

"Caring for our environment"

Centre : **ARKLOW**
County : **WICKLOW**
Category : **E**

Results

Date of Adjudication : 25-06-96

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded
Overall Developmental Approach	50	30
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	20
Landscaping	40	28
The Built Environment	40	26
Litter Control	40	26
Tidiness	20	12
Residential Areas	30	18
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	24
General Impression	10	6
TOTAL MARK	300	190

Adjudicator's Comments

OVERALL DEVELOPMENTAL APPROACH

Welcome to the new format Tidy Towns Competition. The changes in the competition place more emphasis on tidiness and litter control as well as on wildlife. Overall there appears to be good co-operation between the voluntary and business sectors and the Urban District Council. Good efforts have been made on open spaces in residential areas. There are still many areas such as the harbour area, that need a co-ordinated approach to development and upgrading. The adjudicators would have welcomed a detailed work programme, or even an outline map showing the areas that have been improved since last year.

WILDLIFE AND NATURAL AMENITIES

Arklow has a number of strengths in the area of wildlife. It is encouraging to note that the town has a number of physical features which provide a perfect backdrop for the development of wildlife throughout the town and Arklow can expect to do well in this section through the River Walk, the nature reserve and other areas including open spaces. The adjudicators were particularly impressed with the nature reserve. It is nice to see that you have achieved a good mix of leisure facilities and wildlife living as one through the location of the leisure centre and swimming pool adjacent to the wildlife park. The large pond and the walks around it provide a very attractive amenity. It is good to see that interpretation boards are in place - perhaps they need to be replaced as they are faded. It was slightly disappointing to see that litter was in evidence in this area, both at the outskirts of the pond itself, in the area surrounding it and around litter bins - this may have been due to the interference of crows at the time of adjudication. More litter bins with lids would perhaps be beneficial. The adjudicators also noted the very attractive lake at the caravan park with swans, signets, ducks and coots. This area was totally litter free - well done. The River Walk is a very nice attractive amenity. Unfortunately, the premises fronting on to the River Walk takes from the attractiveness of the area. The signage/container at the paddle boats area should be improved. Overall, a very good effort was made in the area apart from the litter noted at the Nature Reserve.

LANDSCAPING

The adjudicators were very impressed with the landscaping efforts throughout the entire town of Arklow this year. It is good to see that the voluntary efforts and the efforts of the local authority are paying dividends. Many areas were looking well at the time of adjudication, particularly the flower tubs and tree planting near John Byrnes. The golf course grounds and car park area were very neat and tidy. The area by the lifeboat was also very good with grass cutting taking place at the time of adjudication. Outside the Caravan Park at St Patricks Terrace was particularly attractive with a beautiful display of a variety of flowers. The adjudicators also noted that maximum use is being made of open spaces through the provision of seating and maintenance of grassed areas, as well as tree planting. One or two areas needed attention. For example, to the front of the Sea Scouts, the boat/flower bed needs to be replaced and weeding was also required. Also, try to watch out for weeds on kerbs and footpaths, as in some cases it did detract from the overall appearance, e.g. on the approach road from Gorey.

THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

A number of improvements were noted throughout the town of Arklow this year. Well done to those businesses involved. A majority of the public buildings were looking well at time of adjudication. The adjudicators would particularly like to mention the grounds of the Urban District Council/Court House which had an excellent presentation together with the Church of Ireland on the Coolgreaney Road. A number of B&Bs were also noted for their efforts, particularly one or two on the Gorey approach road. It is nice to see that there is a continued programme of refurbishment of shopfronts with several new buildings noted, e.g. the Style Bureau; Ripleys; Gails; Duffys; AIB Bank and, in particular, Bolands) Kittys and Roses Florists were also quite nice. Other new premises noted were Joannes and An Ciscan Arain. The Church next to Avonmore B&B is a particularly attractive building. There is still however significant room

for improvement in this section, particularly with some of the business premises. Outside Tom Halpin & Son in the harbour area was particularly unsightly. National Home Fuels had a very disappointing presentation outside it - this needs to be addressed. Along the Main Street and other streets there are many examples where plastic signage could be replaced. Also, the Planning Authority might be consulted as they could provide advice on use of proper signage, traditional materials etc. It is felt that while the mural is a nice feature, the side of the Bridge Hotel has been over-decorated. Noritake is also taking from the overall appearance of the harbour area. Outside the Leisure Centre was litter free but the swimming pool area could be upgraded.

LITTER CONTROL

Generally, for a town of Arklow's size, litter control is quite good throughout. There is evidence that a concerted effort is being made to control litter through the presence of litter bins and through the strict approach to litter offenders. However, there are problem areas such as the nature reserve where litter was in evidence near the litter bins and actually in the pond itself. Small sprinklings were also noted, for example, opposite the school on the Coolgreaney Road. There is a need for litter bins in the south shore car park - while the Main Street, was relatively litter free, small sprinklings were noted - increased vigilance is needed here.

TIDINESS

Generally, there is a very tidy appearance to the town of Arklow. A number of areas which take from the overall tidiness include the overhead wires; shop front signage; weeds on kerbs, along footpaths and on approach roads, and general landscaping in some areas. The streets were relatively litter free and it was nice to see the underground cabling of wires on the Main Street. The presence of flower beds and maintenance of open spaces has already been mentioned. Well done in this area. Residential areas are litter free overall, showing that there is a strong pride within these areas. At the South Beach Car Park, the grass needed to be cut by the seating. Perhaps more landscaping could be carried out here also. The adjudicators were very impressed with the maintenance of the South Quay area. Well done; the area was absolutely immaculate. Flower baskets on the poles on the approach roads and on the Main Street were looking very well at time of adjudication.

RESIDENTIAL AREAS

There appears to be a consistent effort in the presentation of residential estates visited by the adjudicators. The majority of the parks and their entrances were looking well and the residential areas of the town itself show evidence of good maintenance. There is obviously strong pride with particular premises and their owners. The majority of B&Bs were also looking very well at the time of adjudication. Overall, a good performance in this section.

ROADS, STREETS AND BACK AREAS

Overall, quite a good performance in this section as well this year. On the Coolgreaney Road grass verges had been cut. Approaching from Woodenbridge, the gravel near the kerbing could be removed. Small amounts of litter were noted opposite the Arklow sign and perhaps the sign itself could be upgraded. Approaching Arklow from Gorey, tree planting was noted. Cleaning of the footpaths and grass cutting were taking place on day of adjudication. Unfortunately, the weeds along the kerbs/footpaths do take from the overall appearance. Approaching Arklow from Wicklow, there is again a good impression, with a high level of maintenance on the left hand side around the flower presentation and anchor. The Accident Black Spot sign needs to be cleaned. The adjudicators were also impressed with the side streets and back streets of the town, where there was good litter control. From Brittas Bay, the outer approach was very attractive. Closer in there was a good effort with flowers noted outside the Caravan Park. Well done. Overall, quite a good performance in this area. Continued vigilance is needed.

GENERAL IMPRESSION

The adjudicators felt that the general impression of Arklow this year was quite good. There is good evidence of effort throughout the town. Overall, there is quite good litter control. Open spaces, even though there is a very significant number throughout the town, are well maintained. Flower baskets are well watered. Residential areas are good. Generally there was quite a good impression. Lack of attention to detail can detract from the overall presentations. Try to encourage more businesses to improve their premises. Continue with tree planting and maintenance of open spaces. It is nice to see that a number of water pumps throughout the town were nicely painted. The adjudicators enjoyed their visit to Arklow and look forward to further improvements in 1997.