

"Caring for our environment"

Centre : **BAGENALSTOWN**
County : **CARLOW**
Category : **D**

Results

Date of Adjudication : 22-06-2002

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2002	Mark Awarded 2001
Overall Developmental Approach	50	39	38
The Built Environment	40	34	34
Landscaping	40	36	36
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	22	22
Litter Control	40	31	31
Tidiness	20	16	16
Residential Areas	30	25	24
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	32	30
General Impression	10	8	7
TOTAL MARK	300	243	238

Bagenalstown, County Carlow

OVERALL DEVELOPMENT APPROACH

The comprehensive plan submitted with the application form showed a very serious commitment to the improvement of Bagenalstown. The very focused issues raised in the plan and the solutions proposed will result in continuing success. The committee of 10 has worked very hard and the achievements are evident on a visit to the town. The photographs submitted in the plan were very helpful. Perhaps you already have a website in which all the current and past work could be displayed and interested parties anywhere could view this. The residential areas are very significant and your involvement with the resident associations will result in further progress.

THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Both the Catholic Church and Church of Ireland are very significant buildings in the town. These break the skyline before any other building. They are both well-presented and important landmarks in the town. The Courthouse/Library is an amazing building and stands out clearly and prominently. The Fire Station, Garda station, Presentation convent, De La Salle School and Technical college all form important components of the built environment. The old Bolgers' premises sadly remains as it is hopefully, before too long, this will change. The path through Pairc Mhuire and the cleaning of the stone at the Kilree bridge are important steps forward. The numerous carved stone art pieces add great character to the town as do the slate stone urns on the street by the public toilets. Looking at the range of business premises in the town there is quite a variation of standards. Encouragement to upgrade premises in whatever form the committee feel this could be achieved is important. A street by street inventory would be one way which would categorise the premises according to set criteria.

LANDSCAPING

The riverside and roadside landscapes on the Leighlinbridge road are very speculator and make a lovely sight on the approach to Bagenalstown. The Town Park is a lovely idea as it forms such a central part of the town. The millennium plantation is interesting. The granite table and seating is very impressive. The standards of maintenance of the park could be a little higher to get the most benefit. The grass care and attention to the shrub borders could be improved. The cherry trees appear to be suffering and some new tree planting would be beneficial. The landscaped Courthouse /library is a really interesting project and deserves praise. This was a difficult site to deal with and the results are very pleasing. Work at the Bachelors' Walk passage is very successful and has transformed this area. The large site below the toilets and to the side of the Courthouse hopefully will be dealt with soon. Small landscape details can create substantial effects. For instance, the Virginian creeper clad buildings opposite the Health Centre gives a very nice impression. Much of the significant landscape development in Bagenalstown is within housing estates. Many of these have been very

well landscaped. Others rely almost solely on grass with little else. There is tremendous scope for tree planting in these areas. Trees create a wonderful environment which is evident from looking at places where there is a mature stand of trees. The mature stands of trees of today were planted by people who could never have hoped to see the trees to maturity. We have an obligation to do likewise for future generations, rather than only planting small ornamental garden trees. The enormous open greens at the top of Cummins park are a perfect example of sites needing tree planting. Landscape planting in Maple and Eastwood estates are attractive. Gardens make a very significant contribution to the landscape of the town. There are many good gardens of varying sizes and types. The gardens along Kilcarrig Street are significant because they bring plants right into the heart of the town. The addition of street trees in this area is helpful too.

WILDLIFE AND NATURAL AMENITIES

The riverside walk offers interesting opportunities for wildlife observation. A shelter at some point along the river would be very welcome. Here, people could watch in comfort regardless of the weather. Several swans were on the river and there was considerable amount of bird song on this occasion. The wealth of wild plants in the area and the hedgerows that harbour birds and insects all form a rich environment to be observed. Ways of increasing awareness of the value and beauty of wildlife would be welcome.

LITTER CONTROL

Generally, there is a good litter control programme which works well in the town. This seems to have broken down a little in the Town park where a considerable amount of litter was observed in several places. Streetside litter was also noted. Constant vigilance is needed with this problem as it is never resolved sufficiently to warrant any effort diminishing.

TIDINESS

Attention to detail will ensure a tidy town. Kerbside weeds and grasses, litter, overgrown grass and shrubs produce untidy effects. Business premises with materials stored outside and shop and advertising signs, can also detract. Every person can contribute by being alert to his or her immediate environment. Businesses and householders alike have opportunities to keep their own premises in a tidy state.

RESIDENTIAL AREAS

Broadly speaking the residences in Bagenalstown fall into three categories. Firstly, street side residences such as at Kilcarrig Street, where front gardens meet the street footpath, terraced streetside houses, or apartments with no front gardens. Secondly, houses in the housing estates which are concentrated on the Royal Oak Road and are varied in style. Thirdly, individual and separate houses along all the approach roads. Competitions and advice about gardens and paint colours and their use would be

beneficial. The use of competitions either between estates or among estates, or even for the entire town, may help to raise awareness and standards. Eastwood Estate has been very innovative with the use of stone, interesting tree and shrub borders and the painted seats to suit the year. The entrance to this estate is very effective. The hanging baskets in Conway Park are attractive. The need for tree planting is obvious in all the enormous green areas.

ROADS, STREETS AND BACK AREAS

The approach roads are all very well cared for. The Leighlinbridge Road, as mentioned, is especially beautiful. The Royal Oak road is attractive too, with the entrances to the estates and some good trees along the way. The Kilree bridge forms a pleasant sight as an exit to the town.

GENERAL IMPRESSION

A great deal of change has occurred over the past six or eight years in the town and the amount of work in response to this has been very good. The plans of the committee are very worthy and focusing on targets will achieve much more in the coming years.

SECOND ADJUDICATION (01/08/02)

Litter control was a slight problem on Second Adjudication Day. Litter was evident by the Kilree Bridge and more to the riverside area on the Leighlinbridge Road, in particular, by the swimming pool car park. The attractive and unusual stone walls, such as that to the Kilree Bridge were greatly admired. These are quite unusual and particular to this area of the country. The attractive clematis growing over it added a cheerful touch. A tin roof will need repainting before next year's competition in the vicinity of the old cinema (which is a very charming building of its time). Do discourage curved plastic canopies. The unusual stone and glass hard landscaping feature at Market Square were greatly admired. The fascia to the front of the gutter at the public toilets in this location should be replaced. The Health Centre behind the Courthouse is a simple, modern and well kept building. The Bolger building looked quite unfortunate, sporting, as it does, some graffiti. Some consideration might be given to replacing its concrete post and wire fence with some of the fine stone walling that is so prominent a feature in the town. A bench to the attractive riverside area was in need of repainting. Generally, Bagnalstown looked well on the day.