

Tidy Towns Competition 2003

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Banagher**

Ref: **637**

County: **Offaly**

Mark: **229**

Category: **C**

Date: **04/07/2003**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2003	Mark Awarded 2002
Overall Developmental Approach	50	34	33
The Built Environment	40	34	34
Landscaping	40	33	33
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	21	21
Litter Control	40	34	32
Tidiness	20	15	15
Residential Areas	30	22	21
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	29	28
General Impression	10	7	7
TOTAL MARK	300	229	224

Overall Developmental Approach:

Thank you for your detailed entry form, accompanied by a review of 2003 work plan, map of the town and copies of both the town improvement plan and Offaly Heritage Plan. The information supplied was concise and informative and helped the adjudication process greatly. Banagher has an excellent partnership relationship with the local authority and other associations such as West Offaly Partnership and Shannon Development. The Banagher 2000 forum or committee has succeeded admirably in ensuring that the town has benefited from this partnership approach over the last few years. In relation to your point under the comment section, the Committee is obviously used as a descriptive term in the application form. It goes without saying that the Community is the main catalyst for any development in any town or village.

The Built Environment:

There are many positives to note under this heading. Overall the majority of buildings both commercial and private were very well maintained and presented many with a nice mix of colour. Banagher has retained a number of old shop fronts that reflect the old street architecture. A number of properties, which looked very neglected when this adjudicator last visited the town some years back, have been improved. Unfortunately, like most places of its size it still does suffer from too much dereliction. This is mainly caused by unoccupied buildings being left to fall into a shocking state of disrepair. Banagher House in the centre of the town and a house directly opposite are in very poor condition and in actual fact take away from what is a very attractive streetscape. I hope

that you can, as you aptly put it, exhort owners to see the light and contribute to your good efforts by at least camouflaging their properties somewhat. The Marina is a mixture of good and not so good. Buildings are kept well but fencing is in poor state; a coat of white paint to post and rail fencing would brighten the entrance somewhat. It was noted that some additional work has taken place around the Marina, but basic stuff like good weed control and tidiness should be adhered to a little more. On the plus side, it is good to note that St Rynaghs Primary school is an excellently designed building and a bonus for the town. The following personal choices deserve mention for the manner in which they have presented their premises; Tom Lynch Menswear; Flynn's Bar and Supermarket; Lyons; Bank Of Ireland; Nallens and Grimes Hogan Pharmacy. Quigleys is an example of an old style shop front that is not to be seen too often in the present era. The library and garda station were also in very good condition both painted with tidy surrounding areas. The churches and St Rynaghs GAA Clubhouse and grounds were also kept well and credit is due to those who look after their upkeep. Shannon Bank Park is an excellent amenity on the river for both local and visitor alike and was in very good condition when visited.

Landscaping:

There were many examples of colourful and well attended hanging baskets around the centre of the town, particularly the display of begonias and other annuals in stone urns at the Town Square! It is good to note that the area around Fort Falkland is being revived and some new planting arrangements are already in place. The Ladies Club are to be commended for ongoing work of watering all existing planters in the town. Shannon Park is an example of a well maintained public amenity that has a mix of nice planted and green areas. Portavalla, which houses a large number of holiday cottages, has an eye catching planting arrangement as one enters from Main Street. Overall, the standard that was achieved over the last few years has been retained and in some cases improved upon.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

Some years back, there was consideration given to a Corncrake Project that would help retain that nearly extinct bird in the area. There is no mention of it in this year's submission or indeed in last year's report!

Banagher has numerous wildlife habitats and it is important that these be exploited as best as possible. It should be possible to involve all the schools in a number of mini-projects and it is good to note that St Rynaghs Community College has undertaken a hedge restoration project of late.

Litter Control:

The committee has, and is, doing all in its power to spread the message of proper litter control in the town.

The involvement of the three schools in the Offaly County Council anti-litter awareness project will pay dividends long term. The Spring clean-up seems to have been a great success and it has benefited the town as it was almost litter free on the day. Keep up the good work.

Tidiness:

This might seem contradictory to what has been reported upon in the previous section, but this was an area that the standard was a little mixed. The core of the town was kept quite well, but there are a few public houses that could store their barrels in a less obtrusive manner. Also, any old petrol pumps similar to the one at the Galway end of town should at least be painted. The Marina has a number of areas that have too much weed growth and some untidy yards, but on the positive side, it also houses an excellent receptacle centre. The Maltings has too much untidiness. This may be outside the control of Bangaher 2000!, but if not addressed over the coming years it will become an eyesore. Minch Norton could do a little more to improve their premises as well.

Residential Areas:

A strong performance in this category with new housing developments like that on the Harbour Road and Ard Abhann contributing. Port an Brollagh was very good as were the Cuba Cottages and all the family houses on Cuba Avenue. Boundary walls seem to have been painted over the last few years. There were nice planting arrangements dotted around these areas and some of the beautiful private gardens to be viewed when traversing the town and its environs.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

The entrances from all locations were impressive especially from the Harbor Road where there were a number of attractive new residences. The verges and hedgerows were cut according to recommended practice for the preservation of wildlife. One negative to report is that the St Rynaghs link road is very uneven and needs to be resurfaced. Overall a good performance in this section and an improvement on a few years back.

General Impression:

I note that you are more a development association than a purist Tidy Towns committee. There are a few problem issues that seem to be outside your control. Hopefully some of these might be resolved over the coming years. Maybe there is a possibility that some of the derelict property owners will heed your exhortations and even if only one derelict building was upgraded by next year, you will have made progress. The community in general has to be lauded for its collective effort to make its town more attractive for both the locals and the many visitors that come to Banagher each year.