

"Caring for our environment"

Centre : **CASTLEBAR**
County : **MAYO**
Category : **E**

Results

Date of Adjudication : 29-06-2002

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2002	Mark Awarded 2001
Overall Developmental Approach	50	47	45
The Built Environment	40	33	31
Landscaping	40	33	30
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	21	21
Litter Control	40	23	21
Tidiness	20	15	14
Residential Areas	30	21	21
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	30	24
General Impression	10	7	7
TOTAL MARK	300	230	214

Castlebar, Co. Mayo

OVERALL DEVELOPMENTAL APPROACH

Thank you for an exceptional submission. The degree of work that went into compiling such a comprehensive, thorough and colourful folder full of facts and figures must be fully acknowledged. The colour coded laminated map was very detailed and easy to follow. Before and after photographs are always effective – further highlighting the amount of work carried out. A very professional and informed approach was taken. Your mission statement is straightforward and achievable. It is re-assuring to read that you intend to conserve the town's natural assets and plan to draw on the community as a whole for proposed projects. Your plan is very focused and it seems like no area has been left out. In summation, in this category of the competition you have excelled and the only suggestion that can be offered is that you maintain this high standard and follow through on your objectives.

THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Lough Lannagh village and the Turlough Museum are finely presented structures. The Market square development has a very futuristic feel, conducive to the administrative capital. All of the roundabouts apart from the one at the junction of Richard Street are well constructed. The library and the hospital are modern and tastefully finished buildings. There are a number of derelict buildings that detract from the look of the town. The old Bolgers building at the bottom of main street really stands out negatively and the lane way beside it looks drab. Colls service station is also unattractive and its prominent location doesn't help. The corner building beside the traffic lights on Newtown street would need to be painted. It has been noted that there are extensive development plans in place for the Court House so we look forward to seeing its progress.

The Church and the tourist office are well maintained. Chapel street lower could do with being freshened up. The Welcome Inn Hotel is a fine display of tudor style architecture. The Anthony Lenahan building and Colemans Computers building are both impressive premises. The alley way beside the former is a lovely feature. Perhaps the alleyways on main street could be treated to a similar face lift. Alleyways can often have negative connotations but with adequate lighting, power hosing, nice paving etc they can become intriguing features. Fitzgeralds pharmacy (now Gavins video shop) has potential with its ornate window sills.

LANDSCAPING

There is great evidence of landscaping projects being undertaken. It has been noted that a lot of investment has been made in this regard. The appointment of a town gardener and the involvement of local groups imply a commitment to the on-going maintenance and development of the surroundings. It is great to hear that a boat will be available to assist in weed control around Lough Lannagh and local waterways. There

were semi mature beech trees in Lough Lannagh village which are nice however the lawns there could do with some fertiliser as the grass quality seems quite poor. The larger concerns Volex, APC, Aldi's etc were very well landscaped. Some margins on the Breaffy road would need to be cut back. The margins along footpaths on Station road were also in need of being cut. The banks and slopes on Hopkins road near Aldi's would need to be tidied up and eventually landscaped. There is a lot of construction work going on around this area so understandably landscaping will have to be put off till then.

WILDLIFE and NATURAL AMENITIES

A holistic approach has been adopted in developing the natural assets of the area. The Lough Lannagh environmental enhancement scheme has been broken down into practical, manageable stages. Intentions for a nature trail, involvement of agronomists, horticulturalists and your own environmental group all show a commitment to developing & preserving the many species of animal, plant and bird life that co-exists here. This adjudicator is particularly interested in the nature trail display compiled by the conservation volunteers Ireland group. The proposed stone sculptures are a novel idea to complement this trail and the use of stone to represent trees is very creative. Perhaps when the Mall development scheme is implemented, bird tables could be introduced.

LITTER CONTROL

There are very good litter control schemes in operation. From litter wardens to colourful anti litter promotional literature etc it appears every effort is being made to combat this problem. On the day of adjudication however there was small displays of litter in the town. The re-cycling facilities seem to be effective in the car parks. There was evidence of litter in the gorse bushes at Lough Lannagh and quite a lot of litter in Fr. Conroy Park.

TIDINESS

Overall, Castlebar has a tidy appearance. Naturally where some projects are on going, there is evidence of accompanying debris. Unfortunately, traffic congestion is prevalent and can result in obstructing the orderly flow of things. Footpaths are generally wide and in good repair so accessibility is good. There are however a large cluster of bikes outside the bike shop on New Antrim street and although the area outside the shop is adequate, where there are young children passing, there may be safety concerns. One of the phone boxes outside McNulty's shop near Moneen road was smashed.

RESIDENTIAL AREAS

There are a large number of housing estates and the majority of homes are nicely presented however there are a few exceptions. It was noted that there is a residents association in existence and the awards programme must serve as a great incentive.

ROADS, STREETS and BACK AREAS

A lot of progress has been made here since last year. Overall, road surfaces around the town are very good. Car parking facilities are also generally very good however the car park surface beside Stauntons pharmacy is a little rough perhaps this could be tar sprayed. Directional signs in general are quite small and lacking at some junctions. Some more directional signs could be introduced. The junction at the mall traffic lights could be better developed and the road markings need to be re marked in certain areas e.g. the yellow box at the above mentioned junction. The market square project is finely finished and the street lights very attractive.

GENERAL IMPRESSION

Receiving Castlebar's submission was akin to being handed a valuable recipe book. The ingredients for making this town the very best that it can be are all meticulously documented. The extent of the work completed to date is a credit to you, the way you have presented your submission has already been acknowledged. I believe you have a very sound and progressive strategy and all that is left for me to suggest is that you consistently refer to your action plan, adhere to it and continue to execute the projects it contains. The opportunities are limitless and I wish you continued success.

SECOND ADJUDICATION (06/08/2002)

Castlebar has earned a substantial increase in marks in this years competition. Congratulations! The newly developed civic spaces will be the envy of many towns and are rivaled only by your beautifully maintained public green areas. Public art was also admired. Buildings are well presented in general and streets are wirescape free in most instances. Landscaping is also good throughout, no doubt the open spaces in the environs of the 'Aldi' premises will also be landscaped. The committee is obviously aware of the wildlife heritage of the town and will be cognisant of this in developing the river amenity further.

While litter control is strong there is still room for improvement. Litter was noted in the river near the bridge and some was caught in the growth on the bridge wall. One of the car-parks featured litter also. The increase earned under this heading for this year was given for the poster competition initiative. It will be difficult to earn additional marks under this heading without an actual improvement in litter control. The recycling points are well located and neatly presented, well done. Car-parks are well developed (with one exception) and are being nicely maintained. We look forward to charting your future progress.