

Tidy Towns Competition 2003

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Castletown**

Ref: **731**

County: **Laois**

Mark: **267**

Category: **B**

Date: **03/08/2003**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2003	Mark Awarded 2002
Overall Developmental Approach	50	44	44
The Built Environment	40	35	35
Landscaping	40	36	36
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	26	26
Litter Control	40	38	38
Tidiness	20	17	17
Residential Areas	30	25	25
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	37	37
General Impression	10	9	9
TOTAL MARK	300	267	267

Overall Developmental Approach:

Thank you for your entry to Tidy Towns 2003. Your updated management and development plan 2001-2003 is most informative and well presented.

The Built Environment:

The school is nicely presented and painted cream and pink with brown cills and bases. The grotto looks nice and clean with hornebeams on either side. The modern RC church has nice clean lines and is well kept with a neat and tidy garden of lawns, plants and colourful roses. The De La Salle Monastery is nicely presented with mature and colourful gardens. Castletown Inn looks fine with an attractive beer garden to one side. Kealy's looks nice with its two wheel barrows of decorative flowers beside the fuel pumps. The ICA Hall building is clean and tidy with some hanging flowers. Guilfoyle's Funeral Home looks excellent with its series of hanging baskets. The open forecourt to the left is part screened by a series of planters and potted flowers. The yard could be tidied up.

Landscaping:

The entrance to Castletown, with its beautifully presented grass verges and completed stone walls, features the word Fáilte in plants on the left hand side. There are fine acre, birch and beech trees maturing on the left hand side while on the right there is beech hedging. The Norman Castle is

impressive overlooking the Nore River and its informative interpretative plaque is excellent. There is seating along the castle frontage. The Corn Mill is very well presented and its interpretative plaque informative. The walls around this area are complete and look very well. The continuation of the lawn with trees along the castle wall towards the village is very well done. The Gash Court sign looks well with its surrounding flowers. Houses are well kept with nice floral gardens and potted plants. The new flower bed put into the girls school under the FÁS scheme looks very well. Both ends of the car park have attractive floral displays. At the apex of the green triangle is a nice flower bed. Across the road is an extended planter of trees, plants, etc. The village pump is somewhat stark and could be dressed with flowers, etc. The telephone box looks fine. The lamps on the bridge are much in keeping with the old world ambience, and there is a nice growth of wildflower developing on bridge walls.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

At the Castletown Community Centre the flower pots at the entrance are adequate rather than spectacular. The wildflower garden at the back of the hall was a little disappointing in that the plant identifications are now overgrown and need to be repositioned. River banks have been well preserved for the growth of indigenous wildflower. The river weir is a nice feature. The nature trail introduced with an interpretative plaque is a delight - the oak plantation and its memorial, the salmon leap and the duck pond (and its interpretative plaque) add interesting highlights to the trail. The three tiered riverside amenity with new seating at the castle is very attractive indeed.

Litter Control:

Castletown is generally litter free and there is no kerb side weed.

Tidiness:

There is a broken litter bin container close to the entrance to the nature trail and one of the riverside seats is showing signs of rust. Grass has been cut but not collected. Village street litter bins are nicely camouflaged by placement around corners or behind shrubs.

Residential Areas:

Elderfield drive has a fine entrance of stone walls, decorated with hanging baskets. In the elbow of the drive is a planter to left and a green area to right. The road surface is good and there is no wirescape. This is a fairly new housing development and is very nice. At the back end of the estate is a planter with mature plants. Some of the poplar trees could present problems due to root extension, etc. The row of Georgian Houses which front onto the green are well maintained with their small colourful gardens. Housing in general is attractively presented. A cream painted house is somewhat disappointing with its glass frontage and pvc window frames. There is an attractive run of bungalows along St.Patricks Terrace.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

Approaches to Castletown from the main Dublin/Limerick road are excellent. Nicely presented verges and Tidy Town signs engage the interest. The new tarmac path at St. Patrick's Terrace looks very well. On the right hand side is mature beech hedging which fronts onto the main Limerick Road. Perhaps it could be trimmed. This entrance features a three stone sculpture in an open grass area backed by planter of flowers. The approach into Castletown from the girls' school side has a cut verge and there's a stone wall on which creepers and plants are now growing. The left hand side has good hedging which provides habitat for wildlife. At the entrance to the village is a mixture of mature gardens, walls and cut verges. The island which introduces the village green has a profusion of plants and flowers. The chestnut trees around the perimeter are striking. At the Limerick Road end the houses to the right have colourful displays of flowers. The rockery at the top of town, with a sculpture, is impressive with a grass area to the front and backed by trees.

General Impression:

Castletown has again produced an outstanding performance in the competition. Nevertheless, it did not quite reach last year's levels. Better trimming of verges and attention to wildlife park interpretation would have been expected.

Second Round Adjudication:

A very charming village, now by-passed by the N7 and allowed to develop in quietness away from the very heavy traffic. It was noted that the number of members on the committee was fifty nine. The work of this committee can be seen in the dedication to the landscaping of all parts of the village and their attention to detail. The committee is to be congratulated. Its work is not only within the village but extends to the wonderful beech hedge extending for the full length of the village adjoining the N7. A wonderful achievement. It demonstrates clearly that the village, though removed from the by-passed N7, is still part of it - a nice touch. The entrance from the N7, with its stone walls, well kept verges and trees are excellent, as is the bridge over the Nore looking down onto the river and its very fine curved weir and amenity grounds adjoining the river bank. Before the by-pass this was an impossible view because of the traffic. The Fair Green is a most delightful tranquil space, with its Millennium Stone, its mature chestnut trees and its beautifully maintained grassed area. A most tranquil spot. The two-storey detached houses adjoining the green add to this feeling. The grounds of St. Edmund's, facing the Green, are excellently maintained. The adjudicator noted the pleasing contrast between the flower planted triangular island acting as a prow to the tranquil grassed Fair Green itself. A nice design concept. The dominant building in the village is the convent; its grounds are remarkably calm with rose beds and lawns and contributes greatly to the village ambience. All gardens within the village are delightfully landscaped with floral front gardens and hanging baskets and give an air of welcome to all. No litter was seen in the village and the committee must be congratulated on this achievement. The grove of five hundred oak trees planted in 2001 is a wonderful project and most poignant.