

Tidy Towns Competition 2003

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Ardagh**

Ref: **372**

County: **Longford**

Mark: **263**

Category: **A**

Date: **31/07/2003**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2003	Mark Awarded 2002
Overall Developmental Approach	50	46	46
The Built Environment	40	35	35
Landscaping	40	36	36
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	25	25
Litter Control	40	35	35
Tidiness	20	15	14
Residential Areas	30	27	27
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	35	35
General Impression	10	9	9
TOTAL MARK	300	263	262

Overall Developmental Approach:

Many thanks for the detailed map which proved useful for judging. Ardagh looked very well - the recent rain had 'greened up' the well cut grass throughout the village and approach roads. It was a disappointment that the heritage centre did not prove viable and that there are problems with staff shortages. It is a valuable amenity - ensure that it is used for community and local events as well as for tourism needs. There are great deal of people involved in the competition in Ardagh which shows a great community spirit. It is important that a 1-5 year plan is set out for the village. Although the village features highly in the competition, direction will be needed over the next number of years, especially with new development and housing in the area.

The Built Environment:

The heritage centre was unfortunately closed on the day of the adjudication - staff shortages, though it is hopefully open for the summer months. It looked very well and the gates and windows were freshly painted. Both the post office and the pub looked well. The red colour set off the building well. The church railings were being painted and the church itself and grounds looked exceptionally well. The Bill Keenan Memorial Park was fine - there was a good neat carpark and there were only a few weeds at the base of the walls. It is suggested that cotoneaster or some other climbers are considered for this breeze block wall. The school was neat and tidy and is in a nice setting of trees well back from the road. The Church of Ireland church and the clock tower are, at this stage, symbolic of Ardagh and looked well. The railings around Ardagh House through the fields, are in

need of repainting. There are a considerable number of them and therefore this will be a significant job.

Landscaping:

What works well in Ardagh is the realization that the village is set in a rural landscape and that the landscaping merges in well with this environment. The way native wall flora are allowed to flourish, the use of greenery and the focus on more permanent planting really ensures that it is a year round approach and is to be highly commended. The incidental planting of flowers did also look well - the use of red geraniums in black planters was most effective. Planters and containers throughout the village and on the approach roads looked very well - well done.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

The arboretum area has significantly progressed and has really come on since it was first planted. Management of the trees is still required. It was a while since the judge had visited and it was a pity to see the demise of the Giants Chair - nature had taken over. It was good to note the creation of the new wildlife area on the Oldtown Road, however, despite going up and down the road several times, the judges could not locate it.

Litter Control:

Litter control throughout the village was excellent and the committee realize that awareness is very important. Litter bins were in extensive evidence. Some did need some attention, e.g. the bin in the carpark. The recycling facility was noted and was clean and tidy.

Tidiness:

Tidiness throughout the village was evident, though gravel located in the carpark should either have been spread or removed. In all, a very high standard of presentation - well done.

Residential Areas:

The estate nature of the village and the preservation of the cottage estate architecture is very appealing. The new houses have also been built in this style which will help them blend into the village. It is unfortunate that the windows of these houses are PVC rather than the traditional wood. It was good to see that the derelict/uninhabited house in the centre of the village was for sale. Gardens throughout were generally excellent in presentation with obvious pride being shown by the community in their village.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

All the roads into Ardagh without exception were well kept. It is nice to see the usage of the old signs. These are becoming a rarity. Ardagh, though, could also be considered to have too many advance name signs - though the Tidy Tidy Competition is guilty to some degree, being responsibly for at least one of them. The Mullingar approach probably fared worst as there was a sign missing and the hedges did need trimming back. However, the bird nesting season is just finished. There was new pavement on the roads throughout and the weed free gutters must be difficult to achieve. The grey kerbing in the centre of the village did need repainting or perhaps you are letting the paint wear off back to its natural look?

General Impression:

Ardagh looked very well - the attention to detail is exceptional, e.g. the black gates along the road from the heritage centre. Well done again in providing a very pleasant task of adjudication - we

look forward to your plan for the next few years.

Second Round Adjudication:

Ardagh is a unique village with its notable architectural style and well laid out village centre. The huge number of trees in the vicinity adds further to the attractiveness of the village. The trees in the Neighbourhood Park make a lovely feature and this area is a lovely strolling ground – at this stage some thinning would be advisable to allow individual trees mature to their true form. The grounds of the heritage centre are well maintained, including the window boxes - despite the saddened closure of the centre. There is a good tree planting opportunity along the inside of the Ardagh House wall by the Oldtown Road. Some unwelcome litter was noted within St. Mel's Cathedral. The information sign outside St. Mel's has deteriorated and is illegible. The planting in the village centre is attractive and the Dahlias were looking well. Attention to surfacing is needed in the carpark and also on some broken and uneven footpaths. The Catholic Church building and grounds are wonderful and the Church of Ireland church presentation is most attractive, adding great character to the village centre. Some attention, as noted above, is needed to both the railings in Ardagh House grounds and planting to the base of the GAA wall.