

"Caring for our environment"

Centre : **OWNING**
County : **KILKENNY**
Category : **A**

Results

Date of Adjudication : 23-06-98

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 1998	Mark Awarded 1997
Overall Developmental Approach	50	25	--
The Built Environment	40	23	--
Landscaping	40	24	--
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	15	--
Litter Control	40	26	--
Tidiness	20	13	--
Residential Areas	30	21	--
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	25	--
General Impression	10	6	--
TOTAL MARK	300	178	--

Owning, County Kilkenny

OVERALL DEVELOPMENTAL APPROACH

After a lapse of six years we welcome Owning back into the competition and wish them every success in it. Since your last entry the competition has changed considerably with new categories and headings being introduced. The following comments are therefore by way of this year's adjudication and some advice on your approach to the competition for future years. Success or otherwise in the competition would be achieved depending on the level of support received from your community, your Local Authority and other agencies such as FAS, Coillte and your Regional Tourism Authority. It has been noted that approaches have been made to your local authority. Similar approaches should be made to FAS and Coillte and assistance should also be sought from your Regional Tourism Authority based in Kilkenny who are responsible at local level for organising the competition. Your committee should be representative of these interests but primarily it is a community effort. Initially it is recommended that in conjunction with these bodies you should draw up a 3/5 year realistic plan based on your physical and financial resources and aimed at a specific number of projects to be achieved within a certain time limit. This approach has been used very successfully in other centres. You should also visit winning centres in your immediate locality such as Kilkenny city, Inistioge, Ardmore (Co. Waterford), Rossadrehid (South Tipperary), in the process perhaps arrange to meet with their respective committees who you will find will be most helpful in giving you advice and assistance.

THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Owning is very much a residential village but nevertheless has a number of substantial buildings such as the St John of God Sisters building, the church (and graveyards) and Owning Hall all of which were reasonably well presented on adjudication day. Although neat in appearance some of these buildings could benefit from a coat of paint. Business premises in the main looked well.

LANDSCAPING

Work which is taking place on the village square area was noted and we look forward to seeing the results of this in 1999. For the future perhaps you might consider the judicious planting of trees and shrubs for the purpose of softening the landscape. Careful planning however is necessary as to plant too many would only cause clutter. In the event do consult with your local authority, Coillte or some qualified person in your locality. In the case of shrubs consider planting those of the flowering type which will give you some colour on an all year round basis. Consideration could also be given to the provision of some flower beds but do bear in mind that these need constant attention particularly in hot weather.

Where presented hanging baskets and window boxes looked extremely well.

WILDLIFE AND NATURAL AMENITIES

This is a new category in the competition with the emphasis on the conservation and enhancement of wildlife habitats and the environment. Woodlands, rivers, ponds, hedgerows, grass margins, open spaces, graveyards and walls are important habitats and your Committee should try to identify areas where these habitats exist and then determine the best approach to their conservation and enhancement. 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 committee with experience in this area please do use their knowledge. Until such time as the project is up and running a nominal mark is being given in this category for this year.

LITTER CONTROL

There was almost no litter to be seen in Owing on adjudication day. Congratulations to all concerned. Your comments regarding the community effort in this respect were noted. This is an area where children can also be involved. Perhaps it might be possible to arrange a small competition for them as part of your anti-litter campaign, the purpose of which to make them conscious of this aspect of the competition.

TIDINESS

In general the village was very well presented and tidy on the day. Please do remember that the adjudicator will examine all streets in the village including all back roads and streets. The adjudication is not just confined to the main thoroughfares.

RESIDENTIAL AREAS

This is and will be the strong point of Owing's Tidy Towns effort. Most houses were extremely well presented. Some have excellent gardens which were full of colour on adjudication day. Congratulations to all concerned. It is suggested that you form a residents association and that members of that group would be on your committee. In that way you might be able to get over the difficulties you are experiencing with others regarding their premises.

ROADS, STREET AND BACK AREAS

In general the approach roads to the village were reasonably well kept. However some were overgrown, a matter which you may be able to discuss with your local authority or with the implementation of a FAS scheme. Please do bear in mind that the thinking nowadays is that grass verges should not be cut right back to the

bushes or trees. A certain margin should be left for the propagation of wild flowers. Please note that adjudication normally begins either between the speed limit signs or the village name signs whichever you opt for. Therefore it would be important to look at approach roads from there on in.

GENERAL IMPRESSION

Owning looked very neat and tidy on adjudication day. However there is obvious work to be done- hence the suggestion of a 3/5 year plan. Your Regional Tourism Authority based in Kilkenny have a video on the Tidy Towns competition which will give you an indication of what other centres are doing and how they have overcome problems not unlike those in Owing. We look forward to seeing Owing back again in the competition next year at which time, and if available, we would like to have sight of the plan.