

Tidy Towns Competition 2005

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Tralee**

Ref: **580**

County: **Kerry**

Mark: **233**

Category: **F**

Date: **09/08/2005**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2005	Mark Awarded 2004
Overall Developmental Approach	50	38	34
The Built Environment	40	34	31
Landscaping	40	34	34
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	20	18
Litter Control	40	32	30
Tidiness	20	15	14
Residential Areas	30	24	24
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	28	28
General Impression	10	8	7
TOTAL MARK	300	233	220

Overall Developmental Approach:

The beautifully presented concise information with the entry form gives a very good guide to the activities and progress to date in Tralee. Immense changes have taken place within the past few years and the town and surrounds is very much improved in many ways. The "Towards a Better Tralee" publication appears to be an excellent approach as there is an important input from key bodies - local authorities, business and community groups. The sub committee system also appears to work very well. The number of people involved in this is impressive as is the fund raising. The plans for various improvements are ambitious and looking at what has been achieved to date there can be a certain confidence about future developments. Community involvement is of the utmost importance for this competition. The organisation of events relating to the tidy towns movement are a marvelous idea. In particular the Garden Festival as it promotes an awareness of the value of the landscape and the contribution that gardens and gardening can make to a community. This Garden Festival also brings so many people to the Town Park, which is an inspiring and beautiful place to visit. Unfortunately the Tourist Office beside the Town Park remains closed on Sundays, which is hard to believe since so many visitors spend Sunday in Tralee.

The Built Environment:

There is a vast range of public, business and private properties within the town and surrounds all contributing to the wealth of interest that makes Tralee what it is. Among these, the Court House

and the churches, the Siamsa Tire buildings and the Museum are landmarks. Day Place is a beautiful terraced feature of the town, so also is Greenview Terrace. The latter unfortunately has lost some of its character by the various forms of window replacements that have occurred over the years and the need for attention to some of the houses there also. The Market Square development is a marvelous achievement and adds a new dimension to the town. The hard landscaping is very effective with the interesting design very tastefully carried out. With entrances from many points, this brings a great heart to the town. The building developments along the basin redevelopment – the Tralee Marina is a substantial venture and offers a huge amount of accommodation in an attractive setting. The Blennerville windmill also forms a very good landmark on this side of the town. The areas around the Abbey Gate hotel have been developed well and the connection from this to older parts – such as by St. Johns Park and the Bridge area help to unit the project with the fabric of the town. The numerous passageways like Barrack and Milk Market lanes add to the character of the town. New developments in the area around Nolan's garage and Dunne's stores also add a new dimension to the town. There are buildings that still need upgrading – for example -the old Mill building on the North Circular road hopefully will see a resurrection and some buildings opposite the back of the GAA stand need refurbishment. The main streets are well endowed with good quality shop fronts – especially in the Bridge street area. Some deterioration of shop building premises occurs towards the end of Castle Street Upper.

Landscaping:

The Market Square as mentioned above is very well landscaped suiting the purpose of this square. The attractive paving patterns, seating, lighting and tree planting all contribute well to this project.. The stone spheres are a lovely feature and give a three-dimensional aspect to the setting. Pedestrianisation is a key element of town appreciation and is welcome. Trees previously planted along Bridge Street are now showing their full benefits and give a lovely green foil to the street. The importance of town tree planting is further emphasised by the mature trees along by the Mount Brandon Hotel and the carpark opposite. The double line of trees on approaching St. Johns Church is a lovely sight. Many roundabouts on the approach roads are well treated and give attractive entry points. The Ballyard roundabout will be spectacular when the fountain is installed. At present the planting at this roundabout is a little tired and weedy – perhaps due to awaiting for the future plan. The canal basin redevelopment is a great success. The walkways along the canal to the new lock gates offer a great amenity which is being well used, is open and safe and allows for exercise at all levels of engagement. The derelict buildings at the new lock gates hopefully can be removed and the carpark there surfaced satisfactorily. The Town Park is in spectacular condition with the rose garden at its peak and the most interesting Garden of the Senses. The grounds are well maintained and ideal for the garden festival. The Pairc an Phiarsigh seems a little intimidated by the immense building development alongside. Fortunately the trees have remained and hopefully they will be sustained in their curtailed space. The railings around this park need attention. Displays of colour thorough the town from container plantings adds a sparkle to the town. The landscaping at the Kerry Building contributes well to the landscape of the town. Similarly the Kerryman premises and the Technology College.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

Ample opportunity is now afforded for wild life observation along the walkways of the canal bank. The display boards offer helpful information. The swan pond and the observation point all contribute well under this heading. The planned opening of the Ballyseedy wood, as a recreational amenity is a marvelous idea and will contribute greatly. The town park itself offers much in this regard as well.

Litter Control:

Litter continues to be a challenge in all towns and village despite numerous campaigns and efforts to clean places. Because towns become more attractive to visitors and particularly where a great deal of night life is enjoyed in towns a consequence seems to be a need for a massive clean up each morning – especially at the weekend. The cleaning up was in progress very early on this Sunday morning and things were better very quickly. Litter was noted in a number of places – at the new canal lock gates, in the Pairc An Phiarsaigh and along some streets. The work of the boy scouts and

girl guides is commendable. The schools sub committee - involving transitions year students is a wonderful idea and continued progress and promotion will eventually make all people realize how offensive it is to discard litter in public places.

Tidiness:

There is a very good degree of tidiness within the town and surrounds. The building developments naturally present temporary difficulties in this regard. It is important that all building development sites are fully and satisfactorily reinstated before the builders leave the site. Keeping a constant watch by the committee can ensure this. Observation of planning proposals is important too. Buildings that need upgrading, lapsed care buildings, weediness at walls and kerbs are all issues to be dealt with. At the roadside leading to Blennerville – a railings is very untidy on one side and small units of shrub planting on the other side of the road have become very weedy.

Residential Areas:

There is a vast amount of both new and old residential accommodation in and around the town. Every residents input is important in the overall presentation of the town and the great efforts with residents associations and community groups is very good work. The residences near the Bon Secour Hospital look well – it is great to see such an amount of housing right in the town centre. The one-storied terraced houses along beyond Strand Street have great character. The very colourful housing development at Cois Laoi – Ballyvelly (behind the Spar shop) is attractive and well landscaped with fine trees – the open plan aspect works well. The stonewall road frontage by Lios na Liothart and Cluain Ard is a good feature. Caheranne Close also shows good colour. St. Johns Park adjoining the Abbey Gate Hotel area is a gem with well kept gardens and a n attractive tree planted green – a good example for other similar style estates. The many apartment buildings look well and form a new style of living for town people today in Ireland..

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

The approach roads have been improved considerably over the past few years and the concentration on this aspect in your planning is an excellent idea. Roundabouts are a key feature of many of the approach roads and the treatment of these gives a flavour of the care and attention that a town is prepared to give to the roadways. Tree planting on approach roads is invaluable. This is particularly so in Tralee where developments on the outskirts are very varied – ranging from industrial, business, residential - old and new developments – tree planning can be the unifying feature and tree planting will also help to alleviate the harshness of some of the features along the approach roads.

General Impression:

Tralee has made great progress. This is a town in which both the landscape and the buildings have been developed in a balanced way. The canal walk and Market square are marvelous additions. These successes will encourage further developments.

Second Round Adjudication:

The attractive archway to the Presentation Convent of Castle Street should be repainted up before next year's competition. The attractive limestone kerbstones to streets were admired as was the museum. A patchy outcrop of weeds was apparent on the Ballyheigue road, but this appeared to be the exception rather than the rule. Housing estates were generally well cared for. Advertising hoardings should be discouraged as they give a cluttered appearance. Litter control was generally quite good with only the rare outbreak spotted along main streets. These generally looked well cared

for, but attention should be paid to gables – one beside Quickfit looked unfortunate. There are a few empty buildings, which should be developed as soon as possible. The marvellous backdrop of the mountains forms a marvellous setting. The Aquadome and its associated green spaces were well presented, as was the Town Park. The Council buildings looked well, with attractive hanging baskets, and Bank of Ireland looked extremely fresh. Some rusty entrance gates were spotted adjacent to Siamsa Tire. The lights strung across main streets created a very festive appearance. The busy town of Tralee has been making steady and distinct progress in the competition in recent years and this year was no exception.