

Tidy Towns Competition 2005

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Listowel**

Ref: **624**

County: **Kerry**

Mark: **257**

Category: **D**

Date: **12/08/2005**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2005	Mark Awarded 2004
Overall Developmental Approach	50	46	46
The Built Environment	40	38	37
Landscaping	40	36	36
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	25	25
Litter Control	40	31	31
Tidiness	20	16	16
Residential Areas	30	24	24
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	33	33
General Impression	10	8	8
TOTAL MARK	300	257	256

Overall Developmental Approach:

The excellent submission attached to the entry form shows a wonderful commitment to sustaining the already renowned headway that Listowel has made over the years. Continuing building development places a strain on the infrastructure of the town and surrounds and with the great efforts and forward planning evident in the town these challenges can be met successfully. The sponsorship gained and the fund raising is also an important element and this gives various people opportunity to express their talents and become involved in the development movement. The cooperation with so many local bodies is also commendable and allows for progress on many fronts. Development work is never complete as new situations demand new approaches – your plans for future developments are very laudable and while the square and surrounding areas have been developed so well, there are still a number of opportunities for further developments as documented in your submission.

The Built Environment:

The Listowel castle restoration is a wonderful achievement. This is tastefully done and the surrounds are very appropriate to this fine building. The curved steps and the stone associated with the surrounds enhance the structure so well. The staircase – while being an addition to the original structure is carefully obscured from the full appearance of the front from the square. Seeing this floodlit by night makes a great addition to the square. The square has many fine buildings not least

of which are the two churches and their surrounds. The hard surfaced areas are well detailed and give a lovely impression within the town centre. There are many well painted and presented business premises and shops through the streets and the small number that still need upgrading now are noticeable as exceptions. Keeping an eye on the upper stories of buildings is important, as these tend to get less treatment than actual shop fronts. The Garda station is well presented and prominent in its striking colour – both back and front. The Mart area still remains and hopefully the planned development there will go ahead. The Courthouse and Fire station, Public Authority building and Carnegie Library all look well. The Listowel Business Development centre looks impressive. The Buzz Retail Park hopefully will get a tenant soon and upgrading may take place. The stone building - goods store, at the start of the Lartigue Monorail is a fine building – it would be great to restore the windows/doors of the building rather than have them filled by concrete blocks. And hopefully your plans for this will become reality.

Landscaping:

There are many fine examples of landscaping within the town. The trees on the square have now matured well and give a very good green foil. The colourful containers complement these. Planting at some of the buildings also gives good character – notably those houses with wall climbers – in this regard – the Listowel Arms Hotel with its roses, Hydrangeas and wall covering plants looks very well. The landscaping within the castle is attractive and fitting. The Garden of Europe is a lovely hidden gem – more signage for this would be helpful as unless one knew of its existence it would be difficult to find. The Town park makes good strolling ground and the large trees are beautiful – further trees planting for continuity is important in such situations. The picnic area at the park is very restful. The M69 roundabout is being prepared for landscaping – the associated segments will offer further landscape possibilities and this could become a very significant feature. Shrubberies along the John B. Keane Road are developing well and make a good impact. Some extra tree planting on the roadside opposite the Monorail would be helpful to border the housing estate behind. Individual gardens and the many containers planted by business premises along the streets are helpful. The Burial Ground is well treated and adds to the appearance of this site- such care and attention is always welcome in burial grounds. The hanging baskets on the bridge give a nice entrance welcome to the town. Attention to landscaping in housing estates is important – particularly the entrances and large open spaces within which offer great opportunity for planting trees that will grow large over the future rather than large numbers of small trees. Many new estates visited have boundary concrete block walls that could benefit from wall plants or hedges.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

The riverside walk offers great opportunity for wildlife observation and forms a very pleasant strolling way. There is great potential for developments of ideas to promote and to make people aware of the wide range of wildlife they may observe. Your planning work in this regard will be interesting. It is great to see the Valerian plants allowed grow on the walls behind the Castle. The white form of this flower is less common and good to see. Also in the town park the natural unmown areas are interesting as well as the riverside walk to the Garden of Europe.

Litter Control:

It is good to see in the submission that the problem of litter is fully recognised and that so many initiatives are in place to help alleviate the difficulty. Competition, schools awareness, business premises initiatives and community projects all contribute to lessening the difficulty. Litter was spotted in many locations – in the square, in carparks and on streets. Persistence and determination will eventually meet the challenge - a challenge which is shared in almost all parts of Ireland.

Tidiness:

The amount of building development-taking place in the town and surrounds by its nature tends to bring a level of untidiness. Hopefully when sites are completed the surrounds will be fully reinstated – it is wise to keep an eye to this. The industrial areas on the Ballylongford road could benefit from

some better frontage appearances – again the nature of these often tends to be difficult in this regard. The carpark opposite the Town Park by the church – could benefit from a resurface. Back lanes too can be difficult – such as the back lane behind the Garda Station. There are still a number of protruding signs in the main streets. The old mart hopefully will disappear.

Residential Areas:

The large number of residential housing within the town gives great life to the town. The terraced single storied houses are a lovely feature of Listowel – in areas such as Charles Street, Colbert Street and Courthouse road. It is important that when alterations or renovations are being made to these that the traditional character is not lost. The many new and old housing estates look well and the combination of the work of – the local authority, the developers, residents associations and individual home occupiers is all important in determining the ultimate appearance of a housing estate. For example -the entrance to Ashfield is very attractive but there is great scope for development on the green spaces within the estate. At Ferndene the entrance is weak and there is good landscape work within the estate. Convent View estate has an attractive entrance. The large estate being built by the new M69 roundabout should be carefully observed to see that proper landscaping is put in place. The estate at Clieveragh Park has matured well over the years and the value of earlier tree planting can be read as a lesson for other estates. The competitions conducted are a great idea – a further idea would be to hold evening classes during winter on topics of gardening and estate care and development.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

The approach roads are well cared for and signposted. The town is very self-contained and quickly on leaving the town the buildings stop which is a good feature. The hard landscaping at the square and road system appears to work well as do the one-way streets. The John B. Keane road and the new Roundabout at the M69 give some relief to traffic. Encouragement for carparking outside the main central part of the town would be helpful. There is a considerable amount of heavy traffic passing through the town. Attention to street side kerbing has been good over the years and some work remains to be done in this regard. The kerbed area at the Tarbert approach road sets off the shrubbery well. Back areas become more accessible with developments and often reveal passages that have not been frequently used. These then need upgrading.

General Impression:

Listowel is a very pleasant town to visit – not only because of the many fine characteristics of the town – the square, the river, the streets and the important buildings but because there is such great enthusiasm for improving and interest in meeting the challenges. The standard achieved to date is marvelous and this year the opening of the Castle marks a very significant landmark in developments of Listowel – well done. There is a confidence that future improvements and developments will be bright.

Second Round Adjudication:

Weed control was a problem on Second Adjudication Day – to kerbsides on the Ballybunnion road, to the base of the boundary wall of the Community school on this road. The grotto on this road was well presented. There was a light scattering of litter along the streets of the town. The fine buildings of the town looked generally well cared for – of note being Diarmuid Tarrent Garage, which was fresh in red, Piarse Fitzgibbon's was very fresh in blue, as was the Garda Station. The fine heritage of Celtic Revival plasterwork that is so much a part of the character of the town is always a joy to see. Rear areas are beginning to be developed and it is therefore important to ensure that they are presented to as high a standard as the main streets of the town. The modern civic centre, incorporating the Library, Council Offices and Courthouse looked well with colourful displays of nasturtiums either side of the roadside leading up. The fine limestone kerbing along footpaths was

noted and admired. Much work had taken place in the Square since this adjudicator last had the pleasure of visiting Listowel, all of which adds to its impact. The limestone archway leading to the river walk was admired. The handball alley in this location had been painted but further impact appeared to be needed here, and weeds were evident. The wildlife information boards were also in need of attention, as the perspex was rather yellow.