

"Caring for our environment"

Centre : **OUGHTERARD**
County : **GALWAY**
Category : **B**

Results

Date of Adjudication : 19-07-97

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 1997	Mark Awarded 1996
Overall Developmental Approach	50	29	25
The Built Environment	40	19	17
Landscaping	40	19	18
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	18	16
Litter Control	40	19	16
Tidiness	20	12	10
Residential Areas	30	16	15
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	18	16
General Impression	10	7	6
TOTAL MARK	300	157	139

Oughterard, Co. Galway

OVERALL DEVELOPMENTAL APPROACH

Your very detailed submission with maps and plans was most impressive and helpful. Indeed we would concur with the vast majority of the recommendations in the reports. Your long term development programme should be reviewed at the end of each year to identify the work completed and review outstanding works which could then be prioritised and ownership given to the tasks. You have a small committee of six people - should this not be expanded to spread the workloads. A lot has been achieved but a lot more needs to be done. This can only be done by all the Community supporting your efforts.

THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

The majority of the commercial properties are making the effort with well maintained buildings. Properties such as McGeough's, Lydon's, Waterlilly, Boat Inn, Finnerty's, Esso Garage, the Corrib Lake, Sweeney's and Connemara Gateway Hotels (to mention a few) are well maintained. The Courthouse looks drab but has a lot of potential. The recommendations for improving the streetscape, especially shopfronts, would make a huge difference to the town. Without naming properties all overhanging canopies on properties should be removed and frontages improved. Business houses should also replace plastic signs. It has worked in other towns throughout Ireland and Oughterard is no different.

LANDSCAPING

Keep up the work with your tree planting proposals. The trees planted already look well and those in the main street will make a difference to the streetscape in time. The landscaping at the V'Soske Joyce Carpet Factory is commendable. The tree planting on the approach roads enhances the entry to Oughterard and the flower beds look well. Open areas should be watched especially the park area opposite Sweeney's. The riverside area and landscaping at the bridge was well presented. Landscaping of the National School grounds should be considered with some creepers on the end wall and the gates painted. The secondary school with its flower/shrub beds looked well. Perhaps the addition of one/two trees within the front courtyard might be considered. The hanging baskets on the poles looked well.

WILDLIFE AND NATURAL AMENITIES

Oughterard has a wealth of wildlife and natural amenities. Your nature walks and rivers are there for all to see and appreciate. It is important that suitable background information is available at locations in all the areas concerned so people will not interfere with the wildlife or natural habitats and still be able to appreciate them.

LITTER CONTROL

Oughterard appears to be tackling the litter problem. While there was little evidence of litter throughout the town, some litter was noted in the car park and outside one of the Banks. The new litter bins looked well and appear to be serving their purpose. However, the litter bin at the amenity area/park opposite the hotel on the Clifden road was overflowing.

TIDINESS

In general due to the influx of visitors, Oughterard is a busy commercial town and looks very congested. Perhaps an additional car park should be provided which would take some of the pressure off the centre of the town. A constant watch on litter and weeds is important to maintain an overall appearance of tidiness. Commercial property owners should refrain from cluttering footpaths in front of their premises with stands, goods, billboards etc as they restrict access on the pavement, especially for the disabled.

RESIDENTIAL AREAS

The majority of residents are making an effort; indeed some have fine displays of flower boxes and hanging baskets and well maintained houses and gardens. We fully support your endeavours in promoting residential and district competitions to help encourage the tidy town ideal. Hopefully in time those not supporting the effort will do so, thus supporting their neighbours and the community of Oughterard.

ROADS, STREETS AND BACK AREAS

On the station approach road the old stones walls and openings require attention. The Clifden approach road flower bed looked well and this road contains some nice colourful gardens, but the grass verges should be cut from the welcome sign. The Galway approach road looked well; however, a number of openings and broken walls need attention as do the road verges on the hill down into Oughterard. The Glanroad approach road with its Old Bog Road Walk looked well, as did the entrance to the GAA pitch. The entrance at the blue gate opposite should have creepers planted on its walls. The Hill of Doon road and bridge areas look well. We suggest some planting on the earth beds at the bridge. The cul de sac off this road contains some colourful gardens but should have its road verges cut back. The entrance and wall to the Owenriff Way near the schools requires attention. Some of the signposting on the roads requires attention. Back areas generally are not causing a problem but watch rear/side service openings and vacant derelict sites and buildings (e.g. in front of the Garda Station).

GENERAL IMPRESSION

Keep up the good work - it will not be easy. Oughterard has the potential to do very well in this competition but it will only happen if all the community support the efforts of the Tidy Towns Committee. Work to the plan you have drawn up and give the community ownership of the work still to be achieved. It will take time but it will be worth it. Good luck.