

Tidy Towns Competition 2005

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Carlingford**

Ref: **358**

County: **Louth**

Mark: **221**

Category: **C**

Date: **10/07/2005**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2005	Mark Awarded 2004
Overall Developmental Approach	50	40	41
The Built Environment	40	32	32
Landscaping	40	30	30
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	15	15
Litter Control	40	25	25
Tidiness	20	14	13
Residential Areas	30	25	25
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	33	33
General Impression	10	7	7
TOTAL MARK	300	221	221

Overall Developmental Approach:

The adjudicator would like to thank you for the town map, and 3 - 5 Year plan document. This document was quite useful on adjudication day. However you should identify by year your key objectives for each year. It is recommended that you have no more than 4 / 5 key objectives per year. Your plan should also indicate who or what bodies are responsible for the implementation of the actions that will lead to the achievement of each objective. It was good to read that you have good local community support and that your community has benefited from the CLAR programme. The successful Tidy Towns Committees are those that succeed in harnessing the goodwill, skills and experience of a number of different groups and Agencies that have something to contribute to the implementation of the 3-5 Year Tidy Towns Plan. These groups and Agencies include the following –

- GAA
- Local Development Association
- FAS
- County Council
- Local SuperValu outlet
- LEADER Company
- The CLAR Programme (if you are in a CLAR designated area)
- Local School or schools
- Urban & Village Renewal Grant Scheme

The Built Environment:

Carlingford has a most beautiful location where mature trees, the castle, water and the lush green hill rising up above the town create a wonderfully impressive feast for the eye. The adjudicator is of the view that the town is perhaps at a crossroads in regard to how it progresses in environmental terms on into the future. On the one hand Carlingford has a very impressive heritage and most interesting old buildings to visit. However the presence of fast food vehicles and ice-cream trailers on adjudication day did not seem to sit well with this important heritage. Like many towns of it's size and water side location it is a day trip destination and the challenge for the future is to manage that visitor segment in tandem with the walking and heritage visitor demand. The new fencing at the Tennis Courts looked quite effective and this amenity was in high demand on adjudication day. Some of the derelict properties needed to be white washed and some gable walls also needed painting. The front elevation of St. Michael's Hall might be improved if painted and this is something that your Tidy Towns Committee might discuss with the appropriate authorities. Three information panels were noted at the car park and these give excellent information on walking, heritage and other aspects of interest in and around the town.

Landscaping:

The landscaped area at the McGee Memorial is a most attractive area and it was so good to see an important aspect of your heritage being remembered. However the planting here needed a little freshening up and perhaps removal of some of the older shrubs and replacement with new ones. The grass verges in the village were excellently presented and were obviously being frequently cut. Hanging baskets and flower tubs added a great sense of colour to the village.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

The work on the small river channel running through some of the streets was examined carefully. The end result seemed somewhat disappointing. A lot of ugly slime was noted in the river and a lot of litter especially at the 80 KPH sign. It is recommended that your Committee looks at this problem with the Local Authority engineer. Increasing the water flow may help to solve the slime problem, and increasing vigilance is the only option in regard to litter. In many towns and villages this is an aspect of the Tidy Towns Competition where there can be significant potential for development. All towns and villages have the presence of wildlife to some degree. It is important that your Tidy Towns Committee would examine further the wildlife potential, and see what you can achieve in terms of making your area even more wildlife friendly. If you have not already done so, the starting point is to have a habitat Survey carried out of the wildlife in your area. Suggested habitats to be considered include the following –

- Urban habitats – gardens, waste ground, walls, graveyards, hedges
- Wetland habitats – rivers, ponds, lakes, canals, reed marsh, bogs
- Woodland habitats – forests, hedgerows, plantations, parks
- Grassland habitats – roadside verges, parks, wet meadows, dry grasslands

The Survey should produce a species list for each of the habitats relevant to your area. This need not be an expensive Survey. Perhaps there is a knowledgeable person in one of your Schools who might undertake this task for you. Basically the Survey would identify the animals, plants, birds, fish that inhabit your area and their associated habitats. It should be remembered that to carry out the Survey properly that it will probably take a year so that all habitats can be assessed at different time of the year. Using the results of the Wildlife Survey your next step should be do draft a straight forward Plan to preserve the identified habitats in your area, and investigate the possibility of new ones. For example perhaps there is an old Pond in your area that is disused, but with a little work could be an important area for wildfowl. It is most important to try and involve your local school children in this project, and in many Schools there is probably a teacher who may have an interest in this area who would be willing to get involved. As part of the actions to be undertaken in your Wildlife Plan you might like to consider the provision of some weather proof and vandal proof display

panels, illustrating and explaining the wildlife in your area. This has been done very successfully in many towns and villages in Ireland.

Litter Control:

Litter control was not especially good on adjudication. Given that the town was busy on the day of adjudication, some of the litter did not appear to be of recent origin. Litter was noted at the green area at the end of the car park, in parts of Back Lane in the lane to the rear of The Anchor Bar, and in the river channel. In the village centre litter was also noted. With so many day trippers to Carlingford litter needs to be collected several times per day. It is very important that your Committee would develop a litter control plan for your town / village. The issue of litter control is not an issue just for the Local Authority. All citizens and especially your Tidy Towns Committee have a key role to play. Your plan should include such issues as surveying the litter bins that you have in your community and their adequacy, clean up days and the role of your local schools. It is most important that litter bins are placed in close proximity to the largest generators of litter. The regular emptying of a litter bins if of course essential.

Tidiness:

The Bring Centre now has a better location and was reasonably tidy on adjudication day. The issue of fast food and ice cream vehicles has been mentioned earlier in this report and needs to be discussed by your Committee with the relevant authorities. It does not lead to a tidy appearance. The adjudicator is not in favour of the display of retail goods on the pavement as was noted in Carlingford. Apart from looking rather untidy such displays can cause major difficulties for people in wheelchairs or the visually disabled. For 2006 the green and red railings to the children's play area will need to be painted. Parts of Back Lane appeared to be rather untidy.

Residential Areas:

New housing development was noted on the road to the East Pier and this is to be welcomed, however the provision of appropriate landscaping by the various developers is of crucial importance. If you have not already done so your Committee might talk to your Local Authority to discuss the issue of landscaping by future builders. Perhaps this can best be delivered through the Planning Conditions process. Many of the housing estates were attractively presented and good work was carried out by a number of the residents. The majority of private properties were well presented and a number were obviously freshly painted recently. Some attractive gardens were also noted, and the landscaping work by property owners contributes in an important way to the overall character of your village. The Old Schoolhouse near the Church is one property that caught the eye.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

On the Dundalk approach the verges on the left hand side had not been cut on the approach to the town signs. In front of the hotel on the same approach road there was potential to improve the verge presentation here. With a little work the verges on this approach road could look really well. On the Omeath approach road the banks and verges had been very roughly cut, and did not look well. On the road to the Marina no work had been done on the road side banks in recent times.

General Impression:

Carlingford is a beautiful town in a superb location. If there is a strong strategic approach to your future work programme we may well see Carlingford returning to the presentation levels of 1988 when the town was the national winner of the Tidy Towns Competition.

Second Round Adjudication:

