

Tidy Towns Competition 2004

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Portumna**

Ref: **270**

County: **Galway**

Mark: **233**

Category: **C**

Date: **27/07/2004**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2004	Mark Awarded 2003
Overall Developmental Approach	50	36	36
The Built Environment	40	33	33
Landscaping	40	34	33
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	24	21
Litter Control	40	29	30
Tidiness	20	13	14
Residential Areas	30	26	26
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	30	31
General Impression	10	8	8
TOTAL MARK	300	233	232

Overall Developmental Approach:

As last year's report recommended, it is very important to put in place a 3-5 year plan to help Portumna reach its full potential in Tidy Towns. However, it is good to see the co-operation with agencies such as the County Council, community warden and Coillte. The special needs walkway project in the Forest Park deserves a special mention as it promotes the enjoyment of the town's natural amenities and increases accessibility for all.

The Built Environment:

The architectural heritage of Portumna is very rich, with the Castle, the Priory, the Courthouse, and the general street layout featuring carriage arches throughout the town. There are a number of arches on the main street which could become a very attractive feature of the townscape if properly treated. While the carriage arches on Abbey Street and Dominic Street were very well presented, repairs are needed to the gates at the arches beside Starr's Shop, between Willie Burkes Office and the pharmacy, and beside Pro Sport. The black gates in the carriage arch between Connollys and Hayes Pharmacy were in good order but were covered in posters which looked quite untidy. Business premises were presented to a reasonable standard. In particular licensed premises such as Connollys, Horans, Curleys, and The Clonwyn looked smart and well kept. The Bank of Ireland, the Credit Union and the Shannon Oaks Hotel also looked well. However, there was a lot of unnecessary signage on the upper storeys of business premises on the main street. Both the Courthouse and the Workhouse are important buildings and should be considered for renovation or restoration.

Landscaping:

Overall the level of landscaping in Portumna is good, and the town makes the most of its open spaces. The landscaping at the Shannon Oaks Hotel was excellent and the area in front of the Catholic Church was colourful and well tended. The area beside the children's playground, the grounds of the castle and the marina were also well kept. The Forest Park was well presented with neat green areas, picnic tables, attractive signage and an appealing new children's play area. There was also some new planting of shrubs at the Golf Club which will look very well as it matures. The colourful display of flower beds at the junction of Dominic Street and Bridge Street looked attractive as one entered Portumna from the Offaly side.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

Portumna is very lucky to have natural amenities such as the forest park, the river Shannon and Lough Derg. Portumna Forest Park is a fantastic amenity for Portumna and its visitors. The new special needs walkway and viewing platform really add to the Park, and the signage at the platform is very informative and well presented. Well done on this very worthwhile project. The new children's area is very attractive, in keeping with the atmosphere of the park, and the bird box is a very good idea to attract some of the park's wildlife. The swimming area is also a great asset for the town, but the toilet blocks should be freshened up and the green areas weeded and landscaped.

Litter Control:

There was some litter on the main street and on Abbey Street despite the presence of litter bins throughout the town. The front of the litter bin near Claffey's garage was missing. There was also litter at the recycling bin area near the children's playground.

Tidiness:

Some public spaces such as the children's play area and Yew Walk were very tidy and well kept. However, as mentioned earlier, the recycling area beside the children's area was untidy. The car park beside the Church needed attention - there were discarded bollards and tape in the centre of the car park, the lampposts and railings in the car park needed to be painted. Residential areas were generally tidy.

Residential Areas:

Residential areas in Portumna were well kept and tidy. In particular, there were some very attractive houses on Abbey Street and Dominic Street. A number of houses on St. Brendan's Road were very well kept, including some new houses on the right hand side and Oak Lodge B&B. Marian Park was well kept and the entrance to Shannon Park was very attractive.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

The approach road from Loughrea was very impressive with flower beds, shrubbery and well kept verges. However, the effect of this was slightly spoiled by the proliferation of business signage further on on the the left hand side of the road. The sign for Portumna on the Woodford approach road was discarded at the side of the road, and the footpaths needed to be weeded and resurfaced in places. There also seemed to be excessive signage on the junction of Tynagh road. The area near the marina was well presented with attractive lighting. The only exception was one picnic bench at the marina which was broken and lying on its side.

General Impression:

I was very impressed by the new walkway in Portumna Forest Park, but more co-ordination and co-operation is needed from individuals and businesses in the town. While some parts of the town were very impressive, there was inconsistency in terms of the level of litter and tidiness throughout the town and this makes it difficult to earn high points.

Second Round Adjudication:

As noted above Portumna in some respects lacks consistency and coordination. The town has tremendous potential and therefore it is regrettable to see weedy kerbsides and litter so prevalent. An example of lack of coordination / cooperation is seen at the Shannon Oaks Hotel which is exemplary in standard but the kerbsides to the road in front have not been cleared of weed growth in some time. Rusty sign poles and poor road surfacing create a negative impact. On the other hand there are instances of good presentation and your interest in the natural environment is highly commended. It was hoped that most of the five year plan carried out in 2000 would have been implemented by now.