

Tidy Towns Competition 2003

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Listowel**

Ref: **116**

County: **Kerry**

Mark: **249**

Category: **D**

Date: **31/07/2003**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2003	Mark Awarded 2002
Overall Developmental Approach	50	45	44
The Built Environment	40	36	36
Landscaping	40	36	35
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	25	25
Litter Control	40	29	29
Tidiness	20	15	15
Residential Areas	30	23	23
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	32	32
General Impression	10	8	8
TOTAL MARK	300	249	247

Overall Developmental Approach:

Thanking you for your completed application form accompanied by extremely detailed supporting submission and maps of town depicting points of action under the competition categories. While the supporting documentation was of great assistance to the adjudicator, it should be noted that Tidy Towns reports have to be summarized under nine headings in three pages and invariably this means that all issues flagged may not be commented upon. The Town, which has been one of the high achievers in the competition, enjoys both the support and the goodwill of all sections of the community. The practical support afforded to the committee by both Kerry County Council, Listowel Town Council other agencies and local businesses is something that most other towns and villages would envy. Hence, the town has been making great strides in the competition in the last few years. The continuation and strengthening of this type of partnership will be for the betterment of Listowel and its residents in the years to come.

The Built Environment:

The town has had high markings in this section of the competition over the last few years. This year's standing is very much on par with what has gone before as overall the standard of presentation of buildings public, commercial and private was very high. The adjudicator noted all the action items under this heading in the submission and also had some own observations to comment on. The committee was exhorted by last year's adjudicator to encourage owners of unoccupied and derelict buildings to have them at least tidied with a basic coat of paint. The response has been

positive as some old buildings looked as if they had just been painted. This is the kind of action that improves the look of a place. It is good to see the restoration work being undertaken in Listowel Castle and in St Marys Church and a visit to the excellent visitor centre was an added plus. The shop fronts in Listowel reflect and blend in with the architecture of the town; "Freezers", The Barber who glories in the name of "Jack the Boot" (at least that is what I think it is), O'Gealbhains excellent off-licence and the Arch Bar were some that created an impression. Mention should be made of the new Listowel Shopping Centre which blends in well with older buildings and surrounding areas. The public buildings such as churches, fire station, St. Patrick Parish Hall, primary schools and secondary schools (such as the Presentation Convent and St Michaels) were all well maintained and credit to those people who are responsible for their upkeep. The Carnegie Free Library which is an impressive building is not enhanced by the KDYC Banner attached to the wall. The town is well served by the number of seats, both wood and simple stone, that are dotted within the town and in the outskirts. There is considerably infrastructural development taking place in the town hopefully this will be done in a manner that is complementary to what is already in place.

Landscaping:

Landscaping in both quality and quantity is one of the towns strong point and there were many outstanding examples to view both in the core area and at periphery of the town. All the on going work was noted and viewed and the Garden Of Europe sponsored by the local rotary club was just a sight to behold. A local informant made mention of the fact that the garden has lost its full time tender because of the discontinuation of a section of the CE Scheme. I would hope that this can redressed as it would be a pity if this wonderful amenity could not be maintained to the highest standard. The new development, Ashfield, on the race course road deserves to be highlighted for its colourful mix of roses, shrubs such as potentilla and perennials off-set by some nice lighting features. Prudent tree planting using native species where possible has taken place in the town and the fruits of this labour will be seen in many years forward from now. Flower boxes and tubs area also a feature much admired in the town, as were the many individual gardens that could be seen in outlying areas. Another strong performance in tis category.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

The town, with the Feale flowing through it, has a number of natural habitats for all species of wildlife. The River Walk, which incidentally is outlined on an excellent display board on the bank, has more potential in this category. It is good to see that a local wildlife expert has been brought on board and will provide a service to both locals and visitor alike. On going work, such as maintaining bird boxes and cleaning of salmon resting pools, is noted and, again, all this activity contributes to the preservation of wildlife within the town.

Litter Control:

Litter control was quite good, considering that Listowel is a busy town during the holiday season when you have day trippers from nearby seaside places, such as Ballybunion. There was some litter evident in areas in Market Street and the Square but there is an immense amount of anti litter promotion being undertaken by the committee. I would emphasise the need to get all schools involved in this endeavour after all they will be the adults of the near future. The town council is to be commended also for its ongoing daily clean-ups. Keep putting forward the message to the kids - litter is not cool!

Tidiness:

Again, there is a immense amount of hard work being undertaken by the committee to get the message across to all sections of the local population that it is in the best interests of Listowel that people keep their respective properties and surrounding areas tidy and free of weed growth and other residue. Good to note that area next to Feale Valley is sold as it indeed is an eyesore and stands out as such. Hopefully the new owners will do something worthwhile with the site. The committee can only do so much as most of the onus to tidy up properties and curtilages is the

responsibility of the owners.

Residential Areas:

Excellent use of bi-lingual signs in this category, such as Ceide Na Feile, Gort Na Fuinnseoige and Sli NaSpeire. Just for the record, two of the aforementioned are new developments and it amazes me that this bilingual idea cannot be replicated in other parts of the country. Established areas such as Ballycollogue Park were well maintained with some very nice individual houses and gardens as were newer areas such as Willowbank and Clevereagh Downs. Encouraging residents to form associations is both beneficial for the individual estate and to the town as a whole as it contributes to the main objective of a better Listowel.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

There was considerable effort put into making entrances to the town as presentable as possible. There were a few negatives in the form of untidy boundary walls and side entrances and in the case of the Race Course Road a badly maintained road surface, but overall the standard was quite good. Signs were visible and clean and, of course, the use of bilingual signs in Listowel should be an example to other towns and villages.

General Impression:

Listowel has a very active Tidy Towns Committee of 20 and the work programme and review submitted as part of this year's entry is a product of the collective effort put in. The town is fortunate in that it has a community that are together in putting it to the forefront in the Tidy Towns Competition. The town has some pleasant leisure amenities such as the River Walk, Town Park and the excellent Garden Of Europe. The best compliment one could pay is that as a visitor, Listowel is a welcoming town and that is in no small way due to its people.

Second Round Adjudication:

Listowel sports some unusual and attractive traditional buildings, with unique plasterwork which is quite distinct to this area of the country. The streets are generally well maintained with attractive street furniture, sculptures and fine limestone kerbsides. There are a number of infill sites along the main streets where construction work is taking place. It is to be hoped that these will be in keeping with the unique character of the town. Litter control was a problem on First Adjudication Day, but had been somewhat improved upon by Second Adjudication Day. However, rubbish was evident to the Writer's Well, in its prominent location. There is a strong use of the Irish Language throughout the town, which is always to be applauded. The restoration of Listowel Castle will be of great benefit to the local community. Work was evident in this vicinity on the day at the bridge leading to the racecourse. The road surface on the Tarbert Road was in bad condition. Listowel is an attractive working town which is always a pleasure to visit.