

*"Caring for our environment"*

Centre : **ARKLOW**  
County : **WICKLOW**  
Category : **E**

**Results**

Date of Adjudication : 11-07-97

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 1997	Mark Awarded 1996
Overall Developmental Approach	50	29	30
The Built Environment	40	27	26
Landscaping	40	28	28
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	21	20
Litter Control	40	25	26
Tidiness	20	13	12
Residential Areas	30	19	18
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	25	24
General Impression	10	5	6
<b>TOTAL MARK</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>192</b>	<b>190</b>

## **Arklow, County Wicklow**

### **OVERALL DEVELOPMENTAL APPROACH**

Thank you for your submission which included detailed map, photographs and correspondence to the Urban District Council which was helpful during adjudication. The adjudicators still have not received your detailed plan and look forward to the submission of same. The adjudicators have made allowances this year for the on-going work which is taking place in the development of the by-pass of Arklow, and also the work at Ferrybank, which was almost complete at time of adjudication. You appear to have good support throughout the town. Improvements are evident. You have a very strong tradition in maritime, boating and pottery. The Irish language is also a consideration in this years adjudication, and it was good to see strong evidence of the use of Irish particularly in shop fronts. Well done in this regard.

### **THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT**

As mentioned above, it was nice to see the use of Irish in many shops, e.g. Ostan Beag; Liam de Paor etc. The adjudicators recognise the problems at Noritake and, hopefully in time, these will be overcome. The Town Hall/UDC was very well presented. The Rover Garage had a nice presentation of plants but weeds were in evidence by the kerbs outside of this. The new street lamps, bollards and flower baskets are a very attractive feature on the Main Street, which helped to improve the overall appearance. It is also good to see some excellent efforts made with flowers on premises. Most of the churches were very well presented, including St. Josephs, and in particular, the Church of Ireland was beautifully presented. The schools too, in most cases, were generally okay, although some improvements could be made. St. Josephs NS was well presented; however, the exterior of the Community College could be improved, i.e. its wall. Christys made good use of flowers. The Arklow Bay Hotel and its grounds were well presented, as was Wade Curtains. Other premises that were looking well on day of adjudication were J. Conroy; McMullins; Ripleys; Hollys; Kittys; Swags & Tails has a somewhat refreshing appearance; also Liam de Paor; Bluebells; David Lane. It was also nice to see some new shop fronts, including, The Secret Garden; House Proud and others. One premises that was particularly singled out by the adjudicators as an excellent design was Bolands Shop on the Main Street. There is, however, still room for improvement in the built environment, for example, try to paint up Quinns and Bumptas. Try to remove the weeds at the base of Arklow Sailing Club. Arklow Pottery would have benefited from painting at time of adjudication. In this regard, it is nice to see some take-aways improving their shop fronts, well done to those involved. Also, try to paint the side trade door at the Corner House approach from Woodenbridge. The GAA club also needs improvements but it was nice to see some of it painted up. Overall, continued improvements are noted under this category.

### **LANDSCAPING**

There are a number of well landscaped areas throughout the town, including approach roads and within the Main Street. The grounds of the Town Hall were also very well presented; congratulations on the effort here. It is good to see that you are placing a large emphasis on tree planting, as outlined in your entry form. Try to replace the broken trees noted near J. Byrne Carpets and Vinyls. It was good to see that the caravan park was being maintained on day of adjudication. At the Band Stand area, it was great to see a band playing on day of adjudication. Grassed areas on the South Quay were generally well maintained. The river side area was also well presented, although, the buildings at the rear do detract from the overall appearance. The harbour area is one that could be improved; however, the area around the Lifeboat station was very well presented, as was the area around the Sea Scouts Hall. It is good to see seating throughout the town too, for example, at the band stand and outside parks, such as Highfield. A number of landscaped areas were noted on the approach roads, some of which were not maintained, e.g. Wexford Road.

## **WILDLIFE AND NATURAL AMENITIES**

Conserving nature is a new venture for many towns and can appear daunting at first. The adjudicators recognise that environmental programmes can take time to get up and running and even longer to assess their success. This section of the report requires an involvement of all groups, including schools in the town. The emphasis is on the conservation and enhancement of wildlife habitats and the environment. Woodlands, rivers, ponds, hedgerows, open spaces, graveyards and walls are important habitats. The committee needs to identify the habitats in their area and then determine the appropriate actions to conserve and enhance these habitats. Guidelines in the Tidy Towns book offers other suggestions as to the type of initiatives you might undertake. Is there a local wildlife expert, or a member of the community with experience in this area, that your committee can draw on? In preparing an environmental programme for the town, there should be a year-round participation in environmental protection and promotion involving all members of the community and providing access for all. The next step is to identify what habitats are in your area - are these woodlands, wetlands, grasslands or coastal habitats, or other habitats such as urban spaces, cemeteries, walls etc. Prepare a survey and map, showing the areas of wildlife importance and areas of potential importance. Other steps involved in the preparation of the environmental programme for Arklow would include identification of species list of the flora and fauna in the area; preparation of a wildlife management plan as part of the area development plan; work to be carried out including conservation projects, wildlife gardens, areas of conservation, access, tree planting, information areas etc. This must be carried out in sympathy with the local landscape and must not be overwhelming visually, or environmentally. In this regard, Arklow has a number of important features. Most notably, it is encouraging that you have a strong emphasis with the wildlife park near the north shore, together with the wildlife area by the caravan park. These were well presented on day of adjudication. It is very nice to see plenty of ducks and

swans in the caravan park lake and within the wildlife park, a number of birds were noted, including swans and sygnets, Grey Lag Geese; ducks and moorhens. It was also nice to see the boulders on the coastal protection works are beginning to be overtaken by Brambles, which is improving the appearance and providing another habitat. In time these could be maintained, but they do improve the appearance overall. The river side park area was also well presented; some measures might be put in place to here to incorporate the appreciation of wildlife features. Overall, a good performance under this category.

## **LITTER CONTROL**

The adjudicators commend your efforts in making visits to schools on the importance of litter control. The adjudicators also commend the use of a litter warden and the commencement of On-the-Spot fines for litter together with power-hosing of chewing gum from the footpaths. However, while the Main Street was generally litter free, a number of bad areas were noted for litter this year which was very disappointing. In particular, the adjudicators were extremely disappointed with the level of litter at the band stand. While a band was playing on day of adjudication, the level of litter was totally unacceptable, as the area was strewn with litter. The car park to the rear here also suffered from lack of litter control, as bins were overflowing with litter, suggesting a lack of regular collections. Also, the tiny litter bin at the South Shore car park was overflowing at time of adjudication. Sprinklings of litter were also noted by the telephone kiosk near Templeraíney Heights, and on the road near Pettits. It was also particularly bad outside Quinns Shop and by the seating on the Brittas Bay road, overlooking the nature park - grass needed to be cut here also. The level of litter evident throughout Arklow this year, disappointed the adjudicators, and it is something that needs to be tackled, and looked at. For example, the practicality of having a tiny bin at the South Shore car park is not realistic. You should also perhaps put up a sign encouraging people to take home their litter from these recreational points. On a positive note, it was nice to see a number of bottle banks.

## **TIDINESS**

While the above category, i.e. litter control, was quite bad, apart from this fact, the town was generally tidy, in light of the fact that the current by-pass is taking place. It is good to see that some wires have been removed, or undergrounded, and that use of a suction sweeper is available. There is an excellent Street Scape along the Main Street, which presented a tidy appearance, and good efforts are evident in residential areas as well. There is a need to sweep up gravelled areas along kerbs on approach roads on a more regular basis, e.g. from the north near St. Josephs Church. While the nice presentation of buildings helps to improve the appearance along the Main Street, some also have a negative on tidiness, as evidenced by the presentation of the Maxol Station on the approach road from Gorey. Overall, though, it is quite good.

## **RESIDENTIAL AREAS**

It is good to see that the majority of the people make an effort in their residential estates. The adjudicators also commend the efforts of the Tidy Towns Committee in running the Best Garden and Estate competitions; well done in your efforts here. At Inbhearr Mor Park, nice shrubbery was noted at the entrance. Try to tidy up the entrance to Templerainey Park. Excellent efforts were noted opposite the terrace on the Brittas Bay approach road, congratulations to the residents here. The entrance to Coolgreaney Park was very well presented but sprinklings of litter were noted; it is good to see seating here also. Try to watch the weeds at Oaklands. At Cherryfield, a nice nameplate was noted, and the park was well maintained. River View Heights could be better presented. A new development was noted at Avalon. Overall, efforts in maintenance of residential areas are evident.

### **ROADS, STREETS AND BACK AREAS**

The Main Street was very well presented again this year, with good litter control; very good presentation of street furniture, i.e. lamps, bollards, flower baskets etc. Approaching Arklow from the north, a good presentation was noted with a very attractive, well landscaped left hand side verge with nice bedding plants and the anchor was a nice feature linking in the maritime history of the town. The right hand side was also well maintained with tree planting coming on well. Improved resurfacing of footpaths are needed further in on this approach. The adjudicators feel that the new signs for driving on the left should have been put out further, as they took from the overall appearance. Good improvements have been noted on the Ferrybank Road, i.e. cobble locking, resurfacing etc. Removal of wires would be helpful here. It would also be great if more premises would consider more regular painting. Additional tree planting along this road could create a very attractive appearance in years to come also. The approach from Brittas Bay needs more attention, particularly near the bridge, by the boulders. The approach from Woodenbridge, could also be improved, but allowances have been made for the fact that work on the by-pass is taking place here. Try to improve the area by the Arklow sign though. The road along by the GAA Park could also be improved, with resurfacing needed and weeds were noted along the kerb. The approach from Gorey was disappointing, particularly on the right hand side where a number of weeds were noted in the shrubbery. This approach could potentially be very attractive, but weeds were again evident along kerbs and footpaths suggesting lack of maintenance of this approach road.

### **GENERAL IMPRESSION**

The overall impression, within Arklow this year was one that efforts are evident, continued improvements are being noted, for example, in the built environment. Good efforts are noted in terms of landscaping and maintenance of wildlife and natural amenities. However, litter control was extremely disappointing this year and the adjudicators would suggest the need to look at a practically based plan. The adjudicators look forward to the completion of the by-pass for Arklow, which will hopefully improve the urban fabric of the main built up area due to less traffic. In this regard, try to plan to the future by incorporating plans for the approach

roads off the by-pass to encourage additional visitors into Arklow. Try to use innovative or attractive landscaping or other features in order to present a strong theme of your maritime, boating and pottery heritage. Good luck for next year.