

"Caring for our environment"

Centre : **LEIGHLINBRIDGE**
County : **CARLOW**
Category : **B**

Results

Date of Adjudication : 22-06-2002

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2002	Mark Awarded 2001
Overall Developmental Approach	50	45	43
The Built Environment	40	33	32
Landscaping	40	38	38
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	27	27
Litter Control	40	32	32
Tidiness	20	18	17
Residential Areas	30	26	26
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	35	34
General Impression	10	9	9
TOTAL MARK	300	263	258

LEIGHLINBRIDGE, CO. CARLOW

OVERALL DEVELOPMENT APPROACH

The material submitted with the application form was very helpful, including the map pinpointing so many areas of development and interest, the photographs, many of which are before and after type of pictures emphasising the successful development of so many projects, the folder of materials relating to past awards and the very focused plan and schedule of work for the coming years. Leighlinbridge has come a long way in a short number of years. The nature of the village has always been very attractive. The harnessing and maximising of all the features and their embellishment has made this village well known both at home and abroad. If there is not a website for the village, the tidy towns committee should consider setting one up. This would slow ongoing developments and suggestions and ideas could be channeled through this medium. The committee has involved a wide host of public and commercial bodies in its endeavours and this has worked very effectively.

THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

The original buildings on the main street is the Church, School, Malt House and Corn store, the Old Castle and Garrison, have been joined by apartment buildings and new housing. The apartments are very similar to those found in city areas as are all the materials used in cladding. One wonders if there can be a design of building and use of materials specifically intended for a rural village centre. The use of existing old building facia to accommodate such a building programme would be welcome. The stone walls of the village are a unique feature and their use in the Valerian bridge, walls throughout the village and the old castle, have given a particular quality to the village. The business premises in the village are extremely well kept with only small exceptions. The monuments to recognise past inhabitants of the village are a lovely idea and the sculpture garden celebrates these people very well. The Millennium garden, appreciated since 2000, is a fine feature and makes a pleasant place to roam and contemplate.

LANDSCAPING

Leighlinbridge is particularly noted for its fine landscape content. There has been an enormous amount of planting over the years and this continues. The many trees, shrubs and climbing plants produce a "garden" type village. The enthusiasm for garden work is phenomenal, as seen by the efforts of many people who care for these plantations. The Containerised plants play a very significant part of the colour in the village. There may be a point beyond which extra containerised colour will become over fussy and cluttered and care must be taken to recognise this. Some plants, for example, such as the Coleus by the riverside below the castle ruins seems a little too exotic and inappropriate in this situation. The church grounds are very nicely planted and give a lovely effect, which includes the islands in the carpark. Many trees have been planted and it is good to see beech being used on the Carlow road. The large trees of the surrounding countryside of beech, lime, ash, and willow give an excellent character to the countryside. Using these types of trees, where possible, within the village would be valuable. Much tree planting in towns and village consists of ornamental garden trees and where space permits the "real" trees of

the countryside would be welcome. They will take a long time to reach maturity but past generations planted so many that we are enjoying today. Perhaps we should be doing likewise for future generations. The Vivaldi garden was being constructed at adjudication time and this promises to be another strong feature of the village. The garden at the Lord Bagenal deserves special mention for its design, range of plants and the atmosphere created.

WILDLIFE AND NATURAL AMENITIES

Having a consultant on board to suggest how best to create an application programme of wildlife will be of great help. The riverside walks are a lovely facility and the island offers a safe refuge for wild life. Basic appreciation of wild life for many people is encouraged by allowing them see wild plants, flowers insects, birds and animals in their natural habitat. Suggesting to them where and when to discover the natural surrounding flora and fauna is therefore the objective.

LITTER CONTROL

The arrangements in place for litter management are very good. Despite this, litter was spotted in a number of places, from the millennium garden, to the memorial garden and the riverside bank (not easily accessible) below the bridge on the Lord Bagenal side. Generally, this is an exceptionally clean town with a very good attitude to litter.

TIDINESS

The village presents a picture of tidiness with great attention to every detail. Work in progress on the development sites at the apartments and at the area just below the millennium garden is causing some temporary disruption but this will be resolved when work is completed

RESIDENTIAL AREAS

The estates are very well presented with nice stone name plates at their entry. The open greens are well kept and are planted to give interest throughout the year. Remarks about tree planting made above may be applicable under this heading. Individual homes and gardens through the village are very well taken care of and the sense of pride in properties is very evident with many people engaged in decorating their homes, and working at their gardens.

ROADS, STREETS AND BACK AREAS

The approach roads to the village are extremely well cared for and the planting that has taken place is phenomenal. The entrances from the Carlow Kilkenny roads are spectacular. The work on the Bagenalstown road has proved very well. The tree planting scheme on the Carlow Road from the village is progressing very satisfactorily.

GENERAL IMPRESSION

Leighlinbridge is a delight to visit. A few hours strolling make one appreciate the enormous effort that has been invested to produce the wonderful results existing today.

SECOND ADJUDICATION (01/08/02)

Leighlinbridge is a most attractive and unusual village which looked extremely well on the second adjudication day. Virtually every house and premises appeared to be covered with hanging baskets and window boxes. This adjudicator is in full agreement with the comments made by the first adjudicator in relation to “gilding the lily”. Do try to resist the temptation to over-prettify what is, in itself, a very charming and unique village. The adjudicator noted that the Vivaldi Garden had been completed despite the inclement weather. Signage could have been less grubby on the day. The village nameplate on the Bagnalstown side was very grubby and signage throughout could have been improved upon. The school looked extremely fresh and the unusual alphabet garden leading into it was admired. Much activity was taking place on the busy River Barrow on the day. The church and its car park area are extremely well maintained with attractive planting. Do ensure that you don't neglect rear areas. There appeared to be a number between the church and the bridge which could be improved upon. Although they had a very neat and ordered appearance, perhaps you could consider screening the recycling bins from public view. The adjudicator was pleased to note much activity at the bird box opposite the school in this location!