

Tidy Towns 1997

"Caring for our environment"

Centre : **CASTLETOWNBERE**
County : **CORK**
Category : **C**

Results

Date of Adjudication : 06-07-97

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 1997	Mark Awarded 1996
Overall Developmental Approach	50	36	36
The Built Environment	40	27	26
Landscaping	40	23	20
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	16	16
Litter Control	40	20	21
Tidiness	20	11	12
Residential Areas	30	22	20
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	18	18
General Impression	10	6	6
TOTAL MARK	300	179	175

Castletownbere, Co. Cork

OVERALL DEVELOPMENTAL APPROACH

The difficulties experienced by a new group taking on responsibility at short notice are appreciated. It is good to read in the answers to the questionnaire of your co-operative involvement with local bodies, and of your participation in the FAS Youth Employment Scheme. The suggestion made by last year's adjudicator that you consider preparing as 3 or 5 year Development Plan is worth pursuing, scheduling projects on a phased basis for completion in certain years rather than trying to accomplish everything at once. Centres which have produced such plans have invariably improved their placing in the competition. On your map next year, please mark the names of all streets and housing estates, and also the locations of improvements which have been completed or are on the way to completion.

THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Both Churches are well maintained as usual. The Hospital with its pleasant grounds, the ESB, and an industrial building next door, are fine examples of well-presented public and commercial property. The Garda Station is very smart indeed, as is the Hotel. There are some good shopfronts; those mentioned in the questionnaire, as well as others admired by the adjudicator, were photographed for consideration in the various shopfront awards. (Those which are well designed, with exceptional quality of workmanship and maintenance, where the whole building is in first-class condition (including upper storeys, roofs and stacks), and where there is an absence of plastic or mass-produced signage, PVC glazing bars, and window stickers, have the greatest chance of success). A prominent derelict building at the west end of the town seems to have been there for some time.

LANDSCAPING

Landscaping at the back of the town is most impressive, especially at the entrance to the school and on a prominent rocky site nearby. Planting along the seafront is a distinct improvement, and the new paving with young trees in the centre of the Square is a real step forward: there is room for much more tree-planting around the perimeter of the Square, which could transform this space in a very few years.

WILDLIFE AND NATURAL AMENITIES

Situated between ocean and hillside, Castletownbere abounds in areas of natural interest. Suggestions made by last year's adjudicator might be considered again; there are also suggestions under this heading in the Tidy Towns booklet. Nature walks might be signposted, as has been done successfully by other committees in the county, perhaps taking in the remarkable number of standing stones, burial mounds, holy wells etc. at

scenic points in the neighbourhood.

LITTER CONTROL

This was very disappointing on adjudication day. There was a light scattering of disposable litter in the main street, even where bins are handy, and also at the river bridge at the east end. The paved area in the centre of the square was litter-strewn. The bin nearest to the ferry terminal was overflowing, and rubbish bags had been deposited nearby. The comments made by last year's adjudicator state something similar.

TIDINESS

There was considerable debris at the port (near the toilets) - other than acceptable materials required by businesses or fishing which were often well organised. Kerbside weed was prevalent in a number of places, most obviously on the hill leading to the holiday homes and the road leading to the hotel. As mentioned last year, there was even weed growth on the steps leading to the R.C. Church in the town centre. In spite of good efforts at some sites near the junction of the main road with the road to the Cametringane, this area has a very untidy air.

RESIDENTIAL AREAS

Painted street houses are mostly well maintained. A small un-named hilltop estate of private houses near the holiday homes is well looked after, with some nice gardens, though the approach road is weedy. The holiday village is also well looked after except for a poor post-and-wire fence at the sea view - a wall in local stone, a wooden paling or a hedge of (for example) hawthorn or escallonia would be much more in keeping. Local authority housing off the road to the west is impressive, with its well-tended grassed areas. A short street of older houses opposite the Hospital is notable for its charming roadside gardens. The imaginatively laid-out estate immediately to the west has excellent stone walls and fine lawns, with older cottages fitting cosily into the scheme. The garden of Island View is so extensive and attractive it might almost be termed landscaping.

ROADS, STREETS AND BACK AREAS

The sweeping approach road from Glengarriff is especially impressive. That from the west will be much improved when road widening or maintenance has been completed on one section - it is to be hoped that the concrete block wall will be faced in stone. Surfaces are good. The new paving at the Square has been praised above. Good to see stone walls and a weed-free car park at the GAA Sports Ground, and surprising to see so much weed on the car park at the Hotel. The hillside road (Chapel Lane) above the town was unfavourably mentioned last year and there seems to have been no improvement, with broken walls, unpainted extensions and unsightly 'backs' detracting from properties which are better looked after; this was the worst street seen by this adjudicator anywhere this year.

GENERAL IMPRESSION

Castletownbere is an unusually handsome town, in an unusually

picturesque location. It is in the details where marks are being lost in the competition. If every householder, and every business proprietor, took the responsibility which the majority take for their immediate frontages and back areas, and a more proactive approach by the local authority in terms of overall environmental maintenance, there would be a very marked and rapid improvement. A reading of the answers to the questionnaire suggest that a more alert and effective regime is now installed, and this is to be hugely welcomed.