

"Caring for our environment"

Centre : **AVOCA**
County : **WICKLOW**
Category : **B**

Results

Date of Adjudication : 10-07-97

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 1997	Mark Awarded 1996
Overall Developmental Approach	50	25	20
The Built Environment	40	25	24
Landscaping	40	25	22
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	14	13
Litter Control	40	25	24
Tidiness	20	13	12
Residential Areas	30	20	19
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	26	25
General Impression	10	6	6
TOTAL MARK	300	179	165

Avoca, County Wicklow

OVERALL DEVELOPMENTAL APPROACH

Thank you for your detailed entry form and map which was very helpful during the course of adjudication. The adjudicators look forward to the submission of your detailed five year plan. This plan should be simple and realistic, covering 3 - 5 pages, together with a map outlining areas for improvement or particular problem areas. Try to get greater input from your local authority, business community, residents and schools. Try also not to over-commercialise the village in light of its success due to Ballykissangel. This is beginning to become evident in a number of premises. The adjudicators commend the work carried out in the development of the park, congratulations in this regard.

THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

An excellent effort was noted with most premises. Surfacing is needed at the GAA Park. Try to also paint the GAA building, where a new dash wall has been put in place. Also, try to improve the area where buses are parked adjacent to the GAA. It is nice to see flowers and seating outside Fitzgeralds and at Hanleys. The adjudicators were concerned with the noise coming from Fitzgeralds Craft Shop. Flowers were also noted outside Quigleys, well done. The grotto was well presented. The adjudicators look forward to the restoration of the Old Court House. The Post Office was looking well. The Catholic Church was also looking well on day of adjudication. The old style lanterns are quite nice in the park. Try to under ground cables. A new wall was noted on one approach road - from Avoca Handweavers on the right hand side. Try to paint the area outside the school, including its perimeter wall and resurface the area outside this also. Avoca Handweavers was beautifully presented, well done. The Garda Station was very good but flowers would be nice here. The Credit Union could be improved. Allowances were made for the buildings, which are obviously part of a set, antique shop etc. Try to have more colour on the Main Street. Overall, not a bad presentation, but there is room for improvement here.

LANDSCAPING

On the approach from Rathdrum, a nice floral display was noted at the sign. The adjudicators commend the work done at the river side park, congratulations - it was being frequented by visitors and locals with nice seating and fountain noted. Some work needs to still be done on the bank, however; try to continue with this. Flower baskets were noted on Station Road. The grotto area was well maintained. Overall, improvements were noted. Well done

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 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 village, 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 other habitats such as 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 Avoca 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. Continuing efforts to improve the river under the LIFE Programme are noted, if you progress in this regard please let the adjudicator know for next year. Also, the stream by Avoca Handweavers was well maintained. The adjudicators also noted on the map the presence of a forest walk.

LITTER CONTROL

Sprinklings of litter were noted in a number of locations throughout Avoca, for example, at the entrance from Rathdrum; it was also evident where buses had been parked opposite the church, in the car park and the bin was noted as overflowing; it was also noted near the bridge;. There is a need for bins in the public park and a need for more regular clean-ups. While the Main Street was relatively litter free, the outbreaks of sprinklings suggest a need for more regular vigilance in this area. There is also a need for a litter bin at the Bus Stop sign on the approach from Rathdrum.

TIDINESS

Weeds were evident at the National School and grass verges need more attention, for example, near the 30 MPH signs. On the approach roads, while some improvements were noted, briars were noted over hanging one Avoca nameplate sign. Try to avoid the over use of sandwich boards on the Main Street, it is a very narrow street and more vigilance is needed to maintain this. Illegal parking can detract from the overall appearance. Overall, not a bad presentation.

RESIDENTIAL AREAS

Residential areas were very well presented this year, well done in

this regard. The park near the GAA pitch, was very well presented, well done; unfortunately, some sprinklings of litter were evident but the individual effort, and the effort with flowers made up for this. Some weeds were noted outside the house near the butcher. Superb individual efforts are evident. The adjudicators would also like to commend the residential estate near the Post Office. Under this category, the only area that needed attention was more vigilance with weeds along kerbing. Try to work on this for next year. You have made excellent improvements to date and the planting within the park near the Post Office was magnificent. Station Road is an excellent presentation and was being admired by tourists on day of adjudication.

ROADS, STREETS AND BACK AREAS

It is good to see the signs for Avoca including Ballykissangel, and the adjudicators wish the village well from the success - try not to lose the overall appeal of the village by becoming too commercialised. The adjudicators noted improved presentation on the approach road from Rathdrum/Woodenbridge with lovely flower beds in place, a good presentation by the bus stop on the main road; there is a need, however, for a litter bin here. Good appearance by Avoca Handweavers on the right hand side, well done. Down hill into the residential park is very neat and tidy with flower baskets noted. Overall, continued improvements are being noted.

GENERAL IMPRESSION

An excellent presentation was noted throughout Avoca this year. It is good to see that you are getting support from a number of different sectors and congratulations to the residents on the presentation of the residential parks. Try to expand on Irish, and minimise the use of sandwich boards and inappropriate signage. The music coming from one shop cheapens the overall presentation. Excellent efforts have been noted with flowers. Try to underground cables if possible and resurface roads where needed. You might also consider an innovative painting programme for some of the buildings along the Main Street. The adjudicators commend the work you have done with the park and look forward to the completion of further work being undertaken at the Court House next to it.