

"Caring for our environment"

Centre : **CARLOW**
County : **CARLOW**
Category : **F**

Results

Date of Adjudication : 27-06-2000

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2000	Mark Awarded 1999
Overall Developmental Approach	50	40	38
The Built Environment	40	36	35
Landscaping	40	33	32
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	22	21
Litter Control	40	30	29
Tidiness	20	15	15
Residential Areas	30	24	24
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	31	30
General Impression	10	8	8
TOTAL MARK	300	239	232

Carlow, County Carlow

OVERALL DEVELOPMENTAL APPROACH

Thank you for your enclosed documentation which included the entry form, town map support material and photographs. It was perfectly presented and was most helpful on adjudication day. You have a very focused plan of action for each year which I note, commenced in 1999, together with an excellent working relationship with the community, local authority, chamber of commerce, businesses, local media and other agencies. Perhaps you might also liaise with the ESB and Eircom and bring them on board to help with the excellent work you are doing for the town. There is also an evenness to your plans and all categories are being tackled. It is good to see that the local authority is planning to tackle derelict sites and has appointed a staff member to oversee this task. Well done!

THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

It is important that all public buildings are well presented. The two dominant buildings in the town are the courthouse and the cathedral. The cathedral continues to be well maintained and the courthouse, when the on going works are completed, will have more scope to look good. All schools are maintained to a good standard. Some planting of climbers has been started outside St Leo's and it will certainly help to make this building more attractive. The Garda Station and the Fire Station are well presented. Most of the business proprietors are making tremendous efforts to have their properties looking their best. Your effort to encourage bi-lingualism in signage is very laudable and is no doubt proving worthwhile with an increase in bi-lingualism throughout the town. Most industrial properties are well maintained. The improvement to the shopfronts is noticeable and, no doubt, the shopfront competition organised by you has helped no end. The support of the local authority with grant assistance for shopfront restoration is to be commended. It is hoped in time that plastic signage will almost disappear from the town. Some industrial properties could improve their presentation, although, in general the standard is good. The Sugar Factory needs some appropriate screening by the railings and also outside the railings needs to be tidied up. The factories on O'Brien Road are generally well maintained but, again, the mesh wire railings need attention in some areas.

The Carlow Rowing Club building enjoys a wonderful location and great efforts have been made to make the building attractive. However, if the roof of this building was replaced, it would improve the appearance.

LANDSCAPING

Considerable work, effort and time has been put into the landscaping of your town. It is no easy task with such a large area to cover. However, you have done remarkably well to date. An exceptional job has been done to the Dr Cullen Park area. When the new roundabout is completed and landscaped it will enhance this whole area. One does look forward to seeing this completed and your selection of trees and plants is a very interesting one. The landscaping at the Bill Duggan Bridge and roundabout is excellent. It is a large area and again, when it matures, it will look delightful. You have also planted a large number of trees in residential areas and in schools. This was a wonderful project to take up during National Tree Week. The Welcome to Carlow signs on the main roads look very well and the choice of plants and shrubs is good. The open space in front of the Garda Station is very well maintained, as is Hanover Park. The landscaping done at the wildlife and river area is, again, very well done. The new planters which are sited throughout the town are very attractive and are of good durable material. Choice of plants and shrubs is very good. The flower beds located throughout the town are very well maintained and weed free. All open spaces are kept neat and tidy with the grass cut and all flower beds maintained in excellent condition. Well done to all concerned. On the Carlow Quay, where the wildlife sign is erected, the landscaping is excellent. There are three beds with lovely purple plants in them. The landscaping in the car park in front of the hotel is a delight and the fountain which was in working condition gave a lovely overall effect. The proposed location for the Millennium Park seems to be ideal and it will be a wonderful amenity for the community at large.

WILDLIFE AND NATURAL AMENITIES

Both rivers have huge potential and are great assets to have in promoting, protecting and increasing the appreciation of wildlife in the community. You have made a tremendous start by erecting the very attractive noticeboard depicting the plant, insect, fish and bird wildlife in the Carlow Quay area. I note that you also intend to erect wild flower information boards. The seating in this area is very appropriate and the ducks appear to prosper from the members of the community who come to visit and feed them. However, there was litter in the water near the quayside and it included plastic bottles and bags. Vigilance is needed at this area to keep the water free from this type of litter. Your choice of plants for the Dr Cullen Park area will certainly increase the wildlife habitat in that area. Great efforts have been made to increase the awareness of wildlife in the community and the choice of a photography competition for the wildlife of Carlow is a most interesting one and will create much more awareness in the development and conservation of wildlife in your town. Well

done for the excellent efforts you are making in this area.

LITTER CONTROL

The measures which you have undertaken in the control of litter are to be commended. The appointment of an Environmental Patrol Officer/Litter Warden has no doubt helped in this area. Your efforts to involve both primary and secondary school children are excellent. Great work has been done in putting measures in place to increase public awareness: producing anti-litter car stickers, the National Spring Clean Week, the anti-litter competitions, the Keep Carlow Tidy badges and using parish newsletters and the media. Also, more litter bins have been provided and this ultimately does help the situation. You do have a large area and it is an uphill battle to control litter. On the day of adjudication the litter control throughout was extremely good. Small amounts were to be found at the traffic lights at Hanover Park, some small pieces on the by-pass road to Portlaoise and also some pieces in the river and on the quayside. The streets throughout the town were very good with only very small pieces to be seen. The residential areas were reasonably free of litter with some small pieces evident. Keep up the work in this area. Continued vigilance and measures to combat it are necessary at all times. Well done to all concerned for the very good work done in this area.

TIDINESS

There was an absence of fly-posting and very little graffiti to be seen throughout. The control of weed growth at kerbs and at the base of buildings and walls was very good. However, attention is needed on the road from Dr Cullen Park with some weeds coming through the footpath. This was also an issue on the Bunclody Road in a few areas. Individual property owners must be encouraged to control weed growth at kerbs and at the base of buildings, on a co-ordinated basis. I note that you are doing a survey of recycling facilities. It is important that the locations are suitable and that they are accessible to all the community.

RESIDENTIAL AREAS

The standard of presentation in housing estates and individual houses is very good throughout. Great care and attention appears to be taken by the owners in presenting their properties and maintaining them in very good condition. I note that you have developed strong links with the residents' associations and this is very valuable to you as a committee in your efforts for Tidy Towns. All the older housing estates, in the main, are presented very well. Obviously, there are odd black spots but by and large, for the amount of houses in each estate, it is good overall. Encouragement of all residents to make that extra bit of

effort must be continued, so that all houses look well. It is clear that New Oak Estate has benefited from the effort made by the residents' association and other agencies with the Tidy Towns Committee. The grass was cut, and it was neat and tidy and generally, it had a cared for appearance. No doubt in time, all householders will make an effort to present their properties in a clean and tidy state. Well done to the residents and to the community in the New Oak Estate for making a great effort. As mentioned in last year's report, there is only so much the local authorities and residents' associations can do and it is up to each individual property owner to try and do the best they can.

ROADS, STREETS AND BACK AREAS

The overall presentation of roads, streets and laneways is very good. Obviously there is more work to be done but the improvements are ongoing. The streets and roads around Carlow are very busy and, no doubt, the by-pass will reduce the amount of traffic going through. The roads throughout are generally well-maintained and when the roadworks at the Dublin Road roundabout and on the Waterford Road are completed, it will certainly add to the overall presentation. The car parks throughout are well maintained and very little litter was evident. The committee is to be congratulated on its efforts to make the town more accessible to persons with disabilities and it is good to see that the recommendations in the report by the Carlow Access Movement will be taken on board. The signage throughout is clean and was in good condition. The dolmen sign on the green in the roundabout would need replacing. The presentation of the Bill Duggan Bridge is very good. The other plans to be carried out over the next few years are indeed very worthy and will contribute to the overall presentation.

GENERAL IMPRESSION

Carlow is a vibrant and busy place. Development of the open green spaces and parks are excellent and creates a delightful environment for those who live there. Your committee has done much to improve many aspects of your town. It is a large area and takes an enormous amount of hard work to see and get results. Much work has been done and there is still considerable work to be done. You have an excellent structure in place which involves all the community. Very well done to all concerned.

SECOND ADJUDICATION (02/08/00)

You are to be highly commended for seeking a 21st century vision for the town into which new developments can confidently and appropriately be placed - if only other towns would do likewise! The current feeling of rejuvenation which is apparent throughout is the necessary catalyst for small scale private improvements also. On a house

keeping level litter again was not a problem, most grassed areas had been well tended and the approach roads were generally well presented. Nonetheless there were numerous incidental open spaces and road edges which could have been simply up graded by weeding. Do try to rid the town centre of advertising hoardings. Road surfacing and faded road markings in many parts of the town centre tend to detract from other worthwhile achievements. It was a great pleasure to visit Carlow; we look forward to returning next year!