

"Caring for our environment"

Centre : **ATHY**
County : **KILDARE**
Category : **E**

Results

Date of Adjudication : 14-07-2000

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2000	Mark Awarded 1999
Overall Developmental Approach	50	34	31
The Built Environment	40	31	30
Landscaping	40	28	27
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	21	21
Litter Control	40	21	22
Tidiness	20	12	12
Residential Areas	30	21	20
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	22	21
General Impression	10	7	7
TOTAL MARK	300	197	191

Athy, County Kildare.

OVERALL DEVELOPMENTAL APPROACH

Athy is a heritage town and as might be expected has a range of important historic buildings. Its location on the Barrow and Canal also adds greatly to its attractiveness. Your 3 year plan 1998 – 2001 with its mission statement and work programme sets out a comprehensive but concise development plan for the town. Your education programme is to be commended and hopefully it will have the desired result. A simple sketch map of the town with street names and showing the location of developments and activities would be preferable to the Ordnance Survey Map.

THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

The Heritage Centre, the Castle and Courthouse give the town much of its character. All are impressive buildings with the Courthouse currently undergoing reconstruction. The churches provide an interesting contrast of architectural styles and are all well presented. The Mill and factory buildings tend to dominate the skyline of the town. The modern red brick Council offices and the Fire Station are attractive buildings. The Model School with its fine stone work is also an important building. Most of the other public buildings are in good condition. The several squares in the town with many period buildings and often interesting features add considerably to the town. It is a pity that those areas do not appear to have name signs. The Macra na Feirme commemoration monument and the Fountain Bowl are lovely features. It is a shame that the fountain does not have water. The two carvings on the Emigrants Pub are also noteworthy. While most of the business premises on the Main Streets are well presented, a considerable number that require painting and renovation. Many also have unsuitable name signs and frontages.

LANDSCAPING

The mature broad leaf trees in and around the town, on the river banks and on several of the approach roads are most attractive. The trees in several of the squares together with flower tubs considerably enhance the appearance of these areas.

Extensive and well maintained grassed areas were noted at the riverside, approach roads and in the Peoples Park etc. Well maintained flowerbeds and shrubberies were a feature on approach roads, .e.g. Kilkenny road and many of the public buildings and business premises had landscaped frontages. The approach to the railway station needs upgrading with its rusting iron fencing and tall weeds, etc. Several rusting security fences especially on the Kilkenny

road were unsightly.

WILDLIFE AND NATURAL AMENITIES

Both the river and the Canal are wonderful natural amenities and very important wildlife habitats and provide a wide range of recreational activities – angling, boating, walking etc. for locals and visitors alike. The Peoples' Park is another fine amenity with its well tended grass and children's play facilities. The mature copper beech and other trees and stone boundary wall add greatly to its charm. The mature trees, hedgerows, well planted gardens are also important wild life habitats.

LITTER CONTROL

There seems to have been a considerable deterioration in the standard of litter control since last year. On the day of inspection considerable amounts of litter were visible in many areas of the town including the centre, open and gap areas on several of the approach roads. Litter of various kinds was visible in the river downstream of the town bridge. A stepped up anti-litter campaign is required. Hopefully your plans in this respect will bear fruit.

TIDINESS

The town has a tidy and cared for look. However, the appearance of the town could be considerably improved by better litter control, weeding gravelled margins. Several open and gap areas are untidy.

RESIDENTIAL AREAS

The standard of presentation of most of the housing estates is another good feature of the town. These estates are located on most of the approach roads and it is not necessary to name them. There is also considerable new building taking place and these areas will not look their best until development have been complete and landscaping undertaken. Here and there boundary walls require attention and weedy boundary margins were also noted.

ROADS, STREETS AND BACK AREAS

Mature trees and well maintained grass verges are a feature of the Carlow and Monasterevan roads. New planting was also noted on the Kilkenny road. The grass verges approaching the canal bridge on the Stradbally road were untended. The iron railings on the bridge require painting. The stone work on the town bridge would look better if grass and other vegetation was removed. Weeds were also present in several entrance and gap areas. Several of the directional signs need attention.

GENERAL IMPRESSION

Athy is a town with a lot to offer. Steady progress is being made. Better litter control must be a priority. Pay more attention to detail and the finer points of presentation.