

"Caring for our environment"

Centre : **THOMASTOWN**
County : **KILKENNY**
Category : **C**

Results

Date of Adjudication : 20-06-97

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 1997	Mark Awarded 1996
Overall Developmental Approach	50	31	30
The Built Environment	40	27	26
Landscaping	40	27	26
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	16	15
Litter Control	40	30	30
Tidiness	20	14	13
Residential Areas	30	18	18
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	32	31
General Impression	10	8	8
TOTAL MARK	300	203	197

Thomastown, Co. Kilkenny

OVERALL DEVELOPMENTAL APPROACH

It is good to read that your Committee has the continued support of your Local Authority, FAS and the Community in general. The very size of the town and its layout makes it difficult to service from a Tidy Towns point of view. The secret is to produce a 3 to 5 Year Development Plan which, although mentioned in last years report, was not sent with this years documentation. In the experience of other centres success in the competition comes from careful planning and working each year on specific projects within your physical and financial resources. In the preparation of such a plan consult with your Local Authority and the Community for the purpose of getting their full support and co-operation. You received an in-depth report on Thomastown last year. The following comments should be read in conjunction with that report as many of the items commented on are still applicable.

THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

The Church and its building in the immediate surrounding area, including St Josephs Nursing Home were very well presented on adjudication day. Many commercial premises, particularly in the Main Street, were very well presented also. Progress at Mullins Castle and its surroundings were noted. The Quay area however continues to be a problem as are the many derelict sites in and around the town. Your comments regarding these sites have been noted. Derelict sites are quite common in many towns and villages in the country and it is very difficult to know, in a small community, how the problem can be handled. Some communities approach the owners with plans suggesting alternative uses or in the cases of the Local Authority who have powers in such matters, sites can be purchased or obtained from owners for the purpose of in-fill housing. Schools in the town and their surroundings also looked well on adjudication day.

LANDSCAPING

The excellent work which you have carried out on your open spaces has been noted. The area around the Allied Irish Bank looked particularly well on adjudication day. Tubs and hanging baskets on many premises also looked well. Many of the industrial premises on the Bennettsbridge and Gowran roads are making good efforts to enter the spirit of the competition. Landscaping of the RC Church area and its surrounding buildings was also noted. The entrance to St Columbas Hospital is excellent. As part of your forward planning do consider further landscaping by way of the judicious planting of trees and shrubs. In the case of the latter, select those which will give you some colour on an all-year-round basis. The emphasis, is on the word judicious as to do otherwise only causes clutter. Careful selection will soften the landscape particularly in a place like Thomastown which, as mentioned in last years report, has some very fine buildings standing cheek-by-jowl with less prepossessing ones.

Again take the best advice available to you from your Local Authority, Coillte or some local expert.

WILDLIFE AND NATURAL AMENITIES

Your comments on the entry form have been noted. This is a comparatively new category in the competition with the emphasis on preserving wildlife habitats and the environment. These can consist of woodlands, rivers, ponds, hedgerows, grass margins, open spaces, graveyards and walls. The Committee should endeavour to identify habitats in their area and what appropriate action could be taken to conserve and enhance them. The guidelines in the Tidy Towns book offer other suggestions as to the type of initiatives you might undertake. If there is a local wildlife expert or a member of your Community with experience in this area please do seek their advice.

LITTER CONTROL

There was very little litter in the centre of the town but unfortunately there was quite an amount to be seen in the area of the RC Church and St Josephs Nursing Home. Litter control needs constant vigil but in most towns and villages who enter in the competition the situation has improved considerably in recent times.

TIDINESS

There was still some weeding to be seen on approach roads but in general the town was very tidily presented. Traffic continues to be a major problem.

RESIDENTIAL AREAS

Many private houses looked extremely well, others need a coat of paint. Housing estates - in many cases unnamed - are improving. The residents of Cloghabrody Heights are to be congratulated on the maintenance of their open spaces. However some gardens could do with attention. If you have not already done so you should endeavour to form residents associations in these estates and have them represented on your Committee. Perhaps a small scale estates/streets competition might also create some friendly rivalry to the benefit of the overall effort.

ROADS, STREETS AND BACK AREAS

Verges on some approach roads were quite good, particularly on the Waterford road. Other approach roads need some work done to them. When cutting grass verges could you please bear in mind that present thinking is that these verges should not be cut right back to the hedge or wall but a certain area should be left for the propagation of wild flowers. In other words only cut roughly half way in on the verge from the edge of the road. The road to Mount Juliet looked remarkable well. The walls on this road are exceptionally well preserved. Road surfaces in the main are good.

GENERAL IMPRESSION

You are doing excellent work. Thomastown is a strung out town and therefore not easy to handle in Tidy Towns terms. Careful

planning is called for. Dereliction appears to be your biggest problem.