

"Caring for our environment"

Centre : **CASTLEBLAYNEY**
County : **MONAGHAN**
Category : **D**

Results

Date of Adjudication : 01-07-1999

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 1999	Mark Awarded 1998
Overall Developmental Approach	50	26	--
The Built Environment	40	21	--
Landscaping	40	15	--
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	5	--
Litter Control	40	20	--
Tidiness	20	10	--
Residential Areas	30	17	--
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	20	--
General Impression	10	4	--
TOTAL MARK	300	138	--

Castleblaney, County Monaghan

OVERALL DEVELOPMENTAL APPROACH

Thank you for your completed questionnaire and Development Plan, these were very helpful. Using your Development Plan as a flexible working document, encompassing all the sections of the competition as headings, will help focus your work in the future. You have identified a number of important issues and priorities. An effective partnership with all the relevant local bodies and organisations and the full co-operation of the business and residential community will contribute towards the full realisation of your plans. You should also realise the importance of effective communication and education programmes, and involving young people in the development of your town, this has proved useful in other towns.

THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

As stated in last years report Castleblaney has many fine features within the town that contribute to its overall appearance. A smart wide main street in good repair, some fine feature buildings, a lovely park and good parking facilities all contributes to the built environment. The loss of some overhead wires already demonstrates what the rest of the town would look like if similarly treated. The Churches, Church properties, St. Mary's hospital and the Convent all looked well maintained and were nicely presented. The Community Enterprise Centre, adjoining building and the G.A.A. pitch all looked well, with some nice landscape features. There was a mixed standard of presentation in the Industrial Premises. M.C. Chemicals had a lovely garden, Kingspan need to tidy the front of their premises, and Sabra Plastics also had a very untidy entrance area. John Daly on the Monaghan Rd. had a clean yard, attractive landscaping and tidy railings, while the Lyric Building opposite John Bogue needs attention. The Department of Defence site also looks very untidy, but the new building on the corner will be an attractive focal point on this junction when fully completed and suitably finished and landscaped. The Market House is a very important focal building in the town and deserves the planned attention. The many new shops look very smart, with their traditional shop fronts adding to the streetscape. Premises that caught the eye with attractive floral features include Vincent Tavey's Bar, Centra, Kennedy Mc Cormick Solicitors, Conlons Café, Teach I Chealagh, and Mc Hughes Bar, with the adjoining building admired for retaining its original windows. Corrigan's also with its original sash windows and hanging baskets looked well, as did Onomy House, Mc Guigan Motors The Salad Bowl, Shorts Butcher Shop, Riva's and the Pharmacy. Bank of Ireland, Conboy Arianis and

Hanrattys, look well but would be further enhanced by some simple flower features. A particular mention must go to the premises formerly known as Mc Guigan's Clothes Shop with their lovely flower features and display windows full of colourful household plants. The committee must also encourage business people to keep the areas in front of their shops clear and tidy to avoid interfering with safe access for those with disabilities.

LANDSCAPING

Some nice landscaping features, attractive window boxes, and tubs were noted throughout the town and on approach roads. An attractive flower bed looked well at the Information Board outside Wylies, as did the mixed planting scheme on the opposite road junction. The beds outside Blaney Bowls looked very well, as did the sleeper beds at the Castlecool premises on the Monaghan Rd.. The freshly painted seats were noted as were the tubs around the Market House. There are still further opportunities for judicious tree planting (including native species) on the approach roads and in the housing developments. Your mixture of seasonal / perennial planting features, provide a good mix of colour and content to last the whole year, but there are further opportunities for appropriately extending your planting programme throughout the town.

WILDLIFE AND NATURAL AMENITIES

The Tidy Towns Committee have an important role in preserving and suitably enhancing the natural environment within their community. Castleblaney is very fortunate to have such a wonderful amenity as Lough Muckno so close to the centre of the town for everyone to enjoy. The new wooden bridge looks very well, and it is good to see that the walks and picnic areas were being used on the day of adjudication. There are plenty of opportunities for enhancing and conserving wildlife habitats and the environment within the town and at Lough Muckno. Wild flower meadows/grass areas, nesting boxes, pond/water features, trees and hedgerows offer additional opportunities. The local children and their school and grounds are an option for developing some of these opportunities. When choosing appropriate signs for projects ensure to enhance rather than detract from the environment you are promoting and preserving. Work in conjunction with relevant local bodies, ENFO, or a local wildlife expert to develop this important area.

LITTER CONTROL

There was some litter evident on the day of adjudication, both in the town centre Car Parks, and at Lough Muckno litter was actually thrown beside the litter bins. A Litter Awareness Programme and appropriately maintained and

sited bins, also contribute to the marks in this area. Perhaps you need to use a brighter colour scheme for your Litter Bins in order to attract people to them. You already have plans to involve the local schools in your work, school visits, essay/poster competitions, voluntary/community clean up days, and an effective PR campaign can all contribute to your Litter Awareness Programme. The committee and community must remain vigilant in this very important area at all times.

TIDINESS

The overall impression of the town was one of general tidiness. However there are some premises and areas that detract from the overall picture. Bill posters looked untidy on the notice board in Lough Muckno Park and on the derelict site beside AES Mobile Phones. This practise should be strenuously discouraged. It is important that all areas of the town are appropriately maintained and kept tidy and litter/weed free. This includes forecourts, back yards, kerb edges, all open spaces, and areas between properties. Back alleys/yards, should be appropriately screened particularly in areas that will attract rubbish or dumping. Your Recycling Bins looked tidy. The Public Health building needs its paint refreshed, and the derelict buildings opposite and around the Fire Station look untidy but have potential if appropriately developed or "cosmetically disguised". Dereliction is a challenge faced and inventively overcome, by many Tidy Towns Committees.

RESIDENTIAL AREAS

The majority of houses throughout the town and on the approach roads were generally well presented. The attractive hedges, lawns and colourful flowers in some individual gardens were noted, as were some attractive tubs, window boxes, and hanging baskets, in some of the town houses. This splash of colour is very welcoming and always brightens up a streetscape and should be further encouraged. However the nicely maintained homes highlight those that need attention or their paint work refreshed both in the town, housing developments and on the approach roads. Some nice trees were noted in Ashling Grove and Bree Upper had some lovely gardens. The road surface in Rosedale estate needs some improvement and the trees and grass area also need some attention. The Crescent looked tidy with some nice benches. Some particularly nice character homes were noted at the entrance to Lough Muckno, attractively maintained with some lovely floral features. These houses along with the Stone Cottages close to the church and the Alms houses are a unique feature in the town, and last years comments re: the latter two still applies. You should initiate your partnership with the various Resident Associations much

sooner than your suggested 2001 target date to make further progress in this area.

ROADS, STREETS AND BACK AREAS

The approach roads are the first impression of any town and require particular attention for this reason. Nicely faced hedges, good signage, good footpaths/kerbing and tidy verges that do not compromise the flora and fauna on all the roads, are some of the contributory factors in this section of the competition. The standard on the approach roads was not consistent, with tidy presentation on some and others needing attention. The Dublin road looked well with its effective traffic calming system, good road surface and nice landscaping. There was also some smart road verges and tidy hedges on the Dublin/Dundalk Road junctions and but this should be carried on further out the road. The road to the Industrial Estate has a very poor surface and needs some attention. Similarly the road out past the Alms house and the area around Castleblaney Water Supply needs to be tidied. An attractive hedge was noted in the vicinity of the G.A.A. pitch, but the footpaths here need some attention and the current good path surface should be extended to cover the poor footpaths further out the road. The Keady road looked very well and sets the standard for the rest to follow. The paint on the speed ramps in Lough Muckno needs to be refreshed. The Car Parks were generally tidy and some nice landscaping and street furniture were noted, particularly the Car Park at the back of the main street which had some lovely railings and planting.

GENERAL IMPRESSION

This adjudicator was impressed with many aspects of Castleblaney and wishes the Tidy Towns Committee every success with the actualisation of your Development Plan. A co-ordinated approach is of extreme importance in the overall development of your town. Continue to foster co-operation with local bodies and organisations that may be able to help with advice, funding and ideas in many areas of the competition. The benefits of these partnerships and the work of the committee will both enhance and enrich the town and its community.