

# Tidy Towns Competition 2004

## Adjudication Report

Centre: **Blarney**

Ref: **207**

County: **Cork South**

Mark: **215**

Category: **D**

Date: **22/06/2004**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2004	Mark Awarded 2003
Overall Developmental Approach	50	40	37
The Built Environment	40	32	32
Landscaping	40	27	27
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	29	29
Litter Control	40	21	21
Tidiness	20	15	14
Residential Areas	30	23	23
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	21	20
General Impression	10	7	7
<b>TOTAL MARK</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>215</b>	<b>210</b>

### Overall Developmental Approach:

The comprehensive " Village enhancement work programme" commissioned by The Blarney Development Association will act as a wonderful guide to the development of Blarney during the years 2001 to 2006. This document covers a broad range of developmental plans and hopefully these will be implemented. Having targets and using them to assess progress is an excellent idea and this programme can be used as a yardstick for assessing progress through the years. The small committee of the tidy towns has much work to do in organization of developments and the ongoing maintenance of the village standard. Recruitment of more members would be helpful particularly if these could be recruited from a broad spectrum of the community.

### The Built Environment:

The accommodation section accounts for a major part of the built environment of Blarney. The Guesthouses are very well presented and are inviting. Well cared for premises with attractive road frontage is always a good indication of good accommodation. The hotels are also very prominent. The Blarney Woolen Mills and Hotel form a landmark in Blarney and look very attractive. The two churches are well presented. The Catholic Church with its unusual combination of building materials – stone, brick and slate, and the Church of Ireland with its prominent position to the centre of the fairgreen. The school, shops and business premises are well presented and appear in good condition. The Credit Union building looks well except for the missing letters and the health centre decor is in need of attention too.

## **Landscaping:**

The fairgreen forms an integral part of the village and this looks very calm and restful in its green presentation. Trees and grass are indeed an excellent formula and these, together with the stonewall surround and gates, make a very traditional style. The Blarney castle estate obviously is kernel to Blarney and the various elements of this estate contribute greatly to the village – in particular – the tree lined entrance, the visitor entrance with the numerous hanging baskets and other floral features, as well as the areas surrounding the car parks. The grounds of the Blarney woolen mills also contribute to the landscape - the walkway to the Blarney castle from the Woolen Mills is especially attractive. The church grounds form yet another interesting part of the landscape of the village. Roadside gardens contribute greatly to the appearance of the landscape of the village. Every effort to keep gardens tidy and attractive contributes very well to the overall landscape of the village. The Blarney Park Hotel grounds look very attractive.

## **Wildlife and Natural Amenities:**

The Clogheen Milken Wildlife Reserve is a fine facility close to the town and should be well availed of. Projects that encourage people to gain an appreciation of the natural environment would be welcome.

## **Litter Control:**

There is generally a good level of litter control, although some litter was noted in the carparks and at the wall around the village Fairgreen. Also, some was observed at the entrance to the Church of Ireland where a refuse container was overflowing and causing litter spillage behind a small gate. With the huge amount of traffic and visitor numbers extra vigilance is needed to retain a good standard of litter control.

## **Tidiness:**

There is a very tidy aspect to the village. The remaining overhead cables, hopefully, will be removed underground. At the goods entrance to the Blarney Woolen Mills – the coach park, untidy pallets and materials were present. On the approach road to the village from the Cork road, a number of the buildings were a little in need of freshening up with paint. The passageway from the Catholic Church to the upper road looked a little untidy.

## **Residential Areas:**

The residential areas are well cared for and there is an obvious pride in many of the homes and gardens. The terraced cottages alongside the Fairgreen are colourful and well cared for. It would be good to retain as much of the authenticity of these buildings as possible. Some have windows or doors altered already. At the Groves housing estate there is a good standard of care – it would be helpful if some uniformity could be developed of roadside boundaries in this estate– some have railings, others walls of various types and also some have balustrade. A more unified approach would give these terraced houses a very cohesive appearance, but understandably, this project could take many years and much persuasion. The Mancertain terrace is attractive although we are concerned that expert advice was sought before removal of rendering on the walls. The Castleowen estate is attractively set above the town and is well maintained.

## **Roads, Streets and Back Areas:**

Road surfaces are reasonably good. The roadside verges on the approach roads have a nice amount of wild flower content and have been allowed to remain fairly natural without looking unkempt. The relief road with its many junctions towards the Cork road are a little confusing. The carpark surface for the Blarney Castle near the visitor entrance is very rough, as is the narrow entrance from that

area to the fairgreen surround road. The Groves estate road could also benefit from resurfacing.

**General Impression:**

Blarney is a beautiful to visit with a vast amount of greenery surrounding the village. The Village centre is well used and provides a very good focus for the entire village. The churches and school looking down upon the core makes for a great village framework. The castle and grounds are an excellent facility.