

Tidy Towns Competition 2007

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Bagenalstown** Ref: **32**
County: **Carlow** Mark: **252**
Category: **D** Date(s): **17/07/2007**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2007
Overall Development Approach	50	36
The Built Environment	50	36
Landscaping	50	38
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	25
Litter Control	50	31
Waste Minimisation	20	7
Tidiness	30	15
Residential Areas	40	27
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	30
General Impression	10	7
TOTAL MARK	400	252

Overall Development Approach:

Bagenalstown is welcome to the Tidy Towns Competition 2007. We note that you have a committee of 9 and meet monthly and note your funding sources both agencies and business. You have no mention in the submission of schools. However we are glad to see the National school flying the Green Flag.

We note also your welcome of the abolition of Tidy Towns fees. We also agree that there is an increase in vandalism but this is unfortunately increasing in other places, but is treated elsewhere with patience and increased efforts to improve the quality of the attractions of the town.

The maps included in the submission were of very poor quality being a nearly illegible photocopy of an A4 size O.S. map of part of the town centre with no context map of the rest of the town showing clearly all areas of the town from the outskirts to the centre. This map should include all your projects clearly marked. The adjudicator this year is newly appointed and an occasional visitor to the town only, and had to spend extra time in a busy schedule of adjudications coming to grips with a rapidly expanding and complex new town plan.

The river front treatment and walk continue to be the jewel in your crown. On the other hand much improvement work is required on most approach roads, interesting bridges, town streets, and derelict buildings and screening ugly buildings e.g. approaches to the Barrow Bridge.

The Built Environment:

The market square is well presented and has well painted tarmac areas and car parking on both sides. New Urban Renewal schemes in the square might increase pedestrian safety and comfort whilst providing an opportunity to use sides and middle of the square for lighting and planting and give emphasis to the front of

the Catholic Church.

On the square recent developments met with our approval, namely the new Credit Union building, and the jewellery shop and the old style shop called O'Duinn's close by were admired.

Both churches have been maintained and attractively presented. The beautiful old railway station still has its original Victorian windows. It is well presented but is lost at the end of a tarmac car park. This should be broken up and made a pedestrian friendly approach with car parking along the side.

There is at least one set of very unusual Carlow granite traditional railings to the railway bridge on the Graignamaragh bridge which need restoration.

Church Road, Main Street and Bachelors Walk are generally very attractive and the Library garden is lovely. The little stone lodge and gate are lovely at the end of The Parade and form a focal point and should be restored.

There use of the architectural gem that is the Courthouse as a library is excellent. The Estoria conservation/reuse is good, and the restoration of the McGrath Hall is commendable as a Civic Office, giving leadership in this field. uPVC window replacements in the rear and gable should, in due course be replaced with original timber frame windows as in the Main Hall.

The piece of public art outside the Credit Union creates a focal point area.

There is a general good use of bilingual signage in the town.

Landscaping:

Again this continues to be of a very high standard on the riverside walk with the picnic area beside the roundabout landscaped and maintained beautifully. Other areas of note and distinction are the lovely Library Garden and also the public park in Church Road. Many areas in the town need softening with planting as mentioned before namely Market Square and the Railway Station for a start.

The McGrath Hall surrounds are excellent. The grass was well cut, with a nice use of planting/hedging. Granite seating was admired, and your Pont Pean students' twinning project commemoration was noted. Also, areas on the approach roads such as the Barrow Bridge Road require softening and better presentation by screening and planting.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

You have not included this section of the application. You have endless opportunities in this area, given your river and canal side location in particular.

Litter Control:

On the day of the adjudication litter amounts were low in the centre and on the outskirts in the area looked at. There was however some litter in the Park, and in Barrow Lane. There is however no evidence of litter patrols included in your submission.

On the same day the area beside the bring bank or recycling skip had not been maintained and rubbish was strewn around.

Waste Minimisation:

To perform to a high standard under this heading it is necessary to encourage all sectors of the community to survey the amount of waste generated by themselves and to formulate strategies to minimise the amount produced, as opposed to simply collecting waste for recycling. We anticipate a performance of excellence under this heading in the years to come given your track record to date in every other respect. The race against waste booklet included in this year's Tidy Towns pack contains a number of good ideas on this. We note that you use a composter at Conway Park.

Tidiness:

As noted last year there are still many untidy derelict sites in the town.

Signage requires maintenance. Over head wires and ugly ESB & Eircom poles should be under-grounded in town and outskirts.

Kerbs and traffic signs were neat on the day in areas which were looked at.

Residential Areas:

There is a row of cottages which is very attractive and well presented on the Graignamanagh Road approach.

Chestnut Court was attractive and very well presented with a good entrance.

The new Ashfield estate is newly planted and attractive but has an untidy area near the entrance sign.

The local authority housing off the Kilkenny Road was well cared for in general.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

The Kilkenny Road approach from Royal Oak inwards is a very important entrance to the town. Initially the impression is good with well trimmed hedges and trees on both sides. There are weeds in the Barrow bridge approach area, and trees on the town side of the bridge appear to be dead and/or vandalised. Beyond, the shed on the right is a very ugly complex with a lot of rusting corrugated material and ugly security fencing present. There is a plethora of plastic signs along this road both at the entrance to the new and the old industrial estates, and the new estate itself does not have enough semi-mature planting for what is a very raw new part of the town. There are beautiful views from within the service road to the lush countryside beyond, and these should be emphasised in an overall planting scheme. One premises stood out as having considered its site - Dunbar Clancy with good paving and landscaping.

There were three signs to inform that this was Bagnalstown. One good sign should be adequate.

Graignamanagh Road had verges needing trimming. As already commented upon, the Carlow fences at the Bridge are lost in this generally neglected area in which the bridge is located, although hedging adjacent is good.

Plastic signage removal/upgrading including painting are required in the complex of the Astoria "cinema", JR carpets, Irwin's and the Statoil garage opposite. Irwin's is an unusual interesting example of earlier twentieth century garage design, and is worthy of care, but is lost in the environment as is.

On the Bunclody Road approach all bridges and Carlow fences should be made a feature of. The school and sculpture could do with a little planting.

The approaches from the North / North East/ North West are generally much better, apart from the fact that the swimming area on the Leighlinbridge road is dated and needs upgrading. This area has been concentrated upon and the river and canal are predominant in the landscape, and the lands are not so fragmented / developed. The final approach "The Parade" is good, although the garage needs a little care.

General Impression:

Given its location on the River Barrow it is fitting that with the increase of water leisure sport and activities on the river, Bagnalstown has much to offer given its fine river frontage. The interior of the town with its attractive streetscape and good quality buildings has great potential for making a good quality pedestrian, friendly space as a continuation of the river walks. Attention must also be brought to the quality of all approach roads to the town.