

"Caring for our environment"

Centre : **BIRR**
County : **OFFALY**
Category : **D**

Results

Date of Adjudication : 14-06-2002

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2002	Mark Awarded 2001
Overall Developmental Approach	50	31	30
The Built Environment	40	34	33
Landscaping	40	32	32
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	19	19
Litter Control	40	28	26
Tidiness	20	15	14
Residential Areas	30	25	25
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	27	27
General Impression	10	7	7
TOTAL MARK	300	218	213

Birr, County Offaly

OVERALL DEVELOPMENTAL APPROACH

Birr is welcome to the 2002 Tidy Towns Competition. Thank you for your completed entry form and suggestions. You did not supply a map with this year's application, perhaps you could forward one with next year's submission as this facilitates adjudication greatly and once again, we must suggest that you undertake a three to five year development plan for Birr. Congratulations on the ducting of cables and erection of attractive lampstandards in Emmet Square, this is a substantial achievement. Birr looked extremely well on adjudication day. Your efforts are paying dividends and the support you receive from the local authority and community is evident throughout Birr. You have earned your substantial regain of marks from last year.

THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

The majority of buildings in Birr look well. Of particular note are the Post Office and most of the buildings in the Square, Purcell Auctioneers beside the castle, The County Arms Hotel and grounds and the Library, with its well painted seating and planters. The 'Palace Bar Guinness Sign' of its public house looks well, but the presentation of many other premises are let down by their plastic and / or broken signage e.g. Tony's Take Away, K. Fayle & Co. Ltd. and the numerous 'Coca Cola' signage in the windows of the otherwise well presented Newsagents in the Square. Premises badly in need of attention include E.H. Hacketts and The D.P. Hoctor premises across from the Castle which appears to be vacant. The Birr Credit Union could be painted to freshen it up as could Dolan & Sons (the petrol pumps located here on the main street should be removed as a matter of urgency), the Ko-Rec-Type Europe property, the Co-op Livestock Sales and the white and black boundary wall of Ionad Oideachas.

LANDSCAPING

Landscaped areas throughout the town looked especially well including those to either side of the statue of the Earl of Rosse, the railings and lampstandards here are well painted. The grounds of the Shannon Development Birr Business Park are well cared for with young planting and a stone wall outside. The grounds of both the school and the Birr Met Eireann station are tidy and well presented.

WILDLIFE AND NATURAL AMENITIES

The picnic area on the Banagher Road looks well, although the picnic tables and chairs could be refurbished a little and the 'Welcome to Birr' sign could be cleaned. The area of landscaping here is excellent as are the young trees, but the graveled area outside is quite rough with an amount of weed growth. Have you undertaken a wildlife survey for the town? This is highly recommended, particularly in relation to the Riverside Park.

LITTER CONTROL

Birr was almost free of litter during adjudication, well done. In particular the litter noted last year around the Castle is absent this year and both Emmet Square and Main Street were excellent in this regard. There was a small amount of litter at the entrance to a new housing estate on the Banagher Road. It is imperative that at least one litter bin be placed at the picnic area on the Banagher Road.

TIDINESS

The well kept stretches of stone wall just beyond the Enterprise Centre is excellent in appearance but there is quite an amount of weed growth here which needs to be eliminated. More vigilance regarding weed control was also necessary on the Nenagh Road which featured quite an amount, particularly on the right hand side of the road which almost entirely covered the old stone walls here. Other areas of untidiness included the grounds of the Esso service station which featured rubble and an undeveloped area and the entrance to a field located just before the Kingdom Hall which is overgrown. The Eugene King Motor Showrooms on the Roscrea Road also looks untidy.

RESIDENTIAL AREAS

The terrace of houses on entering the village located just before the Texaco service station could be kept freshly painted to maximize their visual impact. There is an excellent row of brightly painted houses on the Nenagh Road. Most other terraces of houses feature some well painted and some drab looking houses (on the Banagher road and Compton Row). Some of the houses of St. Johns Court look very well and there are nicely painted houses on the Roscrea Road. The gable wall of a house beside the telescope badly needs to be painted as it is in quite a prominent location on the Roscrea road. The Westgate residential development also on the latter road looks well. Many residential boundary walls throughout the town are in need of attention, including almost every residential boundary wall on the Kinnitty road, with one or two exceptions.

ROADS, STREETS AND BACK AREAS

The majority of roads signs in the town are well maintained but the 'Birr Heritage Town' sign from the Kinnitty Road is almost covered by over growth. The Roscrea Road is quite overgrown and features scrappy hedging. Mounds of gravel on this road should be removed after the work is finished. The roadside areas and roadside boundary walls to the P.J. Midleton Multi Dealer, D.R. Tyres, Garage and Motor Showrooms are untidy with weeds, potholes and loose gravel. The long stretch of orange and black road barriers along the Tullamore Road urgently need painting, they are in poor condition and are almost hidden with overgrowth. The roadside of the Tullamore approach also features mounds of rubble on the green verge just before the Lidl market is quite overgrown. The entrance to the Garden Centre is attractive but all of its roadside signs

urgently need to be painted / refurbished. The grounds of the Mobile Home Park on the Tullamore Road are quite well kept, the grass is cut and there is some nice landscaping, but the road outside is in a terrible condition. The Gallogly Motors premises and grounds, with several parked/abandoned cars, is overgrown and untidy and urgently needs adequate screening.

GENERAL IMPRESSION

There has obviously been an upsurge in interest in the presentation of Birr in the past year. Your increase in marks is well deserved. The town is improving steadily and we wish you luck with the continuation of this effort.