

*"Caring for our environment"*

Centre : **CASTLETOWN**  
County : **LAOIS**  
Category : **B**

**Results**

Date of Adjudication : 07-08-2002

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2002	Mark Awarded 2001
Overall Developmental Approach	50	44	43
The Built Environment	40	35	35
Landscaping	40	36	35
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	26	25
Litter Control	40	38	37
Tidiness	20	17	17
Residential Areas	30	25	25
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	37	36
General Impression	10	9	9
<b>TOTAL MARK</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>267</b>	<b>262</b>

# **Castletown, County Laois**

## **OVERALL DEVELOPMENTAL APPROACH**

Excellent work has been undertaken by the committee and indeed all the residents of Castletown. The adjudicators were much impressed with the presentation of the village. Your updated Management and Development Plan is a commendable document and has clearly won the support of the community.

## **THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT**

The corn mill with its painted slatted windows and explanatory plaque looked very well, also the run of white painted single storey buildings nearby. To the right there is the Castletown Community Centre with its admirable flower and wildlife gardens. The footpath and wall connection from the amenity area to the village, backed by a row of trees, is most appropriate. The wall between the community centre and the riverside area is of attractive cut stone. The school close to Elderfield with its well presented grounds and flower planter across the front of the building was admired. To the right is a row of attractive two and three-storey houses, beautifully presented with mature gardens set behind a green area with trees and shrubs. The cream coloured house with replacement windows was a little disappointing and there was one white painted house of which the low front walls could have been painted. The Post Office was neat. Castletown Inn was cleanly presented. Kealy's Service Station was well dressed with hanging baskets and window boxes but the shop window illustrations seemed somewhat at variance with the village 'style'. The water pump set with two trees and a planter makes a pleasant composition. Guilfoyles Funeral home was fine and the houses on both sides were well presented. There was a colourful display of four tubs of flowers in front of the house and forecourt in which a JCB was parked. The ICA hall looked particularly clean and tidy. The Convent with its rose beds and trimmed lawns contributed greatly to the overall standard, similarly the Church with its effective paintwork.

## **LANDSCAPING**

Approaching from Mountrath the box hedge 'Failte' message set into the bank on the left was suitably subtle; to both left and right fine maturing trees in cut verges, fronted by kerb stones were admired. The lamps on the bridge are appropriate in the context of the old world ambience, especially since wildflowers are being allowed to inhabit the bridge walls. The village green with the Millennium stone placed in front of the school looked exceptional. To the left are fine mature chestnuts, addressed by a row of elegant Georgian houses. The village approach from Rathdowney features a 3 stone sculpture in an open grassed area, backed by a flower planter; the grass was well trimmed and together with young trees makes an attractive entrance to the village. The approach from the South-East had again well presented verges and hedging. A broken wall near the 30mph sign looked as though it may be being repaired.

## **WILDLIFE AND NATURAL AMENITIES**

The Castletown Community Centre Wildlife Park features an informative interpretative plaque. The Community Hall and car park were well presented with flower beds and tubs, and background hedging and trees. The restored castle walls and bilingual plaque were admired. The three-tiered riverside amenity with new seating is very attractive indeed. The continuation of the lawn with trees along the castle wall towards the village creates appropriate linkage. The entrances to riverside amenities have been naturally screened with timber. In addition, the timber signs inside the entrance to the nature trail, duck pond and salmon leap were admired. The growth of indigenous wildflowers on the river banks has commendably been preserved. The river weir creates a wonderful sense of excitement. The nature trail is a delight - the old plantation and its memorial, the salmon leap and the duck pond (and its interpretative plaque) add interesting highlights to the trail.

## **LITTER CONTROL**

Your litter control programme is clearly working exceptionally well.

## **TIDINESS**

There was scarcely anything in or about the village which would be deemed untidy.

## **RESIDENTIAL AREAS**

St.Patrick's Terrace with its limestone road sign, a collection of bungalows and two storey houses in a cul de sac separated from the N7 by cut lawns and hedging clearly receives great care and attention from its residents. Elderfield Drive has two fine walls, one with a series of hanging baskets and a stone planter with roses on left - on the right was another green area with plants to the front, and a display of shrubs at the bottom end. A narrow verge of maintained grass fronted the footpath. The road surface was good. At the entrance to Gash Court was a fine display of shrubs. Similarly, the planter at the bottom of estate was admired. The Grotto near the national school had been well tended.

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

The approach to Castletown from Mountrath as previously noted was excellent. The introduction is the Tidy Town 2000 Award winning sign set in a cut verge both to the left and right with a fine selection of new trees. At the time of the adjudication a new retaining stone wall was being built at the entrance corner of the green area.

## **GENERAL IMPRESSION**

Castletown has again produced an outstanding performance in the competition. The

standard of presentation within the village and at the wildlife amenity, castle, and corn mill is of the highest order.

## **SECOND ADJUDICATION (07/08/2002)**

Once again, despite the wet summer, the standard of grass cutting was overwhelming. Indeed on a grey morning threatening rain at any moment grass was being mown and edges trimmed. The approach from Mountrath was particularly enjoyed. A stone wall in front of a cottage on the Abbeyleix road was waiting to be built. Perhaps trees could be planted on the grass strip at Elderfield Drive. The simplicity of the green with the chestnut trees looked magnificent. The garage forecourt referred to over the years was infinitely better presented this year. Castletown is especially commended for the extension of effort to the bypass as it retains a presence on the national route. As this adjudicator was leaving the village the road along by the bridge opposite the Mill was being swept. Attention to detail is phenomenal.