

*"Caring for our environment"*

Centre : **ASHFORD**  
County : **WICKLOW**  
Category : **B**

**Results**

Date of Adjudication : 27-06-96

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded
Overall Developmental Approach	50	30
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	18
Landscaping	40	25
The Built Environment	40	16
Litter Control	40	27
Tidiness	20	13
Residential Areas	30	17
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	24
General Impression	10	5
<b>TOTAL MARK</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>175</b>

## Adjudicator's Comments

### OVERALL DEVELOPMENTAL APPROACH

Welcome to the new format of the 1996 Tidy Towns Competition. Thank you for very detailed questionnaire and map which were helpful during the course of adjudication. We welcome your proposals and objectives, and look forward to your detailed five year plan for next year's competition. Overall, there was quite a good impression created by the adjudicators visit to Ashford this year. Try to maintain the character of the village. The adjudicators do appreciate that there is a high level of traffic passing through the village, and in spite of this, there was a good presentation. The adjudicators appreciate that you have to work within the existing towns scape. Try to build on local strengths; for example, Mount Usher Gardens as a theme of plants and Strawbridge Furniture - could be used as a showcase for other towns under the area of plants or street furniture. The new residential park was relatively well maintained. One area which must be tackled by the village is the overuse of signs at the Texaco Station (over 20 signs were noted - this is detrimental in the overall appearance).

### WILDLIFE AND NATURAL AMENITIES

A nice brook was noted on the Roundwood approach road at the 40 MPH sign. The river area was clean and is a very nice feature - it was nice to see wildflowers in full bloom along the river bank. The removal of the weeds at the bridge itself opens up the vista; good improvement. There was a good variety of fish, birds, insects and flowers in the river - try to further promote this. Perhaps a good starting point in the area of nature conservation would be to identify the wildlife habitats in your catchment area and see what species of animals, birds and fish these attract. Why not invite your local environmental experts and groups to get involved and to advise you and provide you with the specialist information you require. Perhaps an interpretation area by the river would be nice and your plans for the proposal for a little river bank seating area would also be welcomed.

### LANDSCAPING

Overall, a good effort has been noted to date. You have a number of very nice features, Mount Usher Gardens is beautiful, but is hidden from the passer by. The riverside area would be a nice feature; we looking forward to your developments of this area. At Ballinalea triangle, grass had been cut; the litter bin and seating were noted. Opposite Mount Usher Gardens continues to be an eyesore and this will have to be an important part of your overall plan. The seating by the Garda Station was quite nice. Tree planting was noted at the concrete wall near Bolands. Nice planting was noted at the bridge of the river. Flowerbeds at the car park by Ashford House were also very neat and tidy, with trees coming on well. Perhaps consider the use of more traditional or more attractive flower containers if possible; this would dramatically enhance the appearance of the village. Again, the links with Mount Usher Gardens could perhaps provide a theme on which to build a strong visual presence through the presence of flowers.

### THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

There is a mixed presentation here. The derelict buildings are in need of attention, you might try to work on these for the coming year. The ESSO and Texaco Stations have too much signage. Mount Usher Gardens; Kingfisher and the Garda Station were all very well presented with flower boxes noted at the Garda Station - could the car park perimeter wall at Mount Usher Gardens consider putting in a floral presentation for next year. Too much signage in the window at Connollys and it would also benefit from painting. Perhaps painting of Ashford House might improve its appearance. It was nice to see the shopfront improvement at Clarke Auctioneers as well as at the N-Eleven. Outside Martsworth was litter free. Kanes were also overdoing it with the signage (ten signs noted here). The Church grounds were very well presented, as were the school grounds with flower baskets noted. The Butchers/Ashford Meats were also well presented and at the Video Village it was litter free and flower boxes noted. At Jim Hanleys it had a very negative appearance, even though work was going on - the existing building would have benefited from painting.

## LITTER CONTROL

Very good litter control was noted throughout Ashford this year, even in spite of the large volume of daily traffic. The Keep Wicklow Litter Free signs were noted. The only place where litter was evident was on the kerbs/margin opposite Jim Hanleys and on the approach from Glenealy. The area along by the Main Street was all litter free as was the area by the Bus Stop.

## TIDINESS

Generally, Ashford is very tidy in appearance; There are however, a number of areas that take from the overall appearance, including the area opposite Mount Usher Gardens car park and the signage which is getting out of control. The adjudicators would earnestly hope that the Tidy Towns Committee would encourage the commercial operators in the village to agree on a policy about signposting amongst themselves. With regard to the bottle bank, it was nice to see these facilities available, but they could perhaps be better screened. The area nearby was litter free. Weeds were noted along the footpath, on the left hand side approach from Dublin. Try to watch the signs; some were dirty, particularly the Glendalough and Wexford sign and graffiti on the Glendalough/Roundwood sign.

## RESIDENTIAL AREAS

Generally, there is a good impression throughout the town. The house next to the Parish Church house(?) had a fantastic presentation of Rhododendrons. The park by Carriglen B&B was okay. The Old Rectory has a very attractive entrance. It was nice to see a thatched house, even if it was screened by hedging. Good effort was also noted by the house next to Village Video, well done here. The Ballinlea Area, weeds by the kerbs were noted, grass was okay - good individual premises were noted here. At River Walk Park, perhaps some tree planting at the entrance might be considered and the possibility of opening up the river may or may not be a possibility depending on the age of children. The entrance was well presented with a litter bin noted, however, within the park, weeds were noted along by kerbs - the two turning areas were not well maintained, litter was noted at one end while grass cuttings and debris were dumped at the other end and both of these were overgrown. In the Council estate, Woodview, the entrance and the area to the left hand side was very well presented. In Woodview itself, the telephone box/boxes were particularly bad - the adjudicators feel that a special effort is needed here by the Residents Association. It is really up to themselves to make the most of the surrounding environment.

## ROADS, STREETS AND BACK AREAS

Main Street was very good, especially in light of the volume of traffic. On the approach road from Rathnew, the right hand side by Mount Usher Gardens was well presented and the left hand side untidy appearance has already been referred to above. Approaching from Dublin, there was a nice stone wall on the left hand side and the right hand side walls had been cleared of ivy. The grassed area does need to be landscaped but the adjudicators noted the comments made. Try to rebuild the wall where it is broken down. Approaching Ashford from The Devils Glen (even though it outside the area of adjudication) it is nice to see the bridge area cleaned up and the junction was very neat and tidy. The 40 MPH sign needed to be cleaned. Further in on the right hand side also needs landscaping and try to replace the kerbing where pathways have been dug up. Weeds were noted along by kerbs in some places and these have to be tackled.

## GENERAL IMPRESSION

The overall, general impression of Ashford this year was one of a tidy and litter free village. This is to be commended in light of the volume of traffic. Signage is going to be an increasing problem, if not stemmed for the coming year. Efforts of flower beds, and maintenance of open spaces were quite good this year which give good image of co-ordinated community effort.