

# Tidy Towns Competition 2006

## *Adjudication Report*

Centre: **Blackrock** Ref: **460**  
County: **Louth** Mark: **239**  
Category: **D** Date(s): **04/06/2006**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2006
Overall Development Approach	50	39
The Built Environment	50	27
Landscaping	50	32
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	22
Litter Control	50	34
Waste Minimisation	20	9
Tidiness	30	16
Residential Areas	40	28
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	25
General Impression	10	7
<b>TOTAL MARK</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>239</b>

### **Overall Development Approach:**

As remarked by last year's adjudicator, Blackrock has to fulfil the functions of a seaside resort, a commuter suburb and a town in its own right; on this year's showing it seems to be doing all three very adequately. This year's adjudicator recalls it as a dismal and neglected resort in the 1950s: nothing could be more different. (Incidentally, it is very sad to read of the violence and conviction that occurred last year.) Your map was most informative in its detail and an enormous help; the aerial photograph on your documentation emphasises the amount of development which has taken place in very recent years. Clearly the realignment and surfacing of the main street is a major disruption but when finished the result should have been well worth waiting for. Your 3-Year Plan is first class of its kind: much research has gone into its preparation and it is sincerely hoped that the ambitious targets set will be reached.

### **The Built Environment:**

No extraordinary buildings have been erected in the past year though some very interesting private homes were seen to be nearing completion on the coast road. Maintenance of the existing building stock seems to have been the theme. The sight of the remarkable Hiberno-Romanesque Revival church never fails to give pleasure and it is very well looked after. The Stone House and the Clermont Arms are important buildings which make their mark partly due to the care with which they presented. The sporting facility was also well maintained. Unfortunately the AOH Hall continues to give a poor impression: it is quite a handsome structure and with an amount of renovation and painting could be quite impressive.

### **Landscaping:**

Well-chosen resilient plants such as New Zealand flax, whin, fuschias and rock roses valiantly weather their seafront location. Several very well tended grassed spaces in residential areas, such as Beech Park and the triangular lawn with its seating at St Fursey's Terrace, punctuate the town in an attractive way. The entrance

to Blackrock at the southernmost point is very nicely landscaped; tubs, window boxes and hanging baskets were admired here and there.

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

Young trees were favourably noted in many estates. It was good to see the 'Louth bank walls' reinstated – this is something which has only begun to be recognised in a number of centres in the county in very recent years. The extensive estuarine reed beds which look so attractive are only a part of the marine habitats with which the town is bounded. It is good to read of the ecological survey undertaken by Ms Roe and Mr Merne – please include whatever documentation is appropriate in your next submission.

#### **Litter Control:**

There was comparatively little litter on the date of the visit. Congratulations to those who engage in clean-ups and in litter-picking. The only black spots – and they were hardly black – were near Viro, near the junction of Sandy Lane and Main Street and near the Post Office. Some of this would seem to be virtually unavoidable, but a few well-publicised fines on perpetrators, whether visitors, traders or residents, could have a strong effect.

#### **Waste Minimisation:**

The bring bank was not well maintained at the time of the visit. It is good to learn that you make use of the excellent recycling facility in Dundalk and that collections of different types of waste material are regularly made.

#### **Tidiness:**

The works on Main Street obviously contribute to a sense of disarray but this has been sympathetically taken into consideration. A great deal of building activity has been suitably screened off at the north end of Main Street; some unfortunate dereliction persists nearby. The surroundings of the AOH Hall are as untidy as the building itself. A small feature creates quite a large adverse impact – the 'No parking by day or night' lettering on a rusty metal gate just off the sea front. An old graveyard on the Golf Links road was in need of some attention, especially weeding at the entrance. Weed control throughout the town has been very effective.

#### **Residential Areas:**

There is a comfortable old-world feeling about the Dundalk end of the town with several quaint houses and cottages – such as a house with green woodwork opposite the Violet Bar and the charming seaside Crescent. Such dwellings give real distinction to the town. Substantial private houses here and there – such as on Seafield road and Rock Road, where the diversity of designs does not jar with one another because there is sufficient separation and foliage – add considerably to the sense of well being. Of the newer estates, Claremont Manor and Fane View are exceptionally neatly maintained and there are plenty of young trees which will show their worth in a surprisingly short time. Carraig Ard starts well but diminishes towards the end. Very promising new housing was noted in course of construction at the N1 end of Seafield Road. As mentioned under 'Landscaping', greens are a prominent feature of most estates .

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

The ongoing Main Street reconstruction has been mentioned above. Of the approaches, Copckle Hill is the most welcoming because so well groomed; Seafield Road starts in a lower key because of construction work and the constant poor surface. The surfacing of Rock Road is surprisingly poor in patches, as is Carraig Ard. Some superb lengths of new stone walls were very favourable noted.

#### **General Impression:**

It has been salutary to revisit Blackrock and observe the very many genuine improvements. It seems that there will be a great many more when the Development Plan really gets going, so that if all goes well a substantial rise in marking should occur over the next three years. This will be eagerly looked forward to. Congratulations to all those individuals who are making this possible and in so doing making Blackrock such a pleasant place to live in.