

# Tidy Towns Competition 2005

## Adjudication Report

Centre: **Wicklow Town**

Ref: **763**

County: **Wicklow**

Mark: **222**

Category: **E**

Date: **20/07/2005**

|                                | Maximum Mark | Mark Awarded 2005 | Mark Awarded 2004 |
|--------------------------------|--------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Overall Developmental Approach | 50           | 35                | 35                |
| The Built Environment          | 40           | 34                | 33                |
| Landscaping                    | 40           | 33                | 33                |
| Wildlife and Natural Amenities | 30           | 20                | 20                |
| Litter Control                 | 40           | 27                | 28                |
| Tidiness                       | 20           | 14                | 14                |
| Residential Areas              | 30           | 23                | 22                |
| Roads, Streets and Back Areas  | 40           | 29                | 28                |
| General Impression             | 10           | 7                 | 7                 |
| <b>TOTAL MARK</b>              | <b>300</b>   | <b>222</b>        | <b>220</b>        |

### Overall Developmental Approach:

Wicklow town is developing well – the most significant development being the Market Square. Working with the Town Council, community groups and the Chamber of Commerce is very important to ensure that there is a comprehensive and inclusive approach to ongoing developments. A detailed five-year plan is needed so that clear aims and objectives can be established and progress can be made. Each year an assessment of the progress to date can be made and the plan adjusted accordingly. The plan should be made in conjunction with the above-mentioned bodies and any other groups that have an interest in the development of the town. Wicklow has many advantages- the harbour and seashore, riverside areas, the characteristic narrow street arrangement and the attractive views from the surrounding elevated housing estates and roads. Maximising on these advantages in future planning is advisable. A map of the town streets and surrounds would be very helpful at adjudication time.

### The Built Environment:

There are many fine buildings in Wicklow town; again, the Market Square is a highlight with the Gaol looking particularly well. The Courthouse, Town Hall, Childcare Centre and surrounding buildings on the Square all look well. The construction of the steps, paved areas with bollards, lighting and tree planting all contribute to make this square a notable feature of the town. The old Abbey Cinema looks forelone and hopefully a revival of this building will occur. The Grand Hotel in its prominent location and with the restructuring now looks especially well. The Catholic Church above the hotel is

a landmark building in the town and is impressive. The Church of Ireland Wicklow Parish Hall also looks well. The Garda station is looking fine but the nearby Assembly Hall seems a little neglected. The County Buildings and Fire station appear well and both have attractive landscaping. Abbey Community College, Dominican schools and surrounding buildings, Marine House. East Glendalough schools and Coral Leisure Centre appear well. Along the streets most of the premises are well painted and have good attention to general décor was noted. Exceptions were also noticed and some attention to the second story above shops is needed in a few places. Public Houses and the Bookshop in the Bridge street area were particularly attractive. The harbour piers are attractive and provide good strolling ground for people.

## **Landscaping:**

Wicklow benefits well from a good number of mature trees on the Dublin side approach. It is important that wherever possible, some tree planting should be done to ensure continuity of this fine collection of trees. Trees planted in the past along the riverside – to each side are now maturing well and having good effect – especially on the Garda station street and directly across the river from there. The trees planted at the Square are developing well and will need a few more years to give of their best. The landscaped paving, tree guards, steps and surfaces all contribute to the presentation giving a very satisfactory result. The triangle in the centre of the town needs consideration – while the trees do give an attractive green foil – the trees seem a little overcrowded and the railing restrictive. Perhaps a rejuvenation of this triangle is called for at this stage. One large growing tree as a central feature with surrounding landscape could be very effective. The single large Lime tree at the end of Church Street illustrates this. The narrow strip of ground in the centre of the main street has a varied collection of trees. This area also needs consideration. As a landscape feature the total assembly is not very impressive as it stands and suggestions could be sought for improvements.. The entrances to many housing estates are very well landscaped and these give both a good impression of the estates and also contribute well to the roadside appearance – examples being – Marlton Demesne and Park, Wicklow Heights and Bayview Grange. Tree planting opportunities occur where open greens are present within estates – in St. Manntans there is a green square without a single tree planted.. Many well kept gardens visible from the roadsides look well and contribute well to the overall landscape of the town. The riverside park forms pleasant strolling ground – the grass and the trees form a pleasant environment but greater use of this area could be used with good landscape planning.

## **Wildlife and Natural Amenities:**

Wicklow town and surrounds offers good potential for wildlife observation and appreciation. The harbour, the shoreline and the river are ideal resources for observation. The development of the strategy to protect and develop wildlife along the Vartry river sound like an interesting project and we are interested in seeing this plan and the plans for it being put into practice. Involvement of schools, gathering local knowledge and gaining assistance of an environmental officer would all be helpful in this regard. The anglers guide to fish was noted on the shore carpark.

## **Litter Control:**

Good work is in progress in keeping the streets clean. Working with the councils is very useful. The recycling units were noted. Nevertheless litter was noted in several places along the streets and was particularly troublesome at the scenic carpark. Litter was also noted along the roadside on the approach road from Rathnew. Litter left by the side of recycle bins is unfortunate. Constant vigilance and a determined approach in which all the community take responsibility for litter in their surrounds is needed.

## **Tidiness:**

There is a good level of tidiness within Wicklow town. The removal of overhead cables has helped greatly at the Square and hopefully this will extend to the entire area of the streets. Some of the poles are very poorly presented and need repainting or cleaning. A number of plastic ice-cream

cones were noted – these are not particularly attractive on the streets. Attention to detail of kerbside weeds is important. In the industrial area by the seafront many of the railings alongside the road are weedy with lots of grasses and Ragwort. Similarly there are weeds at the Coral leisure centre railings. Christmas lights allowed remain on buildings are unattractive.

### **Residential Areas:**

Wicklow has an interesting combination of residential properties through the town. The large amount of residences within the town is a great advantage as it promotes a community spirit and life right through the centre of the town. The Residents associations offer a great opportunity to raise standards by promoting awareness of good upkeep and maintenance. By organising competitions, arranging group work on specify projects within estates good progress can be made. Street side housing – such as at Lower Strand Street looks very well with well painted and presented road frontage. The many housing estates, some examples – St Manntans and the Dunbar Estates look well, the road frontage by Ballyguile is well cared for, Marlton Demesne and Park have very good roadside landscaping with many young trees and well tended greens. Bayview Grange and Wicklow Heights both have very attractive entrances with a good collection of shrubs and well cared for grassed areas. Estates along road to scenic car park also look well. In all cases each estate is dependent on the contribution of each householder in each estate. Individual houses along the roadsides contribute well by their roadside appearance. The apartments at the harbour offer another style of housing and these look well – some attention to wall painting at the premises close to the slipway at the harbour is needed.

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

Roads through the town are generally in good condition. The paved areas by the Square are particularly attractive. The approach roads are well presented and the cycle lanes are welcome where present. The Rathnew approach has the advantage of the mature trees lining the roadside at Lidl and Tesco and along towards the petrol station. The landscaping at both Tesco and Lidl contributes to the roadside appearance as without such planting large expanses of car parks can be uninteresting. The carpark at the Supervalu area looks well and is surrounded by well-presented buildings. The lamp standards look well. There is only one tree in this area and perhaps more tree planting could be done on the islands. The one-way system was not in operation on the main street -hopefully this will be implemented soon. Footpaths are variable through the town. It is good to see the granite kerbing retained in places and the large stone slabs. There are some broken and uneven paths and there are also some new concrete paths. To create better traffic flow further parking restrictions along the main street are advised. The industrial estate needs attention to roadside detail – roadside definition, weeds and small areas of waste ground all need attention. Tree planting would help enormously.

### **General Impression:**

Wicklow town has a wide range of activities and residential and commercial properties. Making the best of these and combining the new developments offers a challenge to the town. Wicklow town is progressing well. Traffic volume, parking and attention to detail are important issues for the town.