

"Caring for our environment"

Centre : **STRADBALLY-WATERFORD**
County : **WATERFORD**
Category : **B**

Results

Date of Adjudication : 15-06-2000

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2000	Mark Awarded 1999
Overall Developmental Approach	50	39	--
The Built Environment	40	34	--
Landscaping	40	35	--
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	24	--
Litter Control	40	34	--
Tidiness	20	16	--
Residential Areas	30	23	--
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	36	--
General Impression	10	9	--
TOTAL MARK	300	250	--

Stradbally, County Waterford

OVERALL DEVELOPMENTAL APPROACH

Welcome back into the Tidy Towns Competition. While other centres have risen to the uppermost grade of the Competition, it is clear from your entry form, and from the first class documentation attached, that work has continued in Stradbally during the period of absence. Your Development Plan dated April 2000 is impressive, and it seems that every category has been covered; what is missing is the timescale: a year-by-year table showing in which year such and such a project is to be started, and the target year for its finish. It does seem that you plan to go forward on all projects simultaneously, with no completion date proposed for each, and it is not clear whether the total plan is to end in 3 or in 5 years' time. This does seem to be an enormous undertaking – but if any community can rise to such a challenge it is certainly this one. It is wonderful to see the interest expressed in the Plan in local history and archaeology.

THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

The repainting of the Roman Catholic church is a great success; the nearby Hall is in need of painting, and the same colour as the church is suggested. The Church of Ireland church is beautifully maintained (interiors are not considered in the competition, but it is worth mentioning the superb memorial sculpture here); painting of the gates and repairs to the adjacent wall are very favourably noted. The project at the ecclesiastic remains is most worthwhile – it is good to see that the area has been fenced off as a preliminary measure. The Garda station was being refurbished on the date of the visit. Some whitewashing/repainting was needed on gables in the village centre. The schools are very well looked after. For a shopfront to be considered for an award, the total building, including upper storeys, gable, roof and stacks must be in as fine a condition as the shop frontage; there should be no mass-produced or plastic signage, and a minimum of window stickers or other temporary advertising.

LANDSCAPING

Planting and maintenance of gardens at the churches and schools is of a high order; the landscaping at the recently erected cross at the Roman Catholic church is very promising indeed. The Green is the centrepiece of the village; the grass was well mowed on adjudication day, the flowers well nurtured, the roses in particular looking extremely well. The railings here, and the seating, were spic

and span. The long herbaceous border as you descend to the village centre from Bunmahon, and other annual and perennial plantings and grassed spaces such as at Rockville, Viewmount and the ivy-decked Ball Alley, were well nurtured. The more informal gardens as you approach St James' are particularly attractive.

WILDLIFE AND NATURAL AMENITIES

The measures to be taken under the above heading as proposed in your Development Plan are far-sighted, and progress will be eagerly watched over the coming years. The unique Water Garden and its surroundings are, as usual, lovingly conserved; presumably the eels continue to spawn here. The preserved wild-life area is a splendid innovation, so close to the road. It is good to read of the removal of dead trees from the woodlands. Inevitably, with the increase in tourism, a more formal parking area will have to be provided at the entrance to Stradbally Cove: when this time comes, it should be as densely screened as possible with vegetation appropriate to the locality, and any building work should be in local stone.

LITTER CONTROL

There was hardly any disposable litter either in the village or at the cove on adjudication day. Congratulations on your continuing efforts.

TIDINESS

The presence of the recycling centre was favourably noted. There was weed growth on the exterior of the otherwise impressive GAA park on adjudication day. Some untidiness associated with building works was recorded, but its temporary nature was taken into consideration.

RESIDENTIAL AREAS

The older village houses are a real delight, obviously maintained with much pride by their owners. Individual suburban homes with front gardens are also well looked after, such as in the neighbourhood of the RC church and on Ballyvooney road. The two estates on the Bunmahon road, also mentioned under 'Landscaping' above, are very well kept, as usual. A pink thatched house needs attention.

ROADS, STREETS AND BACK AREAS

Surfaces and paving are variable. Verges and hedges, especially on the Waterford road, were very trim indeed on adjudication day. The new stone wall at the RC church, and repairs to stone walls elsewhere, were much admired. The WC (with its surrounding planting) is well maintained, as is the phone box. New signposts are well designed and

helpful; it would be a further help if there were name plates on all streets, terraces, avenues and roads.

GENERAL IMPRESSION

A village of extraordinary charm, where the people are actively concerned about preserving what is good of the old and developing what is appropriate of the new.

SECOND ADJUDICATION (11/08/00)

Congratulations on an excellent presentation this year. The village was faultless on a number of fronts. Litter control was excellent and extended to both Stradbally and Ballyvooney coves. There was an overall ambience of tidiness and elegance. Your approach to the overall development of the village is admirable, we wish you well with your ambitions regarding the development of the three residential estates planned for the area and others in the pipeline. We hope that the development of the pig factory to be located one and a half miles from the village will not present a problem. You are well aware of your heritage and we wish you well in the redevelopment of St. James' Church for heritage. Buildings in general are very well presented, however Bairéads shop will need to be painted to freshen its appearance. Work was still in progress on the Garda Station during second adjudication. O'Cuirín and Cunninghams and Tigh O'Faoláin are presented to a very high standard and the arched laneway beside O'Cuiríns is well presented also. It was good to note the painting of the church hall since our first visit and the elimination of weed growth at the GAA centre. The village was beautifully landscaped, flower displays were in full bloom. The water garden is a lovely feature and your notes in your application regarding the natural regeneration of the woodland area with the resultant diversity of species is interesting. All approach roads were neatly presented and housing developments, particularly the row of terraced houses on the hill leading down into the village were admired, the latter for their colour scheme. Congratulations on an impressive increase in marks since your last year of entry.