

Tidy Towns Competition 2004

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Castlebar**

Ref: **406**

County: **Mayo**

Mark: **239**

Category: **F**

Date: **31/07/2004**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2004	Mark Awarded 2003
Overall Developmental Approach	50	47	47
The Built Environment	40	34	33
Landscaping	40	35	34
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	23	22
Litter Control	40	24	24
Tidiness	20	15	15
Residential Areas	30	23	22
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	31	30
General Impression	10	7	7
TOTAL MARK	300	239	234

Overall Developmental Approach:

Welcome to the 2004 Tidy Towns Competition and congratulations on your 10th year. It was a pleasure for your adjudicator to visit Castlebar again. Thank you for the extremely comprehensive documentation submitted with your entry form. The photographs were especially useful. Thank you also for an extremely good map that was very helpful on adjudication day.

Your committee has adopted a very comprehensive approach to Castlebar and you have a very commendable long term vision for the town. It is very obvious that you have an extremely high level of support from both the statutory bodies, local associations and many individuals. That it a great recipe for future success. Your mission statement is excellent and that must guide all your activities. The adjudicator appreciates the fact that you are not just concentrating on one or two aspects of Castlebar, but that you are taking a very rounded approach to the town, and that is essential. Perhaps the town is like a jig saw and all the pieces have to be fitted together to get the best long term overall visual effect. Working with just one or two pieces would never give you that result. The Town Walks Maps are extremely useful - are they also available in pocket map form?

The Built Environment:

The local competition to enhance the built environment is an excellent way of developing an increasing commitment to environmental improvement. Derelict buildings as you say are a problem but obviously you are working hard to get this situation resolved over time. The work on the

Courthouse is superb and the more unified colour approach externally is very pleasing to the eye. Work was underway at the new playground at Lough Lanagh on adjudication day - a great amenity in a beautiful location. Hopefully the development plan for the old Convent will result in a building or buildings that will be environmentally sensitive to the immediate area. Work on the Lough Lanagh car park was noted. It is most encouraging to see the major list of listed buildings that has now been scheduled by Castlebar Town Council. The town has a really interesting buildings heritage that must be preserved. New uses for old buildings should never be rejected provided that the new use is appropriate and sympathetic to the fabric and history of the building. New shop development on Hopkins Road was noted. There are many excellent shop fronts in Castlebar and some that came to the adjudicator's attention include the following - the ACC building, modern but it fits in well, Castlebar Credit Union a building with simple lines and good lettering, Eddie Egan Jewellers with it's elegant simplicity and Chamber House with it's fine cut limestone entrance area.

Landscaping:

Good landscaping is one of the many fine features of Castlebar and it is clear that you put a lot of work into this with the appropriate agencies. The Floral Displays Competition appears to be bringing results. Major work has been carried out at the main roundabouts to excellent visual effect. Another feature of Castlebar are the many fine mature trees such as those admired on both sides of the Lannagh Road. On the Newport Road the very high bank on the right covered in daisies really catches the eye. Another area where excellent landscaping work was noted was at St. Annes & The Sacred Heart Hospital. Work at The Mall was also admired. The provision of over 100 hanging baskets has added much colour to the town.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

Lough Lanagh is a beautiful amenity to be enjoyed by local residents and visitors alike and the walks here along by the water are most enjoyable. The entrance roadway has been well developed with the low curving grass banks on each side. Your commitment to the development of the wildlife aspect of the town is noted through the 3 year Wildlife Plan and the major River Walks Plan that involves very significant funding. The wildlife Newsletter for Schools was a great idea and the adjudicator is sure that it must be very popular with the students. The Walking and Sculpture Trails are a great way of getting people to stay longer in Castlebar. The stream in the town is a potential amenity that has not perhaps received the attention that it deserves in the centre of the town.

Litter Control:

You have put major effort and resources into litter control. In the centre of Castlebar little litter was noted on adjudication day, but some areas outside of the town core were disappointing in terms of litter control. Litter was noted in the following area - approach road to Lough Lanagh, Newport Road, Dublin Road by the 40 MPH sign, in some car parks and Lucan Street end of Bridge Street. A few badly littered back lanes were also noted.

Tidiness:

The heavy promotion of the benefits of recycling is admired and the four Centres in the town appear to be heavily used. Some untidy areas were noted on some approach roads but generally Castlebar was quite tidy on adjudication day. The removal of sandwich bar signs from outside retail premises is welcomed and do make sure that the display of retail goods on pavements does not become a problem for the town.

Residential Areas:

There are over 80 residential estates in Castlebar and it is noted that the Town Council has allocated significant resources to estate upgrading. Your idea of getting builders to use appropriate names for estates has not been seen before by your adjudicator and it is a very welcome initiative. An

attractive row of cottages was noted at the bottom of Chapel Street. At Wheatfields Manor the addition of some trees would improve the landscaping of this area. On McHale Road some houses and road boundary walls need to be re-painted. At the other estates visited, it was evident that a considerable level of community pride existed among residents.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

Work on McHale Road was underway on adjudication day. Work done to date looks well and the end result should be most attractive. The promotion of bilingual signage is to be welcomed and encouraged and your policy of encouraging pavement development with disabled access is commendable. The appearance of approach roads was a little uneven. Some were really excellent such as the Dublin road, Galway Road - more colour here might be desirable, and the Breaffy/Ballinrobe roads. Approach roads where problems were noted include the Achill and Pontoon roads where verges did not appear to have been cut recently.

General Impression:

Congratulations once again on the excellent work being done by your committee, other bodies and individuals. It is the all inclusive comprehensive approach to your work that shines through. Well done to all!

Second Round Adjudication:

The overall standard of Castlebar is definitely improving but there is still considerable inconsistency. For instance the roundabouts in most cases were superb and the ring road in general is maturing well. However the roundabout near Tesco had only recently been cut exposing substantial litter. Also grass verges on the outskirts varied from the well mown to partially cut such as on the initial Westport approach where tall weeds and litter were evident. On a more complimentary note the Mall with its mature, reserved nature and the boldly designed piazza at the ACC Bank were admired, also Lough Lanagh and the river amenity areas. We look forward to returning next year.!