

"Caring for our environment"

Centre : **CLARECASTLE**
County : **CLARE**
Category : **C**

Results

Date of Adjudication : 05-07-97

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 1997	Mark Awarded 1996
Overall Developmental Approach	50	26	--
The Built Environment	40	25	--
Landscaping	40	24	--
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	15	--
Litter Control	40	23	--
Tidiness	20	13	--
Residential Areas	30	18	--
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	24	--
General Impression	10	6	--
TOTAL MARK	300	174	--

Clarecastle, County Clare

OVERALL DEVELOPMENTAL APPROACH

Welcome back into the competition after a break of one year. You now need to formulate a three to five year working plan that will chart out envisaged developments over the next few years. Such a plan should be spearheaded by your committee and be representative of the wishes of the community. Most centres are by now working to an agreed plan that incorporates the various sections under adjudication. This is particularly relevant if you are fortunate enough to have a FAS scheme as such workers should be working towards an agreed plan.

THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

You have some fine buildings, many with great character and many with distinctive features from the last century. Indeed, there is much evidence of excellent stonework to be seen by examining the side and rear entrances of some of the older houses in the village. The church is very well presented together with the school. One feature that has improved in recent years is the treatment of your boundary walls. Many of these have been freshly painted. You also have some fine shopfronts - in particular Powers, which has long been recognised.

LANDSCAPING

The developments of previous years continue to enhance the village. The G.A.A. monument and environs look attractive in this strategic location. There was a great display of window boxes and hanging baskets in the main street, reflecting a keen interest from the residents. The Grotto was well presented. However, the Limerick approach road is very overgrown and in need of grass cutting. Even if the outer 18 were cut it would improve this approach. The concrete post and rail fencing on the right hand side should be planted with a hedge to soften the effects of so much concrete. There is also an area here on the right that would be ideally suitable for a small flower/shrub garden development - this could form part of your mid-term plan.

WILDLIFE AND NATURAL AMENITIES

Your adjacency to the estuary provides you with an opportunity to promote an interest in wildlife. You should liaise with the school and organise a wildlife project that would identify the birds and plant life of the area. This would be best done in association with organisations such as the Irish Wildbird Conservancy and Conservation Volunteers of Ireland.

LITTER CONTROL

You have a litter problem in many of the housing estates which will need to be tackled by involving the residents. Clare Hill was poorly presented and needs improved litter control.

TIDINESS

Because of the many overgrown spaces on the approach roads and some broken walls, together with rusty farm gates there is a degree of untidiness throughout parts of the village. Farmgates could be painted in strong colours by the committee itself. The surface dressing throughout the village and on the estates is really first class. An unused car in one of the housing estates should be removed. Commercial traders should be encouraged to tone down their signage and as a committee you should urge the replacement of plastic signs with more acceptable traditional ones.

RESIDENTIAL AREAS

The housing estate near Syntex is in need of improved presentation. Also on the estate behind the church there appears to be a couple of houses unoccupied and in need of painting. The many individual efforts here are acknowledged, but ideally housing estates should have their own representative groups working in association with the committee. The house Knockfune is really superb with a great variety of well presented flowers, shrubs and trees. The village has several areas suitable for housing infill. An excellent example is the two houses built near the bridge on the Limerick approach.

ROADS, STREETS AND BACK AREAS

As mentioned, the road surface is excellent throughout. However, many of the side entrances off the main street are in need of improvement. You also have some attractive features only visible from the side and rear entrances that should be exploited. The large anchor might be made a feature in a more visible location.

GENERAL IMPRESSION

The village looked well with plenty of fresh colour, enhanced by the richly festooned county colours on the eve of the Munster Hurling Final. The main street which has to endure continuous traffic is well maintained and the excellent layout of the houses near the church is long recognised as excellent. You now need to draft an improvement plan with short medium and long term phasing, that will upgrade all areas of this busy village. Good luck for 1998.