

"Caring for our environment"

Centre : **OCALLAGHANS MILLS**
County : **CLARE**
Category : **A**

Results

Date of Adjudication : 08-07-97

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 1997	Mark Awarded 1996
Overall Developmental Approach	50	31	30
The Built Environment	40	30	29
Landscaping	40	30	30
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	18	19
Litter Control	40	30	29
Tidiness	20	15	15
Residential Areas	30	23	22
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	29	29
General Impression	10	7	7
TOTAL MARK	300	213	210

O'Callaghan's Mills, Co. Clare

OVERALL DEVELOPMENTAL APPROACH

The village is improving and the tidy towns Committee and the community are to be commended. The drafting of the proposed 5-year plan should be completed as a priority in co-operation with the County Council, FAS and the RRD to set out clear objectives and a work programme for each year within the period covered by the plan. As suggested in 1996, the plan should address the fragmented nature of the village and an integration approach adopted to deal with the problem.

THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

The community hall, handball alley, church and school at the Broadford end of the village are all well presented and this area is quite attractive. The focal area in the village, in the vicinity of the Mill Tavern, should be considered for special treatment in the proposed development plan and this should address this whole area on both sides of the road. At the other end of the village, the area around High Street and along the Kilkishen road, the Post Office and the feature around the water-pump, Campbells Self-Catering premises (beautifully restored stone-work), Smiths - all these premises are well maintained. The old water-mill, which had been previously restored in the early 1970's, again needs attention as a part of the village's heritage. It is noted that this is part of your 5-year plan and also restoring the river to its original course which is to be commended. The problem of derelict buildings and unsightly galvanised sheds remain throughout the village and the committee's efforts and approaches to owners will hopefully prove successful eventually. The problem with No.1 Doonaille Estate will also hopefully be resolved soon.

LANDSCAPING

The treatment of open spaces, grass margins and other incidental spaces could be improved. The picnic area on the Kilkishen road, the landscaped area on the Feakle road, the car parking areas and open spaces around the Mill Tavern and in the vicinity of the church and school - these are some areas where further improvements would be welcomed. The problems with the road between Leyden's Cross and High Street were noted and the re-instatement of this area should be pursued with the County Council. The project at the entrance to the Doonaille Estate will improve the appearance of the area. The project at the well, at Leyden's Cross, is a nice feature but where is the sign?

WILDLIFE AND NATURAL AMENITIES

The pleasant rural setting of O'Callaghan's Mills can be exploited in developing a wildlife conservation strategy. Water features, nature trails, hedgerows have been suggested and, indeed, these could also be useful in bringing about the integration suggested above, including stone walls and re-alignment of the road through

the village to give a better line of sight between the 'separated' areas.

LITTER CONTROL

Litter control around the village is reasonably good. The new litter bins requested from the County Council are badly needed and the involvement of the school children and the Junior Youth Club on litter control around the school area and community centre is to be commended, as is the regular litter patrol by the FAS scheme workers.

TIDINESS

The general standard in this section of the Competition is good but, as previously mentioned, it is the half-hidden back lanes and entries, rusty galvanised roofs and gates and the number of derelict buildings that are the problem. Perseverance may bring results but eventually some action may be necessary to get the owners of such properties, if they are known, to take responsibility for the common good.

RESIDENTIAL AREAS

The houses on both ends of the village, the Tulla and Broadford approach roads, are very attractively presented and certainly create a good impression on entering the village. In the Doonaille estate, with few exceptions including No. 1, the individual houses are all neatly kept and the landscaping proposed at the entrance and elsewhere in the estate will greatly enhance this area. Most other private houses are making a very positive contribution to the overall appearance of the village. Excellent use of planting and flower boxes and baskets was noted throughout.

ROADS, STREETS AND BACK AREAS

As in 1996, the major approach roads from Tulla and Broadford are fairly well maintained, the minor approaches from Kilkishen and Feakle need improving and the condition of the road between Leyden's Cross and the High Street problem was duly noted and pressure on the County Council to re-instate this road should be maintained. As already mentioned, back lanes and entries need more attention.

GENERAL IMPRESSION

The impression is that efforts are being made to improve the overall appearance of O'Callaghan's Mills. The Community Development Council are obviously aware of the problems which need to be faced and they should continue to work with the statutory bodies and to complete, with whatever advice or assistance is available, the 5-year plan with emphasis on an integrated approach.

SECOND ADJUDICATION (14/08/97)

As noted by the first adjudicator the long linear nature of the village of O'Callaghans Mills make it difficult to maintain to a consistent standard. The fine stone mill building is a marvellous cultural, historical and architectural heritage and will be a fine

asset to the village when restored to its former glory. Many of the out-buildings in the village had an air of neglect, a mere coat of whitewash and a traditional red or green layer of paint to the tin roofs would improve them immensely! Litter control was a problem at the walkway to the riverside by the bridge and the telephone box appeared to be quite flaky. However, the village generally looked well cared for on the day.