

Tidy Towns Competition 2006

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Banagher** Ref: **591**
County: **Offaly** Mark: **247**
Category: **C** Date(s): **07/07/2006**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2006
Overall Development Approach	50	35
The Built Environment	50	35
Landscaping	50	34
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	22
Litter Control	50	36
Waste Minimisation	20	9
Tidiness	30	14
Residential Areas	40	24
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	31
General Impression	10	7
TOTAL MARK	400	247

Overall Development Approach:

Thank you for your detailed entry form, which was accompanied by a review of developmental plan for 2006 and map of the town which was very helpful when identifying places of interest.

Again one has to compliment the committee for the amount of work that it has undertaken in the last year.

This type of effort is reflected in the way the town looked on adjudication day.

The committee has succeeded admirably in ensuring that Banagher benefits from the partnership approach it has pursued over the last number of years and it is noted that agencies such as Shannon Development and Offaly Leader as well as Offaly County Council have supported your work.

A request was made in last years report that you detail achievements for the previous year this was done and all were noted by the adjudicator.

The proposal to erect Welcome Signs to Banagher is worthwhile and it goes without saying that they should be as Gaelige as well.

Good work being done and of course much more to do.

The Built Environment:

It has been a while since this adjudicator has been to Banagher and one of two striking features about streetscape this year is the freshness of many premises in the town.

A revitalisation has taken place in terms of painting and the use of more vibrant colours.

The second noticeable thing, and a sign of times we live in is that the town and environs has grown so much.

A number of properties, which were very neglected, have been tidied up and in some cases refurbished completely but there are still places that need attention. The Maltings area has become a little jaded and it looks like if there is very little on the plan to re vitalise it.

Do the Galway people claim the Martello Tower and the Fort belonging Mr Cromwell?

There are a few architecturally significant buildings that are falling into disrepair and were noted and photographed by the adjudicator to highlight the problem.
The Church and other public buildings the garda station and community school were all presented to a high standard.

The National School has undergone a complete transformation and is very much in keeping with the existing street architecture.

St Paul's Hall and The Billiard Hall are buildings that have a long association with the community of Banagher. The Marina and the immediate facilities area was extremely well kept and easy accessible, the area further down was a little untidy.

The following are some examples of well kept premises that appealed to this adjudicator The Royal Shannon Hotel, Corrigans in the Square both of these have been refurbished extensively, Catherine Grimes Chemist, Simon Lyons, The Crank House and the Brosna Lodge Hotel which had a goodly number of boating enthusiasts.

The St Ryangh Service Station on the outskirts is a nice premises and well managed.

Shannon Bank Park, an excellent amenity for the public, has undergone improvements since this adjudicator was last in the town and there are more planned. A relaxing game of a pitch and putt was very much on the mind of the adjudicator but duty called.

The GAA Club deserve credit for keeping its expansive grounds in good order and painting the main building a bright colour.

Landscaping:

The town and its environs has reasonably done well in this category over the years and this year the standard was very good

There were many examples of colourful and well attended to hanging baskets in the main part of the town as well as well planned areas on the outskirts.

Trees are most important plants in an urban setting and no mention was made in either your submission or the plan of adding to the existing tree planting already in place.

Shannon Park is an example of a well-developed public amenity in a landscape sense as both the planted and green areas were maintained to a very high standard.

There are one or two areas that need attention, the shrub bed at Portvallia (forgive me if I have spelling wrong) has now become overgrown and less hardy shrubs are being choked out.

Also the kerbside needs to be cleared of decayed plant residue.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

Banagher has numerous wildlife habitats and it is important that these be exploited as best as possible.

It may be feasible to involve the schools in a number of mini projects that would eventually result in one main project.

Your plans for the continued treatment of areas in the Shannon Bank Park will be of a major help in this category and this may be a location that the above suggestion might be applicable to.

The hedgerows on the outskirts were treated in a manner, which is conducive to the conservation of wildlife.

It is incumbent on Birdwatch Ireland to help you in protecting the habitats of the endangered species that is the Corncrake – now that re ignites memories of idyllic rural summer settings many moons ago.

Litter Control:

The committee has and is doing all in its power to spread the message of proper litter control within the greater community.

The key to achieving some success is to target the younger generation and convey the message to them and this is being done as per your submission.

On the day there was not that much litter to be seen but some litter bins seem to have had their day and need to be replaced.

It was also noted that the Bring Litter Home signs were on display in most business establishments and the recycling area at the Marina was very well managed and tidy.

Waste Minimisation:

You have embraced the concept of better waste management very well judging by the entry in your submission and getting the business community on board is a big help.

Cultivate the links with Offaly County Council Environment Section and develop more project ideas together.

Tidiness:

Tidiness involves a multitude and one could become ultra fastidious when applying the ground rules, that said there are certain basics that need to be adhered to.

For the most part the town was quite tidy with exceptions and one does not want to name these for the sake of it but areas such as the inner section of the Marina and the Industrial Estate need to improve on this score. A number of back areas highlighted in last years report have not made much progress.

The multitude of signs, 20 on three poles, in the centre square leads to confusion and maybe an accident, as one tries to figure out which is which.

There was some weed growth evident at kerbsides on the outskirts of the town.

Standard acceptable but much more to do.

Residential Areas:

The new housing development on the Birr Road near new Rynagh Service Station is very well designed but there was no name sign to identify this area.

The amount of residential development, especially as one circles the Middle road on to Harbour Road, has been quite staggering and lets hope that ancillary services will be able to cater for all this additional housing stock.

Port an Brollagh has matured and expanded over the years and was well presented.

Cuba Cottages and all the family houses on Cuba Avenue are still the benchmark for good presentation.

The newer development Currach Close and Cor Na Cille are excellent new town house developments that fit with the existing street buildings.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

The entrance from Harbour Road was quite impressive with edges and grass margins cut back. The new impressive houses being built will add to the road and the signs were visible and clean.

The entrance from the Galway side of the town has added appeal as it affords an excellent view of the Shannon and Marina

The Birr entrance and Lusmagh entrances were also presented to a good standard but there were a few untidy side areas on the Lusmagh Road.

The link road in from the Cemetery has a new footpath which is there for practical reasons none the less it has added to that entrance.

A few signs have been obscured by over growth one for Ely O Carroll Country and one Banagher name sign, which if I recall correctly are on the Birr side of town.

General Impression:

The commitment and effort that the committee has put into addressing and trying to solve contentious issues is slowly paying off and as an integrated town Banagher is making good progress.

There are a number of issues that are outside the control of any committee but let's hope that the ongoing lobbying of relevant parties will help resolve them.

The community in general has to be lauded for its collective effort to make its town more attractive to the many visitors that come each year.

The adjudicator plans to re visit outside the call of duty and to sample the excellent Pitch and Putt course.