

Tidy Towns Competition 2005

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Castleblakeney**

Ref: **157**

County: **Galway**

Mark: **201**

Category: **A**

Date: **08/07/2005**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2005	Mark Awarded 2004
Overall Developmental Approach	50	32	
The Built Environment	40	30	
Landscaping	40	22	
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	18	
Litter Control	40	33	
Tidiness	20	11	
Residential Areas	30	24	
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	24	
General Impression	10	7	
TOTAL MARK	300	201	

Overall Developmental Approach:

This was this adjudicator's first visit to Castleblakeney - a really rewarding experience. Thank you for your very comprehensive documentation. (Your map, incidentally, did not show recent housing developments.) It was most encouraging to read of the involvement of students at two levels, and the involvement of FAS has proved to be highly significant and admirable. The adjudicator's report of 2003 was also studied - it appears that you did not enter the competition in 2004, and the reasons for the awarding of a most unusual increase in marking this year is partly due to the immense amount of planning and physical work which has taken place during the intervening period. The next two or three years should show an accumulation of further marks for projects signalled in your data.

The Built Environment:

The completion of restoration of the former Church of Ireland church has been a major achievement - congratulations to the individuals and the subscribing organisations involved. The tower is the landmark building for Castleblakeney and can be seen for several miles - it would have been most unfortunate if this had vanished. The restoration work has been sympathetic as well as technically accomplished - stonework, woodwork, floors, glazing, etc. A little more external plastering still needed to be done at the date of s adjudication. It is hoped that the community will now make use of the facility. St Cuan's College is an unprepossessing looking building very well maintained. The business premisses were also well maintained, though none had the unique qualities which would

merit nomination for a shopfront award.

Landscaping:

The landscaping on the turn on the Menlough road looked especially attractive. Other planting, such as in the village on the Mount Bellew road, in the grounds of the secondary school, outside the Heritage Centre, and several smaller initiatives such as hanging baskets and window boxes, all contributed to the sense of careful adornment.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

Tree planting falls under this heading (though of course overlaps with Landscaping) and your record here is significant in terms of the amount of work carried out and the obvious enhancement of the main street. Your projects for river and bog walks are impressive - and if publicised in the walking press should attract walkers from elsewhere, now an important sector of tourism. As the locality is so rich in ancient remains there are archaeological as well as natural objectives. The Keville & O'Sullivan report made impressive reading. Your progress in developing these projects will be looked forward to.

Litter Control:

The bring bank was clean. Litter control throughout the village was good at the time of adjudication.

Tidiness:

While in general Castleblakeney may be described as a tidy village, there were some areas which needed attention - for example a building beyond Nolan's car park needed freshening up, and there was an untidy site on the Mount Bellew road next to Golding's. Avoid the poisoning of weeds, as the result is the brown dead foliage seen in some places which looked worse than the growing weeds!

Residential Areas:

The traditional street houses are what gives the village its real character - these were well presented. Small suburbs are growing up on the approach roads and some of the houses have yet to integrate with the local environment - the use of stone boundary walls is a great help. If future housing estates are planned, encourage them at, behind or adjacent to the village centre in order to maintain the sense of community and avoid ribbon development.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

Road surfaces were in the main good, and directional signage excellent. The car park at Nolan's was well kept, with good boundary fencing. Neat parking bays with planting were favourably noted at the GAA park. Considerable roadworks were taking place at the time of the visit and the result of these will be assessed next year.

General Impression:

This is a most interesting village to visit and the Community Development Association is successfully striving to make it an even better place to live in. The presence of a secondary school must add a sense of liveliness. Best wishes for your ongoing initiatives.