

# Tidy Towns Competition 2004

## Adjudication Report

Centre: **Letterkenny**

Ref: **211**

County: **Donegal**

Mark: **260**

Category: **F**

Date: **05/04/2004**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2004	Mark Awarded 2003
Overall Developmental Approach	50	46	45
The Built Environment	40	36	36
Landscaping	40	36	36
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	27	26
Litter Control	40	34	33
Tidiness	20	15	15
Residential Areas	30	25	25
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	33	32
General Impression	10	8	8
<b>TOTAL MARK</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>260</b>	<b>256</b>

### Overall Developmental Approach:

The continued development of Letterkenny, as it strives to consolidate its gateway status in the National Spatial Strategy Plan, engenders many challenges for your committee. In particular, the necessary construction and civil engineering works continue to cause disruption, which create additional problems. You are facing up to these challenges with a positive coordinated approach. Thus you are playing your part in protecting and improving the environment that you work and live in. The Letterkenny and Environs Development plan 2003-2009 continues to be the up-to-date road map that gives you the potential to achieve even greater success in the future.

### The Built Environment:

Letterkenny has succeeded in combining and maintaining the shopping experience of a traditional market and commercial town with the modern shopping mall experience. The combination of traditional and modern architecture in the town centre adds to the town's character and creates a unique and vibrant setting. Whilst the demise of the traditional cinema is to be regretted, the modern Griannan Theatre incorporates a distinctive atmosphere in its own right, which compliments the town. Main Street, with its complement of nicely maturing trees and floral displays, looked very well. Most public and business premises were presented to a high standard. Efforts should be made to ensure that signage is of a good quality. Plastic signs on some buildings do not do anything for

the image of the town. St. Eunan's Cathedral and the Church of Ireland occupy prominent positions in the town and are maintained to a high standard. The Presbyterian Church is a significant part of the town fabric. However, it is important to ensure that some commercial buildings, which need attention, do not become too neglected. The recently completed shopping centre at the rear of Tescos and the modern shopping centre on Neil T Blaney Road both looked very well. As commented on in last year's report, the continued development of commercial enterprises along the Port Road and Pearse Road are an essential part of the ongoing development of the town, but care needs to be taken that such developments are coordinated.

### **Landscaping:**

The ongoing work of landscaping all approach roads to Letterkenny is very impressive. There is significant amount of planting of flowers and trees and shrubs all over the town. Of particular note is the landscaping of roundabouts. The combination of sculpture and landscaping at the Dry Arch presents a very fine gateway to the town. The open space beside the Neil Blaney roundabout and the Tourist Office has been turned into a very attractive amenity. The Town Park and Ballyboe Park are particularly noteworthy and have been developed to a very high standard. There is a lovely combination of nicely maintained road margins and natural pastoral land opposite Oatfield's sweet factory. There were some nice displays of window boxes and hanging baskets in the town centre. The market Square with its fine shrubbery looked very well. Open spaces and private gardens in residential areas are maintained to a high standard.

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

Your performance under this heading is to be highly commended. The very fine information stands, which have been provided at key locations around the town, together the Letterkenny Tidy Town's Flora Study, contribute greatly to both learning about and understanding indigenous habitats. The River Swilly is an important natural resource and perhaps you would now consider implementing a study to examine how its wildlife contributes to the area. The work, involving school children, is of prime importance for the future preservation and enhancement of wildlife.

### **Litter Control:**

There was very little evidence of litter in the town centre or in the shopping centres. Open spaces and parks were generally litter free. There was considerable activity in the Town Park on the day of inspection and it was nice to see use being made by children and parents of the litterbins provided. Approach roads and residential areas were generally litter free. However, there was one exception and that was the approach road from Derry which had a considerable amount of litter strewn about.

### **Tidiness:**

The town centre generally presented a tidy appearance. However, care should be taken to ensure that closed business premises do not become derelict sites. The Post Office needs a coat of paint, as do the railings and seating outside the Bank of Ireland premises and the railings at Mount Southwell Place. The rusty 'no parking' sign at Mount Southwell place should be replaced. The considerable construction work, by its very nature, looks untidy and you should continue in your discussions with the relevant personnel to try and minimise this problem.

### **Residential Areas:**

Residential areas along all approach roads were very well maintained. There were some lovely examples of old mature gardens with some lovely landscaping. Of particular note are the houses on Pearse Road opposite Bonner Engineering. Residential estates were generally presented to a high standard, with gardens and open spaces looking very well. The work undertaken by all concerned is to be commended.

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

The particular difficulties associated with the continued, but essential, development of Letterkenny's infrastructure, particularly its network of roads and the provision of broadband, continue to pose problems. However, considerable progress has been made, particularly along the approach roads from Derry, Kilmacrennan, Ramelton and Churchill. The major landscaping works being carried out on the main roundabouts improve the approach roads to the town to a considerable degree. There is also significant work in progress in developing the area around the Cathedral, and in particular, the car park, which when complete will make a huge contribution to the streetscape of the town. Roads in residential areas were maintained to a good standard.

## **General Impression:**

The goals that have been set and the amount of activity that has been carried out reflect to the credit of all associated with it. Your work demonstrates that a coordinated approach with the public, business, private and voluntary sectors pays dividends. While considerable challenges remain, your focussed and coordinated approach should ensure continued progress.

## **Second Round Adjudication:**

The county town of Letterkenny has developed and expanded greatly over the last number of years. The town essentially divides into two areas—the town centre and the central core of the town with its streets and squares and the peripheral areas. As mentioned by the First Adjudicator, it will be important to monitor the overall development of the town to ensure that it maintains its own integrity and character. The adjudicator was disappointed to note that a number of the items, such as the railings of the Bank of Ireland and the cills of the Post Office, as raised by the First Adjudicator, had not yet been dealt with. Hopefully these will be resolved by next year's competition. The Courthouse should also be painted before next year's competition. The standard of litter control on the day could have been better, as quite a few papers were noted along the main streets of the town and on approach roads. A messy yard area near Mc Caul's on the outskirts of the town looked messy and should be screened from public view. The Flora and Fauna map enclosed with your application was most informative and the new litter bins were noted and admired. Perhaps additional landscaping could be considered at the hospital area? The grassy area by the toilet area in the town park appears to have worn due to its use as an overflow parking area and this looked rather unfortunate. Generally the town looked well on the day.