

Tidy Towns Competition 2003

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Macroom**

Ref: **452**

County: **Cork South**

Mark: **240**

Category: **D**

Date: **07/08/2003**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2003	Mark Awarded 2002
Overall Developmental Approach	50	42	41
The Built Environment	40	30	29
Landscaping	40	34	33
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	22	22
Litter Control	40	30	28
Tidiness	20	16	15
Residential Areas	30	26	26
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	32	31
General Impression	10	8	8
TOTAL MARK	300	240	233

Overall Developmental Approach:

The five-year plan submitted with the entry form and all the information and notices accompanying this were very helpful in understanding the targets of the Tidy Towns Committee in Macroom. The membership of 15 is a reasonably small number for the population of 3,000 and a recruitment drive would be helpful now, especially with all the now residential estates. Work with the local council, residents association, local schools and the business community is vital to form a unified approach to developments.

The Built Environment:

The castle and demesne and the town square are the defining characteristics of Macroom. The new paving surfaces are very attractive and work on the paving was continuing at the time of the visit. The unique stone paving at the entrance to the demesne differs from the main square and is lovely. The laying of these must have taken great patience. The Catholic church, nearby convent of mercy and national school all look well. The prefabs at the front of the national school hopefully will not be there forever. There has been a tremendous amount of painting of streetside properties, both residential and business premises, over the past few years and this has helped to give Macroom a very colourful appearance. Some properties continue to be in need of attention and these are more prominent now as the standards of the rest rise. The AIB building is situated in a very prominent situation and some attention to painting is now needed. The Castle Hotel, refurbished in recent years, looks well. In Castle Street there are a number of properties needing attention. The area by

the garda station and courthouse has been helped by the cleaning and construction of the walled approach with planting therein. The bridge is a lovely structure and the viewing points with the lamps insets are a real asset. The theatre and library buildings look well. The buildings at the bus depot are a little dreary. The extensive car parking areas behind the streets are a great benefit. The areas are well tended and one wonders why parking is allowed at all on the main street and at Railway View causing so much traffic disruption when these cars could be parked in the carpark. The Muskerry Vet Clinic, Fitzgerald square buildings and the buildings in Temperance Lane are well tended, which is important, as these are back areas of the main town. The Neville Brothers' premises also looks well. The Church of Ireland building is a landmark building.

Landscaping:

There are many attractive landscaped pockets within Macroom. The area to the front of Oakwood Court looks very well. The grounds of the convent of mercy and the castle demesne area are both attractive. Trees on Chapel Lane have grown well and are producing a very nice effect with their narrow unobtrusive shape – it is good to have oaks in the center of the town. Tree planting on the road below the courthouse are progressing well. The planting at the entrance to the courthouse area is attractive. Greens at housing estates contribute significantly to the landscape of the town. The planting at the O'Connor Park is particularly good in this respect. The trees in Market Square are fulfilling their role well and give a good image. The container plantings along the streets and square gives great summer colour. The castle grounds and park are a wonderful landscaped asset to the town. Trees on Bowl Road are also, and their planting was a clever initiative.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

The riverside walks offer lovely opportunities to enjoy and appreciate nature and the wild life of the locality. The riverside walk behind O'Riada's public house is particularly nice with the hard surface toe path and the tree lined passage. As mentioned last year, some particular initiatives should be established to heighten the awareness of what can be seen in these areas. Working with the schools, local environmental groups and with the help of the Tidy Towns Handbook, some positive actions should result.

Litter Control:

There is a very good level of litter cleanliness within the town. Some litter was noted in places sporadically, such as in car parks and on streets, but the level was very low and congratulations are due. Constant vigilance is needed to keep litter at bay. The recycle banks are well located at the carpark and appear to be well used and the surrounds kept clean.

Tidiness:

The improved square and upgraded presentation of many premises has lifted the tidiness aspect of Macroom. The Castle Street area still needs upgrading. The GAA carpark and the area below the courthouse, which now appears to be designated for building, both need some attention. The large carparks that are situated at the back of buildings show an unattractive side of many of these buildings. Any efforts to improve these would be helpful.

Residential Areas:

There is an enormous number of on street residences. These, as stated before, have been very well painted in an array of interesting colours and have given a great boost to the streetscape of all the approaches to the town. Housing estates are also contributing very well. There are a great amount of new housing estates. The housing estate at Ard na Greine looks down on the town and from here the colourful houses of O'Connor Park are noticed with their painted chimney pots – which is a novel idea.. Oakwood Court houses are also attractive. Individual houses in all estates can contribute so much by simply taking care of their own properties and presenting attractive gardens.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

Approach roads are very busy and the volume of traffic coming through the town is excessive. The Bypass, when it comes, will be most welcome and will change the nature of the town enormously. Roadside verges on approach roads are well cared for. The entry over the river bridge places the "Pint of Murphy's" on an equal footing with the tower of the castle, which is unfortunate.

General Impression:

Macroom has advanced dramatically over the past few years in the quality of presentation of premises and houses. The beautiful setting and the improvements that have taken place are most welcome.

Second Round Adjudication:

It was indeed a pleasure to revisit Macroom after several years absence and see such extraordinary improvements - the town centre with its new paving, surfacing and road markings and street furniture as well, of course, all the improvements made by premises owners. The bright paintwork with the deep blue sky overhead looked amazing! Similarly, the cheerfully painted terraced houses on the approach roads were admired as they show the first signs of a concentration of effort extending to the outskirts. There is, however, clearly much to be done on the outskirts where there are still numerous untidy yards, forecourts and outbuildings. Some improvement of Sleaveen Road was noted. Perhaps you might take on board the suggestion to remove all parking along Main Street, apart from deliveries at specific times. As no doubt you will agree, the bypass cannot come soon enough! The castle demense is a wonderful asset to have so close to the town centre.