

Tidy Towns Competition 2014

Adjudication Report

Centre:	Skibbereen	Ref:	693
County:	Cork(West)	Mark:	294
Category:	C	Date(s):	14/06/2014

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2014
Community Involvement & Planning	60	45
Built Environment and Streetscape	50	39
Landscaping and Open Spaces	50	40
Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities	50	34
Sustainable Waste and Resource Management	50	13
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	57
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	29
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	37
TOTAL MARK	450	294

Community Involvement & Planning / Rannpháirtíocht an Phobail & Pleanáil:

Skibbereen is welcome back to the Supervalu Tidy Towns competition 2014. We enjoyed our visit to your lovely town where many positive changes have taken place in recent times. Thank you for your entry form accompanied by a helpful map and Summary Achievements/Plan.

For next year, you might consider putting some thought and time into the preparation of a 3-year Tidy Towns Plan. It can be as simple as one or two pages as long as it is giving you direction and structure in your various actions. We would recommend that you lay out your Plan under the eight category headings so each area receives equal focus. Have a look at the table format that was emailed to all Tidy Towns groups earlier this year – this should assist you. Your active committee is forging good links with outside agencies such as Cork County Council and West Cork Development Partnership. We are glad to hear that the local businesses in are in support of your efforts. You are engaging well with local clubs and communicate your messages through various channels including social media. Keep up the good work and we wish you well with future projects.

Built Environment and Streetscape / An Timpeallacht Thógtha agus Sráid-dreacha:

It is wonderful to see the old railway bridge being used by customers of the lovely West Cork hotel. We hope the interesting building opposite will be purchased and put to good use soon. Skibbereen Heritage Centre is a fine building. Busy Bee's Fast Food was neat and fresh. Other buildings that caught the eye were Liam O' Donovan's Solicitors, Bridge House, An Chistin Beag, Charles McCarthy's, Clerke's, Francis Collins, Hamilton's pharmacy, Thornhills, Yellow House Montessori School, Trendy Hair Fashions. Both the Permanent TSB and Post Office are interesting buildings that are well maintained.

Could the derelict house at the T-junction (Bridge St end) be painted as it occupies such a prominent position? The Southern Star occupies a significant site in town and is neatly presented. At the other end of the town, the Square is a small but well utilised area. The nearby Tourist Office looks well.

One of the highlights of our visit was the lovely North Street areas with its interesting mix of churches, schools and arts centre. Railings near the impressive cathedral were being painted to further enhance this area. The playground area was a hive of activity. The Skibbereen retirement home is neat; however the boundary wall is quite weedy. PRENCO has well maintained grounds. The Regal garage on the Castletownsend road gives an untidy impression. The Skibbereen Community & Family Resource Centre looks well.

Landscaping and Open Spaces / Tírdhreachú agus Spásanna Oscailte:

JFK Bridge is in good order and is enhanced by impressive flower boxes. Ornate flower stands along the main street bring a welcome splash of colour. The planted areas at the Heritage Centre car park could do with a tidy up. Lidl has attractive boundary landscaping. The ring road and roundabouts are very well maintained. The interesting

sculptures at the roundabouts were admired. North Street contains some attractive landscaping, particularly outside the Arts Centre. Appropriate landscaping could be used to improve the Schull Road approach.

Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities / Fiadhúlra, Gnáthóga agus Taitneamhachtaí Nádurtha:

The Ilen river is a haven for birdlife. A sign for the 'Birds of river Ilen' event was noted. It is always a good idea to take photos of such awareness events to submit with your application. It is difficult to judge awareness-raising initiatives on the day we visit. Continue to show how you are making the most of local or outside expertise in this category. Do you have a local wildlife enthusiast or third level student studying in this area? There are plenty of free resources and advice available. It is also crucial to link up with any schools that are working towards their 'biodiversity' green flag. This would be for your mutual benefit. Do name such schools next time and let us know of their activities relevant to this category. Keep us updated of any surveys carried out, that would be relevant to this category. You could also participate in one of the many online wildlife surveys organised by groups such as Irish Wildlife Trust. Start with protecting what you have and raising awareness of it among the wider community.

Sustainable Waste and Resource Management / Bainistiú Acmhainní agus Dramhaíola Inbhuanaithe:

Well done to the schools for achieving Green Flags – we know that all the children are bringing the messages home on how we should be reducing waste, water and energy for a better environment. Any examples of how they have been doing this? Do tell us next time what theme of the Green Flag programme the school is now working on. This is important in term of your own work and you should be linking in with their actions.

The focus of this category has moved on in recent years towards waste prevention and more efficient use of resources such as water, energy and transport. There has been large jump in marks available so focus is required if you wish to progress in this category. Recycling initiatives are still an important component of a good waste management system but please tell us how residents in are saving on these resources. E.g. do you try to use rainwater to water summer bedding? Please refer to the 2013 guidelines and pick a few ideas that would work best for Skibbereen. Alternatively, visit www.localprevention.ie/tidytowns to see what other initiatives are happening around the country. We look forward to hearing of further progress next year.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

Litter control was very good throughout the busy town and residential areas so well done to all involved. Your annual clean ups are helping to bring Skibbereen to a higher standard, thereby discouraging further littering. There was minor littering at Eurospar car park. Mutt Mitt dispensers were noted and you appear to be tackling this challenging litter issue.

Roundabouts and the ring road were tidy in appearance apart from the Schull Road, which was somewhat weedy. Look out for disused poles and request their removal if not being used (near T junction/Liam O Donovan's Solicitors, another downhill from Garda Station). Dirty signs can also give an untidy impression, such as the Yield sign at the bottom of this hill. Please try to ensure that event organisers take down advertising signage as soon as possible after the event. e.g. Country Music Festival on June bank holiday. Christmas lights at McCarthy's bar give a cluttered appearance. The finger post sign at the junction near Super Valu car park requires attention.

Residential Streets & Housing Areas / Sráideanna Cónaithe & Ceantair Tithíochta:

Residential areas were well presented overall. Some along town streets were freshly painted and colourful; others were enhanced with window boxes or tubs. Skibbereen has a large number of housing estates – general well maintained with and litter-free. Patrick's Place was neat as was Mardyke Park. Lovely houses were noted along Townsend Street, however some railings require attention. The Mills is lovely with attractive planting at the name stone. However some of the plants are obscuring the sign; please plant appropriate low-growing plants in these locations. Along Gotnacloy Drive, footpaths were a little weedy. Gortnacloy Heights was clean and neat. Please continue to update us on how you are engaging with residents committees and encouraging them to get involved. Well done to all involved.

Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes / Bóithre Isteach, Sráideanna & Lánaí:

The Cork approach is the commercial end of the town. Both main approaches have scope to be further improved. On the Bantry Road, weeds along footpaths catch the eye though we did spot one local volunteer in the process of tackling them. The by-pass itself is clean and well maintained. It appears to part of a popular walking circuit. Street signage is in good order. It was difficult to cross the street at times (Bridge St) due to the heavy volume of traffic. Additional pedestrian crossing areas would make the town easier to navigate on foot and more enjoyable for visitors. The tunnel of trees on Rossa Road makes for a very inviting approach road. The tree-lined Baltimore Road approach is also in good order. Skibbereen has ample car parking in the town and all was in neat order. Visitor Information signage is good.