

"Caring for our environment"

Centre : **O'BRIENS BRIDGE**
County : **CLARE**
Category : **B**

Results

Date of Adjudication : 24-06-96

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded
Overall Developmental Approach	50	33
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	18
Landscaping	40	24
The Built Environment	40	24
Litter Control	40	22
Tidiness	20	12
Residential Areas	30	17
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	24
General Impression	10	6
TOTAL MARK	300	180

Adjudicator's Comments

OVERALL DEVELOPMENTAL APPROACH

The excellent 3 year work programme with attached map was very helpful in getting an insight to what is ongoing and what is planned for the future. This is the type of straightforward bullet point document that is needed. The committee are to be congratulated on this initiative. The last tidy towns adjudication report for OBriens Bridge was in 1994 and one can see the transformation in approach since then. It is good to see that a proposal is being submitted to Clare County Council for the Village Renewal Scheme.

WILDLIFE AND NATURAL AMENITIES

The Quay area of the village would be an ideal focal point for a proposed nature project. It already has a well preserved Wildlife Sanctuary on Riverside Walk. This an ideal type of activity to get the schools involved in and give them a role in enhancing the wildlife value of the community. The natural advantages that the village has would be the envy of many other towns and villages.

LANDSCAPING

In the village itself there were some excellent individual examples of colourful tubs and hanging baskets, a nice mix of annuals and perennials. The Village shrine which is a focal point was nicely presented and looked as if it was in the process of refurbishment. The mixed planting around the wildlife sanctuary also deserves praise. The Riverbank is an ideal location for some imaginative planting to integrate with the surrounding wooded countryside; work was either about to start or was ongoing in this area. Next year should see a more vibrant riverbank.

THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Both business premises and private residences were well presented, some with nice hanging baskets and tubs giving a good splash of colour. O'Briens Bridge is a village that would benefit very much from participation in the village renewal scheme; it has so many natural advantages but one feels that it is not exploited to the full. The village buildings for instance while well presented lack a certain uniformity; some are very bright others are quite bland. The Grotto as mentioned was in very good condition; unfortunately the old graveyard was in need of cleaning. The back area of the council houses as one comes from the tailrace road is bit untidy. The stonework at the wildlife sanctuary was most appealing and caught one's eye from a distance. There is an old stone house at the top of the village that had a number of barrels around it; these looked unsightly and need to be removed if not there for some practical reason.

LITTER CONTROL

Unfortunately there was a good deal of litter on adjudication day especially around the seating on the quay/ riverbank area. This needs to be controlled as the village is quite a busy place at week ends and during holiday period. A few more bins need to be placed around the village; these could be sponsored by local traders as a contribution to the tidy towns effort.

TIDINESS

The overall appearance of the village was one of neatness but litter is a significant problem. The weed control was adequate but could be better; there is a tendency in places to kill weeds with chemicals and then let the rotting foliage linger when it should be cleaned up. The seats at the riverside need to be painted as does the sign at the riverside walk.

RESIDENTIAL AREAS

The village is quite small and it does not have any estates except for a small council scheme of houses.

The houses here were reasonably well maintained and presented, some better than others, but the wall at the back of these houses needs both repairing and painting. There are a number of nicely presented private residences, some with excellent gardens, in the village and on the outskirts. These set an example for others who may not be up to the same standard. The Shannon Caravan and Camping Park is to be commended for the standard it sets with very nice flower beds in front.

ROADS, STREETS AND BACK AREAS

The two main approach roads from both Montpellier and from the Tailrace were quite good. Special mention here to the owners of the house at the junction of the Killaloe and Tailrace Roads for the beautiful flowers and shrubs. Grass margins had been cut back to an acceptable standard. The new path protection on the tailrace bridge, while a little obtrusive, is very effective.

GENERAL IMPRESSION

O'Briens Bridge is a village with the potential to achieve much more in the competition. It has natural advantages that would be the envy of many other places. It is fair to say that it has not exploited those advantages to the full especially in the context of tidy towns. This years committee is intent on taking a positive approach, - hence the excellent 3 year work plan, the benefits of which will accrue to the village over the coming years. They are to be commended for their efforts to date.