

Tidy Towns Competition 2005

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Carlow**

Ref: **542**

County: **Carlow**

Mark: **257**

Category: **F**

Date: **11/08/2005**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2005	Mark Awarded 2004
Overall Developmental Approach	50	45	44
The Built Environment	40	37	37
Landscaping	40	38	37
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	23	23
Litter Control	40	31	31
Tidiness	20	15	15
Residential Areas	30	26	26
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	34	33
General Impression	10	8	8
TOTAL MARK	300	257	254

Overall Developmental Approach:

Carlow Tidy Towns Committee would seem to be rather small for a town of Carlow's size - particularly given its expansion over recent years! Your submission was most comprehensive and made very interesting reading. The adjudicator was pleased to note that you have updated your plan till 2009. Your campaign of local competitions and inclusion of community groups and resident associations in the Carlow County Council Litter League is to be commended. There is a marvellous use of public art throughout the town in terms of modern pieces of sculpture along approach roads, roundabouts, public spaces etc.

The Built Environment:

The Superquinn centre is a marvellous example of modern development within the existing traditional fabric of the town. However, do ensure that christmas lights are removed once the season is over! There are some fine examples of modern buildings around the town such as the Garda Station, Carlow County Council and the marvellous Credit Union, which has been nominated for the Architectural Award in the competition. In terms of the main streets of the town, Dublin Street was rather inconsistent in its presentation, while Barrack Street and Tullow Street generally looked fine regarding the presentation of their buildings - the latter was admired for its new paving and street furniture. Although the limestone and stainless steel furniture should stand the test of time, the timber of the seating and some of the planters appeared to be suffering already. The new paving

was admired and nicely detailed down to the limestone channels along pavement edges. St. Patrick's College and grounds looked well and was busy for Eigse Arts Festival. However its Gatelodge was in need of some attention, which hopefully might be considered during its upcoming restoration works. The cathedral looked well with freshly painted railings and the adjudicator is looking forward to seeing the refurbished Town Hall in all its glory. The delightful timber sculpture at the tourist office was a pleasant surprise! The Institute of Technology looked extremely well, with its landscaped ground and the Dolmen Hotel was well presented with its wonderfully mature overhanging beech trees.

Landscaping:

Millenium Park and Bridge are a credit to those concerned in their presentation and was busy and well used on the day due to the Eigse Festival. It is particularly effective when viewed from across the River Barrow with its busy playground and performance areas. Things have certainly come along way since this adjudicator last visited the town many years ago and saw the sadly neglected Town Park as it was then! The tiered planters around the main streets of the town had yet to come into their own. The landscaping around the Credit Union is excellent with its attractive combination of both hard and soft landscaping and fine modern items of street furniture such as lamps, stainless steel bollards and marvellous limestone detailing including seating! The Liberty Tree sculpture and fountain looked most attractive, but perhaps there is scope for further landscaping and possibly a relocation of the car park in time. This is a very dominant location in the town and is indeed its focal point! The landscaped area at Centaur Street looked unfortunate, perhaps this is due to ongoing building work at a number of sites in this vicinity. Its central landscaped space looked quite weedy and will hopefully be improved once construction work in this area is complete. In terms of industrial premises, some of those along the Relief Road contributed well to this category of the competition, while others looked quite unfortunate in comparison. Carlow Business and Technology Park looked marvellous with stone wall and water feature and of course it magnificent reed bed!

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

There is evidence of much wildlife in the River Barrow, of particular note being its lily pads and ducks! However, rubbish had been dumped in this locality, which is most unfortunate. Your campaign to preserve existing wildlife is commendable, as is your Bat Programme. The Dawn Chorus Walk sounds like a marvellous initiative. The adjudicator looks forward to seeing the future wildflower garden in the People's Park.

Litter Control:

The standard of litter control on the day was reasonably good given the size of Carlow town. However, some rubbish had been dumped in Cox's Lane car parking area and quite a bit of litter was evident on Tullow Street and the Potato Market area. More litter was evident on the Tullow Road and the Relief Road.

Tidiness:

Carlow is indeed fortunate in having ten recycling banks. Perhaps for next year's compeition, you can consider the design of these, with the intention of putting one or more forward for the new Recycling Area Award. Weed control was a problem on the day, in the centre of town at Barrack Street near the junction with the Tullow Road. The weeds to the landscaped area at Centaur Street had been mentioned previously. More weeds were apparent on the laneway off Brown Street and on the Kilkenny Road. Dereliction was a problem in one or two locations, such as a house on Cox's Lane and a huge vacant site which, although it had a planning application notice up, had no date on it to ascertain when this might be developed. As this is a main route from the town to the park its development and improvement is all the more important. Crotty's Bakery in its prominent location appeared to be abandoned and hopefully its redevelopment happen in the not too distant future. Another empty site near the Fire Station created a bad impression. Do discourage advertising

hoardings as they can give approach roads a very cluttered appearance.

Residential Areas:

Houses, in terms of street houses and individual houses and estates along approach roads, generally looked quite well on the day. Some of the houses in College Street looked quite inconsistent in presentation - some appearing well presented and freshly painted, while others looked poor in comparison. At Friar's Green the attractive landscaping at its open space was admired. Attractive floral displays on the Kilkenny Road were admired and the B&B's in this location contribute well to presentation of this road. In particular, the marvellous student accommodation at the Institute of Technology was greatly admired.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

The marvellous displays of wild flowers, including cheerful daisies on the Tullow Road, were admired. Although this created an attractive entrance to the town, it appeared a little neglected in places and the town nameplate sign was obscured. Rubbish and papers were visible in this location also. Poppies at this road's junction at Chapelstown looked most cheerful. This was attractively presented, as the grass verges had been cut, while the grass had been allowed to grow longer to give the appearance of a meadow with wildflowers at the centre. The attractive timber sculptures on roundabouts were greatly admired. However, road surfaces appeared in need of some attention. Although the Dublin Road was quite well maintained at the town centre, it appeared quite overgrown further out. The two modern circular follies are another good example of the modern sculpture and interventions around the town. On the Kilkenny Road, roadworks were taking place and re-seeding and tree planting appeared to have taken place.

General Impression:

Carlow has expanded rapidly in recent years and continues an ongoing campaign of improvements. Well done to all concerned for their hard work in this regard and good luck with your future plans for the town. As previously mentioned, perhaps consideration should be given to the development of a central focal space in the vicinity of the Liberty Tree at this central location.

Second Round Adjudication:

Carlow has made great strides forward in recent years in terms of both the Tidy Towns Competition and the quality of the regeneration and expansion of the town centre. Contemporary architecture by and large happily co exists with the older buildings: eg, The Riverbank Apartments together with the nearby Italian Connection which appears to be cantilevered over the river. Such addressing of the river is to be encouraged as for too long Irish towns turned their back on waterways. Recent paving and street furniture is most effective and the including of laneways is praiseworthy. Some premises could have been improved simply by attending to small details: eg, the Post Office railings needed painting and the base of the Tourist Office wall detracted from its distinctive design. The Cathedral was neatly presented but it is considered that the planters on either side of the main door are too small. The classically yet modestly proportioned Court House is always admired. It is great to see streets and laneways all with name plaques. The discreet four storey carpark at the Carlow Shopping Centre sets an example for many other towns. The standard of litter control was again reasonably good but please do not become too complacent. The amenity areas were generally well looked after but some such as Hanover Park needs more care and vandalised trees were noted here and there. The approach roads were a little inconsistent. Dr. Cullen Roundabout area always creates a great introduction on the Dublin approach.. The town park and bridge is wonderful but the carpark opposite would benefit from tree planting; there is also a vacant site nearby on Cox's lane. We look forward to returning to this vibrant, dynamic town next year.

