

Tidy Towns Competition 2004

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Tralee**

Ref: **243**

County: **Kerry**

Mark: **220**

Category: **F**

Date: **11/06/2004**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2004	Mark Awarded 2003
Overall Developmental Approach	50	34	32
The Built Environment	40	31	30
Landscaping	40	34	33
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	18	17
Litter Control	40	30	29
Tidiness	20	14	14
Residential Areas	30	24	24
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	28	28
General Impression	10	7	7
TOTAL MARK	300	220	214

Overall Developmental Approach:

Thank you for a most comprehensive and illustrative submission, complete with street map. Your documentation proved most helpful on adjudication day. The town was judged over a two-day period. We note you have a central committee and sub committees with high numbers. We are impressed with your ability to gather financial support and the sum of €20,000, even for a town the size of Tralee is significant and reflects great support for your efforts. Indeed, there seems to be an acceptance of partnership being the way forward and this commendable. There is no denying the great amount of additional infrastructure of recent years. However, we would remind you that the important feature of the tidy towns movement relates to community endeavour.

The Built Environment:

You are richly endowed with a plethora of distinctive public and private buildings in all parts of the town. Recent years have also witnessed the development of extensive new buildings and the restoration of old buildings now fulfilling a new role in the 21st century. Churches, schools, administrative buildings, sporting and cultural developments all looked well and some excelled. You have many attractive shopfronts and the following looked well: Finbarr O Connell, Ger Connolly, First Active, Charlie Nelligan, housed in one of the few remaining brick building Billy Nolan, Seán Sugrue, and many more. Many large period buildings are undergoing restoration: e.g., The Old St. John's Presbytery and the former bank opposite the Imperial Hotel are now completing restoration and we look forward to appropriate signage. We found Denny St., superb with a rich heritage of well kept

19th century building, most retaining original features: Denny Street is your best street by far and brings with it the responsibility of appropriate redevelopment and maintenance. The Sean Mhuilleann is now offering accommodation and boosting the town's residential population.

Landscaping:

The urban landscaping is excellent and the comments in last year's report are well deserved. The Garden of the Senses is exquisite and was being admired by many tourists during adjudication. We liked the sculpture and the many facilities for children were in much demand. You refer to tree planting of the 1980s in your submission: these now illustrate vividly the value of tree planting for the next generation. You now need to intensify tree planting in the town area, where space permits. Tree planting should be done with ceremony by the community and many towns are now intensifying tree planting in town centres and linking such developments as part of traffic calming procedures. Many commercial operators have rich displays of flower boxes and hanging baskets and this is commendable. We admired the landscaping at Kerry Respite Care and the smaller display at Market Place. Of course we now await the finished development at The Square, which was in full swing during adjudication. This no doubt will be a showpiece for the town and we hope the surrounding commercial operators will respond by maintaining their premises within the character of the square.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

Your plans outlined in your submission seem sensible. You have ample opportunity to promote wildlife between the canal, town park and the generous area between the town and Blenerville. Estuarial landscapes offers great potential for habitats and this adjudicator witnessed a variety of wildlife from the Blenerville car park. You might consider a display board or two at judicious locations, similar to what has been done in Ennis Co. Clare. The growth in walkers to our river banks and canals calls for more enlightening information and people welcome illustrations of our wildlife and tree species, similar to those in the garden of the senses. A viewing platform or even a bird hide overlooking the River Finglas would prove beneficial in promoting wildlife.

Litter Control:

No doubt your greatest challenge is litter control and one which calls for sustained effort all year round. The appointment of a full time Litter Warden will prove effective within the core area of the town no doubt. We found the town had very little litter in evidence throughout the adjudication. Some litter was observed in front of the row of houses near the train platform in Blenerville. We notice a good deal of giant litter bins associated with commercial operators being located in narrow lanes: these need to be of high standard and control. The new litter black spots now related to cigarette butts outside certain establishments, so you may need to upgrade the litter bins here. In general the town was free of litter and you have raised your marks here. We commend you on your involvement of school pupils through the litter awareness programme.

Tidiness:

Your problem areas here relate to dereliction, unoccupied premises and neglected open spaces. However, the vast development in almost all parts of the town will improve this situation as more acceptable developments come on stream. Meanwhile there is disruption during development causing untidiness: e.g., the square and the large development at the rear of Tesco.

Residential Areas:

The standard of housing estates in and around Tralee is good and many have excellently developed gardens, giving great colour. There is no better way to generate full residential involvement than through residents associations. Getting communities involved in the upkeep and maintenance of their own areas is the most effective method of ensuring continuity: better still if you can generate

some healthy rivalry between estates. Award ceremonies enable you to acknowledge their efforts and provides opportunity for further progress. We urge you to pursue this policy.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

The road structure throughout is good and well defined. The principal roads in particular are of high quality. The road in from Blenerville has some good landscaping but the hard shoulder is poor and needs upgrading. We note the many back lanes receiving extensive development in places. Millmarket Lane has some graffiti and is poor in presentation. Some of the accommodation developments of former years have now shabby and need improvement. As usual the Court House looks well, but the Duchas building needs attention in this prominent site. We found the town map useful and by chance received a very useful map as gaeilge from Ciarraí Beo: the first encountered by this adjudicator. We also note you comments about naming estates in Irish only and we have nominated the town for the Bilingual award. The Manor West complex is dramatic and well landscaped, with attractive landscaped car parking.

General Impression:

It was a pleasure to visit Tralee and witness the work on hand. You have progressed since last year and your challenge now is to adhere to your own plan. The conclusion of the Market should provide impetus for further town improvement. You are not without your black spots and these will take time to conquer. The commercial developments are extensive and likely to continue: we hope the environmental developments will receive similar emphasis. Well done on a good performance.