

*"Caring for our environment"*

Centre : **BANAGHER**  
County : **OFFALY**  
Category : **C**

**Results**

Date of Adjudication : 17-06-2000

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2000	Mark Awarded 1999
Overall Developmental Approach	50	33	31
The Built Environment	40	32	32
Landscaping	40	33	33
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	21	20
Litter Control	40	30	31
Tidiness	20	15	15
Residential Areas	30	21	21
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	27	27
General Impression	10	7	7
<b>TOTAL MARK</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>219</b>	<b>217</b>

## **Banagher, County Offaly**

### **OVERALL DEVELOPMENTAL APPROACH**

Thank you for your detailed entry form which was complemented by additional information and town maps. Quite an amount of background work has gone into this year's submission and the committee is to be congratulated for its collective effort. The fostering of a partnership approach with statutory bodies is to be welcomed. Too often town/village organisations get caught up in grandiose plans which tend not to address the basic issues. In this respect Banagher Tidy Towns has taken a practical approach which can be seen in the list of activities that have been undertaken over the last year and that are planned for the future. The quality of information supplied made the job of the adjudicator that bit easier in terms of getting a feel for the Town and its Community. Ensure that this type of practical approach is kept to the forefront at all times.

### **THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT**

The adjudication took place on an extremely sunny/balmy June day, so I suppose like any other town or village in the same circumstances Banagher was seen at its best. The overall appearance of the streetscape was pleasant with buildings for the most part being presented to a very high standard. It was noticeable to this adjudicator who hasn't visited Banagher for a few years that there has been a marked decrease in the number of plastic signs. The blend of colours on various premises was attractive and bright without being gaudy, new town buildings are in keeping with the local architecture and it was good to see the use of cut stone notably Nallens Foodstore. It is always a precarious exercise in earmarking places for special mention but the following premises appealed to this particular adjudicator: "Tom Lynchs Menswear" "Bank of Ireland" "Railway Bar" "Lyons Shop" and both "The Shannon Hotel" and "The Brosna Lodge". The little gift shop "Wrapped up Gifts" was very pleasant inside and out. The public buildings: both Churches, garda station, schools were well presented La Sainte Union could do with a brightening up. The Marina and its ancillary building, especially the toilets and washrooms, was extremely well kept and easy accessible. Banagher Concrete on Queen Street also deserve mention for its efforts to present a good front given the nature of its business and it has succeeded in doing, but please remove those iron cages around the fledgling trees. Unfortunately there are few negatives that need to be addressed. The plans for redeveloping The Maltings as part of the Town Renewal plan cannot be put in place soon enough as the place is in a poor state. Contrast this with the excellent Shannon Park with its Martello Tower across the River and

also the bridge, which has been revitalised with new stone facing.

## **LANDSCAPING**

The town has a mixture of prudent tree planting, perennial shrub beds and annual/biannual planting arrangements situated in areas where there are seen to most effect. Shannon Bank Park, a focal place in the town, is a good example of well-planned amenity landscaping; of course it is very much complemented by the excellently maintained local pitch and putt course. Banagher Concrete premises in Queen Street are enhanced by a nice planting arrangement but consideration should be given to removing the wrought iron gages that surround each tree. The hanging baskets in the town were colourful and blended in with the colour schemes of the respective premises. The area in front of GAA grounds needs to be tended to, as it was a little overgrown. Overall, the standard of presentation in this category was quite good with open spaces in various parts of the town well managed.

## **WILDLIFE AND NATURAL AMENITIES**

It would be beneficial if the Corncrake Project was outlined in greater detail and this adjudicator could not see any reference to it in the extract from the Brady Shipman Framework document. I presume it is part of a management programme to retain the corncrake in the area. It is essential that everything be done to retain the Corncrake in the remaining natural habitats countywide. The treatment of hedgerows around the outskirts of the town is conducive to wildlife conservation and credit must be given to the local authority who carried out the hedgerow cutting at the recommended time.

## **LITTER CONTROL**

The Committee is very aware of the need to have an effective litter control programme and has spared no effort in trying to spread the message amongst all sectors of the community. Unfortunately, as is the case in many other places, there was too much litter effort evident on adjudication day especially in the central part of the town. Even though it may be tiresome at times do not let up.

## **TIDINESS**

The standard in this category was quite good with a few notable exceptions in the condition of road signs. Weed control was effective as there was very little growth to be seen in and around the town. The recycling receptacles were well appointed and painted in Blue and Yellow. The barrier at the schools crossing is a little tatty and needs to be painted in the standard colours of black and yellow.

## **RESIDENTIAL AREAS**

As was the case last year there is very little to comment on in this category, as all residential areas were well kept with boundary walls and individual premises in very good condition. The relatively new "Port An Brollaigh" scheme impressed this adjudicator as a very good example of a well-maintained and integrated area within the town.

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

All entrances into Banagher give good first impressions of the town, the Galway entrance with the revamped bridge, the Birr Road with its mature trees and well-maintained residences are on par with any other town in the country. Back areas, internal connecting roads and walkways were also in acceptable condition with one or two exceptions. The flowerpots have not yet appeared on the bridge but I presume will be in place later on in the Summer.

## **GENERAL IMPRESSION**

The level of co-operation between the Tidy Towns Committee and other associations in the town is to the forefront judging by the efforts to maximise the potential of the town in the competition. If the couple of problematic areas in the town are addressed sooner rather than later further success will be forthcoming. Overall, very good impressions and a major improvement since this adjudicator was last in Banagher.

## **SECOND ADJUDICATION (10/08/00)**

The proposals for the rehabilitation of interesting historical buildings make very impressive reading, and the work already done on others is exemplary (but please remove the approved-accommodation shamrock from the centre of the handsome pediment at Crank House!). Unfortunately the derelict and vacant houses give a poor impression of the town, such is their prominence – when in fact they represent only a small proportion of the building stock. There had clearly been considerable weed growth since the first day of adjudication, chiefly in front of and leading to several premises at the marina – it is essential to keep a tidy appearance throughout the year. Litter was also noted in many spots, in spite of the imaginative anti-litter campaign. Troughs of flowers on the parapet of the bridge had appeared since the first visit, to excellent effect. Removal of poles and overhead wires from the picturesque main street and the substitution of more attractive lamp standards would show wonderful results in terms of overall neatness – as has been proved in several other centres; this may be something worth putting on the long-term list.

The Economic Action Plan is splendid.