

# Tidy Towns Competition 2012

## Adjudication Report

Centre: **Bagenalstown** Ref: **32**  
County: **Carlow** Mark: **270**  
Category: **D** Date(s): **06/07/2012**

	<b>Maximum Mark</b>	<b>Mark Awarded 2011</b>	<b>Mark Awarded 2012</b>
Overall Development Approach	50	35	35
The Built Environment	50	40	41
Landscaping	50	42	42
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	27	27
Litter Control	50	31	32
Tidiness	30	14	15
Waste Minimisation	20	9	9
Residential Areas	40	30	31
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	31	31
General Impression	10	7	7
<b>TOTAL MARK</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>266</b>	<b>270</b>

### Overall Development Approach:

Welcome Bagenalstown to the 2012 National TidyTowns Competition. Thank you for your comprehensive submission including your map which reached us in time for our visit. Your submission once again included photographs of events and work carried out over the year which was appreciated, as it allows us see how your town and the selected projects have progressed since last years competition. We note you are in the development stage in setting up a BIG website. This will be a great resource to advertise your works and maybe earn more volunteers. Although being able to draw volunteers from numerous bodies into the town including the local scout groups and civil defence team is a real achievement and an indication of the profile of your group. As a group you seem to have a well structured approach to gaining support from various agencies in the town, be it sponsorship or in a more practical nature. We would encourage you to formularise your planned work into a town plan covering a three or five year period. Look to the TidyTowns handbook for advice on how to proceed with this. Perhaps you could publish a link to any new plan on the proposed website to let the community as a whole see what your objectives are. Maybe have a comments section on the site where residents can suggest areas they feel could do with some input from your group or congratulate you on your work. It's great to hear that your committee meetings are inspirational, long may this spirit continue!

### The Built Environment:

While these are challenging times for business in most towns, we congratulate your shops for keeping up a fine standard of shop presentation. However we would ask you to look to the upper floors of all premises to ensure the standards here matches the lower levels. The bilingual timber signage at Healy's pharmacy was very well done and the cheerful presentation of the Little Shop was also admired. The muted colour tone and discreet signage of the Doyles Railway Arms was also admired, even if one letter had dropped off! The premises of O'Duinns butchers and wine shops was very well presented and the premises here highlighted

one of the delights of this adjudicator's visit to your town. It was the lovely detail of the numerous stone door surrounds and window details of which this premises was just one of the lovely examples admired. These street level details could only really be admired as one walked through the town and from the Georgian homes on Regent Street to the stone surrounds on High Street, it all made for a very pleasant stroll through the town's architectural history. Well done in mainlining the old library's function as in so many towns the solution to an old buildings problem is to relocate and leave a functionless ruin in a core town location. It really is a lovely spot. Once again a visit to the Beam centre was in order with its bridge link to street level. It looks as if the gardens here have some room to expand. Would you consider a vegetable plot or orchard here to provide fare for the coffee shop?

### **Landscaping:**

The town park is a delight and was very well used on adjudication day with the play area in particular very well frequented. We hope with the development of a town plan that you will take a long term approach to the planting in your town. In addition to the focus on seasonal planting the focus both on preserving the trees you have and new tree planting is to be encouraged. This long term tree planting will be a gift to future generations that may take some years to mature but is the approach to be considered. The new avenue of trees planted to the pedestrian path at the Vocational School is an example of this. We see that you hope to keep the cost of bedding down with growing plants from seed. Also consider herbaceous perennials when devising planning schemes as these will come back year after year and are a much more sustainable approach to planting. This adjudicator was also charmed by the small stone sculptures that popped up in various locations throughout the town. There was something very friendly and 'human' if you like, about them and they were a delight to find whether at Kilcarrig Street, Father Cummins Park or the entrance to the town as you approach from Leighlinbridge. A similar timber sculpture was also spotted on the opposite bank of the river at the Quay. Another example of small details that make a town all the richer.

### **Wildlife and Natural Amenities:**

The Barrow really is a lovely asset for all your residents and again good luck with your work here following the recommendations of the Barrow Study. Have you made any progress in carrying out a habitat survey of your town? This would help you identify key sites of interest and formulate plans to help improve biodiversity by intervention or management practices. A simple survey could be based on your town plan. Develop a key to include perhaps 5-10 habitat types of relevance to the town. The local Vocational College could help you with this or get the schools involved. You could also include particular trees or tree groups including those at risk. This then allows you target action and can be the basis of actions in this category for your proposed town plan. We feel this would help you structure your approach in this area and would help you gain marks over the coming years. Be careful of disturbing bat habitats with any plans to light up Rudkins Mill, get advice from Bat Conservation Ireland.

### **Litter Control:**

The emphasis you have placed on litter prevention was very evident in the town with few areas of litter evident. The most obvious issue was the accumulation of floating litter along the river at the Old Mill area, which is unfortunate as we know how many resources you put into addressing this issue. Well done in all your efforts here. We liked the fact that you had painted some of the old concrete litter bins black, which does help unite the town's street furniture and gives them a bit of a makeover. A couple around the town have yet to be painted but well done on this approach as many centres feel the need to rip out old bins and replace them which in many cases is unnecessary. A facelift as you have done is a much more sustainable approach.

### **Tidiness:**

On a bright and sunny day the town was well presented and the cutting of grass verges on approach roads really does set the scene for visitors travelling into the town. While the issue of derelict buildings is difficult to address, your approach of identifying the owner is to be admired and we wish you well with working with them to try to improve your situation. Very little graffiti was noted in town and where it may be an issue, such as the wall at the train station car park, there was evidence that it is being addressed.

### **Waste Minimisation:**

Well done to the work that has been carried out by the local schools and the success in their involvement in the Green Flag scheme. This is a great programme and while it educates pupils it also brings the message back into homes as well. Have you noted any progress made by businesses within the town to address this category? Do any of them take part in the repack scheme? Contact local business that regularly distributes junk mail to see if they can place ads in local papers or shops rather than mass leaflet drops. Are there any local initiatives to encourage waste minimisation by the reuse of printer toners, cartridges and old batteries? There may already be schemes run in the town that could be included in this category for next year and gain you marks in this category. As in last years visit the Bring Centres such as at the Carlow County Council

Offices, were well used and well maintained.

### **Residential Areas:**

Once again the standard in this category was very good with the communal areas in all estates visited looking well. The tubs at Pairc Muire brightened up the footpath without hindering access. It is encouraging to see that you have an active network of Residents Committees as they can do so much to support you and vice versa. Have you considered holding an annual event such as a barbeque to get all the Resident Committees together? This could be hosted by a different committee every year. This could lead to even closer linkages and gets people together in a fun way. If you organise any best gardens or estates competitions it could also double up as the award event. This is an idea that has worked well in other centres and it improves community ties.

### **Roads, Streets and Back Areas:**

Like all centres, during the summer months there tends to be a plethora of temporary signs advertising various events. Keep an eye on these before they become too prolific. Make sure once the event is over the signs are removed. This adjudicator enjoyed a walk along the Barrow from the Parade to the Quay but wondered why the seating at the junction here faces the road rather than the river? Also the wildlife sign here seems to address the road while the information contained on this was catering to the pedestrian. When siting street furniture and signage, be aware of orientation and the end users. What a pity the riverside path is not continuous to the quay. Is it because of vehicle turning that there is not room for a path linking the riverside route to the Quay along the bottom of Hotel Street?

### **General Impression:**

Bagnelstown has progressed well in the TidyTowns Competition and over time has developed close working relationships with many key stakeholders in the town. In order to progress further in the competition we feel that in some categories such as in the waste minimisation area, you can do more to gain marks. Also do progress your town plan. Well done to all involved in this year submission and we wish you continued success in 2013.