

# Tidy Towns Competition 2004

## Adjudication Report

Centre: **Youghal**

Ref: **453**

County: **Cork South**

Mark: **238**

Category: **E**

Date: **27/07/2004**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2004	Mark Awarded 2003
Overall Developmental Approach	50	41	39
The Built Environment	40	32	30
Landscaping	40	35	35
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	22	22
Litter Control	40	30	30
Tidiness	20	15	14
Residential Areas	30	24	23
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	31	31
General Impression	10	8	8
<b>TOTAL MARK</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>238</b>	<b>232</b>

### Overall Developmental Approach:

The very comprehensive document submitted with the entry form shows clearly that the tidy towns committee is very active and represents a positive force in Youghal. The achievements to date are commendable and looking back over even a short number of years the evidence of progress is very positive. The objectives as set out in the document were laudable and consistent with the requirements of Youghal, as it appears to be expanding dramatically. Expansion places strains on services and facilities and the objectives of the committee are carefully matched to this requirement. Standards of buildings, litter and tidiness management, and provisions of amenity facilities are worthy objectives. The committee of twenty-five is a tremendous number and indeed, such a number is needed for so large and diverse a town. Working with Public Authorities and Community groups has been adopted well by your committee and is a good example for other committees.

### The Built Environment:

The restoration of the Arts Centre is a marvelous achievement and the glass extension at the seaward side forms an unique architectural feature beyond compare in Youghal. It is great to see such innovation of style - particularly appropriate since this is the Youghal Arts Centre. The Quay Public House is beautifully painted and looks very well. Similarly the Walter Raleigh Hotel, Garda station and adjoining house. The Lifeboat Station, Visitor Centre and Credit Union buildings display very attractive stone features. The Chareilton Wharf building occupies a very prominent position within the town - forming one side to the 1798 Park and looks well as does the Holiday Inn. The

Tesco building and surrounding paving and Car Park is well designed, The old Couristan Carpet buildings opposite Lidl is looking sad. Developments appear to be in progress behind this building and no doubt will incorporate this building in a new development. Good progress has been made with shop premises through the streets with many improvements. The more that raise their standards the more obvious those that need improvements become. Many of the side streets and alleyways have improved and it is good to see that such are a priority in the Youghal plan. Hard surfaces areas by the visitor centre/Quay Bar/Arts Centre are well treated with the attractive surfacing and benches as well as the passageways via Barrys lane.

### **Landscaping:**

Very good efforts are evident through the streets and approach roads with the many Containerised summer plantings adding a sparkle of colour to the town. The hanging baskets attached to the wall beyond the 1798 park on the Cork side are very attractive and represent a huge amount of work. The recruitment of a gardener is a great asset for the development of the horticultural aspects of the town and congratulations on this. The St. Mary's College garden is an interesting acquisition. This is nicely tucked in away from the main street and has an attractive surround of trees and lawns- this is an interesting challenge and the walled aspect gives both privacy and security. All the planting at the Waterford roundabout and the islands associated with this roundabout represent a very dramatic presentation and well done to all concerned with this. The Millennium Park is another good facility. The signs have disappeared from the display boards which is a pity and perhaps if these were replaced with more durable materials it would be best. The water features also seem to present difficulties. There are many gaps in the plantings and perhaps a new look at the planting scheme may now be appropriate. The Children's playground is well maintained. The 1798 Park looks well with the bedding in place. Again as mentioned in the past the flatness of this landscape style may be improved by the addition of some height – this could be plant material such as formal Buxus (Box) in shaped styles such as domes, pyramids or balls. The water feature is a little rusty and the honeycomb concrete wall at the back together with the white wall above need painting. Benches too need repairing – being so close to the sea continued maintenance is necessary. There are many nice examples of landscape features through the streets and the approach roads. The timber planters along the roadside, on approach to the Credit Union building area attractive. The planting outside the Shalom House is especially attractive. Many gardens of the town contribute well to the appearance of the town and surrounds and great credit is due to those who without fuss look after their own properties and gardens so well. The trees along Breton Road are maturing well and are now making a greater impact. The carpark at Lidl is well landscaped and breaks up the expanse of cars parked effectively.

### **Wildlife and Natural Amenities:**

The marvelous facility of the Slob walk is a great asset. This is useful both as a pleasant walkway and as an opportunity for the appreciation and observation of the wild life of that region. The signboard is helpful. The Quarry also provides a very different wildlife facility – this is well presented and the care and attention of the area is commendable – the seating and picnic tables area attractively located. Getting the message of the value of the natural environment to as many people as possible is a challenge. What to look for, when and where are the vital questions. Accumulation of factual information from local observations would be helpful. Interest groups and school projects can all be helpful in this regard.

### **Litter Control:**

Prioritising litter is a wise objective in the plan presented. In a town of this size there are so many challenges to litter management. There is generally good litter control evident. Some litter was noted in the Main Street but small amounts. Litter was particularly troublesome along the steps up from the Clock Tower – this place seems to present problems. Also some litter at the 1798 Park. The positioning of cigarette butt bins is a welcome innovation.

### **Tidiness:**

There is good tidiness in the Main Street and the areas along the pier from the Credit Union towards the Arts Centre. The well-organised arrangement of seating, litterbins and planters looks well. The narrow street leading from the Arts Centre towards the junction back to Main Street has many grim buildings and hopefully this area will have priority for renewal. Apartments are being built off this street at "Monastery". The painting required in the 1798 Park and the restoration of the water feature would be helpful. The large shed type building bounding the seaward side of Dolphin Square looks somewhat untidy. The efforts the committee are making to reduce plastic, protruding and street side pavement signs is welcome.

### **Residential Areas:**

The vast increase in housing in Youghal is dramatic and appears to be continuing. There are four main categories of housing as observed – The apartments – which look well and form a new skyline and face within the town; the new housing estates - it is important that these utilise well all the open spaces both at entrances and within the estates. Tree planting must be a priority here. Replacement planting is also important where trees fail initially and attention to staking and to the loosening of tree ties all form part of good maintenance. Competitions and educational programmes for homeowners who need help with gardens would be a great idea. The third housing type is the on street housing. This is a very important part as it keeps life in the town. The care and attention to the housing in Dolphin Square deserves credit. The fourth house type is represented by single housing on the approach roads and by the seafront. These contribute well also. There are some beautifully painted houses along the seafront area towards the beach area.

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

Roads are generally in good condition. The roadway along Breton Road is well marked and very useful in avoiding the Main Street for traffic passing through. The one-way system is very effective and perhaps if there was even less parking on streets a greater flow would be achieved. The colourful planting borders on approach roads gives a very welcoming picture and these are well done. The main roundabout as mentioned earlier is a great success. Some road surfaces on the narrow streets above the Main Street could benefit from resurfacing. The prioritising this year of laneways and back alleys is a good idea.

### **General Impression:**

Youghal is taking the improvement of the town very seriously and this is evident from the many facets of the fabric and appearance and facilities in and around the town. The expanding town and changes offer a great challenge, which is being met very well.

### **Second Round Adjudication:**

The 45 page comprehensive submission was read in detail. You are working diligently to enhance the town and your challenge is well acknowledged by yourself. Your historic buildings are unique and provide a clear insight into medieval times. The second adjudication report last year mentioned a contrast of standards. The past ten years of intense building activity is leaving its mark. You now need to revisit the heritage aspect of the town as these become more precious with the passing of time. Despite the by-pass it was virtually impossible to get a photo of the Clock Gate without a vehicle in it, such was the traffic density. Some of the information plaques erected by Bord Fáilte are now in need of replacement: e.g., Water Gate and Clock Gate, the plaques themselves are now collectors items but no longer legible of adequate standard. We were saddened to see so much litter, once again across from the Visitor Centre, and along Windmill Hill. We look forward to the refurbished Tyntes Castle being completed: the laminated plastic plaque here needs replacement also. Of particular delight was the great display of colour in all directions. The bedding plants were a blaze of colour and the superb hanging baskets adorn many fine buildings. The Millennium Garden is excellent and nominated for a landscape award. We also like the post box in the stone pillar at the roundabout.

