

"Caring for our environment"

Centre : **PORTARLINGTON**
County : **LAOIS**
Category : **D**

Results

Date of Adjudication : 28-06-2001

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2001	Mark Awarded 2000
Overall Developmental Approach	50	28	27
The Built Environment	40	23	20
Landscaping	40	24	23
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	17	16
Litter Control	40	20	20
Tidiness	20	10	10
Residential Areas	30	24	23
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	28	26
General Impression	10	6	6
TOTAL MARK	300	180	171

Portarlinton, Co. Laois

OVERALL DEVELOPMENTAL APPROACH

Portarlinton is welcome to the 2001 Tidy Towns Competition. Thank you for your completed application and details of your plan for this year. It is good to note your liaison with Laois Federation of Tidy Towns and Laois and Offaly LEADER and County Council and FAS. You should try to get the support of the wider community over the next few years. Your long term aim and objective to provide a forum for residents to collectively identify an approach for the development of the area is worthwhile and this will, of course, make it easier to enhance the town and its hinterland for the benefit of all. Now that the town has been granted town renewal status, we look forward to an integrated overall development. Congratulations on the three awards won from Laois Federation of Tidy Towns for amenity development.

THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Congratulations on the number of properties that have been painted recently. Hopefully the County Council will encourage property owners to improve their properties as appropriate. The East End Hotel is a fine development and is nicely presented. Portarlinton features a successful mix of single, two, three and four storey buildings with a variety of architectural styles. Most buildings are well presented but there is room for improvement with some. The Georgian buildings are particularly admired. The old Savoy property looks exceptionally well to its roadside façade. The town can boast many fine, handsome buildings, some of which are presented to an excellent standard. The walls opposite the Railway Bar could be planted with a variegated ivy.

LANDSCAPING

Well done on landscaping, particularly around the river. It is more important to focus on landscaping with shrubs and trees rather than an emphasis on flowers, although the latter are lovely. Shrubs and trees are more permanent, require less maintenance and have greater seasonal interest. The Peoples Park is a fine development and is nicely landscaped. The green areas at the Swimming Pool should be landscaped and the old telephone box beside the P.C.D.A. should be refurbished and featured. Weed growth along kerbs in this area is unsightly. The hard surfaced area at the top of the Ballybrittas road which features seating and a litter bin is unattractive in appearance. The area should be resurfaced at least and the bin and seat refurbished. Some container plants might be provided. The landscaped area near the top of the Tullamore / Mountmellick road is a nice introduction to the town.

WILDLIFE AND NATURAL AMENITIES

Your plans to extend the River Barrow Walk to Derryounce Lake will provide a valuable amenity for the community and we wish you well with achieving this objective. Perhaps you could identify the flora and fauna and wildlife habitats associated with the River Barrow and information points regarding wildlife might be located at intervals along the proposed walk. The main objective under this heading would be to identify habitats, particularly those under threat and to take measures to protect these. Well done on the presentation of St. Michael's cemetery. The GAA sports grounds (Gracefield) are well presented. The bridge railings of the River Barrow Walk will need to be repainted soon as it is badly chipped in places.

LITTER CONTROL

It is good to note that you are aware of the problems presented by litter and of the need for a litter management plan. Do let us have details of this. Well done to SuperValu for supplying bins along the river walk. Getting the co-operation of the business community as regards litter, particularly outside their premises, is a great idea and one that can make a significant difference to litter control. Litter control was reasonable during our inspection but many of the litter bins were in need of attention, i.e. refurbishment. The litter bin, in the centre at the Cross Monument, was overflowing. The Peoples Park was littered.

TIDINESS

Be vigilant regarding the maintenance of curtilage areas, particularly side areas and back areas that are visible from the public realm. Weed control is important under this heading too, especially along the base of walls and kerbs. One or two sites, which are undeveloped, present a problem under this heading. Weeds along kerbs of the car park had been sprayed but not removed and, as a result, looked quite bad. The bottle bank and recycling facilities in the car park opposite the Peoples Park are well located, however the immediate environs of the facilities themselves was littered. Some semi-derelict buildings were noted near the Railway Bar, which present another problem under this heading. Don't forget to remove the building material from the roadside to the boundary wall at the Gravefield 1930 Sports Grounds.

RESIDENTIAL AREAS

Keep up your activities to encourage each residential estate to produce a work plan for their own estate, it will be worth the effort. Keeping the grass neatly trimmed in the various estates makes a big difference to their appearance. Congratulations to St. Brigids Square for the award from Laois Federation for tidiness. New housing developments have been noted and have been finished to a high standard. We wish you well in integrating the future residents into the Tidy Towns effort. A number of boundary

walls to private properties on the Emo entrance to the town need upgrading and a small residential estate here should have its green areas fronting onto the road landscaped, they were overgrown and a little unsightly during our visit. The Avondale name stone is a nice feature and landscaping here complements it. St. Josephs, which is an established estate, is nicely presented also.

ROADS, STREETS AND BACK AREAS

Well done on the Portarlinton namestones, they are most impressive. Approach roads to the town are neatly presented for the most part. Some of the public seats around the town need to be refurbished. The brown bricked garage on the Ballybrittas road needs to have its curtilage area upgraded. Car parking is neatly organised on the Devlin / Monasterevin road. The new railway bridge and footpath are an attractive development. Some refurbishment to the post of the namesign on the Emo road is necessary. The stone wall out the Mountmellick road is worth refurbishing. New stretches of footpath along the road to the Gracefield grounds were noted, not all of these had been completed, no doubt this will happen in the near future. The litter bins, the post box and service box at the Cross Monument in the town centre are poorly presented and are a blot on this amenity area. Wirescape in the town centre is quite heavy and presents a problem in visual terms.

GENERAL IMPRESSION

The town of Portarlinton has many handsome features, particularly in the built environment. There are both opportunities and challenges ahead for the Tidy Towns Committee.