

"Caring for our environment"

Centre : **CLOGHAN**
County : **OFFALY**
Category : **B**

Results

Date of Adjudication : 05-07-1999

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 1999	Mark Awarded 1998
Overall Developmental Approach	50	28	31
The Built Environment	40	20	24
Landscaping	40	25	24
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	19	19
Litter Control	40	24	24
Tidiness	20	8	11
Residential Areas	30	21	20
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	20	22
General Impression	10	5	6
TOTAL MARK	300	170	181

Cloghan, County Offaly

OVERALL DEVELOPMENTAL APPROACH

Thank you very much for the entry form which highlights the current status of development within the village and clearly sets out the major problems impacting on the presentation of the village. The three to five year Development Plan is a requirement within the Competition and could outline in more detail how particular issues are being addressed. The drop in marks for this category is a result of not having received such a plan. This plan could definitely highlight the very positive improvements that are being undertaken by the village, that they are long term projects and require serious attention. The village demonstrates a very strong emphasis on rejuvenating the public spaces, such as with the new village Garden Park which is under construction and many of the upgradings associated with public pathways. It is perhaps unfortunate that this year many of these works are in a very unfinished state and do not yet reflect the high standard which the village has committed to these works. It would seem that there is a very good working relationship between Local Authority and agencies and extended community associations and this is very commendable as the village will definitely benefit. The presentation of the planting beds in the Millennium Garden is a definite sign of this commitment, although this is a long term project and yet great care has been taken in ensuring that this feature is presentable even in its unfinished state.

THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

There is a very strong focus to the village centre, with the central roundabout and many roads radiating from it. It is hoped that the current works in progress will rejuvenate the centre of the village and redress some of the major problems arising from dereliction and general dilapidation of the road spaces. Targeted objectives in the overall programme are needed so as to assist in the adjudication of some of these spaces and a three to five year Master Plan would be very helpful to focus the attention on specific projects within the overall environment. The church is very pleasant and the school again very well maintained. There is a mix of different styles to the commercial premises and perhaps this again should be addressed to try and establish a theme to their presentation. Dereliction has become a major problem in some villages of this scale; however there are creative approaches that have tried to address the presentation of such sites and perhaps examination of some of the other villages in the Competition that have this problem could bear some fruitful results. The Millennium Garden will be a major attraction and visiting point within the village and it is hoped that the theme developed in this space could be extended to the existing roundabout so that there is a greater integration between different aspects of the village.

LANDSCAPING

The school site must be commended and the street trees are a most positive addition which will have a long term benefit and are a worthy investment to the rejuvenation of the village. It must be noted that many of the grassed areas could have better maintenance as this creates an untidy appearance. The private gardens are perhaps one of the most effective elements in presenting a very colourful and positive back drop to the public spaces. It must be noted that the flowers in the Millennium Garden provided a positive statement as to the future potential of the efforts carried out within the village and this must be highly commended.

WILDLIFE AND NATURAL AMENITIES

The wildlife park is a very good asset to have adjacent to the village. However it is quite removed from the village and consideration should be given to other efforts that could be made within the village boundaries. It should be noted that parking within this facility was very difficult to negotiate and that perhaps a better parking arrangement should be considered as the facility is very popular. With respect to the wildlife aspect within the Competition, it often requires more of a management policy to how the rural spaces are managed through the seasons rather than carrying out specific projects. Mention should be made on how the environment is connected to educational opportunities and new approaches to future tasks associated with maintenance, i.e. the reduction of weed killers or extended use of wild flowers.

LITTER CONTROL

This aspect deserves more attention as an everyday maintenance problem. The village does not have as many sources of litter as other villages of the same category and therefore anticipated results would be higher.

TIDINESS

The current state of the roundabout has a tremendous impact on many of the adjacent spaces within the village. This may be a short term problem as there were extensive works being carried out within its vicinity. However pressure must be put on the Local Authority to ensure that the works are completed within the shortest time span possible as these works are impacting on the efforts of the Committee. Consideration should be given as to alternative forms of maintenance for the grass areas requiring less mowing. In general it is the impact of the roundabout that has reflected the drop of marks in this category.

RESIDENTIAL AREAS

The gardens provide a very important back drop to the roads in the area and serve a very effective method of improving the visual quality of the village. Most gardens were very well kept and demonstrate a pride within the village.

ROADS, STREETS AND BACK AREAS

Standard of presentation of roads entering the village varies and is dependent upon the different management techniques employed. Perhaps a consistent approach throughout the village would clearly define the extent of the village and ensure a constant theme. This does not mean that there has to be a high level of maintenance, but more that a consistency should be apparent, particularly given the fact that most of the roads radiate from a single point. Again it is with the central area where the road environment has become so dilapidated that marks have had to be dropped until this issue is addressed and finished.

GENERAL IMPRESSION

Given the fairly small scale of the village there is a great diversity of problems and opportunities being presented adjacent to each other. The sharp contrast between these issues, such as the dereliction on one hand and the very effective and adventurous scheme of the Millennium Garden creates an element of dis-unity within the village. Given that there are certain long term projects in progress, this observation should only have a short term impact on the general presentation of the village. The unfinished state of some of the project has unfortunately had an effect on the particular marks for this year. However it would also be fair to say that the very effective co-operation between the various groups in the village is demonstrating that these issues are being tackled in a most serious manner. This must be commended. Thank you for the very well presented entry form which was very informative on issues central to the town.