

"Caring for our environment"

Centre : **WICKLOW TOWN**
County : **WICKLOW**
Category : **E**

Results

Date of Adjudication : 15-07-97

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 1997	Mark Awarded 1996
Overall Developmental Approach	50	29	28
The Built Environment	40	28	25
Landscaping	40	26	25
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	18	17
Litter Control	40	21	23
Tidiness	20	10	11
Residential Areas	30	18	18
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	24	24
General Impression	10	5	6
TOTAL MARK	300	179	177

Wicklow, County Wicklow

OVERALL DEVELOPMENTAL APPROACH

Thank you for your detailed submission which outlined all works that have taken place and all the works proposed for 1997. This was extremely helpful to the adjudicators on day of adjudication. Unfortunately, most of the projects seem not complete from the few that the adjudicators looked for. The adjudicators were also unable to locate the Barrow Green, where improvements had or were planned to take place for 1997. If this has occurred, the adjudicators apologise for not being able to find it, but look forward to visiting it in 98 - please try to indicate on a map where this is located. Obviously, you should try to tie down the number of projects you are trying to achieve, down to a few - see these through to fruition before following through on other plans.

THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

The adjudicators would like to commend a number of improvements noted under this category this year. Wicklow is continuing to make progress in this area. A good effort was noted at Sheemore B&B; a new building (surgery?) was noted behind the Statoil petrol station with considerable landscaping having taken place; Wicklow Rovers AFC grounds were very well presented this year, well done - try to paint the building. The County Council and its grounds were well presented, and the East Glendalough School was an excellent presentation, well done. The railway station platform was very well presented, but the yard nearby needs to be screened. Schools in general are well presented, as was The Grand Hotel. The adjudicators would especially like to commend the presentation of The Old Forge, well done on this improvement; it is nice to see traditional features such as Liscanner Stone and tiling incorporated in the presentation. Other premises looking well on day of adjudication include S.V. Delahunt; Abbey Newagents (try to remove the stickers from the window); Abbey Pharmacy (which is new); AIB (good use of flowers); Horizon (new); Kidstuff; The Coffee Shop; Sheridans (good use of flowers); The Bakery; Bridge Tavern; The Catholic Church and its grounds were very well presented; Wicklow Bay Hostel; OConnors Pub (new shop front); Gelletlies; American Foodfair; ESB; a new development was noted on Lower Main Street and on South Quay; The Opera House; Global Gourmet and Hannahs; new building was also noted at Haughton Solicitors. It is very encouraging to see new shop fronts being put in place throughout the town, well done in this regard. There is room for more improvements including Jet Cleaners and The Pineto. Philip Healys is much improved also but would benefit from a painting, especially to the side of the building. Outside the GAA Park has to be improved, and the Golf Club boundary wall could also be improved. The car park at the Murrough could be also better presented. It is good to see that The Beaches is making good use of a former eye-sore, but the area by Wicklow Aquasports is very badly presented; allowances have been made for on-going building. On the South Quay, it is encouraging to see

the new development as mentioned above, and hopefully additional renewal will take place in this area. Russells Bar was also noted. The car park near the golf course was very untidy. Considerable graffiti was noted at the hand ball alley. Overall, it is encouraging to see a considerable number of improvements this year.

LANDSCAPING

The appearance, maintenance and presentation of the public spaces (including amenity areas, open spaces, footpaths and streams etc.) are a vital aspect of civic design quality. Poor presentation of public areas can take away from high standards achieved by individual properties. There was a mixed presentation under this category this year. The area opposite Quinnsnorth was very well presented this year, well done, with flowers coming on well, and new seating was noted, as was the park near the Gaol. Weeds were noted at the shrubbery at the entrance to The Rise. The grassed area on the right hand side at the entrance to Friars Hill was overgrown. The picnic area down by the railway station was pathetic. The monument adjacent to the FCA building was well presented this year, well done - one of the few well cared for landscaped areas noted by the adjudicators. Along the river walk, old fencing opposite the Leitrim Bar needs to be painted and fixed. It is good to see the grassed area adjacent to The Beaches, which is somewhat of an improvement on last year. Try to improve on this again for next year. A cobble locked area within the industrial zone on the South Quay was very badly presented. Leitrim Place was well presented, which was good to see - try to avoid the use of weed killers. The adjudicators were disappointed not to see more landscaped areas, following improvements made. More landscaping of grassed areas are needed down by the Sailing Club, even though improvements were made last year. Additionally, grass banks and open grassed areas, near residential areas, were very badly maintained. The area overlooking the sailing club and the Black Castle is well presented this year. The grounds of the church is an excellent presentation. Congratulations to those involved. The area around the Halpin monument is well presented. Bedding plants were noted between the upper and lower main street which is good to see. The Irish language was an important feature of this years adjudication - try to expand the visual presence of Irish, particularly, through the town.

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 town. 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 Wicklow 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. The adjudicators recognise the important habitats exist in the form of the coast, together with the Broadlough Lake. The coastal protection works were noted. The river is also an important nature reserve - you might like to expand your plans in regards to this. The adjudicators would like to see more plans for this in your detailed 3 - 5 year plan. It is good to see seating and picnic area down by the car park on the sea front towards Broadlough. Try to incorporate wildlife information along this area.

LITTER CONTROL

The adjudicators were extremely disappointed with the presentation of Wicklow under this category this year, and are very concerned at the lack of litter control. While adjudicating this year, the adjudicators noted that many towns have begun to get to grips with this problem. However, this is not the case in Wicklow town. There seems to be a total disregard for litter control; there is a need for a total re-education programme and a stiffer approach has to be established as is the case in Bray. The car park of the railway station was very disappointing, with litter very evident. Litter was also quite bad at the grassed area opposite Quinnsworth, which took from its, otherwise, very good appearance. A new litter bin was noted at the entrance to Mount Carmel Estate and in other locations as well. Litter was also noted on the road adjacent to the Catholic Church, and the road going up the hill near the large playground. At an open space near the Gaelscoil litter was also bad. It appears that, in every open space where litter has potential to collect, it does so. Though the town was busy on day of adjudication with visitors, it is not a welcoming feature, and it only has the potential to lead to adverse comment. Ask the Local Authority what their plans are for in relation to the recently announced Action Against Litter campaign. The adjudicators feel that if seeking co-operation is not working, then you should follow Bray in employing a litter warden and taking a strict approach. This has to be tackled as it is a matter of urgency.

TIDINESS

The presentation of Wicklow under this category was not very positive, in light of the comments made above, together with the fact that many residential estates appear to be only tackling the immediate area, i.e. entrances, and not boundary, grassed areas. It appears that tidiness is something that is not taken seriously in the town. Try also to improve the area opposite the County Council grounds, which is a bit of an eyesore. Graffiti was noted in one or two areas, as well. Also, watch out for illegal fly posting. A stricter, more serious approach is going to have to be taken in the presentation of the town in relation to tidiness. This category relates to the overall presentation of the town, and while many of the commercial premises are making an investment of improving their premises, it is not being matched by similar effort in terms of other areas, this attitude has to change.

RESIDENTIAL AREAS

There is a need to continue to improve liaison with Residents Associations in order for them to take on a greater responsibility for their own residential areas. There is a mixed presentation noted this year; there appear to be many unfinished developments, which appear to be in place for several years. Examples being the presentation of landscaped areas within Glebemount; while the estate was very good, grass was very long within the park, and the boundary area which has shrubbery is totally overgrown. Weeds were noted at kerbs and places. A new development was noted at Church Gate, which will be very nice once completed. The Rise was well presented. Friars hill was also well presented but the sign needs to be fixed. Hill view was also well presented. The adjudicators noted a very good presentation all along Leitrim Place with good individual effort. The apartments on the seafront would be nice if they were painted. An excellent effort was again noted in many premises and one singled out was number 6B on Strand Road. Within Ballyguile Park the entrance in the lower section of this park was well presented but the higher section needs more attention as litter and tidiness is a problem. A new park has been noted also to the left of Ballyguile park; all along this road many gardens are not landscaping the front of their boundaries for example opposite Ballyguile park and also a white bungalow development opposite Mount Carmel. Why havent the residents done this? The entrance into Wicklow heights could be improved as could the park next to it and the park opposite it. Along Dunbur road was quite good with very good individual efforts and Dunbur Park was well presented. A residential park opposite the car park on the coast road was one of the best presentations. Well done, with planting outside on the main road. A good effort was put in here. Marlton Court is a new development with expensive landscaping having taken place but not yet complete. It should be nice once it is complete. Heather brook park also had an excellent presentation. Brooklands was also very well presented at the entrance but again the shrubbery area had not been maintained. This is a problem which is all too evident throughout many of the newer estates throughout the town. Again overall there is room for improvement here. Crinion Park was well presented.

ROADS, STREETS AND BACK AREAS

On the approach from Rathnew a good presentation is noted at the Welcome to Wicklow sign. Grass had been cut at the left hand side but the right hand side could be better maintained. Try to replace the fencing on the road to the railway station. The road into the railway station needs resurfacing. The road to the Sailing Club also needs resurfacing in parts. It was good to see that improved surfacing was noted around the Subaqua club. Well done. Approaching from Brittas Bay was a very disappointing presentation. On Seaview road there is a need for more maintenance of grassed areas, as litter is evident. Try to improve the fencing here also. On Church Hill a new footpath was noted with seating. Well done in this regard. It was one of the few improvements noted. Approaching from the Beehive grass verges could be neater although a nice presentation was noted at the Wicklow sign. Weeds along by walls take from the overall approach. Overall again while some limited improvements were noted there doesn't seem to be an overall co-ordinated effort, e.g. Brittas Bay approach road.

GENERAL IMPRESSION

The general impression of Wicklow this year is one of sadness at the fact that while many good improvements have been made in particular with the presentation of buildings with new shop fronts noted and several new premises, the adjudicators were extremely disappointed with litter control, tidiness and overall presentation of residential areas. There is room for improvement of the approach roads and landscaping also. The adjudicators, while recognising that resources might be limited would suggest that more emphasis must be placed by the local authority on improving areas. It was good to see that improvements have been made, for example road surfacing, landscaping, new seating, etc., but considerable improvements are also needed. The responsibility also lies with every resident of the town to improve the residential areas and again with every resident of the town to improve on litter control which will have to start with the schools. The adjudicators would wholeheartedly support the appointment of a litter warden in order to insure that Wicklow gets a grip with this problem. You have, potentially, beautiful town with a strong character of the seaside and the harbour, with attractive buildings. It was a pity that the adjudicators could not finish their visit without being more positive in light of the efforts made by a lot of the commercial premises. Having said this the adjudicators would hope that the tidy towns committee together with the residents and other associated groups would take these comments with a view to making positive improvements rather than considering them as negative. The adjudicators wholeheartedly would like to see improvements made to this town, so try to generate more support, and good luck. The adjudicators look forward to their visit to Wicklow in 1998 and also to the goal which hopefully will be open by then. Thank you for your documentation in this regard.