

Tidy Towns Competition 2004

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Douglas**

Ref: **621**

County: **Cork South**

Mark: **199**

Category: **F**

Date: **24/06/2004**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2004	Mark Awarded 2003
Overall Developmental Approach	50	36	34
The Built Environment	40	30	29
Landscaping	40	28	26
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	15	15
Litter Control	40	25	26
Tidiness	20	15	14
Residential Areas	30	20	19
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	23	22
General Impression	10	7	7
TOTAL MARK	300	199	192

Overall Developmental Approach:

The comprehensive information supplied with the entry form was most helpful in understanding the complex nature of Douglas. Douglas has preserved a great deal of the original village style while at the same time accommodating a vast business and commercial influx. The list of achievements of the tidy towns committee to date is commendable and reflects the enthusiasm and hard work that has been put in consistently over the years. Gaining cooperation with the various bodies associated with Douglas, at all levels, has resulted in very admirable gains. The report of the survey of the road gulleys and council standards makes interesting reading and hopefully will be the core of future improvements.

The Built Environment:

There is a distinct combination of the old and the new in Douglas. The old street side premises are generally well maintained with some few exceptions. Those premises that look well emphasise those needing attention. Signage at shops is very varied and often leads to a cluttered vista. The St Patrick Mills area is very compact and well utilised. The Lion House is an attractive building - at present, pipe laying is causing some disruption there. The two large churches look well and the large copper beech tree behind the Catholic Church forms a beautiful picture. The old cemetery - very well maintained at the nearby church - is commendable. The Credit Union and St. Luke's school look well. The east village is a most interesting part of the Douglas with an interesting collection of modern buildings - the Ulster bank building looks particularly well. The Douglas Court area is well

tended. The motorway above the shopping centre also forms part of the built environment.

Landscaping:

Excellent landscaping has been achieved through the east village and the permanency of this ensures that at all seasons there is a good cushion of plants to soften and improve the environment. The tree planting, especially throughout this scheme, is particularly good and will improve further as the trees mature. The park is an attractive feature – ideal for strolling and uses a simple yet effective formula of well cared for grass and trees. The children's playground is a good facility. The planting at the Exham building is also notable. Planting of trees along roadsides is effective and very welcome. Very good results have been achieved at the roundabouts and at the garden by the motorway bridge. The many colour features of containerised plants give a nice touch to the town. The very effective screening of the walls of the overhead motorway from the shopping centre are welcome as this otherwise would be a very ugly sight. Perhaps more trees planted in the islands of the carpark would create even more greenness in the vast carparking area.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

The information booklet presented with the entry form is a useful guide. With such a vast range of business and commercial activities it is good to have access to a more relaxed environment in which nature can be appreciated and people can be aware of the value of the natural environment.

Litter Control:

While it is acknowledged that great efforts have been made in the elimination of litter – it is an ongoing challenge. There was some litter along the street up from St. Patrick's Mills. In the park – the recycling area is resulting in massive accumulation of litter by the railings close by and some solution needs to be applied to this as ultimately the litter is blown further a field. The carparks of the shopping centres are well cared for as regards litter.

Tidiness:

There is a well-organised and tidy appearance to Douglas and the manner in which the various elements are linked together helps in this regard. Some shop premises and surrounds, as stated above, do need further attention and hopefully this will be addressed in the near future.

Residential Areas:

There is an interesting mix of dwellings present – from the street side colourful 'cottage style' terraces – such as above Mischief Makers, to the apartments by the roundabout and the more usual types of housing estates – like Shamrock lawn. Care and attention to housing is good and people do have a good pride in the presentation of their homes and gardens. Tree planting opportunities frequently arise in housing estates where space permits on open greens and entrances spaces, tree planting is vital to give character and a settled appearance to the housing developments. Attention to detail of paths, kerbside weeds and rail painting is important.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

The road surfaces are generally very good. The most pertinent aspect of the roads in Douglas is the difficulties pedestrians have in crossing the roads. Some thoughts on pedestrianisation of areas would be welcome. Better facilities for crossing the roads and safer pathways through shopping centres are important. The same problems were mentioned last year and presumably traffic has increased since then.

General Impression:

Douglas is a fascinating combination of the old and the new, the small and the big, the business and the home. Drawing all these elements together to co-exist in harmony is a challenge which the tidy towns committee has faced well to date – continuing challenges remain and hopefully good strides will be made. The work of the tidy towns committee in lobbying authorities to gain what is most relevant to the dwellers of Douglas is vital work.