

*"Caring for our environment"*

Centre : **BLACKWATER**  
County : **WEXFORD**  
Category : **B**

**Results**

Date of Adjudication : 26-06-2000

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2000	Mark Awarded 1999
Overall Developmental Approach	50	34	34
The Built Environment	40	29	29
Landscaping	40	27	27
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	22	23
Litter Control	40	30	30
Tidiness	20	16	14
Residential Areas	30	21	22
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	34	35
General Impression	10	7	6
<b>TOTAL MARK</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>220</b>	<b>220</b>

## **Blackwater, County Wexford**

### **OVERALL DEVELOPMENTAL APPROACH**

Blackwater has a long and enviable record in the Tidy Towns Movement as evidenced by their selection as Entente Florale entry for Ireland in 1992. Currently it is experiencing substantial additional building work and the rate of development and re-building is phenomenal. Thank you for the completed five year development plan, the most useful map and your detailed entry form in respect of Section B. The Five Crossroads does make a natural start point to the village, a suitable break point between it and the surrounding, rural countryside. Its impact has declined somewhat over the years and the whole area would now benefit from enhanced presentation.

### **THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT**

Blackwater enjoys a substantial repository of interesting, vernacular architecture, with some fine individual structures. The church, adorned by the brilliant work of local craftsman John Shipley, together with its fine stained-glass windows is a joy. The 1798 memorial at Bonacasard was impressive. The small scale shell building was very well presented, as was the large, yet neat, Ladhru Pre-stressed Concrete factory. The Credit Union, a former school, was well presented while Bracken Lodge also caught the eye. The school generally was well presented but the base of the front facing walls which were somewhat traffic stained, need washing.

### **LANDSCAPING**

The correct treatment of the centre of the village in the area immediately surrounding the bridge is critical to the overall presentation of the landscape. The junction of the Blackwater River and its small tributaries is a natural focal point and, on the day of adjudication, was very well presented. The picnic tables and treatment of the riverbank at Corrigan's, which makes full use of the river as a feature, was a joy. The small triangle opposite Fox's garden was excellent but the excess slack in the decorative chain needs treatment. The visually important Five Crossroads does need material upgrading. The main landscaping project, Fox's Garden was really splendid. The constantly flowing water, the selection and range of plants and shrubs and especially aquatic plants, combine to produce a delightful oasis. The suitable treatment of the grass, to maintain a rough garden look, is a wise decision. The entrance to Abhainn Dubh Holiday Park was colourful and well planted. A number of individual gardens and incidental public areas were well presented and all contributed to an overall pleasing presentation.

## **WILDLIFE AND NATURAL AMENITIES**

Your plans under this heading are noted and applauded and will, when they reach fruition, contribute substantially to the enhancement and encouragement of bird and wildlife. The problem of mink infestation which you are enduring is indeed a growing difficulty in many waterside centres and, to date, no clear solution can be offered.

## **LITTER CONTROL**

Allowing for the popularity of Blackwater and the inevitable throughput of visitors, litter, in general, was not a problem in the centre. However, there were some alarming and disappointing examples of it. Sadly, on the roadside and even within the delightful Fox's Garden individuals had carelessly discarded litter. Litter in plastic bags awaiting collection for a day or two at the 30 mph signs on the road in from the Five Crossroads occasioned an additional difficulty. The inevitable attention of scavenging birds created a very unsightly result. Additional litter bins in locations where people can be expected to congregate are recommended.

## **TIDINESS**

The village generally was neat and orderly. The Recycle for Life facility within the Credit Union grounds was well maintained and, it appears, much used. The entrance area to St Brigid's GAA grounds was disappointing. Remedial action with a strong sweeping brush is suggested. Closing the gates, when not in use, would also make a neater presentation of this area. The charming streamside walk is perhaps not the most appropriate location for the temporary storage of a substantial number of beer barrels. The extent – and nature – of graffiti was a disappointment here. These difficulties contrast with the generally high presentation of the village and especially with the central area around the bridge and the river waterfalls.

## **RESIDENTIAL AREAS**

The extent of new building is almost overwhelming. A long term programme for the appropriate and sustained maintenance of summer and holiday homes needs to be devised and implemented. The role of the local authority is not immediately clear other than their identification as the lead agency in devising such a scheme if progress is to be made. Individual houses on the water treatment plant road were delightfully painted in vibrant and suitable colours. Houses on the Cois Abhainn housing estate were excellently presented. A very high proportion of individual houses, throughout the centre, were very well presented, often with colourful and imaginative gardens.

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

The presentation of speed limit signage and village nameplates was of a uniformly high order. The maintenance standard of the Entente Florale notices was also pleasing. Roads were very well swept in the centre of the village and generally the presentation here was of a very positive and suitable nature. Sadly, a number of road signs at the bridge area need to be washed and in some cases repainted.

## **GENERAL IMPRESSION**

Blackwater is a popular and much frequented resort village. It is currently experiencing, like many similar villages, unprecedented development of new housing, many for summer or holiday occupancy only. The success and tenacity of the Tidy Towns Committee in adapting to the new reality and sustaining their interest and beneficial activities, is applauded. The range and depth of their attractive village properties together with the delightful topography of the village is such as to make their effort of continuing importance, significance and value in ensuring the enhanced presentation of this delightful village in the new millennium.

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

It was good to see continuing improvements – for example, the Community Hall was being repainted to a high standard on the date of the second visit, and the very real litter problem of earlier was considerably less, proving how important a second adjudication is. Marks deducted were restored in this category, though there was appreciable litter at Whelan's car park. The problems set by the immense amount of building in the neighbourhood was taken into consideration: the Committee will have an important role in seeing to it that these developments will blend into the existing village structure through choice of textures and colours, and more particularly through planting and landscaping. Rather than simply listing tasks which need to be addressed, your 5-Year Plan should show annual targets – e.g. this item to be completed in 2001, this other to be started in 2003, etc; otherwise progress may be difficult to assess, and there may be the hindering element of attempting to undertake everything at once. A very good entry indeed.