

"Caring for our environment"

Centre : **GRAIGUENAMANAGH**
County : **KILKENNY**
Category : **C**

Results

Date of Adjudication : 26-06-98

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 1998	Mark Awarded 1997
Overall Developmental Approach	50	26	--
The Built Environment	40	21	--
Landscaping	40	21	--
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	15	--
Litter Control	40	26	--
Tidiness	20	13	--
Residential Areas	30	19	--
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	24	--
General Impression	10	6	--
TOTAL MARK	300	171	--

Graiguenamanagh, County Kilkenny

OVERALL DEVELOPMENTAL APPROACH

We welcome Graiguenamanagh into the competition and wish them every success in it. Thank you the information sent with your entry form and for the map which was most useful on adjudication day. It is gratifying to read that you have the support of Residents Associations in the town for your Tidy Towns efforts. It is hoped that this will be extended further into the commercial sector and other local voluntary groups. It has also been noted that FAS are giving you valuable assistance and that you have made contact with your local authority. As in many undertakings, the secret of success is planning. You should consider in conjunction with your constituent members, drawing up a 3/5 year plan. This need not be an elaborate one nor do you need the assistance of consultants. It can be done in conjunction with local groups, your local authority and other interested parties. Stage one should be that you try to identify what needs to be done. Stage two is to phase the work over 5 years and try to achieve as much as possible within a given time scale, within your financial and physical resources. Success in the Tidy Towns competition does not come over-night and can only be achieved after many years of effort and dedication. Please also make contact with your Regional Tourism Authority(RTA) based in Kilkenny. The officer there will come and speak with your committee. There is also a video on the Tidy Towns competition which is interesting viewing. The RTA also run an annual seminar for Tidy Towns groups with guest speakers which is well worth attending. Since you last entered the competition there have been a number of additions and new categories.

THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

On adjudication day the church, arts centre/visitor centre, library and schools were very well presented. Congratulations to all concerned. Most commercial buildings in the town also looked well. Many others could do with a coat of paint. In as far as is possible and where replacements are being made, please do encourage your commercial sector to replace their shop fronts etc. in the old style and not in plastic. Hanging signs also intrude on the streetscape and, more often than not, serve no useful purpose and could be removed. Alternatively it should be suggested that they be replaced with wrought iron or wooden signs in keeping with the street architecture. Colour schemes for adjoining premises are also an item which should be considered. In the past paint manufacturers have been known to make the services of colour consultants available to groups such as your own free of charge which in the event would be very useful for a joint painting of premises project. Stone walls are a feature of Graiguenamanagh and many were to be seen on adjudication day. Work on the stone wall on the New Ross road was noted. Perhaps this is an area where FAS can be involved.

LANDSCAPING

Tubs of flowers, window boxes and hanging baskets looked well where presented. The area surrounding Duiske Abbey was particularly noted. Graiguenamanagh does not have many open spaces but where they exist some are very overgrown. The area in the vicinity of the arts centre was very well presented on adjudication. Where such areas do exist they could be the basis for a landscaping programme. Think in terms of some flower beds but bearing in mind that they do need constant attention particularly in hot weather. Consider also the judicious planting of trees and flowering shrubs which will give you some colour on an all year round basis. The emphasis here however is on the word judicious as too many trees or shrubs can lead to clutter whereas careful planting can soften the environment. If you have not done so already seek the advice of your local authority, Coillte or some qualified person in the locality to advise you on this. Perhaps you already have one on your committee.

WILDLIFE AND NATURAL AMENITIES

This is a comparatively new category in the competition, the purpose of which is to put the emphasis on the conservation and enhancement of wildlife habitats and the environment. Woodlands, ponds, rivers, hedgerows, grass margins, open spaces, graveyards and walls are important habitats and your committee should try to identify those in your area and determine what appropriate actions could be taken to conserve and enhance them. The guidelines in the Tidy Towns book offer other suggestions as to the type of initiatives you might undertake. If there is a local wildlife expert or a member of your Community with experience in this area then please seek their advice. Being close to the river Barrow this facility may present an opportunity for the development of a wildlife project and, in the event, we look forward to hearing about it next year.

LITTER CONTROL

Your comments regarding the placement of litter bins was noted. On adjudication day there was almost no evidence of litter in Graiguenamanagh and all concerned are to be congratulated on this. This is a very important part of the competition and needs careful and constant monitoring.

TIDINESS

In general the town was presented in a neat and tidy manner. However you have to bear in mind that adjudication is not just on the main streets but also in the side streets and back areas which tend to lend themselves to open storage which in turn can become very unsightly. Again it is a matter which should be raised with your committee in order to focus attention on this aspect of the competition.

RESIDENTIAL AREAS

All housing estates were visited on adjudication day. In general they were very well presented and some houses have lovely gardens which were in full bloom. However others could do with a coat of paint. Where open spaces exist at these estates it is important to keep them cut during the summer an area where perhaps your Residents Associations can be influential.

ROADS, STREET AND BACK AREAS

Approach roads in general were good. Adjudication normally takes place from the town name plates or the speed limit signs whichever you opt for. From there on in the grass verges and hedges should be cut as often as possible. The thinking however nowadays is that grass verges should not be cut right back to the hedge or wall. There is a suggestion that a margin of 12 to 18 inches should be left near the base for the propagation of wild flowers. Road surfaces are good and pathways also looked well.

GENERAL IMPRESSION

Overall, and bearing in mind that there has not been a Tidy Towns committee for some time, Graiguenamanagh looked reasonably well on adjudication day. The above comments are made in order to try to identify areas which your committee could examine with a view to improvements. Planning is all important and again the secret is to seek the best advice available to you. Graiguenamanagh is an attractive town with many very fine old buildings and architecture and can do very well in the competition.