

Tidy Towns Competition 2003

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Drogheda**

Ref: **295**

County: **Louth**

Mark: **215**

Category: **F**

Date: **22/06/2003**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2003	Mark Awarded 2002
Overall Developmental Approach	50	38	36
The Built Environment	40	32	30
Landscaping	40	32	29
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	18	20
Litter Control	40	22	18
Tidiness	20	12	11
Residential Areas	30	23	23
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	30	29
General Impression	10	8	6
TOTAL MARK	300	215	202

Overall Developmental Approach:

Drogheda Borough Council is thanked for their entry into this year's Tidy Towns Competition which included an Entry Form and an excellent series of back-up information, a very good three-year Development Programme and a Map of the town. The population is approximately 28,000 people and makes it one of the larger towns in the Competition. there is no separate Tidy Towns Committee for Drogheda, but the Borough Council works in association with the Residents Associations. The Council does not have at present any input into the Wildlife Section.

The Built Environment:

Drogheda is an old town with a long history, and during the Middle Ages was one of the most important English towns in Ireland. As a result there is a rich heritage of historic buildings throughout the city which are, over recent years, being restored, such as Bullsgrove Gate, the 18th century Tholsel, St. Peter's Church and the 13th century barbican, St. Lawrence's Gate. Now that the heavy through traffic and cars is now slowly gone from the main streets with the completion of the recently opened motorway by-pass, there will be a great improvement to the fabric of the city and it should give heart of the Council and the many Residents Associations to continue their good work.

Landscaping:

The landscape and general improvement works around the Bridge of Peace and along Fr. Connolly Way to the new footbridge is very pleasant and well done. The Shaft of Light is most interesting. The entire works is a wonderful start to the rehabilitation of the river Boyne's edge and this will continue to the Bull Ring crossing of the Boyne as stated in the future works envisaged by the Borough Council. This overall work can already be seen and will be a most elegant entry to Drogheda, with both banks of the Boyne redeveloped as hard landscaping, riverside public walks, planting and seats. The Borough Council's proposals for the continuation of their tree planting programme on many additional streets and their improvements to the setting surrounding the St. Lawrence Gate in hard landscaping, trees and street furniture, deserves much praise. This work by Dúchas and by the Council will make it a fine focal point to St. Lawrence Street. Hopefully the Council will soon continue the enhancement of North Quays and the Mall with further tree planting. The future trees should be berried or with other forms of fruit bearing tree species such as oak, ash, rowan, beech, chestnut, lime or thorn.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

This is not a section that will be included within the Borough Council's work, but instead will be the work of one of the Residents Associations and with financial assistance from the Council. There would therefore be a twin approach to the creation of wildlife within Drogheda. One, through the tree planting programmes and using various berried and other trees by Council, and the other approach by a particular Residents Association by seeking advice at an early stage from ENFO and obtaining some of their very fine publications on wildlife conservation. The river Boyne offers many suitable locations. Also, as mentioned in last year's Adjudicator's report, for the particular Residents Association to seek the advice from an Taisce's Green Schools initiative.

It is suggested, following the Councils excellent floral basket and window boxes programme, that they organise a Competition to encourage hanging baskets for both residential and commercial buildings in the inner core of the city.

Litter Control:

During the day of adjudication the Adjudicator saw many of the Council's workforce on litter removal, working on the picking up and cleaning away of litter. In the Borough Council's submission to the Tidy Towns initiative, they wrote that eight new temporary employees have been taken on to augment the existing force and their two green machines and four hand carts. This is excellent and the Council is to be congratulated on their proactive approach to the problem of litter. During the Adjudicator's walk around the city there was remarkably little litter, except on the roadside adjoining building sites and even here there was little. Well done.

With this programme of actually picking up litter there is also the other programme to inform schools, businesses and shop owners on their duties in relation to litter control under the Litter Pollution Act 1997.

Tidiness:

There is a tremendous programme of building work throughout the city, especially in the rectangle enclosed by St. Lawrence Street to the Quays and from St. Lawrence's Gate to George's Street. This, unfortunately, will make parts of the city temporarily untidy, but when completed the finished works will have a tremendous visual effect and is worth waiting for. During the school summer holiday period there is a general tendency to neglect school grounds. It is important that some pupils and members of various Residents Associations are organised to cut the grass in the school grounds and pick up windblown litter and also keep the adjoining verges, kerbing and bases walls free of weeds.

Residential Areas:

Some residential areas, and in particular the front gardens of the houses in these areas, are

outstanding. This willingness to improve the residential environment by the various Residents Associations should be greatly encouraged by the Borough Council. The creation of a Competition for residential areas, including apartment groups, would be an essential part of this encouragement. The Department of the Environment's new initiative "City Neighbourhoods" could be used as a model. However, together with this Competition, there should be a Competition for best individual gardens. The two Competitions together would undoubtedly raise the quality of the environment in these residential areas. The local press should be involved in the reporting of the results.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

The entrance roads, in general, into Drogheda need a programme of improvement with verge cutting and maintenance, litter removal, signage and above all, attractive "Welcome to Drogheda" signage in two languages. There is however, building work along these roads, but the builders must contribute to keep the building sites adjoining these approach roads in a clean and tidy condition. There are some excellent gardens to houses on these approach roads and the owners are to be commended for their care and feeling of welcome they offer.

Streets within the city are a mixture of good and poor, in visual quality, but the first steps have been achieved with the removal of through traffic now using the motorway by-pass. There is an added opportunity to commence additional tree planting, verge improvements and weed control. In the more residential areas, the verge improvements and weed control should be part of the local Residents Associations work.

A programme of street names must be undertaken. Many streets have no name plates visible. The Adjudicator asked twenty three people, including four taxi drivers, where was Fr. Connolly Way and the Shaft of Light, none knew where they were.

General Impression:

Drogheda is a fine smaller city, rich in heritage items which are being restored. The entrance to the city proper, along the Quays and river front both sides of the Boyne, are already taking shape and will undoubtedly in years to come, give a most pleasant and interesting image to Drogheda. The nearby cable stay bridge over the Boyne is a stunning structure. The railway viaduct and the new bridge are very fine boundaries to the city. The new buildings arising in Drogheda should match these structures in quality and boldness.