

"Caring for our environment"

Centre : **STRATFORD-ON-SLANEY**
County : **WICKLOW**
Category : **A**

Results

Date of Adjudication : 15-07-97

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 1997	Mark Awarded 1996
Overall Developmental Approach	50	34	32
The Built Environment	40	25	22
Landscaping	40	32	30
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	18	17
Litter Control	40	33	31
Tidiness	20	15	14
Residential Areas	30	21	21
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	31	32
General Impression	10	8	7
TOTAL MARK	300	217	206

Stratford-on-Slaney, County Wicklow

OVERALL DEVELOPMENTAL APPROACH

Thank you for your detailed form and map, together with photos of projects completed, which were very helpful during the course of adjudication. The adjudicators would also like to thank you for your detailed work programme, which is fairly ambitious, but over a long term period it is felt that the majority of these can be achieved. Good luck in this regard. It would be nice to see a water feature in the village square, well done. There is excellent evidence of good community effort and spirit in Donard. The adjudicators enjoyed their visit to Stratford-on-Slaney and look forward to further improvements next year. The visibility of the Irish language was an emphasis in this years competition, in this regard, the adjudicators noticed that the village has two different names in Irish; one is Baile an Taibhirne and the other is Ath na Sraide - is there any significance in this? It is encouraging to see that you are trying to incorporate the historical and cultural uniqueness of the village into your plans, well done in this regard. Good luck with the implementation of this plan. You have an excellent developmental programme to date and one which the adjudicators look forward to seeing further improvements.

THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

The built environment is also well cared for also in Stratford-on-Slaney this year. The school was well presented, apart from the rear area and it was nice to see the trellis which is a nice project for the children to get involved in. Both churches were looking well at time of adjudication, but try to paint the Catholic Church. Outside the community centre was well maintained, try to resurface this if possible. Kellys Stores was neat and tidy; Stratford Arms was freshly painted with efforts made with flowers which were coming on well but not yet in their prime - try to paint the gable end of this building. In building walls, try to minimise the use of cement as it is the stones and the design itself that gives the wall its feature, not the cement. Good luck with your project, in particular the development of the museum. A wall was being worked on at time of adjudication by a farmyard on Chapel Street. Overall, quite a good performance in this section.

LANDSCAPING

There was an excellent approach to landscaping throughout Stratford-on-Slaney, which created a very positive impression on the adjudicators this year, well done. An excellent rose bed presentation was noted opposite the Post Office, well done. The village, which was looking well on day of adjudication was helped by well cared for flower beds throughout the village supplemented by flower tubs and well trimmed grassed areas together with trees maturing well and stone walls. Overall, a very good approach in this regard. On the road to the Church of Ireland by the pump was a good presentation. The cross-roads area is excellent, very well

maintained and it was nice to see people sitting out at time of adjudication enjoying the fine weather. Also, well done on the work carried out to date at the Mass Path, it is nice to see the animals incorporated into the stone wall, well done. Perhaps try to put a flower tub by the seat on Doctors Road and perhaps a monument could be developed where there are bollards and chains relating to the cultural significance of the village. You also mention your plans to put in a fountain, which would be welcome, perhaps this is the proposed location. Overall, an excellent performance.

WILDLIFE AND NATURAL AMENITIES

The adjudicators notices a wildlife sign on one of the approach roads, while this is encouraging to see, the adjudicators would also like to see what plans you have in place to develop this area if it is to be a wildlife area. You also mentioned other areas in your plan - could these be developed. The adjudicators noticed the planting by the trellis in the school but nothing else, try to expand on this as school children can be an important vehicle in heightening awareness of wildlife importance. 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 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 Stratford-on-Slaney would include identification of species, lists 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.

LITTER CONTROL

Litter control throughout the village was excellent this year and the adjudicators have reflected this in the marks awarded. Does the

village have any recycling facilities?

TIDINESS

Again, an excellent appearance throughout the village. The location, colour, screening and signage (including bilingualism) is important; the absence of fly posting and graffiti (which was not a problem); control of weed growth at kerbs and at base of buildings (again, not a problem). Overall, very good. The only area that was disappointing was the rear yard of the school, which could be improved as it was relatively untidy with gravel, sand and sprinklings of litter. Unfortunately, the wire scape has not been done yet - this is going to have to be a long term project and good luck in this regard. The adjudicators also noted a cul-de-sac sign near the green which had been torn, try to have this fixed or replaced.

RESIDENTIAL AREAS

Residential areas were very good throughout the village. Try to paint the farmhouse adjacent to the school. An excellent effort was noted with the use of flowers at a house up from the community centre. It is good to see new houses being developed on Hill Road, and in time, these should be adequately landscaped. Watch the weeds in one or two houses, for example, off the cross roads by the green where there is gravel. As stated there is excellent individual efforts with many examples noted, one or two being the green house off the green itself, and two white houses opposite the Stratford Arms, which were freshly painted.

ROADS, STREETS AND BACK AREAS

Again, an excellent approach under this section. On the approach along Dublin Hill resurfacing is needed outside the Post Office on the pathway. It is good to see Beach/Hawthorn hedging also. On the road toward the Church of Ireland it is very well maintained with no litter in evidence or weeds. Roads have also been resurfaced throughout the village, which helped to improve the appearance. On Building Hill approach, the footpath that is being developed is not yet complete - this is a very ambitious project and allowances have been made for this. Coming up from the bridge, from the N81, it would be lovely if this could be a tree lined road and would give a lovely effect for the village in years to come. However, fine shrubbery was noted coming in this road on the right hand side. On Hill Road, try to highlight wildlife, while the left hand side was very neat and tidy, well done. Doctors Road was excellent, neat and tidy with well painted sign, the pole, however, could be painted. The adjudicators also compliment your plans to develop a cycle lane along the Baltinglass Road, well done in this regard. Overall, an excellent presentation under this section.

GENERAL IMPRESSION

This category looks at the overall integrated presentation of the village and also provides the opportunity to reward exceptional effort in overcoming a difficult problem. While the adjudicators recognise the problems, problems exists in all towns - no marks are given for aspirations or complaints, only on achievements. Thankfully, through a strong community pride, and effort,

Stratford-on-Slaney was looking excellent on day of adjudication, and the adjudicators would like to commend the efforts of all those involved. Good luck for 1998.

SECOND ADJUDICATION (16/08/97)

The village was under severe excavation works at nearly every corner of the town and it would be unfair to make any judgements on the tidiness or other elements until the restoration works are finished. It must be stated that the new path down to the river is going to be a substantial improvement to the connection of the village with an important water body. It was not known if there were considerations being made for barrier-free design, such as roll on kerbs, at portions of the proposed footways. One looks very much forward to the improvements for next year.