

Tidy Towns Competition 2005

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Abbey**

Ref: **48**

County: **Galway**

Mark: **259**

Category: **B**

Date: **08/08/2005**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2005	Mark Awarded 2004
Overall Developmental Approach	50	44	42
The Built Environment	40	32	30
Landscaping	40	36	34
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	24	23
Litter Control	40	38	37
Tidiness	20	17	16
Residential Areas	30	26	25
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	33	33
General Impression	10	9	8
TOTAL MARK	300	259	248

Overall Developmental Approach:

Thank you for your first class documentation, which, while providing the information necessary for the competition, also gave a most interesting historical and demographic account of the parish. Your updating of your 5-year plan and the map were also most useful. It was very good to see how the work of this Association is influential outside the confines of the village centre - roadsides, fields and farms of the neighbourhood showed an enviable sense of good husbandry. Abbey was a new venue for this adjudicator, and the visit proved to be an unusually satisfying experience.

The Built Environment:

The Church, an attractive traditional building at the hub of the village, was very well presented at the time of adjudication with its subtle choice of colour in two shades of green and its bright red geraniums contrasting - as well as other well nurtured plants. Last year's adjudicator mentioned that the roof of the otherwise well presented Community Centre needed attention, and this was still the case; it was good to see a public building with a well painted boundary wall, often a neglected area. Hynes', Lynch's and Smokey Joe's all looked well; there was a minimum of mass-produced advertising on the business premises, which was also unusual. The St Feicin's National School was well presented. The two-storied house converted as a store had been sympathetically repaired. Of the buildings surviving from the more remote past, the remains of the Friary were exceptionally well tended, a change from the dismal overgrown ruins which one sees all too often. For this adjudicator the Lady's Well Penitential Station was the star attraction, modest in concept, lovingly restored, and

judiciously landscaped.

Landscaping:

The landscaping throughout Abbey was appropriate to a village of this size - not over urbanised, except perhaps in the cement capping of one section of the bank of the stream: stone would have been preferred, but this was a minor matter in view of the design and execution of the very large areas of planting and grassing throughout the entire village. The beds of annuals along the cement construction were quite charming. The reverent and tasteful planting at Lady's Well has already been referred to. Mowing of the grass plots in the graveyard was in process on the day of the visit and this large and historic space was also very decently adorned with herbaceous plants - the enormous sweet-williams at the graveyard wall were especially admired. So too was the clever little planting at the public toilets. The broad sweep of the streamside lawn from the shop to the church, with its rosebeds - the choice of colour nicely differentiated - its semi-mature trees and well-kept seating was quite captivating. Shrubberies, tubs, baskets and window-boxes were also favourably noted.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

The open meadow in the centre of the village, the strip of undisturbed meadow that is designated as an insect habitat (with mare's-tail flourishing nearby), the designated nesting habitat, a young thorn hedge, and much tree-planting - not to speak of the mature timber which is such a feature of the existing natural amenity - demonstrated an admirable awareness of the wild life element. It would be interesting to read in your next year's submission if school children are involved in wild life projects.

Litter Control:

Litter control was very good indeed, among the best in the county. Congratulations.

Tidiness:

Some dereliction was seen, and this is referred to in your submission. There were still some rusty corrugated-iron roofs visible. From the foregoing, however, it will have been gathered that Abbey is a very tidy village.

Residential Areas:

The traditional village houses are full of character. Well-kept individual homes on the outskirts were seen, one on the Portumna road with a remarkable shrubbery and herbaceous garden. The new small estate on the Duniry road was promising - it was good to see that not all the houses were uniform and that colour was thoughtfully used. The cement block end wall might at some time be faced with stone, or plastered, or planted with creepers.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

The approach roads and those in the village were well surfaced. A significant feature was the abundance of stone walls, both old and new, and fine timber fencing in some places. New lighting standards at Eagle Hill were of an appropriate scale.

General Impression:

Abbey is a very well-tended village. With the continued attention given by the members of the Association under all the above headings, and the help of residents and business-people and advice and assistance from the official bodies, it will be no surprise if Abbey moves quite rapidly up the

scale of the higher entries in this competition.

Second Round Adjudication:

It was also the second round adjudicator's first time to visit Abbey and it was a gem to discover! The Loughrea road sported attractive signage and adjacent red rose bed. A new house, the adjudicator was pleased to note, had retained its stone boundary wall. The old ruined Kilnalahan abbey and graveyard were well maintained and the new coping was noted to the boundary wall. An outbuilding adjacent had its boarded up windows freshly painted. The Church and grounds were well maintained. Opposite, the adjudicator was pleased to discover that Abbey has the cleanest public lavatories this adjudicator had ever seen – externally AND internally! A single paper was noted outside – besides this the village was litter free. The village green and pump was well presented. The safety barrier adjacent to the church will need repainting before next year's competition. The stream and weir running alongside the road is a fine asset to have in the village centre and the colourful displays of nasturtiums in this location appeared quite jaunty! Perhaps the concrete post and wire fence could be replaced in time with a low stone wall or even a timber fence – something more natural in terms of materials? The National School was very fresh and the adjacent cottage was admired. The Lady's Well was very fresh in appearance. There are one or two plastic signs to business premises, which should be replaced with ones of a more traditional timber variety. There was much evidence of activity in terms of presentation on Second Adjudication Day – in the graveyard and at the village green. You would appear to have forged a strong relationship with the local community, and your encouragement of the involvement of the local schoolchildren in environmental issues will pay huge dividends in years to come. Well done to all concerned on a marvellous effort all round!