. The Birr Road also had too much litter as had Monastery Road; there seemed to be a lack of rubbish bins especially on the Birr Road and in and around Alleys Lane and Grove Street where the problem was at its worst.

There was also litter in the Bank of Ireland Carpark, parts of Castle Street and even in and around St Cronans Church. Contrast this with Rosemary Square which was litter free on the day of adjudication.

TIDINESS

Again there were gaps in the level of tidiness between the core and the outlying areas. Without going into too much detail the following are areas that need attention under this heading. The Assumption Park area; whilst the houses were kept well, weed control was poor and the footpaths were appalling; more attention should be diverted to these problem areas irrespective of whose responsibility it is as they won't go away of their own accord. A number of signs in this area were in need of painting. The Railway Station needs more weed control as a contribution to the efforts to upgrade the immediate area. The problem of messy caravan sites in and around the town especially on the approach roundabouts is something that will require a great deal of initiative and patience on the part of the committee, if the sites could be cleaned regularly it would help but there lies a saga!

RESIDENTIAL AREAS

Assumption Park, (actually Cnoc Mhuire is the official name; how does one get Assumption Park from that?), looked quite well with most houses making a great effort to give a good image. The Grotto looked very well, obviously cared for by the residents. Sheehane Estate off Alleys Lane was in reasonable condition but the green areas need to be revitalised by way of a planting scheme. Kennedy Park on the Templemore Road was varied, the houses in the front were extremely well kept but in around the estate it was mixed. Are representatives of these areas part of the committee? I feel that estates such as the ones mentioned are often on the periphery of activities such as Tidy Towns; this is not peculiar to Roscrea of course. Special mention to the residents of the Terrace Of Houses on the Limerick Road and those on Green Street for the special effort they have put into their premises.

ROADS, STREETS AND BACK AREAS

The Kinnity Road looks extremely well, the grass margins are cut back and the trees planted last year give this approach a very inviting look. The Ashbury Road despite all the effort put into planting shrubs and trees is not very good. The grass margins need to be cut, there are a number of untidy sites, and the entrances to the Industrial Estate need to look better, the boundary fencing needs painting. The Birr Road is very impressive with trees maturing and rose beds in full bloom. The Old Dublin Road was enhanced by the award winning roadside garden but there were a number of messy sites and too much flyposting as one progressed to the roundabout..

On Monastery Road there were some signs that need painting, Mt. Dudley House had a very impressive entrance as you approached the town. The Knock Road was well presented as was the Templemore Road which was indeed very impressive except for the premises with all the `retired` cars. Quite considerable work has gone into the two approach roundabouts and this was reflected in the way both looked on adjudication day very good.

GENERAL IMPRESSION

In terms of the amount of effort put into forward planning and attention to detail it would be hard to equal the Roscrea Tidy Towns Committee. The Committee has harnessed the energies and skills of all sections of the community and indeed are to forefront in encouraging the involvement of the youth of the town. Investing in youth will pay dividend in years to come as they will have gained from the experience and hopefully bring their own ideas to future Tidy Towns committees. This is one of the most impressive submissions in terms of content and more importantly addressing the problem areas and trying to take measures to rectify them. The sensitivity of how the traveller problem is being handled is a case and point. Roscrea has benefited from the collective effort in that it has been consistently gaining top marks.

SECOND ADJUDICATION (14/08/96)

It was most interesting to visit Roscrea this year to see how the by-pass has affected the town centre. Indeed it was a great relief to be able to enjoy the streets without having to negotiate heavy traffic. Perhaps now the road surfacing might be improved throughout and the marking repainted. Just a little litter was noted but generally the town had a tidy appearance. Many shopfronts have been greatly improved in recent times and especially commended are those where fresh paint has been employed. Window stickers created superfluous clutter on many frontages. Green areas were for the most part well tended and admired. The mature urban park, with the colourful play ground, adds a splash of colour and sense of spontaneity. Beautiful gardens were noted throughout, especially those with well clipped hedges and white metal railings.