

Tidy Towns Competition 2006

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Ennistymon** Ref: **69**
County: **Clare** Mark: **219**
Category: **B** Date(s): **13/07/2006**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2006
Overall Development Approach	50	42
The Built Environment	50	28
Landscaping	50	32
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	21
Litter Control	50	20
Waste Minimisation	20	5
Tidiness	30	15
Residential Areas	40	25
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	23
General Impression	10	8
TOTAL MARK	400	219

Overall Development Approach:

Thank you for the completed application form, excellent sketch map and additional supplementary material to support your application.

It was the adjudicators first time to do a complete walkabout in Ennistymon and it was a pleasant, if somewhat taxing with all the hills, experience. The excellent Art in the Window Exhibition sponsored by the Arts Council was very interesting and the Family Weekend Festival as getting underway.

The Committee has developed a good relationship with the County Engineer and FAS and the town has benefited because of this. The local community must value your input towards the betterment of the town, because for the most part it has done its part by practically supporting your work.

One notes that your Aims and Objectives are very achievable and are a perfect platform to get projects under way and completed over a time.

The involvement of Transition Year students is very noteworthy and their work will be beneficial to the promotion of the town as a cultural and tourist destination.

The work programme is very workable and we wish you luck with it and do consider other programmes and competitions mentioned in detail in last years report. All help towards progress.

The Built Environment:

Like every town of its size in Ireland at the moment Ennistymon is being subjected to infrastructure change and transformation. The quantity of housing stock is on the increase and from what has been observed the new developments are in keeping with the exiting streetscape which is that of a traditional market town with obligatory square.

The new housing scheme on the Ennis exit(huge traffic jams in tourist high season!) looks well designed and situated on the elevated site overlooking that area.

One noticed in past years that Ennistymon had a larger than average number of unoccupied houses falling into varying states of disrepair. I am glad to say that a number are now being refurbished and others are sporting planning notices. Fine buildings like C Hayes in Church Street should be retained in original format complete with shop front sign.

The positive effects of the renewal programme are now being realised.

Blake's Corner is a problematic area and the wall seems to be permanently damaged, I suppose it now seen as a land mark on the way to Lahinch.

The RC Church, Schools, Library and the Graveyard, which is a bit of a trek up hill, were all well presented. There are number of commercial properties with fine traditional fronts and the owners deserve credit for keeping them original.

The following were noted as good examples; McMahons Bar, O Neagrain (as Gaeilge), Crosbies Craft Shop, Davorens all in the centre area and James Griffins Bar and Unglberts Bakery on the edge of town. Very good to see the old Market House restored and now housing the Holywell Restaurant. Proprietor. Wolfgang Deital is wished well and his new venture in Fanore likewise.

There a few examples of tastefully designed new business premises, Malones Service Station and Shop on the Lahinch Road stand out in this context- nice colour scheme with tidy forecourt area, CK Pharmacy in the town centre also deserves praise.

On the negative side there are still too many premises with unsuitable signage, too much clutter in front areas and the bane of most places now days window notices.

The Committee should encourage owners to reduce the level of the latter and it is noted that this is on the list of your long term plans.

Landscaping:

The standard of landscaping and planting arrangement was very good this included both public and private. Work done on the approach roads has a positive effect, when all this ancillary infrastructure work is complete it will be appreciated more.

The Picnic Areas both on the Lahinch Road and at Deerpark in the top of the town are due for make overs judging by your application.

This is needed as both are rather bare at present and prudent planning will help brighten both areas a up.

The Merriman Statue is nicely set in a raised stone bed with both annuals and perennials and these will be at their best next season.

A number of other public planting schemes were admired as were the hanging baskets and planters that adorn the town proper.

There were a number of exceedingly pleasant private gardens viewed all around the town. The Falls Hotel owners deserve immense credit for presenting and maintaining their grounds in such a fine fashion, it is not an easy job and to the staff member responsible well done.

Overall a very good performance in this category.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

The idea to develop leisure walks and nature trails should be brought a stage further in the next year. There are so many habitats in the vicinity and so many areas that could be identified as possible project locations, The adjudicator identified an area, just over the bridge on the riverbank where there are run down outhouses, as a possible location for location of wildlife notice board and seating area. Accessibility may be a problem, but consultation between County engineer and Committee would determine it suitable or not.

This was one of many places that could be linked with the promotion and conservation of wildlife.

Litter Control:

Litter control was quite good considering that the town is extremely busy with transient traffic and people visiting at this time of year.

Your work in promoting the need for good litter control is paying dividends.

Consider additional notices urging visitors, in a nice way of course!, to take their litter with them. This has worked effectively in a number of other places including a few in Clare.

Waste Minimisation:

Waste minimisation is a new category to the competition and is a contribution to the promotion of the Race Against Waste Programme and the need for better waste management in communities.

The involvement of schools both primary and post primary in your activities is noteworthy as it gives children a sense of pride of place and ownership.

The booklet included in the original application package outlines a series of initiatives that one could undertake and also examples of projects done in other communities.

The objective of improving the quality of the environment for the community has to have an action to match, so consulting the booklet would be a good starting point.

Tidiness:

The standard was rather mixed and it is hard for any voluntary body such as Tidy Towns to compel people to have premises and back areas kept in a manner conducive to basic tidiness.

You can gather that the adjudicator came across a number of messy back areas, particularly in the outskirts and around a number of side lanes.

All you as a Committee can do is to encourage owners to make a better effort.

There was a little too much weed growth viewed in the outskirts off the Circular Road and other adjoining areas.

The Mart Premises, which is no longer in use!, is getting very untidy and needs to be cleaned up.

On the positive side congratulations to those residents that have made the effort to present a tidy side of Ennistymon.

The Square Development, when complete, will transform and enhance the town as whole and will also help to give a more "tidy" look overall.

Residential Areas:

The established residential areas in Ennistymon were all well maintained and the relevant communal areas well managed. The residents of Ard Na Choille have their properties in very good condition with nice colours applied. The adjoining area with stone nameplate and sculptor of "Spot" gives that whole elevated area an appealing look.

At the other end of town the established houses on the Circular Road and at Riverview Terrace were kept in a similar fashion with a nice variance of colours. One or two side areas and boundary walls need to be attended to.

Deerpark residents have maintained properties to a very high standard and have the advantage of seclusion, as trees are maturing on the green area in front and blend in well with the well tended shrub bed.

The upgrading of the picnic area will add the finishing touches to a nice elevated area of town.

The new housing developments, when fully complete, will be an asset and look as if they are designed to complement the existing housing stock.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

The Roads in to Ennistymon were very well presented overall.

The Ennis entrance has been disrupted because of the work of providing essential services for the new housing development.

The Kilfenora entrance was very well maintained, cut back nicely as one enters past the 50km sign into the town and the link road to Kilsahny was also acceptable.

The Lahinch Road, which is very busy at this time of year, was also well maintained with good enough road surface and footpath that extends outwards to the seaside resort.

The latter allows both locals and visitors to indulge in leisure walking without fear of getting knocked down, although some of the younger set don't seem to have any regard for speed limits and use this stretch of road as a time trial track.

General Impression:

The town of Ennistymon is your typical Market Town with a slight difference, it is gateway to the tourist spots of North Clare and hence is very busy at seasonal times of year.

It has had its difficulties with derelict properties and with a perceived lack of interest in Tidy Towns on the part of local residents.

There have been big improvements in the last few years and the Committee has become very proactive in trying to develop a proper work plan that will involve all other organisations in the community. This is a very positive step forward and it is hoped that the town will benefit in practical terms, as well as progressing in this competition in the years ahead.

You are wished well.