

*"Caring for our environment"*

Centre : **ATHLONE**  
County : **WESTMEATH**  
Category : **F**

**Results**

Date of Adjudication : 06-07-2000

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2000	Mark Awarded 1999
Overall Developmental Approach	50	34	34
The Built Environment	40	29	28
Landscaping	40	28	26
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	18	18
Litter Control	40	20	19
Tidiness	20	12	11
Residential Areas	30	21	20
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	22	19
General Impression	10	6	6
<b>TOTAL MARK</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>190</b>	<b>181</b>

## **Athlone, County Westmeath**

### **OVERALL DEVELOPMENTAL APPROACH**

Athlone is welcome to the first Tidy Towns Competition of the third millennium. The town is still growing and there was evidence of a lot of development during adjudication. The town occupies an enviable location on the river Shannon. Athlone has a pleasant layout and interesting streetscapes both in old and new areas. The rise and fall of some of the towns streets and their gentle curves create a leisurely ambience within the town and encourage a longer stay. The narrow winding streets to the waterfront add interest. It is good to note your work in co-operation with the UDC, FAS in achieving local sponsorship. Well done also on your visits to schools and the organising of seminars regarding litter. The new committee are wished every success in their activities over the next few years and we look forward to receiving a three to five year plan from you by next year. Some consideration might be given to eliminating carparking or reducing it significantly in the square to give the town a greater pedestrian focus.

### **THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT**

The town is a successful mix of single, two storey and three storey buildings, some streets feature appealing colour schemes. Ganlys on the Roscommon road is excellent in its presentation. The town centre, Main Street, High Street, O'Connell Street etc. has a handsome mix of buildings, most of which are well painted. The extensive stretch of new developments (shopfronts along Barrick Street) are very well finished with attractive roadside facades and nice colour schemes. None of these have yet had their signage painted on the fascia boards and all seem to have living accommodation on the upper stories. The flags on Athlone castle look too small and faded to create a strong visual impact. The completion of the Silver Quay Project Hotel and Leisure Complex with apartments should revitalise this area of the town. The 'Ladbroke's' property is an important building in the townscape and should be presented to a very high standard, unfortunately this is not the case, it needs serious refurbishment to its roadside facades. It was good to note the reduction in plastic neon signage within the town.

### **LANDSCAPING**

The entrance to the town from the N55 looked especially well with its neatly mown grass verges. Stands of semi-mature and mature trees at the army barracks and along the waterfront look magnificent. The wire and post enclosure near the building with the 'Teagasc' sign should be planted with a climbing plant for greater enclosure (Magazine road).

Landscaping along the river bank through Talbot Avenue has matured nicely. It is a pity that some of the planters in the square are not planted, these would be better removed. Flower displays at the Franciscan Friary are beautiful as is the building itself, of course. The small area around the pump at the castle looks really well and is inviting. Place more emphasis on permanent planting rather than on seasonal flower displays.

## **WILDLIFE AND NATURAL AMENITIES**

The entrance to the sports grounds on the N55 looked well. The well whitewashed bollards along the waterfront with their chain link fencing are a nice touch. Congratulations on the clean-up of the river banks. We would be interested to know was there a conflict of interest or threat to wetland habitats during your work. Your Tidy Towns Handbook is an important source of information on how to compete under this heading.

## **LITTER CONTROL**

Litter control is reasonably good for a town of its size but not good enough to be a serious contender for the national award. Well done on Ganlys sponsorship for the litter free zone. Your litter management strategy may have to be reconsidered.

## **TIDINESS**

It is good to note that steps are being taken to deal with the problem of derelict buildings, well done! New traffic islands should be kept free of weed growth at a minimum. Perhaps containerised plants / shrubs could be featured on these. The small traffic island at the Castle junction looked very poor during adjudication and was in need of weeding.

## **RESIDENTIAL AREAS**

The flowerbed to the roadside of the residential development on the Tuam / Galway entrance looks well. However the chain link fencing here needs to be repaired. The 'Annsfield Wood' development is finished to a high standard. A derelict residential property was noted on the Roscommon road. Expansive areas of green open space and play areas in the residential development in the environs of the water tank are being well maintained and it is good to note children playing here on a summers day. Signage in this area tends to be poor.

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

The traffic island at the top of the Roscommon road is weedy and looks quite poor. The small traffic island at the bridge in the town centre (at the Castle) was presented to a very poor standard and let this part of the town down significantly. Do try to have nameplates placed on all roads. It is good to note

the absence of wirescape throughout the centre of the town. This is a grand achievement. Lampstandards look well also. The pedestrian barrier at the bridge needs to be refurbished (across from the Castle). There are some nice monuments within the town.

### **GENERAL IMPRESSION**

Athlone is an attractive town with some handsome buildings and wonderful amenities. The town centre (at the Castle) lacks a crisp presentation. More could be achieved for this area.