

# Tidy Towns Competition 2017

## Adjudication Report

Centre: **Skibbereen**

Ref: **693**

County: **Cork(West)**

Mark: **314**

Category: **C**

Date(s): **21/07/2017**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2016	Mark Awarded 2017
Community Involvement & Planning	60	46	46
Built Environment and Streetscape	50	41	43
Landscaping and Open Spaces	50	41	42
Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities	50	36	36
Sustainable Waste and Resource Management	50	16	19
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	60	60
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	31	31
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	37	37
<b>TOTAL MARK</b>	<b>450</b>	<b>308</b>	<b>314</b>

### Community Involvement & Planning / Rannpháirtíocht an Phobail & Pleanáil:

Skibbereen is very welcome to the 2017 SuperValu National Tidy Towns Competition in this its 58th year of participation! it was a great pleasure to visit your town once again not having visited for many years and to witness the many improvements made while at the same time holding on to what's best about your lovely town. Thank you for your submission particularly the helpful map which was colour coded and linked numerically to details in the entry form; your multi-annual /Tidy Towns plan was not included, we look forward to receiving a copy of this next year. The committee has the help of many volunteers (35) and has forged strong links with many stakeholders that have a commitment to the development of the Skibbereen; the excellent relationship with the schools are a good investment in the future of Skibbereen. It is a pleasure to note the many benefits that have accrued to the community as a result of participating in the competition; thank you!

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

The Heritage Centre looks wonderful and the West Cork Hotel looks quite elegant. There are some lovely shop-fronts on Main Street and the West Cork Arts Centre is impressive in design and presentation; Bridge Street and Main Street have a good mix of building types and presentations are very good indeed. The absence of overhead service cables on North Street enhances its streetscape considerably. The development of the Heritage Trail with a smartphone App is a wonderful achievement and we look forward to the touch screen tourist information panel being activated and the proposed walkways fully developed with signage. The Heritage Centre is a joy to experience and a return visit for leisure purposes is promised; well done also on universal accessibility to the latter and more buildings within Skibbereen. The 60m timber hoarding was brightly painted at the time of adjudication and caught the eye in a pleasant way. Public buildings are nicely presented, a school looks as if it has been recently painted and its grounds are neat, it appears not to have the nameplate; the Community School was admired for its presentation. The Gable wall of the C Connolly premises should be improved as it forms the corner of Market Street and is a focal point in the townscape. The upper storey of the Party and Gift Shop premises on North Street as well as a few others need improvement. Congratulations on the 10 premises that were refurbished to their roadside façade under the 'Project Paint Up' initiative.

### Landscaping and Open Spaces / Tírdhreachú agus Spásanna Oscailte:

The pupils of Saint Patrick's National Boys School are to be congratulated for their work on container flower displays throughout the town, this really is a fine achievement and we are indebted to them. The flower displays at the 1798 memorial look quite magnificent; the entrances to Skibbereen are graced with appealing flower displays also; the town's roundabouts including one with an intriguing sculpture were admired too. The edible landscaping project is a fun and practical initiative; the reuse of old refurbished pallets as flower beds is a nice touch and again a practical

one. It is good to note that recently planted trees are native species and the type chosen will attract birds for their berries in the autumn. No doubt you are aware of the need to plant for year-round colour and interest. Grassed areas are being nicely maintained. Don't forget to include details of your tree management activities also.

### **Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities / Fiadhúlra, Gnáthóga agus Taitneamhachtaí Nádúrtha:**

Skibbereen's two-pronged approach to its wildlife heritage is admirable; protecting and promoting the amenities themselves and educating and raising awareness amongst the community. The town's greatest amenities Lough Hyne and Knockomagh Hill together with The Rock in the town centre and the River Ilan are promoted continuously through exhibition, leaflets and walks and are continuously being developed sensitively. Work on the eradication of Japanese Knotweed has delayed the full potential of The Rock being realised however this is an invaluable undertaking which will be amply repaid in the future. We wish you every success in making the river more accessible by walkways and other developments and well done on sensitivity to habitats and other aspects of wildlife to date in flood management activities. The committee might like to consider a relatively small-scale project under the National Pollination Plan and include the schools; bird species counts might also be undertaken particularly if there are swifts. The numerous nature activities engaged in by the schools are applauded. Walk information panels on Chapel Quay are great as they give distances and other useful information however the surrounding area is very overgrown and looks quite poor. The playground on the Clonakilty Road is well maintained and was in good demand during adjudication.

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

A visit to the Geodome and garden in St Patricks Boys National School is a 'must' as it is quite an amazing development. The contribution of the school to the floral displays throughout Skibbereen is highly visible and appreciated. The Community Orchard features an array of fruits and it is all the more satisfying to note that no chemicals have been used in growing them. Composting and rainwater harvesting activities as well as Walk to School initiative are all in place not to mention the 'Incredible Edible' and 'Appletown' projects. Green Schools, Green Business, Zero Waste, there is no shortage of ideas and imagination for creative projects. Now is a good time to quantify savings and efficiencies achieved to date in waste and resource management and to extrapolate into the future to set long term goals.

### **Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:**

60m of hoarding to screen a derelict site is quite an achievement, congratulations! Skibbereen is tidy overall but an exception was the area at the back of SuperValu which was quite littered and there were small amounts to be seen in the river here too. Work in progress along this stretch of river at the public toilets was noted, the area will look better on the completion of work. Some vacant properties in the main thoroughfare are regrettable, hopefully they will see redevelopment soon. Wirescape looks untidy too in all but North Street in the centre; well done on ducting in Mill Street. Involvement in numerous litter and general clean-ups throughout the town and its environs is admirable, keep us updated on the dog-fouling project results. Litter should be analysed to identify its source, type, location and frequency in order to formulate a strategy to reduce the need for clean-ups.

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

Residential developments are nicely presented in respect of their green areas and landscaping. A beautifully painted terrace of residential properties on Market Street was admired; some examples of roadside boundary walls to be improved were noted on Townsend Street and elsewhere. Hopefully the communication with property owners of vacant dwellings will bring about the desired results. The Housing estate challenge appears to be fun, competitive and fruitful.

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

The entrance from the Castletownshend road is attractive with nice name plates and good landscaping; The Baltimore entrance looks well too with its narrow-trimmed margin backed by wildflowers and nameplate. The entrance from the N71 at the Killarney end of the town would look better if the footpath was kept free of weed growth and the hard shoulder was finished. All stretches of loose natural stone walls where these exist should be revealed as much as possible and refurbished in the traditional manner (stones laid vertically) and highlighted as a handsome feature of Skibbereen. The Community School and road surface here are superb; some sites on the road to the Community School look less well. Footpaths are of a mixed standard on North Street and elsewhere, some newly resurfaced stretches have been noted. The Church car park on North Street is well surfaced; The height barrier to the car park on Bridge Street looks bad. Street furniture in general enjoys good maintenance.

### **Concluding Remarks:**

Skibbereen has a lot to offer in terms of heritage both cultural and from the natural world and is making excellent progress in delivering this to its full potential.