

Tidy Towns Competition 2012

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Skibbereen** Ref: **693**
County: **Cork(West)** Mark: **286**
Category: **C** Date(s): **13/06/2012**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2011	Mark Awarded 2012
Overall Development Approach	50	41	42
The Built Environment	50	37	37
Landscaping	50	37	37
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	33	33
Litter Control	50	35	37
Tidiness	30	17	17
Waste Minimisation	20	11	11
Residential Areas	40	29	29
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	34	35
General Impression	10	8	8
TOTAL MARK	400	282	286

Overall Development Approach:

Thank you for your entry form and submission, complete with three dimensional maps which proved helpful on adjudication day. The commitment to the presentation of your town is well illustrated by the amount of members on your committee and your ability to work closely with the Town Council and other agencies. Your association with the Coast to Coast group is no doubt beneficial in presenting such areas to a high standard. Let us know your progress in the production of a web site for the town. The town was judged over two days, one during continuous rain and one in far better conditions. You have a large area to attend to and the traffic in and around the town is quite a challenge. Well done too and your involvement with local radio which is an important means of communicating your work with the community. The town has grown and developed since this adjudicator's last visit and the many well presented roundabouts and large commercial buildings have changed the appearance of the town significantly. All of these developments now challenge you to keep the town well presented.

The Built Environment:

Public buildings and commercial outlets were well presented and some excel in presentation. The cathedral which commands a focal site on this location is dominant and well presented. The many schools are well presented but the traffic situation at collection time near the Gael Scoil is chaotic. We liked the many traditional shopfronts in and around the town and these represent one of your strong points. Many are recently refurbished and freshly painted and were attractive on judging day. The green flags at the schools speak for themselves and reflect a positive and active outlook for the environment, so well done. Shopfronts that caught the eye included the following: Credit Union, Kevin O Regan, Library, Alma, Fiona's and Morgan O Driscoll. The Town Hall has been recently painted and is excellent, well embellished with attractive floral displays, good street furniture and sculpture. Next step we hope will be the removal of the large ESB pole and the placing of cables underground. Our visit to the Heritage Centre (the most signposted building in the town) was much

enjoyed. You need to refurbish some of your signage, e.g. The large hanging banner at the entrance, some seating and landscaping need improvement and we noticed a car trailer with rubbish parked near the entrance for a long period because of the weed growth in evidence. New supermarkets are bright and colourful but they need to tone down their signage. The Bus Eireann Complex was well presented.

Landscaping:

You have worked hard on the comprehensive display of landscaping and the colourful abundance of bright containers, self standing hanging baskets, tubs, private window boxes and numerous flower beds of high quality. Landscaping of previous years continues to enhance, e.g. opposite the Library. We liked the raised landscaping at the Sports Centre: the two lime trees here are doing well but you may have to remove one in the near future. The hospital entrance is excellent and provides a welcoming approach to the town. The playground is spacious and very well presented. Some colour would be welcome at the Fire Station. You might consider a flower blitz at the JFK Bridge which is interesting, while we acknowledge the attractive hanging baskets here. We liked the treatment of the old railway bridge and the West Cork Hotel is well maintained. You have a number of open spaces that would benefit from a clean up and planting. The well kept Páirc Uí Dhonabháin Rossa is of high quality and very well presented. The adjacent GAA entrance is poor in presentation and should remove the two sponsor signs at the entrance gate. We note the intention to develop a new entrance which will offer opportunity for a much improved presentation. The walking route display map on the Cork Road is excellent and well positioned; also the rose garden at the roundabout is well cared for, so well done. In general the town was bright and well presented with some excellent flower displays that portray an image of welcome.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

The river Ilan offers great opportunity for raising your marks in this section. Well done on your work to date and we are glad to learn that wildlife is progressing in Skibbereen and that various species are returning to the river. The caol stream is interesting and so much part of the core town. The river walk is praiseworthy and offers potential to popularise wildlife amongst visitors and locals. You should try and involve school goers in your work here and this will add to the knowledge of what is required to advance your activity.

Litter Control:

We commend you on your anti litter work and your many programmes with the public. We found the town generally free of litter on adjudication day and litter bins were adequate in numbers, although some would benefit from cleaning. Our photographs show streets without litter with good markings and signage, especially in the core area of the town. We walked the various streets and any small amount of litter is related to some abandoned open spaces and some dereliction and unoccupied buildings. Our biggest single disappointment was at the Recycling Centre which is poor in road surface and has much litter on the perimeter. The adjacent Council Yard does little to improve this Centre and needs attention. Nevertheless we acknowledge the importance of this facility which was in good demand on adjudication day.

Tidiness:

Your problems here relate to some untidy open spaces and poorly presented sheds and signage in need of cleaning, e.g., open space beside Liam O Donovan, and the signage at the West Cork Planning Office. Some approach roads look untidy because of the high grass growth, despite the attractive flower planting. The car park off Bridge Street is well presented with attractive public lighting, perhaps you might consider some tree planting here, and a feature now quite common in most newly developed car parks. Major problems like the burned out premises opposite the Bridge are beyond the scope of TidyTowns and you are only expected to lobby the local authority for a remedy.

Waste Minimisation:

Your policy of segregation is good and well within the recommendations of the guidelines. Do lay emphasis on the three Rs, Reduce, Reuse and Recycle, coupled with the promotion of best practice. Your efforts to involve the schools to such a degree will benefit your marking in this section. Organising a local competition will prove beneficial, so well done.

Residential Areas:

Your many housing estates are good and some excel. The Gortnaclohy Housing estate is well presented, but the top of High Street is very overgrown and some dereliction here also. On all approach roads there are well presented houses, many with outstanding gardens, all combining to present a pleasant image at the town's approach roads. We urge you to continue with you involvement of housing estates and perhaps embark on a local competition.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

The road structure leading into and within the core of the town is excellent with bright markings, good directional signage, colourful roundabouts and good infrastructure. Your efforts to discipline the traffic and your provision of free car parking at various designated locations are most praiseworthy. We would welcome more street names in addition to the principal street names which are good in design and presentation. We liked the appearance of Cork Marts. Most approach roads have attractive illustrated entry signs and we would urge you to continue with this policy where required on lesser approach roads.

General Impression:

Despite the torrential rain on day one of our visit the town looked really well and we could see at a glance that you have worked hard on your preparation. As mentioned you have a big area to cover and a large population to cater for. Your challenge now is to continue with your planned projects and to bring the community in your endeavours. Your long experience will serve you well as you tackle new and existing developments. We wish you well in the future: Go n  ir   libh.