

*"Caring for our environment"*

Centre : **ARKLOW**  
County : **WICKLOW**  
Category : **E**

**Results**

Date of Adjudication : 06-07-1999

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 1999	Mark Awarded 1998
Overall Developmental Approach	50	33	31
The Built Environment	40	28	27
Landscaping	40	30	29
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	22	21
Litter Control	40	29	28
Tidiness	20	15	15
Residential Areas	30	20	20
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	26	25
General Impression	10	6	7
<b>TOTAL MARK</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>209</b>	<b>203</b>

## **Arklow, County Wicklow**

### **OVERALL DEVELOPMENTAL APPROACH**

Thank you firstly for your completed entry form which was very informative together with your street map and your 3 year plan, as well as your nominations for awards which have been considered. Arklow has a number of strong themes and traditions on which to build and make improvements in the years to come, including the seaside town, the focus on the river, the quality of some of your shopfronts together with some of the unique features such as the wildlife ponds and surrounds. The fact that Arklow has been by-passed presents a number of challenges and opportunities as well as possible threats, for example the lack of traffic congestion. Arklow has come a long way since the beginnings of the Tidy Towns committee in the 1950's / early 60's. The town is also experiencing dramatic growth. Success in the Tidy Towns Competition lies in getting support of all sectors, including residential, commercial and support organisations such as local authority etc. It is encouraging to see that you are paying attention to your unique features such as river walk area etc. Well done in your efforts to include all sectors. An update of objectives and priorities achieved would be helpful and there also appears to be little emphasis placed on the Harbour area which was the former life blood of Arklow. This area should be looked at in the near future.

### **THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT**

Arklow is a large town and so, has a large number of buildings and areas of built environment which need sympathetic treatment in order to present the best image possible. In this regard it is encouraging to see the efforts by the commercial interests, particularly along the main street in the presentation of their premises. Traditional shop front materials, together with the use of Irish, was noted in several premises. A nice traditional shop front was noted at Maisie Kelly's. The industrial area at the harbour is a long term problem in terms of visual appearance. Continued efforts through the use of existing competitions may encourage additional improvements, try to enlist the support of the U.D.C. / Wicklow County Council in providing an advisory service to potential shop front improvements. The Arklow Bay Hotel and it's grounds were well maintained although sprinklings of litter were noted on the foot path outside the service gate. Bolands was well presented with it's very attractive traditional shopfront. A new shop front was noted at The Old Ship. The Nineteen Arches was newly painted. It is good to see the use of Irish in An Cisean Aran and The Ostan Beag. The south beach car park area would benefit from landscaping and improved surfacing. The new Tourist Office was noted up at the top

of the main street. AIB was well presented as was the Bank of Ireland. Golf Club grounds were very well presented, well done, it was nice to see good landscaping in the car park. There is also room for improvement in outlying areas which may require the help of the owners. For example, Arklow Boxing Club Car - Park was very untidy and this might be targeted as an area of improvement by it's members. The Church Grounds were magnificent and the fence of the Church of Ireland on the Woodenbridge Road being painted on day of adjudication. The development of the new Swimming Pool was also noted and the adjudicator is looking forward to the completion of this area for next year. The Tidy Towns Handbook can provide advice in terms of best use of material etc, for those considering an upgrade.

## **LANDSCAPING**

There are many examples throughout Arklow where good landscaping was noted and, in light of the size of the town, the adjudicators commend the efforts here, for example, where well maintained areas were noted at the Anchor on the approach road from the Hill Garage. There are areas that could be improved: for example, the grassed area opposite the Pines Residential Development - try to minimise use of weed killers here and the grass could be better maintained. The efforts on the Brittas Bay road residents are to be especially commended on the presentation of their houses. Work in progress at the Leisure Centre on day of adjudication was encouraging to see. As already mentioned in Overall Developmental Approach the harbour area is one you may look at in terms of a key strategic long term development priority. Efforts to screen the unsightly ship building materials within the fenced area of the Harbour might also be considered, while it may not be totally appropriate to screen this off perhaps low level shrub's along the fencing of the ship yard might be considered. There are other examples of where landscaping is maintained; for example, around the Soccer Club which has very nice landscaping. Congratulations in these efforts to all who care for these areas and keep up the good work for next year.

## **WILDLIFE AND NATURAL AMENITIES**

Arklow is blessed with a number of unique wildlife habitats, some man made, some natural. The adjudicator enjoyed the visit to the Wildlife Lake Pond area, which is well presented, well done. This is allowing appropriate habitats to develop yet at the same time is managed to allow the use of amenities to co - exist. On day of adjudication it was great to see how accessible the ducks, geese, coots etc are in this area and the improvement of the board walk and presence of notice boards is beneficial and encourages appreciation of wildlife. Try to encourage the school

children to get more involved because ultimately they will inherit these amenities in years to come and appreciation of the Coast Line and wildlife areas, together with areas along by the river through the use of schools projects, can help in time to further enhance the accessibility and appreciation of wildlife to the residents of Arklow.

## **LITTER CONTROL**

Generally litter control was quite good on day of adjudication, well done. Litter bins throughout the town are encouraging. The adjudicator was impressed with the entire stretch of the approach road from Dublin which is very neat and tidy. On the approach road from Brittas Bay, sprinklings were noted, for example outside the service gate of the Arklow Bay. Litter was noted also outside Quinns. The South Shore Car Park was litter free despite the presence of a large number of cars on the day of adjudication. However improvements could be better on Tinahask Lower. Sprinklings of litter were noted on Coolgreany Road try to pay more vigilance on this stretch for next year, for example litter was noted outside Brauders. Litter was also noted within Inbhear Mor Park.

## **TIDINESS**

Improvements have been made in Arklow over a number of years, for example the under grounding of cables along the main street and along Ferrybank. Basically a tidy appearance is reduced by the presence of weeds, lack of attention to painting premises and maintaining if there is any open spaces around them. Long grass was noted around the seating at Wildlife Lake, however this was been tended to on day of adjudication which was encouraging to see. As mentioned above, weeds along by curbs take from the overall appearance, for example, in Abbeylands. Keen Costs could be better presented as it has a large open space - improvement in the presentation of buildings and open space could help to better the appearance. Replacement of worn or faded signs also takes from the tidy appearance of the town. The recycling bins at the carpark were encouraging to see.

## **RESIDENTIAL AREAS**

The large number of residential estates throughout Arklow could be a cause for concern in terms of presentation in this competition; however, the residents improvements are evident in many areas, not just in the presentation of their individual homes but also collectively in the presentation of their estate. However the entrance into Harbour Court could be improved. At Crogan Heights weeds have been removed which was encouraging to see. The entrance to Fernhill could be improved as weeds and litter were evident. Cherryfield was well presented as was Oaklands. Another

area that could be improved is the Lamberton Grove entrance. Coolgreany Park was also noted as being very neat and tidy, well done, but try to replace the sign / nameplate which took from the otherwise excellent appearance. New residential parks had been noted throughout the town and the adjudicator will look forward seeing appropriate landscaping treatment being put in place upon completion.

## **ROADS, STREETS AND BACK AREAS**

On the approach road from Dublin, from Hills Garage, the poles on the Welcome sign needed painting, otherwise a very neat and tidy approach was noted all along this road. No weeds were evident along the curbs, they were very neat and tidy, well done. It was also good to see the landscaped area coming down the hill on both sides of the road. The approach road from the old Wexford road was neat and tidy, the grass on the left hand side needed to be cut at time of adjudication and shrubbery on the right hand side was well presented. The Arklow sign at the Woodenbridge approach had a rough cut of grass and weeds were also evident. The main street was well presented. Overall efforts were very evident but try to approach the presentation of approach roads with realism. For example, the efforts in placing two planted flower beds on either side of the approach road from Dublin and then not increasing the presentation on the approach road from Woodenbridge, tends to reduce the overall impression.

## **GENERAL IMPRESSION**

Overall the adjudicator was impressed with the presentation of Arklow this year. Litter control management has improved greatly. There is evidence of both individual and combined efforts, although there is still considerable room for improvement, particularly in handling the built environment. Also the adjudicator recognises that Arklow is in some what of a transition through the introduction to the by-pass and looks forward to further improvements in the years to come.