

"Caring for our environment"

Centre : **TULLAMORE**
County : **OFFALY**
Category : **E**

Results

Date of Adjudication : 07-07-99

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 1999	Mark Awarded 1998
Overall Developmental Approach	50	41	41
The Built Environment	40	33	32
Landscaping	40	30	30
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	18	17
Litter Control	40	30	29
Tidiness	20	14	14
Residential Areas	30	24	24
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	32	31
General Impression	10	8	8
TOTAL MARK	300	230	226

Tullamore, County Offaly

OVERALL DEVELOPMENTAL APPROACH

Thank you for the entry form which was easy to read as it was typed out. The summary of development plan 1997 to the year 2001 is very well presented and a credit to the committee. It could possibly be easier to read if a map linkable to the specific tasks of each was provided so as to clearly show what was done in a specific year given the scale of the town. The purpose of the development plan is in part to focus attention onto issues of that specific year of adjudication. It should be noted that the size of map is quite large and cumbersome to use and a smaller scale would be more readable.

THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

This town has a very beautifully built environment with great diversity and good mix between old and new build. There is a very vibrant shopping atmosphere in the centre of the town which contrasts with the more relaxed residential areas. The large public buildings are very well displayed and the grounds very well tended to. An example would be the midlands health board and hospital. However, the train station is also an excellent example and this is treated both on the track side and in the public entry areas to a very high standard. O'Carrols looks very well but it is a pity that it missed the opportunity of installing trees. The GAA grounds must be complimented as they too are visually very attractive. The new walls at Ballydrohid roundabout and stone walls repaired at Clonminch must be commended

LANDSCAPING

The hospital is an exceptional landscape setting and defines a standard for many of the public buildings. The cutting of grass around the harbour makes for a very pleasant extension of the canal environment into an urban area. Flower boxes were noted, however, the scale of the flowers used was not large enough to compete with the strength of the built environment. Perhaps they should have a standardized planting format, which would extend the connection between all the boxes, as they get lost visually between the signage and different window formats of the buildings. Most amenity areas are very well landscaped and maintained, it is difficult to know which ones are specifically addressed by the tidy towns committee and all areas mentioned on the entry form were examined and had a high standard. One area not mentioned but which deserves credit to all who care for the space is the graveyard; this really is a most successful space and beautifully presented. The "Snickers" roundabout looked well and the efforts at Kilcruttin hopefully will bring some long term visual improvements to this area.

WILDLIFE AND NATURAL AMENITIES

The canal cleanup obviously has been very effective this year as the canal comes across as one of the major amenities in the town; all the banks are very well kept and there is a very good balance between urban maintenance and provision of wildlife opportunities. The water lilies were in bloom at the time adjudication. This category should be better explained in your development document to illustrate as to how concerns have been integrated with both the educational aspects and the management of the open space system in the town.

LITTER CONTROL

Tullamore is a very active shopping town and as such has a significant number of litter sources. The town must be commended on the thoroughness with which it has handled this issue. Though litter was noted in various areas around the town, it was not significant and there is a clear understanding that it would probably be picked up at some stage during that day. The re-cycling of cans must be commended as this issue has not been addressed by most urban areas.

TIDINESS

Tidiness is a category that examines the overall appearance of an environment and often provides an indication as to how people who are not involved in the daily management of the upkeep of the town assist in forming a character for external spaces. On this front it must be stated that Tullamore has been very effective given the amount of possible constraints that can reduce marks in the category. Items worth noting were the level of maintenance to kerbs, control of unauthorised advertising, removal of all political posters associated with the recent elections and, possibly most important, that all the life buoys along the canal were properly marked and not vandalised so that a safe environment was maintained for every one's use.

RESIDENTIAL AREAS

There are many residential areas that could be listed in this category as all have a very good standard; the tidy estates competition obviously encourages a high standard. Marian Place is a good example of the standard and interconnection between the grass spaces and reflects the typical environment that shares both public use of public spaces and the benefit from private gardens. Though trees play an important part in forming many of these amenity spaces, it must be asked why there are no trees in the grassed areas around Marian Place as they could further define the character for this area.

ROADS, STREETS AND BACK AREAS

Most kerbs are clean and there is an extensive network of roads to be accounted for. The bi-lingual signs were noted. This is a category which is difficult to evaluate when a town gets beyond a certain size as the scope of responsibility of the tidy towns committee diminishes if compared with a small village. It is essential in the development plan to pin point specific aspects that the committee is responsible for.

GENERAL IMPRESSION

This is an important town in the competition and it is its scale and diversity that must direct the creativeness for a tidy towns committee. There are aspects in the development plan that demonstrate the creative possibilities and it is hoped that Tullamore will present more ideas on how the community and local authorities work together to create a personal space in towns of this scale. Congratulations on the work done so far.

SECOND ADJUDICATION (07/08/99)

Tullamore is a vibrant busy town. It appears that much business activity has outstretched the facilities and back areas and streets have come into greater use without adequate provisions. The number of developing buildings and the excessive numbers of cars are causing a lot of clutter which needs to be addressed. Parking on both sides of Distillery Lane on double yellow lines is unacceptable. More attention to litter control is desirable. The entrance to the shopping centre by Dunnes Stores is very raw and needs attention to landscaping. Also the huge carpark at Quinnsnorth could be helped by some tree planting – perhaps in the form of narrow islands. The many areas with underground cabling is commendable. The Courthouse is a fine landmark and the planting at the new hotel, Tullamore Court – especially the enclosed garden - is lovely.