

Tidy Towns Competition 2008

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Banagher** Ref: **591**
County: **Offaly** Mark: **255**
Category: **C** Date(s): **12/06/2008**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2008
Overall Development Approach	50	37
The Built Environment	50	36
Landscaping	50	35
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	25
Litter Control	50	34
Waste Minimisation	20	11
Tidiness	30	13
Residential Areas	40	25
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	32
General Impression	10	7
TOTAL MARK	400	255

Overall Development Approach:

Many thanks for your Development Plan 2008-2010, which made interesting reading and the map was very useful on Adjudication Day. The chart indicating the time-frame for your planned work was particularly impressive and useful, in order to clearly see where your priorities are. Work with the local GAA, Foroige, Banagher Ladies Group, Banagher 2000, Offaly West and Local Residents Associations are all very positive. The inclusion of 80 volunteers in your work must be of great benefit to you! Work in relation to the painting of derelict buildings is impressive. Do keep an eye on new development to ensure that it is in keeping with the town's unique character.

The Built Environment:

Most of the buildings along main streets looked well. Banagher is fortunate in that it has a wealth of many fine traditional shopfronts including Quigleys (the adjudicator was disappointed to note the planning application here that suggested it was going to be demolished and replaced by a stone fronted building?) Do ensure the uniqueness of Banagher is not destroyed with ongoing developments. The two churches at the top of the town were well presented – perhaps more landscaping could be considered to the Catholic Church in terms of tree planting. The Community College looked well. St. Ryanaghs School and its relatively new extension looked very fresh and cheerful. La Sainte Union School looked very well. Do discourage plastic signage and discourage the replacement of traditional timber sash windows with plastic or aluminium. Indeed, some towns and villages are actually actively encouraging the re-instatement of traditional sash windows. Lyons is an attractive shopfront as is Hunts - which was very fresh - as was Second Time Around. Quigleys and the Railway Bar are other fine traditional shopfronts. The Billiard Hall will need repainting before next year's competition. The gable to a purple house for sale on the Main Street looked unfortunate. Plans for the refurbishment of the Community Centre are looked forward to with anticipation. Your work with owners of local buildings and individual owners in relation to the streetscape are all positive. Plans for a Playground

group at the marina are looked forward to. There are many fine buildings in the town, including (and especially) the distinctively “Banagheresque” (there are very few examples of this unique style in the country) Royal Shannon Hotel and Crank House.

Landscaping:

The Marina area at the waterside was well presented – rear areas here are a little rough and screening would help in this regard. The playground area here was very attractive and work was under construction on the day. The harbour area was well presented although the Boathouse Restaurant appeared to have been abandoned in this location? The Celtic Cross monument was simply presented. Some cheerful nasturtiums at Heidi’s Coffee House were greatly admired. There are a wealth of opportunities for further development of this area of the competition - for example, the car park area at Crank Road and the open space at the old barracks. Try not to rely too heavily on hanging baskets as a means of developing landscaping. The planting of indigenous trees and the encouragement of permanent planting for year-round effect is of greater importance in this category of the competition. The planting of new trees at St Rynagh’s GAA grounds is impressive. Work in relation to the landscaping of new estates, the Crank House Courtyard, and the new relief road are all very positive projects.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

The development of a wildlife area at the park is a worthwhile projects and is looked forward to. Your liaising with Birdwatch Ireland regarding the protection of the Corncrake habitats along the Shannon is a very important initiative, given this bird’s endangered position!

Litter Control:

Unfortunately the standard in this category was very bad on the day. There was a lot of litter to the harbour area and many papers blowing along Main Street. A lot of litter was evident at the site of the old barracks where old site notices were in place indicating development in this location. Quite a lot of litter was also evident opposite the Texaco Garage on the relief road. A number of litter bins were damaged on Main Street and the dumping of boxes was evident at the bring bank area. Work in relation to litter awareness in schools is most important, as is your work in relation to local households. We are pleased to hear you have a good working relationship with your local litter warden. The weekly litter sweep is an important and worthwhile initiative.

Waste Minimisation:

The awareness campaign in relation to the usage of the recycling facility is worthwhile, as is the targeting of businesses in relation to recycling, and the segregation of litter. The encouragement of composting is also a good project – have you conducted workshops? Do you have plans for a community composting facility? Congratulations to the Community College in relation to achieving Green Flag status.

Tidiness:

The area by the old barracks appears a little round and should be landscaped. Hopefully again the unique heritage of Banagher is respected in regard to the development of this area. Rear areas on minor roads by the concrete works seemed a little rough. A temporary hoarding to a cottage on Main Street looked a little tatty. Weeds were evident to the forecourt area of houses on the relief road in the vicinity of the Texaco Garage. Don’t forget outbuildings, when viewed from main street are very prominent and these should also be considered in your overall presentation. Power-washing of the bridge railings and signage is important and worthwhile. The annual clean ups are an important initiative. You mention working with Offaly County Council in relation to weed control – are the methods used environmentally friendly?

Residential Areas:

Street houses generally looked well– of particular note being the very bright ones beside the Vinehouse Restaurant. Kylebeg the Hill Estate also looked well. An attractive cottage garden with lupins was admired nearby. Houses of the Crescent were quite fresh. One or two boundary walls near the churches appeared a little unfortunate. Work with developers in relation to the satisfactory completion of landscaping of estates is a good initiative, as is the erection of nameplates to estates.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

Approach roads generally looked fine – the verges had been cut back but dead grass had not been removed. A similar situation was evident along the relief road by the Texaco Garage. Road surfaces were a little rough and resurfacing should be considered – consult Offaly County Council in this regard. The Birr Road affords the visitor a magnificent view to the church spire through the trees. The old stone entranceways on either side of the road were admired, as were the new Failte signs in stone. Graffiti was evident to the Welcome to Offaly sign at the bridge where there adjacent unusual timber seats were also damaged. Work in relation to the

development of Market Square is encouraging, as is your work in relation to weed control. The welcome signs in stone on both main entrances to the town were admired.

General Impression:

Good luck with your work regarding derelict sites but do ensure that any future development includes the retention of the existing heritage of the town and does not involve the demolition of the fine vernacular buildings and traditional shopfronts that make Banagher so unique!