

"Caring for our environment"

Centre : **BANAGHER**
County : **OFFALY**
Category : **C**

Results

Date of Adjudication : 06-07-99

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 1999	Mark Awarded 1998
Overall Developmental Approach	50	31	34
The Built Environment	40	32	31
Landscaping	40	33	33
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	20	19
Litter Control	40	31	29
Tidiness	20	15	14
Residential Areas	30	21	20
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	27	26
General Impression	10	7	7
TOTAL MARK	300	217	213

Banagher, County Offaly

OVERALL DEVELOPMENTAL APPROACH

Though the entry form was particularly well filled out and the plan was informative on issues that should be adjudicated this year, marks have been dropped in this category as a result of no overall three to five year plan being presented. Reference should be made to the Tidy Towns Handbook to see how this aspect should be presented. Given the high quality of presented information it would seem to be a very easy task to convert this information into a separate document. It is important to recognise that this document is seen as a method to help ease in the adjudication process and bring greater focus to the particular items that are relevant to a particular year.

THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

The town was seen in late afternoon with very pleasant light drifting through the main street. This aided in highlighting the great range of colours used on premises along the main street which has a very strong individual character arising from the twisty nature of the road. Though the town has two very strong terminating points at the bridge and the church at the top of the hill, there is good diversity amongst the other roads that lead in to the centre of the town. Overall there is a very good balance established and nearly all structures were of a high standard. The GAA grounds were very presentable as was J.J. Houghs and many of the other commercial premises in the town. The marina is an excellent facility and it must be noted that the information signage at the exit of the marina onto the main road is very well placed so that it does not conflict with the general character of the main street. Parc Naomh Raghnaich could do with some attention given to the entry sequence and presentation on the entry road. However there is a high standard in nearly all areas of the town as is reflected in the mark this year.

LANDSCAPING

There is a great variety of amenity spaces throughout the town and all of them serve to create difference identities for the different areas of the town. Shannon Bank Park is particularly fine and provides a very good setting along the riverside. The marina environment is very well maintained as are the areas up around the GAA facility. It should be noted that the trees along Cuba Avenue have some problems in surviving as quite a number are dead. These should be examined as Cuba Avenue could well do with a very strong alley of trees. The Banagher Pitch and Putt course is very well presented and has very good maintenance associated with it as is the presentation of the bridge. The high pride in very well maintained landscape areas serves as a very

balanced contrast to the interesting urban format of the main street and all people in the town must be complimented on the presentation of these spaces.

WILDLIFE AND NATURAL AMENITIES

This category could be expanded to describe in more detail how issues are being addressed. It is important that the protection scheme for the corn crake is explained in greater detail so that the management process can be understood on the day of adjudication.

LITTER CONTROL

Given the significant number of litter sources in the town, there is a very effective policy that presents a very good and successful control of this item. The town must be complimented on the very effective approach they have taken to this matter.

TIDINESS

This aspect is very well handled and demonstrates a very clear management plan throughout the town. It is interesting to note that quite a number of studies have a request for the town in recent years have been carried out. These have not been presented with the entry form. However it is clear that there must be very good co-operation between all the statutory bodies and local groups in conjunction with the consultants as there is a very good balance of presentation throughout the town. It would be interesting to see the development of some theme plantings that could tie the various areas of the town together as the modern development is inclined to be rather insular and lacks the cohesive character of the older developments.

RESIDENTIAL AREAS

There is not much to say on this aspect as the annual Gardens Competition must be having a very good effect because all gardens were very colourful. There are some areas that need further attention such as up near the Church of Ireland. However these may be very temporary.

ROADS, STREETS AND BACK AREAS

All roads throughout the town presented a very clean and tidy kerb and surface treatment. The exit road to Birr was really well integrated as was the main street. It should be noted that Cuba Road does require some particular attention so that this modern environment is better integrated and develops its own character.

GENERAL IMPRESSION

This town has very good potential within the overall structure of the Tidy Towns Competition. It presents very good possibilities for towns of this size where a very presentable image is achievable. It is important that the strong commitment provided is continued.

SECOND ADJUDICATION (07/08/99)

At the second adjudication Banagher was very busy with tourists and activity at the marina and pitch and putt course. The signage and new name plates are both attractive and informative. The range of buildings in the town provides an interest in itself. There is considerable potential for individual owners to upgrade premises. Some derelict sites - such as beside the Garda station - offer potential. The development of a mentality of responsibility of individuals to take care of their own litter will result in a welcome improvement everywhere in Ireland. The historic aspect of the town is well documented at the square. The area of the Maltings offers such tremendous possibilities – this could transform Banagher significantly.