

Tidy Towns Competition 2003

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Longford Town**

Ref: **366**

County: **Longford**

Mark: **169**

Category: **E**

Date: **30/06/2003**

| | Maximum Mark | Mark Awarded 2003 | Mark Awarded 2002 |
|--------------------------------|--------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Overall Developmental Approach | 50 | 32 | 29 |
| The Built Environment | 40 | 26 | 25 |
| Landscaping | 40 | 24 | 22 |
| Wildlife and Natural Amenities | 30 | 16 | 15 |
| Litter Control | 40 | 17 | 16 |
| Tidiness | 20 | 11 | 10 |
| Residential Areas | 30 | 20 | 20 |
| Roads, Streets and Back Areas | 40 | 18 | 19 |
| General Impression | 10 | 5 | 5 |
| TOTAL MARK | 300 | 169 | 161 |

Overall Developmental Approach:

Thank you for the comprehensive application form, CD on the Longford Town, Public Art and Planning Project. There was a huge amount of documentation and research in relation to the broad environment. Well - done the photographs were most useful. A map with the names of the streets would be useful to the judges some of whom would not be familiar with Longford. The by-pass has taken much of the traffic off the main street which is welcome. The five year programme is excellent. The CD - Longford Town Public Art and Planning Project was most informative. It has basically identified the areas in which work can and should be undertaken. It was good to note the input being sought from the community within each area giving them a sense of responsibility towards maintenance. The adjudicator looks forward to the implementation of the outlined objectives over the coming years

The Built Environment:

The buildings were presented to varying standards. Some of the new developments off the square and the main street did look well. Other areas were derelict and run down especially on the Kilashee road. The building on Church street including the VEC looked well. There are some fine Georgian houses along here. The church dominates the street and it was heartening to see that work was being undertaken here. The business park on the Kilashee road was well landscaped - but needs on-going maintenance i.e. weeding. In the centre of the town, a number of premises looked well; these included Fusiardis takeaway, the Post Office, the Anvil, Red Rose Cafe, Milos, Eamonn Farrell,

Valentines (which continues to display its fine baskets and flowers)The Distillery, Grey Wizard design, The Tangled Web and John Greggs. There are some premises though that do not meet the standard set by others. The old tourist office and adjacent buildings these should be encouraged to present their premises in a more attractive manner. The new development in the Market Square contributes hugely to its presentation and the swimming pool here was also well presented. Out of the centre of the town, the Fire Station looked well and Erin Foods was well landscaped. The school on the Dublin road badly need some greenery to soften the red brick. The Backstage Theatre is a wonderful amenity and was well landscaped and presented. Also in the area of Arts was Cluid which provides a Community Arts centre off the Congress Terrace. This building stood out amongst the houses and had interesting architecture.

Landscaping:

Landscaping was erratic - the town centre was a proliferation of baskets and flowers in certain areas, the back lanes and streets devoid of any landscaping. The area down by the river was most attractive. Individual businesses have made huge effort - Lidl has some fine planting in its carpark with the predominant Phygellus performing very well. The baskets and planters at the railway station and the colour used here looked very well. Areas did need repainting though. The Market square has been transformed by the landscaped parking areas and it was most heartening to see this. The use of trees should be considered where appropriate - such as on approach roads - do consider the use of single specimen trees as they have greater impact. The trees will also minimize car pollution and soften the concrete landscape in the centre of the town. Prosper Woods is an interesting development. At last the value of a mature setting such as this is valued and the trees have been retained.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

The Mall is a very pleasant amenity and on a Sunday afternoon, it was thronged with people, icecream vans and duck. There were also a number of fishermen fishing for trout on the day of judging - as there was huge one just under the bridge. The landscaping was well done and despite a large crowd of people there was relatively little litter. Are there plans to have any interpretation of the waterside habitat? Throughout the town, residents and schools should be encouraged to provide bird tables and nesting boxes - an annual bird survey is conducted by Birdwatch Ireland which may be of interest of the townspeople

Litter Control:

Despite the number of people out and about on a Sunday afternoon in the town, there was little litter evident on the main street. There was however litter on the Kilashee road and the areas on the Old Sligo road at the Value Centre. The new green bins looked well - with little litter evident, your campaigns must be working. Recycling facilities were noted and were generally clean

Tidiness:

The centre of Longford town appeared quite tidy despite the vast array of shop fronts and presentations. The approach roads were not tidy and this is an area that requires attention. It was noted that work is being undertaken in relation to the towns blackspots. This is highly commendable and progress will be evident as time goes on. There were also a number of weedy areas noted on the Kilashee road.

Residential Areas:

The town consisted of several different types of housing. The individual houses on the outskirts of the town were generally well kept with good gardens. The housing estates varied - Teffia Park, Midara and Ardnacassan stood out with their landscaping. Trees would benefit some of the other estates such as St. Mels View and Annally Park. The new estates tend to make good of landscaping

and this will mature and contribute to the local areas.

There were rows of semi detached houses near the town some of which were boarded up - these areas need to be addressed in the future.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

The town was judged within the confines of the by-pass road and comments relate to the roads sweeping in from here. The road sweeping down from Newtownforbes is very impressive and was well kept. The Kilshee road is the one that needed most attention - there is no real lead in and tree planting would go along way to remedy this. Broken pavement was also noted along this road . The Dublin road was reasonable though again tree planting programme would enhance the approach along this road.

General Impression:

The general impression of Longford on a sunny summers afternoon was one of optimism. Litter and untidiness was not a huge issue and the colourful shop fronts and some well maintained buildings helped to lift the centre of the town. What was most heartening was the accompanying plan and CD - this has showed that there has been strategic thought in the town and a structured process is now underway to ensure that issues receive attention. The adjudicator looks forward to the progress of the town in the competition over the coming years.