

# Tidy Towns Competition 2005

## Adjudication Report

Centre: **Lauragh**

Ref: **288**

County: **Kerry**

Mark: **198**

Category: **A**

Date: **22/06/2005**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2005	Mark Awarded 2004
Overall Developmental Approach	50	35	
The Built Environment	40	23	
Landscaping	40	24	
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	20	
Litter Control	40	31	
Tidiness	20	15	
Residential Areas	30	20	
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	24	
General Impression	10	6	
<b>TOTAL MARK</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>198</b>	

### Overall Developmental Approach:

Lauragh is very welcome to the competition as a first time entrant. A wide variety of towns and villages enter for the Tidy Towns competition and the adjudicators take into account the nature of the particular entrant at judging time. Lauragh has unique characteristics and it is important that development plans are consistent with the natural environment, Impositions are made on the environment by the mere fact that people with their needs live in a locality. The extreme of non-interference of an environment would be not to inhabit it – so compromises have to be made. The material submitted with the entry makes very interesting reading and indeed Lauragh is a historic place. The in depth considerations about developments are laudable. Basically the aim is to preserve the natural beauty of the village and surrounds by interfering as little as possible, enhancing what is already there and bearing in mind the needs of people.

### The Built Environment:

The church, the shop, the post office, community centre, An Sibin, the sports centre buildings and the school are the most prominent buildings of the village. Stonewalls form a very important fabric of the built environment – the bridges, walls and stone kerbing all look well and will need to be maintained and repaired as required. Frequently natural stonewalls become concealed by excessive growth of vegetation and some revealing work is worthwhile – some interesting finds may be made. The school looks fresh and well painted – perhaps at the next painting time colours more muted and consistent with the natural surrounds could be chosen. The fence at the road frontage also could be

more sympathetic to the environment – timber being the ideal choice. The concrete steps and metal bars are all fine in a urban or suburban setting and many times plans for such developments are taken from the shelf and do not reflect the environment into which they are built. Nevertheless the school is well cared for and is clean and bright. Looking around the village at all the gates – all metal tubular – which is standard for agricultural gates. A unique statement theme could be made in the village by using timber-framed gates or as a minimum adopting a subtle natural colour. A further extension of this idea would be to build stone piers at gates. Timber fencing is already used in places in the village and this could also be utilised at the stretch from the church to the recycle bins..

### **Landscaping:**

The natural landscape of the area is so beautiful it would be a shame to impose on this – except of course inside gardens and in container plantings - which have been done attractively in the village. The island plantings at road junctions include some ferns. Perhaps it would be worth trying a tree fern in the centre of some of these with smaller ferns or moss beneath. This would make an attractive statement and would be consistent with the surrounds. Much of the area is covered with mature trees – many pines, oak, beech and ash – except perhaps for the ash – it can be assumed that all those trees were planted by previous generations who could never have hoped to see the beauty of their maturity. We owe a similar legacy to the next two generations. It is difficult to see that legacy in the making now. Some Sitka Spruce has been planted in cleared sites. Some new plantings of the afore listed trees need to be made and an environmental officer would help with this. The invasive Rhododendron ponticum is very prevalent in the growth – where spaces are cleared of vegetation a careful watch must be made to arrest progress of this plant. The idea of recycling green waste material is excellent – vegetation cuttings really should be made frequently when this is practiced as a heavy deposit of vegetation can hinder growth of the plants on which it lies.

### **Wildlife and Natural Amenities:**

The tranquility described in your submission was enjoyed at adjudication time. The wild life aspect of this area is invaluable. A log or list of plants, interesting insects and animals could be displayed with illustrations at the school and community centre area or indeed at one of the carparks. Local knowledge would be helpful here and this could form the basis of a school project whereby the involvement of the children would promote more interest which the children. Some tow paths – with minimum interference would be helpful to bring the walker closer to the river and off the roadside.

### **Litter Control:**

Litter control is very good and the recycle bins appear to be well used and are not causing any uncleanliness. However the prominence of these is not ideal in the particular setting. Perhaps this temporary resting place has the advantage of accustoming people to their use and when they are more concealed they will continue to use them. It is marvelous to see a brilliant attitude to litter collection in the village with parents and their children scouring the roadside for litter at adjudication time. Some litter along the driveway to the sports fields was noted – mostly cans and plastic bottles.

### **Tidiness:**

There is a good level of tidiness at the houses, public buildings and business premises. Fences as mentioned above could be improved especially where wire mesh has rusted or uprights are out of place. The surfaces at car parks also could be improved.

### **Residential Areas:**

The small numbers of residences are well tended. These can make a very positive contribution to the area by looking after their properties in a clean and tidy way, planting trees and being sensitive to

the introduction of artificial materials that can be seen from the roadside.

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

The roadways are beautiful. The winding nature and narrowness of these is worrisome when the speed of some of the traffic is noted and large trucks are seen using these roads. Children walking to and from school and those picking litter need to be on the alert at all times. Perhaps some more measures to control speed and the provision of footpaths in places is needed.

### **General Impression:**

Lauragh is a most interesting entry in the competition and hopefully the valuable policies adopted by the committee will be pursued with vigour and success.