

Tidy Towns Competition 2003

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Youghal**

Ref: **448**

County: **Cork South**

Mark: **232**

Category: **E**

Date: **07/08/2003**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2003	Mark Awarded 2002
Overall Developmental Approach	50	39	38
The Built Environment	40	30	29
Landscaping	40	35	35
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	22	21
Litter Control	40	30	31
Tidiness	20	14	13
Residential Areas	30	23	22
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	31	31
General Impression	10	8	8
TOTAL MARK	300	232	228

Overall Developmental Approach:

The detailed material submitted with the entry form gave a very good idea of the comprehensive programme being undertaken by the Tidy Towns Committee in Youghal. The committee, with the cooperation of so many bodies, such as public authorities, businesses and residents associations, is bridging the many interests in the pursuit of an integrated programme of development. The Youghal Tidy Towns Action plan 1998 to 2003 has pinpointed the very pertinent issues involved, such as the derelict sites, plastic and neon signs, waste and heritage aspects. Planning i.e. rolling on from former achievements and building upon these for the next five years will now need to commence.

The Built Environment:

The many fine historic and heritage buildings make Youghal a very interesting place to take a walking tour. The wall plaques with information about these buildings are very welcome, such as at the Red House, Shalom House and Almshouse. The Mall House is currently undergoing some restoration work. The Life Boat House and the Lighthouse are important landmarks. The clock tower is a marvelous central focus within the town and confers uniqueness in Youghal. The Devonshire and Walter Raleigh hotels look impressive, as do Loreto Convent buildings. The garda station, The Quays Public House, the heritage centre and tourist office look well. Premises in the main streets look well in general, although there are still a considerable number of shops and other streetside premises needing improvements to their décor, particularly towards the end of the town approaching the 1798 Park. The "New Dandelion Market" building will hopefully be redecorated soon. The Lidl building is

well presented with good surrounding landscaping and the new enormous site for Tesco will change the face of the entry to the town on the Breton Road.

Landscaping:

The Millennium Park is progressing very well with good planting and maintenance. The plants are now beginning to fill their space and enhance the well-designed paving areas. The children's playground adjacent to this is well situated and is very well cared for. The 1798 Park is clean and maintained well. This park, perhaps, is a little lacking in impact, with the very low height level throughout the park, and a more imaginative design than at present could be considered. The Millennium Roundabout is a wonderful well-coordinated piece of landscaping with excellent adjoining landscaped segments complementing the roundabout itself. Streetside planting, using colourfully planted containers and baskets attached to the wall, are very successful on the road from Loreto Convent towards the Cork direction along towards the sea road. Within the town some premises have made exceptional efforts with hanging baskets and window boxes and these add considerably to the overall landscape of the town. The area by Dominic Collins' Place is very attractively planted. The area to the front of Dun na Moil looks very appealing.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

Youghal is fortunate in having great and varied potential for the appreciation of wildlife. The Keane Park is a lovely quiet place on the doorstep of the town offering a very different form of wildlife from that at the sea. The attractive walkways and rich bank of trees makes this a very pleasant place for strolling. The Slob Bank walk offers a very different habitat and is a great asset. Seashore walks are always interesting too. The more opportunities offered to people to know what to expect to see, where and when, the more they will learn to appreciate and enjoy these places. The book included with the entry form "The Wildlife Wonders of Youghal" is an excellent record and motivation for people to enjoy the wildlife.

Litter Control:

The range of initiatives that are in operation in Youghal show a very definite commitment to overcoming litter problems. Cigarette bins and dog foul bins are an excellent idea and the operation of the fulltime commercial sweeper is a great advantage. Some litter was noted, however, in small amounts on the main street and some was also noted on the steps leading to the upper road by the clock tower and on a similar stepped area a little distance further back along that street. Constant vigilance, continuous anti - litter campaigns, work with schools and liaison with take-away fast food shops is needed to keep litter at bay.

Tidiness:

The central areas of Youghal have a very tidy appearance particularly by Barry Street, The heritage centre, Quay House and all adjoining areas. Again, any premises that need paint or improvements take from the tidiness aspect. These places are well known to the committee and the action plan for signage and derelict buildings is addressing this. Understandably, there are difficulties getting all people involved on board but continual efforts do eventually pay off. The back areas, as seen from the higher road above the clock tower and on descending the steps at this point, look a little grim. Painting of surrounding walls at the 1798 Park is needed. The backs of old premises frequently do present problems, especially true where new buildings and car parks suddenly expose backs of buildings that hitherto were concealed. The railings along to St Corans Well needs paint. The areas adjacent to the greyhound racing track and the adjoining petrol station are very untidy and hopefully these raw sites will be sorted out soon. Building construction sites always present an untidiness problem and it is important that all sites are finished off well and re-instated before the developers or builders leave.

Residential Areas:

There are a considerable number of streetside residences through the town and these are very important in keeping life within the town. The very attractive Church Lane was admired. Areas of terraced housing within the town such as Dominic Collins Place are well maintained and give these areas a pleasant appearance. The apartment developments have become significant landmarks in the town. The many housing estates above the town are generally well cared for. The appearances of individual houses within estates and the treatment of entrance greens and open spaces within housing estates is vital to give a good impression of the estate. Estates at Millfield Abbey and Shanavine are developing well. A number of other estates in the St. Coran Well area were noted. Planting trees on open greens and entrances to estates is vitally important in integrating the estate with the local environment.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

Approach roads to Youghal are attractively presented. The Breton Road has very good tree planting. The roadside floral displays give a very attractive appearance. The surface on most of Main street has been nicely surfaced and the markings are good. Brick pavements on streets give a very pleasant appearance – it would be nice to have this treatment extended through a greater amount of the streets. The Millennium Roundabout and surrounding areas give a delightful entrance to Youghal.

General Impression:

The rapidly expanding town of Youghal is changing its face with the number of new housing estates, industrial premises and bypass roads. The inner streetscape is well concealed from this expansion and retains its own characteristic quality. Dealing with the remaining premises that need attention is a challenge to be overcome.

Second Round Adjudication:

The standard is quite inconsistent, ranging from exceptional to the neglected. This is the challenge which you will have to meet to make significant progress in the competition. The approach roads for instance have pockets of good presentation, but in general the road sides appear ragged. Litter was a major problem, especially near, of all places, Youghal Visitor Centre, where bins were overflowing, suggesting that the problem is more to do with frequency of emptying. The old dock areas and the streets behind, with their stone buildings, are a particularly interesting part of the town as they exude history. While there are many derelict sites throughout the town centre, the vibrant colours along the main street created a joyous atmosphere. The public toilets had commendably just been washed and smelt of disinfective, so rare in Ireland!. The beach was becoming busy on a scorching August morning. Youghal is most memorable for its location, perched between hill and sea and its spectacular views. The by-pass has made a considerable difference to the enjoyment of Youghal.