

"Caring for our environment"

Centre : **TULLAMORE**
County : **OFFALY**
Category : **E**

Results

Date of Adjudication : 03-07-2002

| | Maximum Mark | Mark Awarded 2002 | Mark Awarded 2001 |
|--------------------------------|--------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Overall Developmental Approach | 50 | 43 | 42 |
| The Built Environment | 40 | 34 | 34 |
| Landscaping | 40 | 33 | 32 |
| Wildlife and Natural Amenities | 30 | 18 | 18 |
| Litter Control | 40 | 27 | 28 |
| Tidiness | 20 | 14 | 14 |
| Residential Areas | 30 | 25 | 25 |
| Roads, Streets and Back Areas | 40 | 34 | 33 |
| General Impression | 10 | 8 | 8 |
| TOTAL MARK | 300 | 236 | 234 |

Tullamore, County Offaly

OVERALL DEVELOPMENTAL APPROACH

Tullamore is an attractive town with many distinctive qualities, such as, good layout, fine buildings, a canal and an interesting and varied history. It is also a town that has continued to improve the quality of its presentation under most headings. It is therefore particularly appropriate that your new Tidy Town Plan should adopt a more strategic approach to future developments at the same time conserving the town's important heritage. The canal is a major resource and to a significant extent its potential has not yet been fully realised. Your photographic record highlights, in a more dramatic manner than any report can areas that need attention. Your progress in implementing your plan and in particular, your wildlife enhancement project will be watched with interest over the years ahead. Good luck!

THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Most reports have commented on the quality of many of the buildings in the town and it is not necessary to do so again. The appearance of the central area is slowly improving but there are still many unsuitable shop frontages and display signs. The square sets the standard and restrained signage further enhances the quality of presentation. A significant number of buildings in the central area need painting and if this could be done it would greatly enhance the streetscape. Public buildings are generally well presented and there are several attractive new buildings. A number of others are in the course of completion, e.g. on the Birr road and the Main Street. Many of the industrial type premises are well kept with landscaped surrounds, etc. The Shragh Industrial Estates stands out and there are others. However there are many untidy frontages / parking areas e.g. in the Portarlinton road and in other areas. Screening planting at several security fences would help. The hedge around the Cattle Mart demonstrates how effective planting can be in camouflaging unsightly buildings.

LANDSCAPING

There are many examples of praiseworthy landscaping work. The car-parking area beside the canal near the Heritage Centre stands out with its well maintained shrubberies, grass, distinctive lighting, hanging baskets, etc. The book of Durrow monument is an interesting feature. The town park is an oasis in the centre of the town and is well looked after with its mature trees and its extensive and well trimmed grassed area. However the Park requires improved signposting, many visitors would not be aware of its existence. Several of the roundabouts are well planted but others need more attention to look their best. The shrubbery at the entrance to the hospital is weedy. Your development plan comprehensively outlines what can be done under this heading, e.g. surrounds to Church of Ireland.

WILDLIFE AND NATURAL AMENITIES

The canal is a wonderful amenity and suitable for a wide range of recreational activities. It is also an important habitat, especially for aquatic plants and wild life. However greater efforts can be made to more fully use the canal as an amenity facility and to make it a more integral part of the town. Painting bridges and repairing lengthy stretches of fencing as well as providing additional amenity facilities would be a good start. The town park is another important amenity and a significant wildlife habitat especially for wild birds. Your plans for wild life enhancement are noted, including the provision of nesting boxes in the Park.

LITTER CONTROL

Litter control is still one of the weaker areas. On the day of inspection litter was present in many parts of the town. It was particularly noticeable in gap and wind trap areas and was even present on the grassed areas of a number of housing estates. Your plan prioritised litter control and on-going efforts from all sectors of the community will be necessary.

TIDINESS

In general the town has a tidy and well cared for appearance. Well maintained grassed areas, weed free and swept footpaths and street gutters help as has the standard of presentation of most buildings. Negative factors include litter, several weedy gravelled margins and several derelict buildings and sites.

RESIDENTIAL AREAS

There are housing estates on all the approach roads and it is not possible to list them all in this report. They are generally all well looked after. Most have attractively landscaped entrances and well trimmed grass areas although as has been mentioned litter was noticeable in several. There are also many fine individual houses and a large number have attractive gardens. However a number need to paint boundary walls and weed gravel margins in front of boundary walls. A significant number of houses in the central part of the town require painting.

ROADS, STREETS AND BACK AREAS

The standard of maintenance on all the approach roads is good with closely cut grass margins. Weed free and swept street gutters were noted throughout the town. Mature trees especially on the Birr Road, together with more recent planting, is also noteworthy. There are, however, several areas where additional screening planting should be considered, e.g. on the Portlaoise side of approach to railway bridge and to hide wide fencing on the Relief Road, at a number of industrial sites on the Portarlinton road and in other locations. Footpaths need upgrading especially on Convent Road but also in other locations. The quality of presentation of O'Carroll Street and Batchelors Walk again stands out. Under-grounding the wires in the central part of the town would make

a big improvement to its appearance.

GENERAL

Your plan provides a blue print for future activities. While keeping in mind the bigger picture don't neglect the basics, e.g. litter control. At this level, the finer points of presentation are now even more important.

SECOND ADJUDICATION (06/08/02)

The vertical posts at the entrance to the Tullamore Harriers on the Birr Road appeared quite rusty and should be attended to before next year's competition. Most of the buildings of the town looked reasonably well cared for on the day although one or two were in need of attention. Some buildings ripe for redevelopment were in evidence on Convent Road along the Grand Canal adjacent to the Convent of Mercy and St. Philomena's. There are a number of new modern premises to add to the town's stock of fine buildings. One such was No. 1 Church Street in sand-blasted glass and granite. The designer appeared to have taken a thorough approach and had even incorporated street furniture into its overall design. The new County Council Headquarters is nearing completion and looks a fine modern building which will be a marvelous asset to the town. Tullamore has improved in leaps and bounds over the last number of years and continues to make great progress in the competition.