

Tidy Towns Competition 2005

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Castlefinn**

Ref: **204**

County: **Donegal**

Mark: **246**

Category: **B**

Date: **10/08/2005**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2005	Mark Awarded 2004
Overall Developmental Approach	50	43	42
The Built Environment	40	33	33
Landscaping	40	37	36
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	16	16
Litter Control	40	33	34
Tidiness	20	17	17
Residential Areas	30	24	24
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	34	33
General Impression	10	9	9
TOTAL MARK	300	246	244

Overall Developmental Approach:

Castlefinn has seen many positive changes in the last 5 years. Community effort and pride in their environment is evident throughout the village. Many towns and villages will no doubt be envious of your "Local Area Plan" supported and prepared by the Local Authority in consultation with the local community. This is a valuable tool going forward to ensure future development is in keeping with the character and spirit of the village.

Many thanks for your submission documentation and professional map. The print piece you circulate to residents and businesses is an excellent idea as it identifies how all sectors can be part of the Tidy Towns effort.

The Built Environment:

Castlefinn is situated in rich farmland close to the River Finn on the main artery between Lifford and Stranorlar. The New Health Centre and business units augers well for the future of Castlefinn and we wish you every success with fund raising for Phase 2 recreational and sports facilities. Buildings are generally well presented with McBrides Pub, Lynch's Tavern, Mace Shop and McGlynn's Restaurant especially noted. While the exceptionally high quality shopfront of C. Gallagher and Sons is very eye-catching the surrounding tin detracts from the overall impact. Your plans to restore Donaghmore Parochial Hall in association with St. Patrick's Church of Ireland for inter community use is an excellent idea and worthy of support. The Cemetery adjacent to the Old Church was in pristine condition, however, the condition of the Old Church is worrying.

Landscaping:

Landscaping throughout the village was again of a good standard this year. Well done to all concerned. The use of window boxes and hanging baskets by businesses and private house adds to the overall appeal of the village. Flowers by Sandra, Castlefinn DVD and Cheung's Garden together looked well with good use of color and traditional type shop frontage. The young trees on the Stranorlar approach are a lovely introduction to the village. The railed street garden at a house close to Mace with beautiful use of color shows what can be achieved with only a little space. The new tree planting and chips on the path opposite the school were admired. Landscaping along the banking on the Lifford road is maturing well.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

Your plans to provide information boards at the nature reserve at Hallow Road and at the bridge over the River Finn to identify indigenous flora, fauna, wildlife and fish species as recommended in last year's report are welcomed. Castlefinn's location and natural hinterland offers many opportunities for progress under this heading. I would suggest a sub committee guided by local wildlife and angling experts to firstly identify local wildlife and natural amenities, then formulate an achievable plan for the next five years.

Increasing awareness and appreciation of wildlife and local amenities through the schools and community groups should be an integral part of this campaign.

Litter Control:

Litter control was very good on adjudication day considering Castlefinn is located on the main Lifford/Stranorlar route and was very busy. Bins were again well maintained, presented to a high standard and in use. Your ongoing work with the National School in Litter Patrols and Litter Clean Up days no doubt contributes to your progress under this heading.

Tidiness:

Castlefinn has an overall tidy appearance especially along the Main Street and in the area of the Diamond. However, open areas with building material and rubble along the Raphoe Road detracts from this. Workers were again busy sweeping, weeding in the area of the bridge. Open spaces and car parks as mentioned in your report are prone to weeds as in St. Mary's Hall Car Park and constant monitoring is required to control this. The School opposite the Garda Station is well maintained, however, the boundary wall would benefit from some painting over the summer months.

Residential Areas:

Gramhsland House Estate is a lovely introduction to Castlefinn with beautifully maintained houses and gardens. The house on the end with it's magnificent variety of flowers and ornamental lighting caught the adjudicators attention. It is heartening to learn that residents in Emmet Park have formed a new residents group, something all estates should have. The Local Authority improvement scheme when complete should greatly enhance the presentation standards here. Green open spaces at Hill Head were freshly trimmed. The seat here would look better if painted. Derg View looked well again with a number of residents using colorful baskets and containers. Some individual houses on all approaches are making great efforts in presenting their property to a very high standard.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

Approach roads were trimmed, verges neat with new tree planting on the Stranorlar Road and shrubs beds on the Lifford road. Road surface is still an issue in places as one would expect where there is so much passing traffic. Your committee is commended for taking a proactive approach to

addressing this and the Raphoe Road Junction issue by lobbying your Local Authority. Some back areas close to the bridge and beside the Cemetery could do with tidying up.

General Impression:

With a small committee, in a short number of years you have progressed well. Attention to detail and the sustainability of existing high standards are now required. Your natural environment, community and Local Authority support together with your Local Area Plan must all be harnessed and focused to deliver a tidy towns work programme that will allow Castlefinn to progress further in this competition.

Congratulations on work to date and best wishes for 2006

Second Round Adjudication:

Castlefinn enjoys the best of both worlds given its location on the N15 and on the banks of the River Finn; the former affords accessibility while the latter is a haven for wild life, indeed the sight of meadows of wild flower on the river banks visible from the Castlederg approach road is a visual treat rivalled only by your magnificent bridge. The Hill Road affords panoramic scenic views of the town and surrounding countryside however the condition of some buildings leave a lot to be desired; hopefully this road will be incorporated into a Sli Na Slainte route at some time in the future.

The majority of buildings look well with only a few remaining dated plastic neon signs; the Clonleigh Co-Operative Society premises features a neatly presented curtilage area for such a large premises.

Landscaping is maturing well both within the centre and on approach roads.

Litter control was less good on this adjudication both along grass verges and in the Diamond; Take Away litter and sweet wrappers were a feature at the latter location.

Infill residential development within the town centre is sitting well into its environment and the large new estate out the Raphoe road looks promising.