

"Caring for our environment"

Centre : **CASTLEFINN**
County : **DONEGAL**
Category : **B**

Results

Date of Adjudication : 19-06-99

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 1999	Mark Awarded 1998
Overall Developmental Approach	50	35	27
The Built Environment	40	30	29
Landscaping	40	30	27
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	14	7
Litter Control	40	33	32
Tidiness	20	19	19
Residential Areas	30	22	21
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	30	28
General Impression	10	8	8
TOTAL MARK	300	221	198

Castlefinn, County Donegal

OVERALL DEVELOPMENTAL APPROACH

It was a real pleasure to spend some time in Castlefinn and to see some of the delights hidden from the passing motorist. The 5-Year Development Plan has obviously been very helpful in identifying objectives and concentrating the mind: it is not a true '5-Year' plan, however, as year-by-year targets have not been set for the completion of each separate project - but perhaps you intend to pursue them all at once, reaching a grand finale in 2003! Ultimately it does not matter, so long as all projects are achieved. It is good to read of the co-operation of the community and of the official bodies. Next year, when providing your map, please mark on it the sites of projects which have been finished or which should received particular attention (e.g. 'new fence', etc.).

THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

The RC Church is exceptionally well maintained without and within. External and internal sculpture is unusually fine. The old church is well kept. The picturesque Church of Ireland church appeared to be closed (is this the case?). The old Railway Station is a pleasing building and suitable for the hostel development envisaged - the community would certainly benefit from a daily influx of visitors; this project will be assessed when conversion has been achieved. The Co-Op premises is very well presented - unlike so many similar concerns elsewhere. The streetscape is very attractive indeed, but, as remarked by last year's adjudicator; improvements are still needed on the east side of the Diamond, and it is a pity that some very handsome buildings are marred by inappropriate signage.

LANDSCAPING

Where the chief buildings are not appreciated by the passer-by, the excellent landscaping, especially of the broad grassed spaces which border the N15, definitely are. The garden in the centre of the Diamond, planting at the main cross-roads and the superb grounds of the RC Church where on adjudication day lupins, cranesbill, lilies and roses around the church porch made an enviable display, are all delightful. Planting and floral displays on public and private properties throughout the village were favourably noted.

WILDLIFE AND NATURAL AMENITIES

The fencing of the Hollow Road through the marsh area and the general nurturing of what is a real asset, has been thoroughly worthwhile, as a preliminary to developing

sensitive wildlife conservation. (In fact, this is already a very pleasant place to walk). You might consider illustrated interpretative signage as an informational adjunct. Plans for the River Finn will also be closely followed.

LITTER CONTROL

The village was almost free of litter on adjudication day. The marking is well above the national average - congratulations.

TIDINESS

Undoubtedly a tidy village, though a couple of weedy places were noticed, such as on the 'old' road, now bye-passed, and in two of the housing estates, but none of this is highly significant.

RESIDENTIAL AREAS

Many older street houses, such as a coloured terrace on the west side of the Diamond are beautifully kept. Homes with pleasing gardens were noted on the outskirts. A small estate on the Marsh road and another near Grahamsland looked very neat. In spite of some kerbside weed, Grahamsland looked very well too. Emmet Park has good grassed spaces - there was some kerbside weed here too and there are opportunities for more tree planting. Copings were missing on some boundary walls. The Hillhead estate is also well kept - in fact none of the estates need major attention.

ROADS, STREETS AND BACK AREAS

Paving and surfaces are good except for a short stretch at the Railway Station. The parapet of the Finn Bridge needs repair - but not with concrete blocks as has been done in the past. Street furniture is good and well maintained; extension of the excellent lamp standards in the Diamond to other streets might be added to the list of projects for future development.

GENERAL IMPRESSION

A village of genuine charm, with a prosperous air. A great advance has been made and the Association is wished well with its plans.

SECOND ADJUDICATION (11/08/99)

Commendably, again during our second visit, litter was not a problem. Indeed, Castlefinn has throughout an air of tidiness. The Diamond is almost perfect - the brightly painted buildings complement the green well. Please note

that coniferous hedging within the confines of an urban centre is generally not considered appropriate. The Lifford approach with its expansive verges created an excellent first impression. The Donegal approach while also well maintained would benefit from further tree planting all the way into the village centre. The increase in marks is well deserved!