

# Tidy Towns Competition 2006

## Adjudication Report

Centre: **Carlow** Ref: **36**  
County: **Carlow** Mark: **271**  
Category: **G** Date(s): **14/06/2006**  
**10/08/2006**

|                                | Maximum<br>Mark | Mark<br>Awarded 2006 |
|--------------------------------|-----------------|----------------------|
| Overall Development Approach   | 50              | 45                   |
| The Built Environment          | 50              | 38                   |
| Landscaping                    | 50              | 39                   |
| Wildlife and Natural Amenities | 50              | 24                   |
| Litter Control                 | 50              | 32                   |
| Waste Minimisation             | 20              | 8                    |
| Tidiness                       | 30              | 15                   |
| Residential Areas              | 40              | 27                   |
| Roads, Streets and Back Areas  | 50              | 35                   |
| General Impression             | 10              | 8                    |
| <b>TOTAL MARK</b>              | <b>400</b>      | <b>271</b>           |

### Overall Development Approach:

Carlow is welcome to the 2006 National Tidy Towns Competition. Thank you for your submission which included your updated plan to 2009. It is good to note the sheer numbers of agencies that cooperate with the Tidy Towns Committee for the enhancement of Carlow town and the activities of the Committee in encouraging the participation of schools, residents and the community in general. The Mission Statement of Carlow Tidy Towns Association is acknowledged and is indicative of the high level of awareness of Carlow's cultural and wildlife heritage and the impact of this on the presentation of the town for the betterment of the entire community. Carlow town is growing fast and hopefully new residents will become imbued with the common mission for the development of the town.

### The Built Environment:

Civic buildings were all beautifully presented and the Court House still looks majestic on its site in the heart of the town. Your Credit Union premises has been considered for both the Architectural Award and the Sustainable Development Award. Your pedestrianised areas in the town centre are attractive and encourage strolling, window shopping and spending quality time in your lovely time. There are still a few dated beer signs on premises which you should try to have eliminated once and for all, it is a pity about the clock on the Bramleys Jewellers premises as it is a handsome feature. Might it be rehabilitated? The new hotel and carpark on Dublin Street has been noted. Encourage shop owners to use the open mesh type of security shutter on their windows at night as the solid ones have a deadening effect on the streetscape. Also remind business premises that posters stuck on windows and doors can detract from an otherwise handsome presentation. The river dell development has been considered for the Architectural Award and the Millennium pedestrian bridge has been considered for the Sustainable Development Award.

### Landscaping:

Colourful and profuse flower displays, both in beds and containers were a feature of Carlow town at numerous locations at the time of our visit and presented a most cheerful ambience. It was surprising to see a number of stone planters with withered plants on the footpath near the building with the Superquinn sign. The entrance to the Millennium Park was magnificent and is a wonderful feature which links the town centre to the town park. A feature could be provided for the Staplestown Road roundabout. Handsome stands of mature trees together with shrubberies planted for seasonal interest and stretches of well maintained hedgerow are an excellent feature of Carlow town and are nicely balanced with your more seasonal flower displays. The water feature which marks the entrance to the Carlow Business and Technology Park was admired.

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

Your good quality interpretive wildlife panels have been noted and admired and serve to heighten awareness and appreciation of wildlife. Your management of grasslands, both in Hanover Park and in Shaw Park, to encourage wildflowers and associated fauna is an excellent initiative. Perhaps you could encourage schools and households or residential estates to count the different species of birds which use their bird tables and nest boxes. It was a pleasure to watch adults and children feeding the ducks and swans within the environs of the Carlow Rowing Club. We wish you well in your negotiations with Waterways Ireland to improve the Barrow Tow Path and its environs.

### **Litter Control:**

The overall standard of litter control in Carlow was good on the day of our visit. We note your daily street sweeping activities which involve a number of groups. No doubt your Litter Enforcement Officer has made an important contribution to your litter free status. Well done on your involvement with the National Spring Clean and the promotion of the Green Schools programme as well as a host of other litter related activities, including name and shame campaigns. We appreciate the difficulty caused by the smoking ban and the use of footpaths as ashtrays is a problem common to almost every town.

### **Waste Minimisation:**

Carlow was very successful in the Tidy Towns Race Against Waste project so we know it has real potential to do well under this heading. We would suggest that you identify the amount of waste generated by various sectors of the community and devise a strategy to reduce it in partnership with those involved. The Race Against Waste booklet provides some good ideas on this.

On the day of adjudication several recycling banks were noted at various locations around the town but again we must note the recycling centre on Maryborough Street which looked dreadful and was spoiled by litter and bags of material left alongside the receptacles. The area was also very badly surfaced and weedy and it is a wonder that anyone would use it. While the physical standard of recycling centres may not appear directly related to waste minimisation, it goes without saying that people will be more encouraged to use the facilities that are well kept. I'm glad to report therefore that the recycling point in the carpark of Centaur Street was most tidy although a few bags and boxes had been left here too, however the overall appearance of the carpark and its environs was one of tidiness and cleanliness. It is good to note the continued success of the Kernanstown Recycling Centre.

We look forward to seeing how you develop your ideas under this heading in the coming years. Well done to all the work achieved to date.

### **Tidiness:**

Perhaps your greatest problem under this heading is the environs of Maryborough Street which are potholed, weedy and dirty. We note your painting evenings where you undo the graffiti and maintain park benches which is an excellent initiative. Your participation in the annual local authority's Litter Action League, as well as the National Spring Clean, is acknowledged. Beer barrels on a narrow stretch of footpath outside of the Court House Hotel are an example of both visual clutter and a hazard for pedestrians, particularly those with prams and wheelchairs.

### **Residential Areas:**

Well done on the organisation of local competitions for residents of estates, we note from your submission that thirty four estates participated in the 2005 Litter Action League. Your hosting of a gardening workshop appears to have been successful and very much appreciated by the community. A number of on-street dwellings in a terrace leading to the Next Door off licence premises could be cleaned or painted to good effect and the same point applies to some dwellings on Barrack Street. Cottages leading from the Post Office to the town centre have been nicely painted, one within the terrace is vacant but has been neatly camouflaged and looks well. The Castle View Way is an attractive development of apartments overlooking the canal and the ducting of the overhead wirescape here, together with attractive lampstandards, is noted. Some apartments near the Garda station are beginning to look a little weather stained (on Green Bank Road). Houses and

boundary walls on the Graig Cullen entrance to the town look well. A number of residential development sites on the Dublin road have been noted.

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

The new footpath along Coxs Lane, which links the River Barrow to Dublin Street, has been noted together with the refurbishment of Kennedy Avenue, the Potato Market and Tullow Street. We look forward to next year's adjudication and the completion of the new Shaw's building and O'Neills Bookshop. It is good to note the eradication of the two large derelict properties and their replacement by Centaur House and Riverdell, as noted above Riverdell has been considered for the Architectural Award. The Graig Cullen roundabout looked dreadful and the plants here appear to have been burned or sprayed. The bridge leading into the town from the Graig Cullen entrance could be cleaned to good effect, however the lampstandard and hanging baskets here looked well and of course Kennedy Avenue looked wonderful with its trees and new street furniture. Fingerpost signage for the town park has been nicely maintained but on following the directions the adjudicator ran out of signs without arriving at the park! Carparks are generally well presented and reference has already been made to the one off Centaur Street. The Millennium pedestrian bridge is a fine development and has been considered for the Sustainable Development Award.

### **General Impression:**

Carlow is a handsome town with fine amenities for its growing population where the level of commitment to the environment is quite high. Given the number of developments sites in the town the Tidy Towns Committee has done well to ensure that these do not impact in an adverse manner on the townscape. We wish you well with your future plans and look forward to repeat visits.

### **Second Round Adjudication:**

The approaches to the town were as well maintained as ever. Cheerful welcome signage greets the traveller on the Dublin road. There was evident of litter, flyposting and advertising hoardings on this road also. The roundabouts were attractively landscaped, as ever, as was the entrance area to Carlow Business and Technology Park. Colourful floral displays were evident at many road junctions. The main streets of the town looked quite cheerful on the day. The Fire Station looked well in brick with its energetic sculpture outside! Indeed, there are numerous and varied sculptures throughout the town – has the possibility of a sculpture trail been investigated? There is quite a lot of construction work taking place in the town. There was a litter problem at the junction of the Kilkenny and Athy roads, and to the nearby river. Graffiti was also a problem in a number of locations, including a boarded up site on Burrin Street. An attractive building on the opposite side of the street had been badly vandalized and looked very sad and neglected. It is a fine building and would be marvelous if restored to its former glory. Millards solicitors unusual projecting metal sign was admired. The fine stately buildings of the town such as the Courthouse, Cathedral and College looked well on the day.