

Tidy Towns Competition 2007

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Portumna** Ref: **320**
County: **Galway** Mark: **258**
Category: **C** Date(s): **30/06/2007**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2007
Overall Development Approach	50	35
The Built Environment	50	34
Landscaping	50	36
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	25
Litter Control	50	35
Waste Minimisation	20	9
Tidiness	30	15
Residential Areas	40	29
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	32
General Impression	10	8
TOTAL MARK	400	258

Overall Development Approach:

Firstly, thank you for filling out the application form and giving details of work done and future work planned. Your application does not mention a development plan, and we wonder has one been developed for the town? Portumna is fortunate to have such an idyllic setting on the banks of the Shannon and at the head of Lough Derg, along with the 17th century castle and gardens and Portumna Forest Park you have the potential to be amongst the high scorers in the competition.

The Built Environment:

Both the Roman Catholic Church and the Church of Ireland Church enjoy prominent positions in the town, both are well presented, however the wall in front of the Church of Ireland Church is in need of repair. We visited Portumna Castle and the Kitchen Gardens, both are very impressive. We do agree with last years comment that the sign to the Castle is inadequate. Furthermore, signage to the Castle Marina would be beneficial. There are a number of traditional shop fronts such as Hays, Connollys and Clossicks which retain their original character. The Shannonoaks Hotel was well presented. A number of properties on Dominic Street are in need of painting. There are several derelict sites in and around the town, but it was noted that planning permission notices where present on a number of these so hopefully the new proposals will be in keeping with the rest of the town. Your proposal to improve the Shannon Bank walk is welcomed and we look forward to when the project is finished.

Landscaping:

The grotto at the Square was well maintained and in particular we like the boat containing the irises, however, we noticed that the flower beds at the other side of the Church are in need of some attention. We visited the Green Isle Complex but thought the entrance road and landscaping around the building was shabby and in need of attention. The landscaping around the Castle and the Marina are excellent. Flowers were recently

planted at the junction of Clonfert Avenue and Dominic Street. The paved area at the Square with the seating, assumed to be completed under the Urban and Village Renewal Project improves this open space.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

We believe that you have the potential to earn high marks in this section with Portumna Forest Park, Portumna Castle and Kitchen Gardens, the Castle Marina, the Shannon River and Lough Derg on your doorstep. These are all fantastic natural amenities and should be used to maximum advantage – other centres are not as lucky! You are currently in the process of developing a trail and cycle track and extending the existing walkway. We look forward with anticipation to the final result. You should consider erecting signage detailing information on local flora and fauna. Coillte and the Environment Section of Galway County Council should be able to steer you in the right direction. Also, may be for next year you could encourage the children to get “hands on” involvement with the Tidy Towns competition by preparing a brief write up on wildlife or the natural amenities in the area.

Litter Control:

No litter was evident during the adjudication –well done to the clean-up volunteers! We did notice the absence of litter bins at the Castle Marina Car Park and Abbey Picnic Area. The Bring Banks were also free from litter.

Waste Minimisation:

You mention the monitoring of the Brink Bank facility by the Community Warden under this section in your application; unfortunately this does not fall under the concepts of preventing and minimising waste. It may be helpful for you to consult the guidance document produced by the Department entitled “How to win the Race against Waste in your Community” to allow you to gain more marks in this section next year. The Waste Awareness Officer of Galway County Council may also be a good starting point. Consider engaging with the local schools and businesses. Other tidy towns committees have held a waste awareness day or given talks to the local schools on reducing their waste. Your local primary school participate in the Green Flag initiative which has modules in relation to waste minimisation; this has earned you a mark.

Tidiness:

The lighting on the approach road to the Castle Marina was admired. The wall at the Garda barracks in need of painting. The wire fencing above the wall at D.Lynch Agri Sales is somewhat “wonky”! Would it be possible to liaise with the owner to have this removed or replaced? Overhead cables and wires are prevalent in the town and are unsightly. We suggest you lobby Galway County Council with the view of beginning to get some of these underground.

Residential Areas:

In general housing estates are well kept. We visited Lios na Si and Abbey Court, Castle Court and Forest Glade. Continue to lobby the various residents’ associations on monitoring their respective areas.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

The approach roads to the town are generally good, with welcome signs. The footpaths are in good condition near the library and fire station from Castle Avenue. Back streets and back areas could be improved.

General Impression:

We thoroughly enjoyed our adjudication of Portumna in particular our visit to the Castle, and Marina. If you could please bear in mind for the competition next year that the more information supplied with your application the easier it is for the adjudicators to award marks. It is possible that you might be doing yourselves out of additional marks in some sections because of the paucity of information supplied. Overall you should be pleased with your efforts – congratulations and we wish you continued success for the competition in 2008.