

Tidy Towns Competition 2004

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Ennis**

Ref: **18**

County: **Clare**

Mark: **272**

Category: **F**

Date: **01/08/2004**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2004	Mark Awarded 2003
Overall Developmental Approach	50	49	49
The Built Environment	40	37	37
Landscaping	40	39	38
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	27	26
Litter Control	40	35	35
Tidiness	20	16	16
Residential Areas	30	26	25
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	34	32
General Impression	10	9	9
TOTAL MARK	300	272	267

Overall Developmental Approach:

Thank you for your detailed Tidy Towns submission for 2004 entitled "Caring for our Town". The twenty three person Committee obviously are committed to this concept. As well as the usual officers of Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer and PRO/ Liaison there are also ten sub sections dealing with Education, Projects, Wildlife, Irish Language, Residential areas, Hanging Baskets, Liaison with Ennis Town Council, Landscaping, Roads, Streets and back Areas and Parish News Co-Ordinator. This is very comprehensive coverage of all Tidy Towns activities backed up with details of the work of each sub-section. It would appear that the vital area of communication with all the communities/associations throughout Ennis is also well covered. We say communities because Ennis is a big town with many different areas and activities, incorporating a busy, bustling town centre, many residential areas and a number of traditional Irish cultural outlets. The town is also a gateway for visitors to Clare. The two maps provided, which are available for visitors to Ennis, were helpful and interesting.

The Built Environment:

From the maps mentioned above we learned that Ennis or "Inis" grew up around a monastic site which was founded in 1240. Many buildings and monuments throughout the town reflect this long history. There are some impressive and well maintained ancient and modern buildings throughout Ennis such as the nicely conserved Ennis Friary; Glor Irish Music Centre; St. Peter & Paul's Cathedral and Clare County Museum to name but a few. It was noted that monitoring the protection of 33

recorded archaeological monuments outside the town centre was included in your submission. However, Ennis is primarily an Irish rural market town and most of the shops/pubs and business premises reflect this fact, many retaining good traditional shop fronts, too numerous to mention. Madigans Furniture Store on Station Rd looked well but their old premises on the same street needed attention. Stone buildings in various locations throughout the town fitted in well with the character of the streets. The six Hotels in the town centre and in the outskirts of Ennis were all well maintained and attractive.

Landscaping:

The work undertaken on landscaping in and around Ennis and on the approach roads is very impressive. Everywhere you look in the town centre there are flower beds, containers overflowing with flowers (including some three tiered versions) and hanging baskets. On the approach roads and roundabouts the effect is the same. Also on the approaches, green areas have been developed over the years. Tree planting here has matured making these areas very pleasant and welcoming at each of the town entrances. The established monuments and sculptures such as the Maid of Erin and the Icarus statue in the Market Square give character to the town and the newer pieces of sculpture situated near the Lahinch roundabout and in other locations add a new dimension to these areas and to the town in general.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

There are many natural features of significance in Ennis including the River Fergus and its tributary the Claureen River, the Rocky Road and the Post Office field which is being preserved as a green area, to name but a few. The River Fergus Ecology Workbook for Primary Schools produced by the Ennis and District Anglers Association (included with your submission) is a very worthwhile project and very much in the spirit of this category, as indeed are the other initiatives listed, one of which was the releasing five different species of duck into the river.

Litter Control:

In the main, litter maintenance was good in Ennis. We noted the initiatives undertaken in this category - litter fines and a 24 hour phone line for complaints on littering; Schools Competition and a Litter Pollution Monitoring System. Also the provision of re-usable natural cotton shopping bags. However, in a town the size of Ennis it would be practically impossible to monitor the situation on a 24/7 basis and a smattering of litter was to be seen on the day of adjudication.

Tidiness:

The town mostly presented a tidy appearance except for a yard next to a Service Station on the Newmarket-on-Fergus approach. It was noted that a waste management door to door household system entitled "Ecocare" has been introduced in Ennis and that there are eight Bring Banks in the town and a supervised recycling point at the Clare County Council yard. Well done on your dog waste control initiative

Residential Areas:

Private residences seen during adjudication were attractive and well maintained. Again, colourful planting was noted at the entrances to many Estates. The nine initiatives undertaken by the Committee as outlined in your submission including Best Kept Garden Competition and Priming Grants Scheme are obviously working.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

As previously mentioned, approach roads are very attractive and directional signage well

maintained. However, care should be taken regarding over signage which was starting to emerge on the Galway road. The narrow streets in the town centre are part of the character of Ennis and the cobble work and structure of pathways were admired. The pedestrianisation of the Temple Gate area, off O'Connell St, works well and this space with the Tourist Office and Clare County Museum is very attractive. Lanes have been put to good use in Ennis and are a feature of the town. The fact that work has commenced on the Ennis By-Pass is to be welcomed.

General Impression:

Ennis is a town of over ten thousand people bringing it into the largest population category in the Competition. The work achieved by the Ennis Tidy Towns Committee under all categories and throughout all areas is extremely worthwhile and exceptional.

Second Round Adjudication:

As the submission title says "Caring for our Town" Ennis is an extremely well cared for town with very good attention to appearances in all respects. The floral displays are most striking and no effort has been spared in this regard with the numerous containers, planted roundabouts, street hanging baskets and park and open spaces well catered for too. The Galway/Shannon roundabout at the Lifford Road has an interesting collection of perennial plants and the choice of plants in the borders by the millennium garden riverside areas also shows great imagination and initiative. This suggests that perhaps a wider variety of plants may be used in many places through the town and surrounds. The features at all sides of the bridge surrounding the Clare County Enterprise Board Centre building are very attractive and the use of the Fennel plant is novel. There is a great variety of sculptural and monumental interest throughout the town lending a unique character to the town. Building works at St. Peter and St. Paul's Cathedral, at the central buildings by the large carpark at Abbey Street and in the Market Place are causing some temporary disruption - these will be resolve in time. It is good to see old buildings find new use such as at the Ennis CDP where the mill building is used well. The Steels Terrace is a lovely example of a well cared for terrace. The number of buildings and premises that need upgrading in line with all those that have been improved is dwindling rapidly. The wall above the telephones in O'Connell Square is a little unattractive for such a prominent square in the town. Apartment developments such as Springfield Orchard are well incorporated into the townscape and nicely landscaped. The main streets are attractive and the narrow laneways are well maintained and provide interesting strolling ways. Litter on an early Sunday morning is always a problem in towns. This needs to be tackled very early to avoid a residue remaining. Ennis has steadily climbed the ladder of success in the Tidy Towns competition - deservedly so, and with the significant increase in this years marking Ennis has now poised itself on the brink of even greater success.