

*"Caring for our environment"*

Centre : **TINAHELY**  
County : **WICKLOW**  
Category : **B**

**Results**

Date of Adjudication : 14-07-97

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 1997	Mark Awarded 1996
Overall Developmental Approach	50	28	--
The Built Environment	40	25	--
Landscaping	40	22	--
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	16	--
Litter Control	40	23	--
Tidiness	20	11	--
Residential Areas	30	19	--
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	21	--
General Impression	10	5	--
<b>TOTAL MARK</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>170</b>	<b>--</b>

## **Tinahely, County Wicklow**

### **OVERALL DEVELOPMENTAL APPROACH**

Welcome back to the Tidy Towns Competition, and thank you for entering the village of Tinahely for consideration. Thank you for your completed questionnaire and map which was helpful during the course of adjudication. The adjudicators enjoyed their visit to Tinahely, and look forward to further improvements next year. The adjudicators also look forward to the submission of your detailed plan, which should outline projects that you have in mind for the development and enhancement of your village. Try to include a detailed map showing what works have been completed, and also identify particular sensitive areas, or problems that cannot be avoided in the short term. The guidance notes of the Tidy Towns brochure provide additional information which should help you in this regard. Your plan should be simple and realistic, covering 3 - 5 pages, together with a map, try to get a greater input from the local authority, the business community, residents and schools. The plan itself can be prepared by the committee. The visibility of the Irish language is in emphasis in this years adjudication, and you should try to expand on this, for example, what is the significance of the villages name. You have shown a commitment to developing the architectural heritage of Tinahely through the development of the Court House, and the development underway at the Market House - congratulations on these achievements. If these are just a sample of the works that have been completed, Tinahely could do very well in this competition, if possible, try to avoid PVC windows on buildings of architectural character. In your plan you should try to incorporate all aspects of the competition, including the historical and cultural uniqueness of the village, visibility of bilingualism throughout the village, and accessibility for the disabled and the elderly. The adjudicators will be looking for attention given to all areas of the competition. Good luck for 1998.

### **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 village. The best approach is a good mix of residential and commercial, enhanced by sympathetic landscaping of open spaces and appropriate use of building materials. The standard maintenance of buildings in Tinahely is very good and you have some unique features of architectural design, which are fast disappearing from Irish towns, for example, arched gate entrances. The Tinahely Courthouse is a great achievement in improving this congratulations. It provides an important cultural facility for the village and visitors alike. The use of granite is welcome throughout Tinahely, both in buildings and in walls. The Square area is relatively well maintained, although, the on-going development at the Market House does take from the overall development, but give it time and this will appear lovely.

Also, try to avoid some of the following; installing pseudo-traditional type shop fronts; PVC windows in traditional buildings; varnished timber as this weathers easily and removal of plaster finishes. Some premises that were looking well at time of adjudication were the Teagasc offices; Fitzgerald Furniture; Symes; Deirdre Minogue; OConnors and Bank of Ireland. A particularly attractive old church was noted along the Main Street, however, the addition is totally out of character with the building itself. Try to improve the presentation of the Corn Woollen Stores through the painting of doors and signage - this, potentially, could be a nice feature for the village. Try also to paint corrugated roofs with neutral colours as they can take from the overall visual appearance. Replace the broken window on the Stores by Black Toms. Several premises, through careful thought, could improve their premises with little effort, for example, Blakes (by removal of stickers on the windows); Murphys (by the removal of the canopies and relocating the satellite dish); targeting derelict sites, for example, opposite the Eastern Health Board; improving the signage for the Garda Station (it is questionable if visitors would be able to find the station at all). Give consideration to the elderly and disabled, for example, footpaths, both in surfacing and kerbing do need attention in places. Also, the pumps need to be painted. Any other areas that you can help to improve the village, for example, in looking at the architectural heritage, could information plaques and historical trails be developed, either exteriorally, or within, for example, the Courthouse building. In considering the main aspects of buildings, there are two factors to be kept in mind, one is the quality of the individual structure, i.e., its presentation and materials used and secondly is the building in its overall context. Insensitive changes to individual buildings can destroy the overall character of the street. Buildings on corners, or at the end of streets assume greater civic design importance because of their location. Where such buildings are modified insensitively, or allowed to fall into disrepair, it can have serious visual implications. The adjudicators would also advise that it is not necessary for new shop fronts to be traditional or Georgian in character - simple, modern style shop fronts are often more appropriate. Having said this, Tinahely has an important hidden resource in its architectural heritage, through its buildings, which are typical of Irish villages - try to protect this where possible.

## **LANDSCAPING**

The appearance, maintenance and presentation of the public spaces (including amenity areas, open spaces, footpaths and streets etc.) are a vital aspect of civic design quality. Poor presentation of public areas can take away from high standards achieved by individual properties. This section looks for a number of aspects including appropriate selection and siting of trees, shrubs and flowers for an all-year round affect - they should not be too close to buildings, or too close together; the maintenance of planted areas - in this regard, do not plant if it cannot be maintained, through watering, feeding, weeding etc. While flower beds are visually effective again, the above point is important in terms of maintenance - try to initiate a project of Adopt-a-Spot whereby residents, businesses etc. take on responsibility of maintaining individual spots, that is the only way you can achieve

success through greater involvement. Try to strive for good natural urban planting with a good mix of trees and of different ages, trees have a soothing affect against buildings. Planting should be chosen carefully as your decisions now will impact on Tinahely in years to come and has the opportunity to create an important visual effect for up to 30, 40, 50 years. Similarly, street furniture should reflect the tradition of Irish towns as should containers for planting and litter bins. Tinahely, under this category, has shown initiative by developing a number of open spaces, for example, on the approach from Aughrim there was a nice open space, could this be enhanced by painting the seat as a minimum. The visual effect of the Market Square is attractive but is lessened by the ongoing development at the Market House. It is nice to see well cared for bedding areas together with traditional seating and attractive litter bins. A nice seat was also noted outside the Cedar Inn. Overall, the square was well presented, well done in this regard.

## **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 coastal habitats, or other habitats such as 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 Tinahely 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, the River Derry offers a unique habitat in which you could develop your wildlife and natural amenities. Try to open up a nature walk along here and put in place projects that would enhance the environment and educate at the same time. School children have an important role to play in this regard. Under this category, the adjudicators noted that there was a need for

vigilance in relation to the maintenance of the river as some items of signage etc. were noted dumped in the river - there should be a regular clean up of these areas without destroying the habitats. Hedgerows also provide important habitats.

## **LITTER CONTROL**

This section looks for the absence of litter and dumping, the management of prevention and control of litter, measures to promote anti-litter awareness in the community; provision of litter bins; regular clean-up campaigns etc. Litter control throughout Tinahely was not too bad this year, which was encouraging to see, however, sprinklings were noted, for example, by the telephone kiosk on Pound Lane; in the Square near the Courthouse by the pump. It is nice to see new litter bins in place, with Irish incorporated, well done.

## **TIDINESS**

This section takes into account the colour, screening and signage, including bilingualism and recycling facilities, the absence of fly posting and graffiti, the control of weeds at kerbs and base of buildings and the overall visual tidiness of the town, including its buildings, wire scape, approaches etc. The adjudicators recommend leaving margins partly wild, yet tidy to encourage wild flowers, this could involve giving due consideration and attention to grassed areas, but also giving consideration to the growth of hedgerows. In general, the tidy appearance of Tinahely was not too bad; allowances have been made for the fact that the development of the Market House is taking from the overall appearance. Other areas that you might look at in your long term plan would be the removal of overhead wires and improving road surfaces.

## **RESIDENTIAL AREAS**

This section looks at residential areas within Tinahely, including the overall site which incorporates front gardens, out buildings, boundary walls etc. In this regard, at Beachwood Drive, litter and dumping was noted at the turning point and this was not helped by the fact that there was an abandoned van in the grassed area - why not contact the County Council in this regard. New fencing is also needed, together with the painting of many of the houses in this estate. Grass and weeds were noted by kerbing at the entrance. Other individual residential premises are very well maintained throughout Tinahely with many very good individual efforts noted, for example, Kindora; Glenview; the house next to Blakes on Pound Lane and on the approach road, to name but a few.

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

This section looks at the presentation of approach roads into Tinahely, including the absence of litter; presentation of verges and hedges; footpaths; kerbing; weeds; gravel; nameplate and signs - are they clean etc. Consideration is also given to wildlife on approach roads. This section also looks at lane ways, street gateways and the presentation of car parks, bridges etc. Is there suitable access for the disabled and the elderly? On the approach

road from Aughrim, the sign for Tinahely needs to be fixed; the left hand side was not too bad but the right hand side needs to be cut back. Approaching Tinahely along the Main Street, replace the 30 MPH signs; clean up the Tinahely sign; landscape the left hand side, consider tree planting here; litter was also evident on the right hand side where grass had been cut back. It was nice to see the name of Tinahely in the centre on the rock incorporating Irish and including old Irish lettering. The new 30 MPH sign was noted along Pound Lane - the left hand side was very well presented and well cared for by residents, well done; the right hand side could be given more attention in places - paint the sign and the sluice valve nearby.

### **GENERAL IMPRESSION**

The overall integrated presentation of Tinahely is quite good. There are unique features, in terms of the built environment - try not to lose these. You also have good options for the development of wildlife and you have great scope to do well in this competition. Protect your heritage. The adjudicators look forward to further improvements next year. Marks are given for achievements and not for aspirations or complaints. Don't be disillusioned, it does take time but in time you will notice changes resulting in a more attractive village. Good luck for 1998.