

Tidy Towns Competition 2003

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Bagenalstown**

Ref: **585**

County: **Carlow**

Mark: **245**

Category: **D**

Date: **29/07/2003**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2003	Mark Awarded 2002
Overall Developmental Approach	50	39	39
The Built Environment	40	34	34
Landscaping	40	37	36
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	22	22
Litter Control	40	31	31
Tidiness	20	16	16
Residential Areas	30	26	25
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	32	32
General Impression	10	8	8
TOTAL MARK	300	245	243

Overall Developmental Approach:

Thank you indeed for all the information sent with the entry form and for the plan which was read with interest and was most useful on adjudication day. The Adjudicator found it difficult to find some of the sites mentioned in your report etc. For next year perhaps you could mark on the map where work has taken place in the current year or is in progress. Nevertheless the vast majority of significant areas in the town were visited and excellent work is being done. In this connection it is gratifying to read that you continue to have the support of Fás and, most important, your local community, for your efforts. Your plan is very comprehensive and the involvement of Carlow County Council is to be welcomed. While the County Council will continue with its own work in line with its priorities your committee should endeavour to produce a plan based on yearly activities for the next three to five years which can be implemented within your physical and financial resources. Bagenalstown has reached a very high mark in the competition and further success will come about as a result of careful planning and attention to detail. You should also be looking at headings within the competition where you might gain additional marks particularly under Litter Control, Wildlife and Roads, Street and Back Areas. You received an in-depth report from last years Adjudicator. The following therefore is by way of comment on further progress to date and should be read in conjunction with that report.

The Built Environment:

Bagenalstown is very fortunate in having a number of public buildings all of which were viewed on

adjudication day: - Courthouse, Fire Station, Garda Station, Schools, Family Resource Centre, Library, Catholic Church, Church of Ireland, Kilree Bridge etc. These are being well maintained and great credit is due to all concerned. Stonewalls throughout the town are being well kept and create a nice atmosphere. Those adorned with flowers looked particularly well. The Swimming Pool is a very nice facility and is being well maintained as is its car park. The Canal Walk is a lovely facility and open spaces on it are being well kept. As mentioned last year the standard of presentation of business premises throughout the town varies. Assuming you have representatives from the business community on your committee perhaps part of your future planning would be to propose an upgrading, where required of individual premises perhaps using the facilities of a colour consultant.

Landscaping:

This is obviously a major strength in your Tidy Towns effort and wonderful sights were to be seen all along the Canal/Leighlin Bridge Road, the Courthouse, the Town Park and many smaller places which created a wonderful ambience in the town. Containerised planting, window boxes and hanging baskets added to this and all concerned with this wonderful effort are to be congratulated. Bagenalstown has many open spaces and part of your three/five year plan could be the identification of where further landscaping might take place through the planting of trees and shrubs which would give you some colour on an all year round basis. Trees and shrubs planted in the past are now maturing very nicely and reflect great credit on perhaps members of your present committee and their predecessors.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

Comments made under this heading last year are still applicable. Your own comments are noted and indeed ducks were to be seen on the canal on adjudication day and added greatly to the total scene. However there are wonderful opportunities in Bagenalstown to carry out a substantial wildlife project and again, as part of your planning, perhaps you might consult with Duchas on this.

Litter Control:

In general the centre of the town was practically litter free. However minor littering was to be seen particularly on the approaches to the town and unfortunately, quite a good deal in the vicinity of the canal. The latter would appear to have been caused mainly by overflowing litterbins which needed to be emptied. This is an important part of the competition and needs constant monitoring.

Tidiness:

Comments made under this heading last year are still applicable. However in general Bagenalstown was presented in a neat and tidy manner which is a great reflection on the regard which your business community and residents have for their living environment. Well done to all concerned.

Residential Areas:

Many of the housing estates in Bagenalstown were visited on adjudication day. In general these are being well maintained. Some have very nicely kept open spaces which in some cases were beautifully landscaped, Maple Drive Estate and Eastwood Estate being classic examples. The new footpaths at Pairc Mhuire were noted and the landscaping at Kilcarrig Street creates a lovely atmosphere in that area. Houses in general, both in estates and in the town, looked well. Some had lovely gardens in full bloom on adjudication day which were a delight to see. Others had hanging baskets and window boxes which looked lovely and reflected great credit on these householders. In a centre the size of Bagenalstown it would be important, if you do not have it already, to have representation on your committee of Residents Associations. The maintenance of open spaces in estates and in other living areas of the town can very quickly get beyond the reach of a Tidy Towns Committee and will require a concerted effort by other groups such as Residents Associations or Street Committees.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

Approach roads are generally being well maintained. The approaches from the Royal Oak and Leighlinbridge are indeed very attractive. The condition of approach roads is very important as they tend to set the tone for the rest of the area. Adjudication normally takes place either between the town/village nameplates signs or the speed limit signs, whichever you opt for. Verges should be trimmed regularly from there on in bearing in mind the comments made in the Tidy Town Handbook regarding the preservation of wild flowers. Road surfaces in general, particularly in the centre of the town are very good. Some of the surfaces of some approach roads are rough and will eventually need resurfacing. Paths are being well maintained and generally speaking the work carried out under this heading reflects great credit on your County Council.

General Impression:

Bagenalstown is a very busy town but still has a very nice atmosphere about it. This is particularly due, in no small way, to your efforts at landscaping, tidiness and your anti-litter efforts in general. Individual efforts by members of the business community and householders is also an important plank in your effort and should be encouraged at every possible opportunity. Plan to do a certain amount each year. Do not try to do everything together as sometimes failure can lead to frustration. The Adjudicator looks forward to returning to Bagenalstown next year to see further progress made.

Second Round Adjudication:

The town was founded by Walter Bagnall towards the end of the 18th century as an estate town and he intended it "to be of considerable architectural pretensions and to bear the name of Versailles". Not too much of this has happened. The town stands on a low promontory above the river Barrow and basically has a grid pattern to its town plan. There are very fine views from Market Square looking across to the Barrow, with its very fine landscape composition of river, canal and weirs when buildings were demolished here. But no advantage was taken of this clearance and the space is now a car park. This central site could have been a unique small town park. Perhaps the Committee could press for this idea to be realised. The land between this car park and the Courthouse is still a wasteland with the rears of premises on Main Street exposing nondescript extensions. The very fine grounds of the Courthouse overlooking Bachelor's Walk are being completed and should look most pleasing when the soft landscape works mature. But this empty space between this landscape work and the car park off Market Square should be redeveloped. It is such an important piece of ground within the fabric of the town. The entrance road to Bagenalstown from Leighlinbridge is most pleasant with the adjoining river Barrow and the magnificent curved weir and adjoining canal and the trees. This sylvan character should be brought into the town and especially Bachelor's Walk as a strong landscape design feature. Perhaps this could be one of the programmes to be undertaken by the Committee and the Town Council. Within the town many of the new housing areas are extremely pleasant with very well kept green open spaces and front gardens. On the more narrow streets, the terraced housing is more difficult to visually improve, but hanging baskets and window boxes gave colour. Possibly the Committee could organise a competition for the most interesting improved street by painting of doors. The railway station is a fine stone building with planters along both platforms. Congratulations to the station master as the station is an important entry point into the town. Some attention is needed to the front facade where weeds are growing on a central ledge. The Committee, together with the Town Council, should consider tree planting along Railway Road leading to the railway station to emphasise the link between town and station. The wirescape in some of the streets should be eliminated and would need co-operation between the Committee, the E.S.B. and the Town Council. There was practically no litter seen on the streets on the day of adjudication and the Committee is to be congratulated on this fine achievement.