

"Caring for our environment"

Centre : **ARDAGH**
County : **LONGFORD**
Category : **A**

Results

Date of Adjudication : 15-07-99

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 1999	Mark Awarded 1998
Overall Developmental Approach	50	45	45
The Built Environment	40	33	33
Landscaping	40	35	34
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	25	25
Litter Control	40	36	36
Tidiness	20	15	14
Residential Areas	30	24	24
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	33	33
General Impression	10	9	9
TOTAL MARK	300	255	253

Ardagh, County Longford

OVERALL DEVELOPMENTAL APPROACH

Ardagh has become more difficult to judge as there are few superlatives that can describe the visual element of the village. Each year there are surprises and this year was no exception. This report does however attempt to suggest additional aspects that can be considered for future incorporation. Congratulations on the work that has been carried out – exemplary as ever. There seems to be an army of people working on the village, many through presumably the FAS Scheme and Student summer schemes.

THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

The Heritage centre is superbly presented and the colour of red and blue in the landscaping offset the centre well. A suggestion would be to consider the use of wrought iron or wooden outdoor seating in the restaurant area as this would raise the visual quality of the restaurant. The Church and graveyard are very well presented, as was the National School whose woody area was being cleared on the day of adjudication. Lyons and the Post Office were fine, although Lyons pub looks as though it is being repainted with white paint on some of the posts. The judges are not wildly enthusiastic about the use of Cordylines as trees, as they are quite exotic. Perhaps in this situation, a more native species could be considered in future. It was noticed that all gates throughout the village and on the approach roads were painted black and looked very well. The carpark sported neatly cut hedges, well-maintained litterbins and a clean parking area. St. Patricks GAA Centre was neat, and the clubhouse was well painted. The planning permission for the extension was noted. A litter bin should be placed in the grounds, as this is where people congregate. Some small pieces of litter were noted in the Park. The exterior wall seems quite dull and grey – climbing plants and some shrubs would lift it considerably, and depending on the plant chosen, could grow quite quickly. This can be seen carried out successfully at the GAA Parks in Castledaly and Mullingar, County Westmeath. The Garda Station is superb and the red flowers set off the blue paintwork. The Church of Ireland and the graveyard are well cut. St. Brigids Training Centre had rusty gates; however it was noted inside that several people were in the process of painting the railings and the gates will eventually be reached. The Training Centre itself has been freshly painted this year, which must have been a large job –well done to all involved.

LANDSCAPING

What particularly impressed the judges this year was the co-ordinated approach to planting and colour schemes. Red

predominates; red geraniums under the trees on the approach from the Heritage Centre have a wonderful impact. Red begonias and geraniums both in private houses and other buildings, i.e. the community centre, looked exceptional. It is clever to plant for continuous colour i.e. the begonia in the tubs will just about appear in August and make a second show of colour. Incidental planting does look well and was well maintained; well done to all involved.

WILDLIFE AND NATURAL AMENITIES

The woodland area is well maintained except for the odd tree that requires replacing. It is a good showcase to anyone demonstrating what can be done in a 9 year period. Thinning will have to take place at some time in the future and advice will be required for this. The judges are also impressed with the selected wall plants on the stone walls throughout the village. So many towns and villages build/restore walls and do not allow vegetation to grow, leaving them visually sterile.

LITTER CONTROL

The litter control in the village is very good with numerous well-maintained bins and it was a difficult mission to find any litter at all! One plastic bottle in the graveyard of the Church of Ireland and a couple of pieces in the GAA grounds was the total sum!

TIDINESS

The overall view of the village was exceptionally tidy. Grass clippings were found in ditches and behind tree areas. (See "General Impression"). The ducting of wires underground certainly makes a good impression. It is a pity this was not done they in the first place many years ago.

RESIDENTIAL AREAS

The houses are presented to a very high standard. Even travelling far out the approach roads, houses have all made an effort. New houses, of which there are several in the immediate vicinity, have a hard task to follow; however they provide more support for the competition. The new houses also fit well into the context of the village.

ROADS, STREETS AND BACK AREAS

All approach roads were neat and tidy and to a very high standard. Work was being carried out on the day of judging on several of the roads. Do not hesitate to encourage select wild flowers/plants through the hedges. Ferns/flag irises and honeysuckle look very well and would help to soften the hard lines of the approach roads. A stand of a specific species would integrate the village further into the pastoral fields.

GENERAL IMPRESSION

The village is again presented to an exceptionally high standard. With such mowing and clearing, perhaps a central recycling area might be considered. This could provide good organic matter when it has decomposed. As the number of residences in the village increase, other recycling facilities could also be considered. Wildflowers play a part in the woodland, St. Brigids (is this under the Rose bower area?) and in an incidental fashion. Perhaps a scheme to plant/allow through further wildflowers in hedgerows or other identified places could be considered i.e. bluebells/foxgloves through the woods. Well done on a tremendous amount of work

SECOND ADJUDICATION (04/08/99)

Ardagh was exceptional in its presentation on the evening of second adjudication. Even the grass looked greener on the roadside verges approaching Ardagh than in other parts of the country. Flower displays were in full bloom and provided an abundance of colour. More permanent planting, i.e. trees and shrubs have established themselves well and are making their contribution to the appearance and amenity value of the village. The numerous incidental seated areas on approach roads and in the village centre are a pleasure to experience. The car park is taking on a mature look with the maturation of trees and shrubs in its centre together with the ivy on the wall of the building here and, of course, the colourful flower displays. Lyons Shop/Post Office looks quite exceptional. This adjudicator was surprised to see that there is still a telegraph pole with associated service cabling in the heart of the village, one would have expected it to have been removed by this stage. However this is not a reflection on the work of the committee in any way and we note that ducting is to be continued later this year. One wonders why the road on which the sports grounds is located is less well presented than other roads in the immediate environs of the village. Verges were not as neatly presented and some properties were in need of attention. Good luck on your aspirations for the refurbishment of the old rectory.