

# Tidy Towns Competition 2004

## Adjudication Report

Centre: **Dundalk**

Ref: **674**

County: **Louth**

Mark: **237**

Category: **F**

Date: **01/08/2004**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2004	Mark Awarded 2003
Overall Developmental Approach	50	42	42
The Built Environment	40	33	32
Landscaping	40	35	35
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	18	19
Litter Control	40	28	28
Tidiness	20	16	16
Residential Areas	30	24	23
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	33	32
General Impression	10	8	8
<b>TOTAL MARK</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>237</b>	<b>235</b>

### Overall Developmental Approach:

Many thanks to the Town Council for entering this year's competition. The entry included details of the Improve our Town Competition, entry form, suggested route (that was travelled in addition to other areas of the town), and a three year plan. The map did not appear to be up to date and some of the street names could not be made out due to the tiny print. The increasing prize fund for the Improve our Town Competition is welcomed as the fruits of the competition are now evident throughout the road, streets and residential areas of the town.

It is most important that the committee lists out the work that has been undertaken since the previous year's adjudication as this will help the adjudicator award marks for the valuable work being carried out and will assist the committee in monitoring progress. If this is not stated clearly the adjudicator may miss some of the work. New landscaping areas, along with improvement to roads and walkways, should be highlighted on the map so the adjudicator can easily identify them.

### The Built Environment:

Dundalk has developed into a very pleasing town, thanks in no small way to the efforts of the Town Council. It has a very open and relaxed feel to it. The Courthouse and Town Hall are looking wonderful; St. Patrick's Cathedral is an imposing sight in the centre of the town. The grounds of the schools, Churches, Garda Station, Bus and Train Station are exceptionally well maintained. The Dundalk Institute of Technology are to be complimented on how well maintained the whole site is, considering the development work that is ongoing.

## **Landscaping:**

All along the inner relief road is very well maintained. The shrubs at the verges and the landscaped roundabouts all give a feeling of welcome and care. The single species trees in the Retail Park are maturing nicely. The centre of the town is awash with colour from the flower displays, window boxes and hanging baskets that are vibrant and fresh looking. St. Helens Park is a welcome urban green space that had a large number of people using it on the days of adjudication. The approach roads to the town sets the scene for the remainder of the town as they are welcoming and the landscaping well maintained.

## **Wildlife and Natural Amenities:**

No comments have been submitted by the committee in relation to this section on this years entry form. Dundalk enjoys many open spaces that attract wildlife and the bay area attracts birdwatchers. Both Birdwatching Ireland, ENFO and the Heritage Council should be contacted and advice sought on information boards for the Bay area. The help of transition year students could be enlisted in preparing such boards. There were ducks on the Ramparts River and their loud "quacking" was a lovely sound in the midst of the traffic noise! Where did these ducks come from and how are they maintained? This is the type of information that will earn the town marks under this section and your adjudicator hopes for more input into this section in next year's entry.

## **Litter Control:**

Litter Control throughout the town centre was, in the main, very good over the two days of adjudication. There was very little evidence of chewing gum on the pavements - well done on this achievement. There was quite a lot of litter strewn around Jocelyn Grove and on the outside of the boundary wall of the Leisure Centre and Swimming Pool leading up to the new roundabout. The Carrick and Ardee roads had litter strewn along the grass verges and litter was also visible on the road at Ard Easmuinn leading to Dunne Stores. Bins are required along the Inner Relief Road as while some areas of it were litter free other parts had a lot of litter caught up in the shrubs and grass area. Some of the bins located away from the town centre are in need of replacing or painting as they looked rather shabby.

## **Tidiness:**

The general feel of this town is one of tidiness, however care should be taken that grass areas are not only cut but finished off in a tidy manner. In some cases this is not happening and weeds and uncut grass is being left at the inside and outside of grass margins, e.g Ramparts Road. The Ramparts River is most pleasing and a very pleasant walkway that was tidy and clean. The Roundabout at Alphonsus Rd. requires landscaping and there was graffiti on the surrounding wall. As was noted in last year's report, there is a need to upgrade or replace the wooden benches around the town as many looked grubby and unkempt.

## **Residential Areas:**

The impact of the Improve our Town Competition is very evident when travelling around the residential areas. The vast majority of them are being exceptionally well maintained and have wonderful colourful gardens - the addition of adding the hanging basket/window box section to the competition this year will further enhance the houses and residential areas, particularly in the terraced rows of town houses. The wonderful gardens on the Dublin Rd. deserve special mention.

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

There is an ongoing programme to improve the pavements in the town. Some of the roads require upgrading eg. Red Barns Road/Point Road. Signage is good but as in last year's report more is

needed; the adjudicator wanted to pass a comment on a road off the Ramparts Rd. and could not find its name anywhere and it was too small to read on the map that was enclosed with the entry form! The signs in the main were clean and clear of obstructions. If not already in place, it is useful to undertake a derelict sites audit and the owners contacted in relation to their plans for the buildings. A programme for dealing with them can then be included with the Tidy Towns entry form.

### **General Impression:**

The Dundalk of today is un-recognisable from the town of a number of years ago. Bright, clean and well maintained throughout the council are to be complimented on the work to date. As towns and villages progress in this competition, the standard increases and marks are harder to come by!! The Council should be aware that attention to detail and tidiness becomes more and more important. Communicating this to residents and businesses is essential to foster a feeling of togetherness and motivation. The adjudicator looks forward to the improvements for next year's competition.

### **Second Round Adjudication:**

Litter was regrettably quite bad in many parts of the town but it is appreciated that second judging did take place during the August bank holiday weekend. It was encouraging to note litter being picked up however near McDonalds. In general the main approach roads were well presented but the side roads needed further attention; verges and kerbsides had only been sporadically dealt with. Also, on the side roads and across the road from Dundalk Shopping Centre fine stone walls were becoming quite overgrown; these ought to be regularly trimmed back. Dundalk Stadium creates a spectacular impact on the northern approach. The relief road with its new retail parks looked very well. Old commercial and industrial premises on the outskirts around the town varied somewhat from the well presented to those with expansive untidy forecourts. Rampart Road has been proved very useful so close to the town centre as it has relieved pressure on parking spaces along the main streets - furthermore the stream along side creates a pleasant ambience. The tree lined roads created welcome dappled shade on a hot adjudication afternoon.