

"Caring for our environment"

Centre : **LISTOWEL**
County : **KERRY**
Category : **D**

Results

Date of Adjudication : 06-07-99

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 1999	Mark Awarded 1998
Overall Developmental Approach	50	42	41
The Built Environment	40	33	32
Landscaping	40	31	30
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	22	22
Litter Control	40	28	27
Tidiness	20	14	14
Residential Areas	30	22	22
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	31	30
General Impression	10	7	8
TOTAL MARK	300	230	226

Listowel, County Kerry

OVERALL DEVELOPMENTAL APPROACH

Thank you for an excellent submission including Town Development Plan and detailed sketch map of Listowel. Your ability to harness the co-operation and participation of so many agencies is to your credit. Your involvement with the local authority is beyond the norm and there seems to be a most beneficial liaison built up over the years. You are now entering the high league of tidy towns and your assessment will be more critical as you progress. You have inherited a great deal from the previous generation and the high presence and good maintenance of so many traditional features make it a pleasure to adjudicate Listowel. Of course you are not without your black spots, but their recognition is the first step to overcoming them.

THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Your submission outlined the many new developments on hand. Not for the first time your shopfronts are commanding great attention and acclaim. Indeed, if anything there has been an improvement, especially in Church Street and Main Street. Painting of shops was observed on adjudication day. Many excel in design and presentation - especially The Stacks, O' Connor Pharmacy, Frame Shop, Peter Mc Guire, Olive Stack and many others. It is also noted that some shopfronts with attractive plaster work have fallen into decline and one awaits with interest their refurbishment. The two Banks in the square looked really well, together with the Church and Heritage Centre. The Kerry Library and Cultural Centre currently under development will prove a major environmental boost to the square and the expected highlighting of the Castle will further enhance. The attention to detail on the Square kerbing, and poetic illustrations and local sculpture make it one of the most interesting in the region. The current development, - some finished, of the Staisiún Doiteáin, Comhairle an Bhaile, Courthouse and Library is already making a startling impact on this area. The landscaping at the Comhairle an Bhaile is superb. Well done on having the pole repositioned at the sculpture site on the Tarbert approach. In general, public buildings were well presented and all schools are of exceptional standard.

LANDSCAPING

You have scored well again in this section. There is a mixture of landscape excellence at the approach to the town park. The attractive river is flanked by an attractive well kept hedge, some fine roses and across the road, inherited from the last century, a well kept stone wall and some fine mature Oak and Beech trees - it is excellent and

providing a great facility. The provision of flower tubs along the Courthouse Road leading up to the Library has an enhancing effect on this street. The standard of tubs, flower boxes, hanging baskets and general landscaping is excellent. The Car Park at the Town Hall, though well laid out, is in need of weed control. Approach roads without exception are well presented. The environs around the Value Centre are poor and need surface dressing and some planting, before it will reach the standard of its neighbours.

WILDLIFE AND NATURAL AMENITIES.

You have all the ingredients for a high score in this section. The pleasant river walk along the town park area could be extended. The area near the car park at the Castle has potential for the promotion and popularisation of wildlife. Consider some illustrated wildlife display boards along the river walk, they could highlight the type of bird and animal life of that area.

LITTER CONTROL

Well done on a good performance here - apart from a couple of empty bottles under a seat in the Square and the occasional crisp bag, the town does not seem to have a litter problem. The Scoil Nano Nagle, though large in area, was totally free of litter and had an attractive display of well cut lawns.

TIDINESS

Any degree of untidiness is being caused by a couple of parcels of dereliction, uncared for sites and unfinished development works. There is a weakness with some boundary walls that need painting. Some small unattended open spaces would make ideal flower display areas.

RESIDENTIAL AREAS

In general the standard of housing is good throughout. The houses on the approach road from Tarbert have some excellent gardens and project an attractive image for the town. Some of the older houses have well established gardens that add colour to the town. All housing estates should be identified with appropriate bilingual signage. It is good to witness such a high occupancy rate of residential shops in the town centre - this leads to an improved maintenance of buildings.

ROADS, STREETS AND BACK AREAS

Within the town centre, streets and back areas are well presented. A small number of commercial operators with

side entrances are below standard. The bilingual signage used on the street names is excellent throughout and makes adjudication more efficient. With the increased value of properties, emphasis is now being placed on side and back entrances, so as a Committee you need to be vigilant. The Killarney experience is a good example of utilising rear entrances to advantage.

GENERAL IMPRESSION

The town looked really well on adjudication day. Your strong point now is the square, Main Street and Church. You have a similar problem to other towns of your size - the traffic situation is placing an inordinate amount of wear and tear on the town's future, and also on the quality of life. However, you are coping well with such developments. Your challenge now is to stick to your agreed plan and bring the community with you - you have much to offer.

SECOND ADJUDICATION (14/08/99)

The small increase in marks is very significant at this critical upper level of the competition. Comments made by the first adjudicator should be helpful in promoting further advances next year. In general, the absence of a by-pass and the resulting continuous traffic makes appreciation of the very real charms of Listowel harder to come by than one would like; if the visitor did not have to stop, he/she might not stop at all due to the difficulty of finding easy access to parking. That having been said, it is the Square and surrounding buildings and floral displays that really set Listowel apart; if the poles, wires, outsize lampstandards and signage could be removed from William and Church Streets as a major future project, the effect would be stunning (as it is in the main street of Kenmare). Listowel in fact has far more interesting shop frontages than any other town of its size, and several should qualify for awards were it not for PVC frames inserted in upper windows, mass-produced signs and/or intrusive window stickers. Congratulations to the Committee for reaching such a high point in the competition, and all good wishes for continuing increases in marks.