

Tidy Towns Competition 2003

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Durrow**

Ref: **209**

County: **Laois**

Mark: **232**

Category: **B**

Date: **04/08/2003**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2003	Mark Awarded 2002
Overall Developmental Approach	50	42	42
The Built Environment	40	33	33
Landscaping	40	36	36
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	20	20
Litter Control	40	22	22
Tidiness	20	13	13
Residential Areas	30	23	23
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	35	35
General Impression	10	8	8
TOTAL MARK	300	232	232

Overall Developmental Approach:

Thank you for your entry to Tidy Towns 2003. Durrow is an engaging town to visit; the initial interest developed by the fine open square and its series of greens. The committee is commended for its detailed work programme and the progress made is self evident. There are still some dereliction and building deterioration problems but notwithstanding this, the town looks very well.

The Built Environment:

The Square and its series of greens surrounded by 18th century architecture is very attractive. It is well presented with cut lawns, flowers, mature and semi-mature trees, seating, litter bins and area map. Along the Ballyragget Road side, the Bank of Ireland building looks well as does Shepards. Joyces, which is for sale, could do with repainting. Marties Pub beside the bridge is nicely presented in old world style. The fire station and Midland Health Board buildings look fine with their tubs of flowers in front. There are some unfortunate instances of dilapidation. The Bianconi Inn is particularly bad. The Georgian buildings along the church side of the green look well, although there is a further instance of dilapidation in this area. The décor on the run of buildings from Happy Days and the Copper Kettle could be improved. Durrow Castle Hotel looks extremely well. The entrance avenue is colourfully decorated with flower beds. The community centre has some tubs of flowers but the doors and windows need attention. The church is clean and tidy, as is the school next door. The garda station looks fine with its display of roses. The courthouse generally needs to be upgraded. The post office looks well. Old Chapel Street and Carrigan Street have a number of tidy

cut stone houses.

Landscaping:

The tall trees on either side of the Dublin bridge act as fine portals to the town. The green is beautifully presented. Grass is trimmed with trees maturing nicely. Directional road signs could be cleaned. The variety of young trees in the green is very attractive and they are maturing nicely. Lamp standards with their hanging baskets look well. The Tae Lane amenity looks very colourful and well presented with pump and lamp standards dressed with flower baskets. The pound, its period lamp and its sculptures, looks well. Attractive flower box displays on the main Dublin Road bridge. Old bridge is nicely dressed with period lamps and is flood lit. At the riverside are a couple of picnic amenities which look fine. Nice to see the interpretative sign boards for Laois Loop Walks and Durrow leafy loop. Lalors gardening centre provides a very attractive addition to the entrance of the town.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

Access to the riverside is very nice with a row of plants and trees to the left, set in paving stones. The wooden seats at the riverside could do with painting, and there is some litter. The five-eyed bridge with willow growing from its side looks very well. The wildlife area adjacent to the fuel station is maturing nicely. Delighted to read of your success in attracting various wildlife species to this location. The riverside walk looks really well with its timber bridge.

Litter Control:

There was marginal litter 'show' on the greens in the Square, but there were adequate litter bins in place. Also, there was some litter near the riverside amenity area.

Tidiness:

A couple of pallets at the roadside near the fire station are a little untidy. The entrance from the Cork Road side is somewhat untidy. Some dereliction along the Patrick Street entrance. The ducting of wires in Patrick Street and Mary Street is excellent.

Residential Areas:

St. Fintans Gardens looks very well. The little football pitch at the bottom green is well maintained. It has mature trees and the grass has been trimmed. The kerbs are fairly well looked after. The green and houses fronting St. Fintans look very well, particularly one house in the corner which has a remarkable display of flowers. The work on the grotto is progressing. There is a new line of bushes at its front and some of the ivy has been removed. The seat needs to be painted. Flowers and trees in front area all look well. Houses on both sides are cleanly presented. It is noted that there is a large new housing estate under construction on the Kilkenny Road.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

The approach to Durrow from the Ballacolla Road has cut verges to the right with trees planted to screen a link wire fence. The stone village sign in the planter looks well. Some of the young trees have been vandalised. At the 30 mph sign, the verge could be trimmed on the left. There is an attractive grass bank and wall on the approach to main Dublin Road. The Dublin Road approach has pleasant green area with picnic tables and maturing trees screening a wall at the rear.

General Impression:

Durrow is a very attractive town with much to be proud of. There is room for exploiting its potential

but some concern is raised about the type of commercial property presentation in parts of the Square.

Second Round Adjudication:

Basically, Durrow, with a population of 800 has the potential to develop into a wonderful small town, but it is undermined by the constant through-traffic of over eight thousand vehicles a day. It is a great credit to the committee of twelve to persist in retaining the character of this very fine village. The approach roads are all excellently maintained with well cut verges, trees and hedgerows. The many gardens on these approach roads are very beautifully landscaped and give a most welcoming sign to all coming to the village. The ESSO filling station is excellent in its planting and tidiness and is an icon to other filling stations. Indeed there was a gardener working on the planting beds on the day of adjudication. The STATOIL filling station at the Dublin end of the town was also well maintained, newly planted and very tidy. The centre piece of the village is the Square with its very well kept green spaces. There was a small carnival on the larger of the green spaces which tended to dominate the green, nevertheless the carnival was a most welcoming sight. Some of the buildings around the Square were very well maintained and most attractive with window boxes and hanging baskets. However, as mentioned in previous adjudicators reports, there are a number of derelict buildings both around the Square and on Patrick's Street. They are giving a bad image to the village, particularly on Patrick's Street as the road is narrow here. It is recognised by the adjudicator that little can be done except for constant monitoring and reminding. The county council now has the deal with these buildings. The committee suggests a new use for the old courthouse as a heritage centre. This is an excellent idea for the rehabilitation of a fine building. The adjudicator always looks at the condition of the local garda station as it is very important that these buildings and their grounds must present a well kept presentable appearance to the public. The garda station in Durrow is very fine, newly painted and very well planted and maintained. Congratulations. There was some litter around the Square, possibly created by the presence of the carnival. The committee is to be commended on advising, especially businesses, that they are now responsible under the new litter laws for the collecting and disposal of packaging created by them. The Holy Trinity Church's grounds were well maintained, and the old stone school building, now the Presentation Centre, was excellent with its use of window boxes in contrast to the grey stone.