

"Caring for our environment"

Centre : **HACKETSTOWN**
County : **CARLOW**
Category : **B**

Results

Date of Adjudication : 22-06-98

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 1998	Mark Awarded 1997
Overall Developmental Approach	50	35	35
The Built Environment	40	24	24
Landscaping	40	26	25
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	18	18
Litter Control	40	15	16
Tidiness	20	14	14
Residential Areas	30	21	21
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	22	20
General Impression	10	6	6
TOTAL MARK	300	181	179

Hacketstown, County Carlow

OVERALL DEVELOPMENTAL APPROACH

Hacketstown is welcome to the 1998 Tidy Towns Competition. You have maintained the standards that you have achieved in previous years. Unfortunately we did not have the benefit on this year's adjudication of an outline of your objectives and plans, though I note from the previous year's report that you do have a three plan which possibly commenced a year or so ago. Hacketstown is an interesting town which must have a strong heritage in terms of its history. It is interesting in its layout and in the dramatic rise and fall of its streets. You should maximize these benefits in your plans and perhaps seek advice from experts on these issues. As regards the problem of derelict sites which you have in your town, it might be worth noting that there is legislation which addresses these issues and can be put to effect. You may like to make contact with the County Council in this regard because they have powers in this matter. Please don't be disheartened by the small increase in marks this year. Good luck with your efforts next year.

THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

As stated in last year's report the commercial and public buildings are presented to a varied standard in the town. The derelict buildings are mentioned under the previous heading. It is unfortunate that you have this problem but there are still some things that can be done, possibly by the County Council or even by putting painted hoardings in the windows. Like last year, the church was extremely well presented, many individual commercial buildings looked quite well this year and some private houses were very attractively presented with a lot of care and attention being given to them. Some of the shopfronts and fascias are rather disappointing. It is recommended that you try to make contact with some of the business owners with a view to having inappropriate signs and shopfronts replaced. This can make a significant contribution to the visual amenity or value of the streetscape. The Supermarket features a good shopfront, but it is disappointing to find so many signs and posters on the window. This site is a vista site within the town in that it becomes into prominent view on approach of the main street. Window posters should be kept to a minimum. The new Esso station still looks a little unfinished but it looks well and the owner is to be commended for his efforts, particularly for the planting on the bank mentioned in last year's report.

LANDSCAPING

All the areas mentioned in last year's report, particularly the area on the Tullow road approach looked very well again this year and obviously a lot of work goes into maintaining the high standard of presentation of these areas. As stated in last year's report the existing landscaping and planting schemes in the housing estates

look well but the point made last year that more shrub and tree planting would soften the landscaping in these areas is reiterated. The open space up at Hillview was somewhat uneven around the edges and this should be soiled and seeded and straightened up. Some weed clearance is also needed, litter was found in some of the estates which is disappointing. The estate adjoining Duffy's business premises was quite badly littered on adjudication day.

WILDLIFE AND NATURAL AMENITIES

It is noted in your submission that you do not make reference to your plans for development under this heading. This is a fairly new category in the Competition which can be quite awesome for some committees at first. Please do not be discouraged. It is noticed from last year's report that you do have plans to develop the river area as an amenity and that this area has great potential for wetland habitats. It is also noted that Eagle Hill was mentioned for grassland habitats. As mentioned in last year's report, seek some expert advice, such as that of the Conservation Volunteers of Ireland and don't be discouraged. It is a good idea to involve the school students as they are usually very interested in this sort of work. You might consider developing a Wild Life Garden (see Enfo activity sheet no. 12).

LITTER CONTROL

On adjudication day, there was a lot of litter on the road leading up towards Marian and Hillview terrace. This was disappointing as you seem to have done very well last year. There was also some litter in and around the town, but in no place was there a serious scattering of litter. Do keep up your good campaigns of awareness as regards litter problems in the town amongst the community and the children as a whole and also amongst the business people. You could even do a campaign using leaflets to some of the residents as well.

TIDINESS

Weed growth needs to be eliminated on some of the roads and streets and along laneways between buildings within the town, both commercial and industrial and beside some residential properties. Do try and encourage the maintenance of these areas because it does create a poor impression and can detract from very well presented buildings which may well be alongside these areas of neglect. The boarding up of window apertures of some derelict buildings would create a tidier impression within the town. If liked the boarding can feature a mural which can be quite cheerful. This can be a satisfactory interim measure until the problem of dereliction is overcome. Display of goods on the street side in front of shops can create a poor impression but this does not seem to be a serious problem in Hacketstown. Some cars were on display on the street at the Eastern end of the town and this does not create a good impression. Ideally all goods for sale should be displayed within the curtilage of a business' site or within the shop unit itself. At a couple of locations there were

mounds of sand or building material outside the front boundary of premises. This also does not look well and should be avoided.

RESIDENTIAL AREAS

Residential estates in the town were well presented in terms of planting at the entrances. Unfortunately, some boundary walls and entrances were in need of freshening up. As mentioned elsewhere, some of the open spaces would benefit from some additional planting of trees and shrubs and in some areas resoiling and seeding where the lawn has worn away. It is disappointing that there was a problem of litter in the housing estates this year because it seems to have been so well under control last year. Please try and concentrate on overcoming this problem for next year.

ROADS, STREETS AND BACK AREAS

The new paving looks well on the main streets and it is good to note that they feature access for the disabled and the approach roads are in general very well presented with some nice individual properties among them. There is some need of verge clearance of weeds and a small problem of litter. Some of the laneways and entrances within the town were quite weedy and in some cases some rubbish had accumulated, possibly blown into these areas. The planting on the approach from Tullow is a nice greeting for the town on approach to it. Keep up the good standard and good luck with this work again next year.

GENERAL IMPRESSION

The overall impression is somewhat mixed this year, some of it due to problems that are extremely difficult to overcome such that of the derelict buildings and also some due to unattractive shopfronts. The latter problem appears to be being redressed by a few property owners. There are some awnings which don't look well on their buildings and consideration might be given to removing them. Although there is not a huge improvement this year, it is appreciated that good efforts have gone into maintaining the standard that you have reached in recent years and that you have good co-operation, particularly financial support from sectors in the community. Do continue to foster the co-operation of the residents and commercial people in the town and try and tackle those difficult problem. Thank you for your continued participation in the competition.