

"Caring for our environment"

Centre : **GREYSTONES**
County : **WICKLOW**
Category : **F**

Results

Date of Adjudication : 08-07-97

| | Maximum Mark | Mark Awarded 1997 | Mark Awarded 1996 |
|--------------------------------|--------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Overall Developmental Approach | 50 | 28 | 25 |
| The Built Environment | 40 | 28 | 27 |
| Landscaping | 40 | 19 | 23 |
| Wildlife and Natural Amenities | 30 | 15 | 15 |
| Litter Control | 40 | 28 | 25 |
| Tidiness | 20 | 12 | 12 |
| Residential Areas | 30 | 25 | 21 |
| Roads, Streets and Back Areas | 40 | 21 | 25 |
| General Impression | 10 | 4 | 5 |
| TOTAL MARK | 300 | 180 | 178 |

Greystones, County Wicklow

OVERALL DEVELOPMENTAL APPROACH

Welcome to the 1997 Tidy Towns Competition. Thank you for your questionnaire, map and detailed plan, which was helpful during the course of adjudication. In looking over your detailed plan, it seems somewhat aspirational and the adjudicators feel that you should put more of an effort into detailing actual work that will take place within the projects mentioned. It is good to see that you get support from the community and businesses; however, it is felt that additional support is needed for Greystones in this competition. The problems with the lack of help from the local authority are very much evident, unfortunately, throughout Greystones this year and it was disappointing to see that there was little attention given to the cutting back of growth in open spaces and along verges and approach roads, and even within the town. Landscaping of key areas on approach roads is needed. The biggest problem noted by the adjudicators was the lack of cutting back of grassed verges, even within the town. A lot of the responsibility for this may be levelled at the local authority, but unfortunately, many of these locations are bounded by private dwellings and it is up to the residents to take on the responsibility to do this, to maintain the front of their premises. It was good to learn of the historical significance of the town in your plan, particularly, the background to the La Touche family - perhaps the Bank of Ireland might offer support for the Tidy Towns committee based on its associations with the La Touche family if they were approached with an ambitious and professional proposal?

THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Every town in Ireland is different - each has its own unique history, topography, buildings and even use of building materials - but the most important town in Ireland is your own. Much of the overall impression of any town is dictated by its buildings. Each building is unique in its own way and collectively these buildings contribute to the unique character of the town. The best approach is to aim for a good mix of residential and commercial buildings, enhanced by sympathetic landscaping and open spaces, and appropriate use of building materials. Public buildings/architectural heritage are important to Greystones. Several of both the public and business premises were greatly admired this year, including, Poppies; Bells; Fenton Fires; the Italian Restaurant and Betnels. The new development of Topaz; the Pineto Classic and Maverick tiles are also generally attractive. Xtra-vision; Village Bookshop and Cappuccino development are also attractive - again, though, the front areas have not been planted here, as was the case with the beds near the station. The religious buildings are generally well presented, as are the service stations - particularly, the Shell Station and the ESSO Station. It is nice to see a new telephone kiosk on the Bray approach road. The Sailing Club area in general is an eyesore. The grounds of Quinnsworth were generally quite tidy, however, there is considerable room for improvement, for example, the Food Deli/Ormonde area; by the

Sailing Club and the CBS; several of the retail/commercial developments, particularly on the south side of the town. The Tennis Club is a very attractive, modern building.

LANDSCAPING

There appears to be a serious lack of maintenance of grassed areas throughout Greystones and of planting areas. The grassed areas on the road sides was very badly presented throughout Greystones this year, for example, at Blacklion, the triangle, the grass had been neatly cut, but there was long grass growing out of the shrubs, this does not suggest attention to detail. The open space and adjacent area opposite to the Rugby Club needs additional attention, including replacing of bin. At the Burnaby Park area, again, a greater attention to detail is required in this area; graffiti was noted on the seat and is not very welcoming. The triangle in the harbour area was well maintained; however, the containers are not appropriate and should be replaced with more sympathetic materials. A new seat and railings were noted along the sea front; however, a detailed plan is needed for this area in terms of how you are approaching this. Other seats were broken. Try to have a co-ordinated approach to the provision of seating. In relation to landscaping, it was nice to see flower baskets on poles and these are coming on well. It is perhaps one of the few examples of attention to detail. The area along the Main Street and leading down to the Church of Ireland is very well presented, but the area by the railway car park was not well presented. The provision of new traffic calming measures have allowed for raised beds but none of these had been planted at time of adjudication. There is room for serious improvement here under this category.

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. Guidelines in the Tidy Towns book offers other suggestions as to the type of initiatives you might undertake. An obvious focus for wildlife programmes is the maritime theme, but within the urban landscape there are many other opportunities for wildlife conservation. You should prepare a year-round environmental programme for the town. 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 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 Greystones 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. Within the urban area, buffer zones can be developed, which include reinstatement and repair of hedges, especially on approach roads and old walls, woodland fringes allowed to grow, or over grow; river sides planted with bank protecting trees and protected from mowing and so on. Establishing a mowing regime along roadside verges to encourage wildflower conservation will be well rewarded. Native species are generally more important for wildlife than introduced ones and their encouragement will be rewarded where possible, in certain cases, non native species are acceptable, even beneficial and may have other heritage value, for example, road sides, old estates and cemeteries.

LITTER CONTROL

Litter was not a great problem this year in Greystones, thankfully. Small amounts were evident at the bus stop on the approach road from Bray, and also on the grassed area opposite the La Touche hotel, which, itself was not well maintained. It is very encouraging to see a very advanced recycling scheme in operation in several locations throughout the town, congratulations in this regard.

TIDINESS

In general, the overall tidy appearance is lessened by some buildings and the lack of cutting of grassed areas. Outside the cemetery was quite bad with weeds and boulders taking from the overall appearance. Resurfacing of the road to the cinema gives an improved appearance but the maintenance of the roadside is quite bad. Allowances are being made at the sea front area for this highly sensitive area; the fact that there are proposed developments here, however this should not detract you from making temporary improvements.

RESIDENTIAL AREAS

The presentation of residential areas in Greystones is quite exceptional, in particular, the adjudicators would like to give a special commendation to the Woodlands development, which is magnificent. Congratulations in this regard and it is hoped that the residents will continue to maintain their premises. Burnaby Woods is very well presented, as was The Burnaby and Burnaby Park; Redford Park (but trim the long grass at the entrance around the trees); Rathdown Park (wall needs to be painted). One negative side of this relates more to landscaping in that the adjudicators cannot understand why a large proportion of premises do not take pride in their exterior/boundary walls of their premises, where they front out onto the roads. In many cases, these areas are totally overgrown, detract from the overall appearance and tend to have the ability to attract litter. An effort should be made by the Tidy Towns Committee to bring this to their attention and explain to them that they have a responsibility to try to improve the overall appearance of the town, as it takes collective effort bring about a greater improvement to Greystones.

ROADS, STREETS AND BACK AREAS

Again, comments have already been made throughout this report about the presentation of grassed areas on roadsides; lane ways were not much better - this area needs to be tackled. On the approach road from Bray, long grass was noted by an attractive and welcoming sign, seating at the bus stop was quite good; weeds were evident along kerbs and road markings are needed where resurfacing has taken place. All along Church Road, down to the car park, and the car park itself of the railway station was not maintained. There are many other examples. Along the road by the rugby club/tennis club, comments have already been made in relation to the problems encountered there, and allowances have been made for this. A nice rose bed was noted at Killincarrig Crossroads this year, but from Killincarrig up to Quinnsnorth, again, grassed areas were totally overgrown.

GENERAL IMPRESSION

The general impression is one of lack of cutting of grass, and this leaves the impression with the adjudicators that there is a lack of a co-ordinated successful effort in the maintenance of the town, both by the local authority and individual residents. The commercial sector appear to be making an effort in the presentation of their premises, and efforts are made in litter control. The over-riding impression, however, of the adjudicators in relation to long grass along road sides was bad and was reiterated many times upon inspection - you are going to have to come to terms with this. Having said that, there are many new developments, both in the built environment and residential, Greystones could, potentially, win this competition, but it will not do so based on aspirations or complaints, it will only gain marks through achievements. Please keep up the effort in trying to get more support, as the adjudicators undoubtedly look forward to further visits in years to come and hope to see further improvements being made to this attractive seaside town.