

Tidy Towns Competition 2004

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Castlefinn**

Ref: **100**

County: **Donegal**

Mark: **244**

Category: **B**

Date: **05/04/2004**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2004	Mark Awarded 2003
Overall Developmental Approach	50	42	41
The Built Environment	40	33	32
Landscaping	40	36	35
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	16	15
Litter Control	40	34	34
Tidiness	20	17	17
Residential Areas	30	24	24
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	33	32
General Impression	10	9	8
TOTAL MARK	300	244	238

Overall Developmental Approach:

The detailed 5 year development plan, excellent map and application were very well presented and the order and attention to detail very much appreciated.

Great Progress is evident in Castlefinn, and the news that Donegal County Council has asked for submissions regarding overall development for the town for the period 2004 - 2010 is clear indication of the progress achieved in Castlefinn thus far, by and large to the continuous and dedicated past and continuing work of the Tidy Town Committee. The overall level of attention to detail and great sense of community and pride in the town is very tangible, the completed first phase of the community resource building and the new housing build in town is in keeping with the forward plans for the town and Castlefinn continues to flourish.

The Built Environment:

Overall the town buildings both new and established the school and the Garda Station were to a very high standard. The impressive first phase of the community resource building and public house are examples of good work that continue to raise the standard. Plans to develop the plot next to resource centre as a recreational and sports facility will be further development in the right direction. New housing on Raphoe Road, Main Street and the Diamond are all finished to a good standard. And again interest to the development site where the Jug of Punch was is crucial to the continuing good standard. Generally signs throughout the town will be welcomed to let people know especially at a central point like the Diamond. The two new footpaths from Millburn to GAA Park and

McBride's to the new resource centre are a nice addition and are in keeping with the overall clean and tidy look of the town. The new paths in the cemetery in the Church also noted. Signs for the entrance in natural stone will be a nice addition and in keeping with the maintained and natural look of the town and should be pursued.

Landscaping:

The current landscaping in Castelfinn is excellent. All areas from private houses, estates, public buildings, approach roads are landscaped to a very high standard, visually the town is very attractive, with maintained greenery, shrubs, flowers and plants everywhere. The hedge rows were all maintained and trimmed and the entrances to the town from all directions were impressive. The Diamond area was particularly attractive with the two green areas in the centre very well maintained, the green water pump feature was a very nice addition. Most of the housing estates and private houses have very clearly a keen interest in their gardens, window boxes and hanging baskets were a nice addition where seen.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

The signs for the Castelfinn Wildlife Reserve at Hollow road were good and the area is a lovely retreat close to the boundaries of the town. Protected to encourage Natural Flora and Fauna the area is a gem and I would suggest to addition to the signs there to denote flora, fauna and wild life indigenous to the local area. The fencing at the Wildlife reserve is attractive in wood, there are a couple of areas towards the left hand side that need repair and possibly to stain in dark wood against the green foliage would denote the area more. Also at the Bridge over the River Finn some information on Fish - Salmon and/or Trout could be added to give some more information on the river also to revisit the work done some years back on developing the river with a number of interested groups and agencies would be worth looking into as a mid to long term project for the town.

Litter Control:

Overall the town of Castelfinn was litter free and there were clean well maintained bins and overall clean streets and pavements. The bottle banks installed at the bridge are clean and maintained to a good standard. Some small amounts of litter were noticed on Clady Road and in Emmet Park Housing Estate.

Tidiness:

There is generally a very tidy appearance in the town. New developments brings with it a certain amount of disruption and untidiness but this is a on going aspect of any developing town and appears to be kept under control. Some of Housing Estates though were in need of improvement and sprucing up. It was good to see council workers at a couple of places near to the bridge and on the N15 Ballybofey road cleaning, sweeping and weeding, overall the town has a crisp, clean and well looked after feel to it.

Residential Areas:

There was a sense of pride and individual and community effort in the residential areas for most part - Housing Estates such as Grahamsland, Caislain Court and Finn Valley Estates were well maintained and had attractive features and gardens. Emmet Park and Hill Head could do with some general maintenance added greenery, shrubs and landscaping in both estates would add to these areas. Both had properties that were well maintained but these showed up some other houses that were in need of attention and painting. Ongoing Development at these locations will be beneficial. Private houses in the town and at all approach roads in general demonstrated from the residents a real

commitment to their homes and gardens, there were plenty of mature gardens with an abundance of shrubs and flowers that have been looked after well over the years. Additions on the Corcullion road are tastefully done and are an added attractive area of the village.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

Resurfacing on the main street was impressive with the new paving nearly complete. The added feature of the wiring for telephone and electric taken underground will have a positive impact on the entry look to the village. The two new pavements running from Millburn and McBride's Bar are significant pieces of work and use in and around these areas is now very safe and accessible. Wheelchair access to the pathway in the cemetery is a nice feature and adds to the order and good maintenance of the Church and graveyard. The Diamond area is very good both with roads and paving. Overall this level of upgrade on infrastructure takes a lot of work and is maybe difficult to achieve but as can be seen here in Castlefinn it is well worth the effort and adds greatly to the high standard that the town enjoys.

General Impression:

The committee is to be commended on the work that has been carried out over the past year and certainly once the County Council introduce the development initiative for the town, it will have been an excellent stepping stone for all the previous work that has been carried out and achieved thus far. There is quite obviously a very effective and directed Tidy Towns Committee and a great sense of community pride and achievement is visible in the town. It was a pleasure to visit and I wish the committee every success with their future plans for Castlefinn.

Second Round Adjudication:

Castlefinn is in an unusual position, situated as it is on the main N15 road, in that the majority of the built environment of the centre is located off this route and therefore still maintains its village atmosphere. The area of the village that is located on this busy route, however, has its own distinct problems to deal with as a result! The roadsides were well maintained with well cut grass verges, grassy banks, colourful montbretia and relatively new trees maturing well. However, the road surfaces were somewhat rough, particularly in the vicinity of the recycling area by the bridge. The old church by the graveyard should remove the weeds growing at its gable. The Diamond was as well maintained as ever. Litter control could have been better on the day as there were a few papers evident along the main areas of the village, which is all the more apparent in a village of Castlefinn's size. However, despite these minor issues, the village generally looked as well cared for as ever on adjudication day.