

Tidy Towns Competition 2007

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Blarney** Ref: **110**
County: **Cork (South)** Mark: **234**
Category: **C** Date(s): **13/06/2007**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2007
Overall Development Approach	50	40
The Built Environment	50	34
Landscaping	50	29
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	29
Litter Control	50	26
Waste Minimisation	20	8
Tidiness	30	15
Residential Areas	40	25
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	21
General Impression	10	7
TOTAL MARK	400	234

Overall Development Approach:

Thank you for the completed entry form which included a map of the central section of Blarney. Your seven committee members are obviously very busy and it is fitting that you have an additional twenty five volunteers to join you for clean ups at various times during the year. The core of the centre was well maintained, Blarney Woollen Mill's grounds were exceptional and there was a complete absence of litter in this area. In addition the road around the small square was well swept and neat. Attention needs to be directed towards the sheer number of directional and commercial signs, your adjudicator counted a total of twenty seven signs at the junction of Station Road and Cork Road! Nineteen were counted at the Waterloo Road junction.

The same splendid attention as given to the visitor section is not apparent in the rest of the town and the development of a suitable work programme outlining your activities over the next two or three years would undoubtedly have the effect of garnering additional support and involvement from other sections, way from the central hub.

The Built Environment:

The Church of Ireland looked very well with very suitable planting in the foreground. SuperValu Supermarket was very eye catching with many high level hanging baskets. Blarney Castle House was freshly painted as was the Garda Station but do clean at the base of the front facing walls. The entrance area to Blarney Castle was very well presented with many hanging baskets. Blarney Woollen Mill was a joy as always to visit while the Catholic Church looked very well in its elevated location. The small Tourist Office was very well presented and welcoming. Scoil Mhuire Gansmál looked well as did the GAA Club premises. Your work in the better presentation of derelict sites in the centre is applauded.

Landscaping:

The grounds of the Girls National School looked well but do repaint the railings. There was excellent floral displays at the triangle going into Blarney Woollen Mill. In general the presentation of the core of the village was achieved at a very high order. The Auto Centre had a good display of flowers around their signage and the square itself was very well maintained.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

The River Martin offers excellent opportunities of the development of wildlife and birdlife activities, please discuss the options here with a local wildlife or birdlife enthusiast. The Chlogheen Sanctuary and the walk at the Waterloo Road are worthwhile assets and are being well used. The wildlife sign at the River Martin is a good addition.

Litter Control:

Well done on securing the active involvement of twenty five volunteers who every two weeks give some of their time to making their area a better place. In the process they will raise awareness throughout the village so hopefully this number will grow over time. Litter bins were good and particularly noticeable in the Church of Ireland area. It was disappointed to note the extent of old litter at the entrance to the Blarney Park Hotel.

Waste Minimisation:

You are certainly working well with the Local Council and arranged with them the collection of waste when bagged and segregated. This is a practical, on-the-ground arrangement which is to the credit to all. We note that efforts are continuing with both the boys and girls schools and trust they will secure Green Flag status soon. The efforts you are making with Blarney Woollen Mills and SuperValu Supermarket to heighten the awareness for the need for waste minimisation will continue to yield benefits over the years.

Tidiness:

Approaching from the west it was unfortunate that the travel company site, now closed, looked sadly neglected. A number of signs were broken, notable Blarney Park Hotel other signs were obscured. We have mentioned before the seemingly excessive number of signs, some of which we feel are now obsolete. A small number of signs are obscured by encroaching trees or vegetation noticeable Blarney's Driving Range. On the day of adjudication cars were parked in a very random fashion at the entrance to world famous Blarney Castle. Perhaps the painting of parking bays would introduce a sense of order here. Some of the approach roads are somewhat overgrown with weeds at the side of roads and at the base of, very often otherwise, attractive stone walls. You are to be applauded for your efforts which are continuing in having the overhead wires put underground. The work on replacing and upgrading footpaths throughout the centre area are applauded.

Residential Areas:

The establishment of resident associations in each of the estates is an excellent development. The capacity at this level to organise litter collection, planting and the maintaining of all common areas is to be recommended. The Grove House estate looked very well while the new houses on Station Road also contributed to the growing housing stock. Some excellent houses were noted off the high road above the Church.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

The introduction of a one-way system around the central square is a definite improvement. The 'Welcome to Blarney' signs on the Cork Road were good, looking freshly painted and well presented. Some weeds were noted at the base of the stone wall on the right hand side. An excellent treatment was organised for the flowers at the GAA grounds junction. The surface at Waterloo Road was very much rutted and may even constitute a danger. The signs on Station Road were very good and a number of 'Cead Mille Failte' signs need to be washed at least and ideally repainted. As first impressions are so vital to Blarney it is important that the points raised here are given attention.

General Impression:

Blarney is one of the icons of Irish tourism and as such it is vital that it together with the main tourism players are conscience of the need to present a neat and orderly face to their many visitors. It is appreciated that with the volume of traffic this is not always an easy task. As you mention, sadly people will not obey the request to take their litter home or at least dispose of it appropriately. You are commended for the efforts you are making with the assistance of business owners and others to maintain the area litter free. Sadly litter management

continues to be an ever ending task and all are applauded for their endeavours and are much encouraged to continue.