

"Caring for our environment"

Centre : **AUGHRIM**
County : **WICKLOW**
Category : **C**

Results

Date of Adjudication : 10-07-97

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 1997	Mark Awarded 1996
Overall Developmental Approach	50	38	36
The Built Environment	40	26	23
Landscaping	40	31	29
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	21	19
Litter Control	40	30	30
Tidiness	20	15	14
Residential Areas	30	24	22
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	29	29
General Impression	10	8	7
TOTAL MARK	300	222	209

Aughrim, County Wicklow

OVERALL DEVELOPMENTAL APPROACH

Thank you most sincerely for the detailed submission you sent on for the adjudicators attention, which included the entry form, photographs, detailed map highlighting improvements, and your five year plan. You have a number of ambitious plans to see through to fruition; the adjudicators wish you well in this regard. To date you have had an excellent development approach relating to all categories of this competition. The National Disabled Angling Facility is an excellent development and congratulations again to all those involved. It represents all that is good about the Tidy Towns competition; it is an innovative, professionally completed project, developed and instigated by the Tidy Towns Committee. It is an important tourist amenity and is great to see that it is fully wheelchair accessible. Your attention to wildlife conservation is also to be commended, try to expand on this over the coming years. It is also good to see use of Irish being made throughout.

THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

The adjudicators noted the development of new holiday homes being built adjacent to Lawless Hotel; these should be nice when completed. This will help improve what was a sensitive spot. Lawless Hotel had an excellent presentation with flower baskets and flower tubs. The adjudicators noted the new Aughrim Credit Union office; well done. A special commendation goes to the Garda Station which was excellent. The building within the National Disabled Angling Facility is also beautifully presented with good use of local materials. The improved Church of Ireland was beautifully presented; well done. Try to paint Herbst and try also to improve the wall and entrance of the GAA. Other premises that could be improved include the Video Shop and O'Duill Groceries. Excellent architectural design features are evident in the building occupied by the Captains Table; it would be fantastic if the owners of this premises would consider improving the appearance as this would surely lead to additional visitors being attracted purely by the design of the building. Perhaps the local authority Planning Officer may be able to advise on appropriate improvements for this building. At the Library building, there is nice signage on this to try to improve it through painting. Woodfab would benefit from a painting. Aughrim school was very neat and tidy. The Catholic Church was very well presented again this year (try to remove the chimney, if not in use, to the rear of this building). Try to improve the rear of the Maxol Station also on the approach to Aughrim. Try to consider putting old style Irish writing on the Aughrim signs. The sign at Paul Kennedy's needs to be painted. It was good to see that Morrissey's Shop had been painted at time of adjudication. Aughrim has displayed fantastic initiatives in improving its overall appearance. Continued improvements are needed under this section in order for Aughrim to be in place to win the national

competition.

LANDSCAPING

Your approach to landscaping throughout Aughrim is excellent. The opportunities that are presented by open spaces are fully seized upon and the adjudicators were impressed with the level of landscaping that is taking place. It was good to see that the rockery has been planted and the stream was working again this year; this is much improved. Attractive shrubbery was also noted by the pump opposite St. Martin's Drive. Tree planting was noted around Lawless Hotel. The grounds of the Angling Facility, as mentioned above, were excellently landscaped, with extensive tree planting of Birch etc. noted. Try to plant behind the wall to screen off the depot area of Woodfab. The rockery opposite the Garda Station was excellent, well done. The back gardens of Lawless were also noted by the adjudicators as a very good presentation (they were being enjoyed by a wedding party on the day of adjudication). The area to the left of Phelan's was nicely presented and forms an attractive meeting place. Opposite the school, it was also well presented this year and had been finished off. The well is a nice feature and was not noted last year. The memorial to the school teachers is also to be commended and is good to see good use of Irish. At the Tinakilly Bridge area, it was well presented, although some stones were left there; perhaps project was underway. It was nice to see a painter painting the landscape of the area at time of adjudication. Try to fix one broken seat in this regard. Overall, an excellent presentation. Continued efforts have been noted and you are a shining example to other towns throughout the country.

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 village. 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 offer 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 village, there should be a year-round emphasis on 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 there 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 future importance, e.g. school grounds and gardens, derelict sites etc. Other steps involved in the preparation of the environmental

programme for Aughrim would include identification of the flora and fauna in the area, preparation of a wildlife management plan as part of the area development plan, and identification of the tasks 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. The National Disabled Angling Facility has presented a very good opportunity for wildlife. Your consideration of incorporating a marsh area for wildfowl to breed and shelter is important; the islands are also important nesting habitats. It is good to see that you have identified other important fauna such as otters; kingfishers; herons etc. together with the building of bird and bat boxes, which were not, unfortunately, visible at time of adjudication. Try to continue in this regard. The river is also an attractive wildlife amenity.

LITTER CONTROL

Litter control overall was excellent again this year. The adjudicators could find very little fault. Odd pieces of litter were noted here and there, and some sprinklings were noted outside O'Duills. Otherwise, the adjudicators have to commend the efforts. It is evident that there is an excellent litter awareness throughout the village among all residents.

TIDINESS

An excellent presentation again under this category. Your attention to avoiding fly posting and graffiti, together with control of weed growth at kerbs and base of buildings is to be commended. The visual appearance of the village is very good. The only factor that takes from the overall appearance is one or two buildings in key areas. Try to under ground more wire cables, for example, near Lawless and on the Kiltegan approach. Road resurfacing is needed in one or two locations also. What are your plans for recycling? Overall, an excellent presentation under this category.

RESIDENTIAL AREAS

Good individual efforts are noted throughout Aughrim again this year. The adjudicators are particularly impressed with the attention given to the presentation of open spaces within residential parks in your innovative use of materials and planting. Pinewood Grove and Lourdes Crescent had an excellent presentation here this year; congratulations. Good individual efforts are noted also on the Woodenbridge Road; the new holiday homes being built near the bridge should be nice once complete. Sheridan's and St. Martin's Drive were excellent. Overall, the adjudicators could find no significant fault with the presentation of residential efforts this year.

ROADS, STREETS AND BACK AREAS

On the approach road from Woodenbridge, landscaping had taken place around the 40 MPH sign. The left of the Maxol Station needs landscaping and the rear could be screened off or improved. Further in on the left hand side, this was very good with trees and fencing etc. The right hand side was also quite nice

with rhododendron and a very neat wall. An excellent presentation was noted at the junction. Attractive signs were noted on the approach from Woodenbridge. Grass verges had been cut on both sides. An attractive garden was noted on the left hand side. However, grass verges could have been slightly neater at time of adjudication at the 40 MPH sign. New 40 MPH signs and Junction signs were noted - try to replace the Aughrim sign. Try to improve road surfacing around Woodside Nurseries and try to remove wire scape. Tinakilly Bridge, as already mentioned, is an excellent presentation. The approach from Ballinaclesh was also very good, it could be somewhat improved with additional efforts from Woodfab. It is great to see plenty of seating throughout the village. Replace the Aughrim sign on the approach from Kiltegan. The wall of the GAA could be improved and this could help improve the overall appearance of this approach.

GENERAL IMPRESSION

The adjudicators were again impressed with the presentation in Aughrim this year. They welcome your five year plan. In every project you have undertaken you have approached it with an excellent developmental approach. It is great to see that you are taking this competition seriously. The adjudicators can see no reason why Aughrim cannot progress to the highest levels in the national Tidy Towns Competition with continued efforts. In this regard, try to concentrate on improving the built environment. The adjudicators wish you luck in subsequent years. Keep up your excellent efforts to date.

SECOND ADJUDICATION (16/8/97)

The quality of works being carried out over recent years is creating very permanent results for the Tidy Towns Competition, and brief conversations with individuals in the town highlighted that most residents are involved with some contribution towards creating a much improved environment. Stone walls in the area display a strong preference for local materials and a continued response to using local crafts. The effects of such land uses as the nurseries, the fish pond and developments associated with the hotel also reinforce a sense of place and pride in what ever is being done to the town. The submission of the report information was very thorough and was one of the few submissions supplying photographs of shops (for inclusion as award entries) - this was particularly helpful. With respect to the general appearance, this is a town which must be walked and many of the finer details of the town are lost if only seen by a car, therefore traffic management is essential, although it is difficult to control. Efforts should go into control of loose gravel and mud on the road surfaces, as this does detract from a tidy appearance (examples would be the wall to the sports grounds where the mud is sprayed onto the walls and gravel around the centre of the town). There is a hillside character to the town, which is unique in the way the wildness of the surrounding landscape enters the town. Care should be taken not to lose this very different and easily changed element, thus the use of floral displays are not necessarily the only way to achieve colour in the town.

