

"Caring for our environment"

Centre : **EASKEY**
County : **SLIGO**
Category : **A**

Results

Date of Adjudication : 21-06-1999

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 1999	Mark Awarded 1998
Overall Developmental Approach	50	34	34
The Built Environment	40	27	26
Landscaping	40	28	26
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	13	13
Litter Control	40	25	22
Tidiness	20	13	12
Residential Areas	30	21	21
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	25	24
General Impression	10	7	6
TOTAL MARK	300	193	184

Easkey, County Sligo

OVERALL DEVELOPMENTAL APPROACH

The completed questionnaire, map and work plan for the Car Park area, were all helpful. I did not have a copy of your 1997-1999 work programme this year. As you are aware this is an element of this section of the competition. As you will probably be updating your work programme for next year, a concise 3/5-year plan using the headings of the competition as a guide, and outlining achievable targets for the committee will help focus your work in the future. It also provides the adjudicator with an opportunity to measure progress. The fund raising ventures and community involvement, along with your continued co-operation with the County Council, other interested bodies was again noted, and the benefits of these partnerships will continue to enhance and enrich the village and its community.

THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Easkey has many features within the town that contribute to the overall appearance of the town. Once again, many of the public, business and residential properties in the village are attractively presented and maintained, with lovely traditional bright seaside colours, and attractive floral features. I note that you are encouraging property owners to use more traditional colourings as opposed to "white/beige". The new Community Centre and adjoining development is completed and looks well. The attractive stone work incorporated into the Community Centre complements the surrounding stone walls and is nicely done. The Vocational School needs its paint work refreshed, and the derelict house opposite it needs to be tidied, although someone was painting its adjoining gate on the day of adjudication. The public toilets in the castle area look very well as do the sympathetic stonework works. The picnic tables and phones are a practical touch, but the bins here need some minor repairs and painting. The Court House is a fine building and deserves some improvement in its presentation. The derelict site on the Fortlands Road remains an eyesore. Dereliction is a challenge faced and overcome by many competitors, often by some simple teamwork and cosmetics. This sight sets a poor first impression of your attractive village. St. Anne's Church with its little landscape feature at the gate, appeared tidy, but the path needs a little attention. Rouse's is a very attractive building in a focal position on this side of the village. It was particularly good to see the previously unsightly building opposite being demolished on the day of adjudication, and hopefully the suitably designed replacement will enhance this area. The old Church & graveyard area was also looking well, freshly mown, tidy and finally enticing visitors into this important historic centre of the village. In general, the streetscape looked well, with some attractive premises

and flower features. Premises that caught the eye included, O Sullivans Pub, Fisherman's Weir, Easkey Surfing and Information Centre, the little building adjoining the Recycling Bin Area, and the Community Centre with its lovely painted logo. The filling station looked tidy, but once again some premises had material out on the pavement. The Committee should try to discourage this practice as it interferes with free access for the disabled. While acknowledging this is a coastal area, some premises in the village need to refresh their paint work. The R.C. Church and the School with its flower beds looked very well presented on the day of adjudication. Like a broken record we say again, the Garda Barracks looks very untidy. Whilst acknowledging your continued efforts to get something done about this fine traditional building, if it were restored, it would add to this whole area of the village.

The derelict buildings in the area behind the Post Office were once again unsightly, and the fine stone building seen from the riverside walk could also do with some attention. I note that in last years comments re: these buildings, that this area is earmarked for long term development, when completed, it can only enhance this area that is worthy of the attention. The Caravan Park once again looked very well, neatly presented, tidy grass and some bright attractive paint work.

LANDSCAPING

Once again, some nice landscaping features, attractive window boxes, tubs, and hanging baskets were evident, providing a lovely splash of colour to the whole streetscape. Landscape features and tubs, included a good mix of plants, with colour and content for the whole year. Tub were admired on the Fortlands Road, outside the school, and the previously empty concrete pipe sections were all planted this year and looked well. The little bed outside St. Anne's needs a little more planting to fill it up. The shrub bed at the farm building opposite the Garda Barracks, looked well again this year, as did your work in the car park. The new kerbstones, street furnishings and planting have enhanced this area and your plans for making this an additional amenity area for the village is commendable. The unusual art piece beside the Easkey Information Centre looks very well this year, and the landscape features around it make this a very attractive focal point in the centre of the village. The street furnishing look well with their new paint work, and the attractive old ventilation poles in the village would also look well if they were similarly painted. Those responsible for revamping the whole area around the bottle banks deserve particular praise this year. The attractive landscaping, grass, stone, paint work and informative signage looked very well on the day of adjudication. This is the way similar sites should be presented everywhere. Well done.

WILDLIFE AND NATURAL AMENITIES

The T.T.C. have an important role in preserving and suitably enhancing the natural environment within their community. Easkey is very fortunate to have both the seashore and a clean river so accessible and close to the village. Both these areas are joined by the attractive riverside walk, here once again this adjudicator noted the abundance and variety of bird life in and around the river side and a suitably signed nature trail could be developed in this area. When choosing appropriate signs for any such projects ensure that they enhance rather than detract from the environment you are promoting and preserving. There are also other opportunities for enhancing and conserving wildlife habitats and the environment within the village. Wild flower meadows / grass areas, nesting boxes, pond/water features, trees and hedgerows offer additional opportunities. The local children and their schools and grounds are an option for developing some of these opportunities. Last year you outlined the possibility of a feasibility study for the village being conducted in this important area of the competition. Work in conjunction with relevant local bodies, ENFO, or a local wildlife expert to develop this area.

LITTER CONTROL

There was some litter evident on the day of adjudication, on the road to the sea shore, and in the flower beds at the bridge / river and on the rocks where the river flows into the sea. The car park areas were virtually litter free. It was good to see that you participated in the National Clean Up event. Similar regular community/ voluntary clean up sessions, house circulars and school based activities have proved effective in many other towns. These Litter Awareness Events, appropriately maintained and sited bins, and a litter free village all contribute to the marks in this area. Your work in this area has gained an increase in marks, well done but the committee and community must remain vigilant in this very important area at all times.

TIDINESS

Easkey Village generally presented an overall impression of tidiness on the day of adjudication. Quite a number of people were out and about cleaning the village on the day including a major clean up on the Fortlands Road. It was good to see the Abbey graveyard tidy, and the excellent presentation of the area around the bottle banks, a big improvement on last year. Well done. Whilst dereliction was mentioned in another section, it must be stated again that there are some back areas that need to be tidied, or disguised. It is good to note that you are promoting suitable screening / gates as a means of tackling untidy back areas, and indeed many property owners like the Split Rock, are using them effectively. The car park near the Post Office

still needs attention although its presentation has improved since last year. It is important that all areas of the town are maintained, kept tidy and weed free, including forecourts, back yards, kerb edges, all open spaces, and areas between properties. Your solution to the grass cutting problem highlighted last year, is both environmentally friendly and effective.

RESIDENTIAL AREAS

Many of the houses in and on the approaches to the village were generally well presented and maintained. Some tidy hedges and boundary walls, flowers, tubs and hanging baskets were noted. Once again the beautiful and colourful flowers in some individual gardens were noted, along with some very attractively presented homes with their traditional sea side colours. These properties did tend to highlight the few remaining ones that need some attention to their presentation. The stone wall at Anchor Cottages looked well. Sea View B& B also had a lovely stone wall and planting scheme. The house opposite the Grotto Car Park also caught the eye with their splendid window boxes. The Failte go lascaigh logo, on the side wall of the home beside the same Car Park was also very eye catching.

ROADS, STREETS AND BACK AREAS

Most of the approach roads were well presented. Some road surfaces and markings weeds in front of walls, still need attention. There are some derelict sites on all the approach roads that could be tidied. Some attractive stone walls were noted on the Ballina Road and on the road to the Castle, these reflected the traditional stone walls found in coastal areas. There are other fine stone walls on other roads that deserve similar repair and replacement work. It was good to see the Fortlands road being tidied. The new surface on the approach road to the castle was noted, hopefully this standard will be continued in to the Car Park and its approach that are both currently in a poor condition.

GENERAL IMPRESSION

Easkey continues to develop, and the efforts of the Committee and its effective partnership with the community and local bodies, continues to enhance the village and its environment for everyone. Managing the challenge of dereliction and attention to detail and the successful implementation of your development plans are the priorities for continued progress