

"Caring for our environment"

Centre : **UNION HALL**
County : **CORK**
Category : **A**

Results

Date of Adjudication : 11-06-97

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 1997	Mark Awarded 1996
Overall Developmental Approach	50	35	36
The Built Environment	40	27	26
Landscaping	40	25	24
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	21	21
Litter Control	40	28	26
Tidiness	20	11	12
Residential Areas	30	21	21
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	25	25
General Impression	10	7	7
TOTAL MARK	300	200	198

Union Hall, Co. Cork

OVERALL DEVELOPMENTAL APPROACH

The assistance from the County Council, the co-operation of the FAS Youth Employment Scheme and the involvement of students and children, suggest strong support for your efforts, rather than the somewhat pessimistic note which you sound in your answers to the questionnaire. Good work is being done. Determination is the key: many centres of similar size but with less picturesque surroundings and a less pleasing townscape do very well. In regard to litter left by visitors to holiday homes, a partial solution might be that when welcomed to their accommodation a diplomatic reference be made to respecting the locality, and this could also be made in the literature handed out. Centres which have compiled a 3-to-5 year Development Plan, outlining their priorities annually over the period chosen, have found the exercise very beneficial.

THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

The two churches and the school are well maintained. The streetscape is most attractive, but some buildings simply need greater attention to upkeep; however, the general picture is one of much charm. Dinty Collins pub was photographed as well as those suggested, because of the colouring, lettering and use of well-designed signage. (When entering buildings for awards, remember that however attractive the frontage, those with unpainted gables, poorly maintained chimney stacks and roofs, PVC glazing bars on windows, or plastic signs, will hardly have a chance).

LANDSCAPING

Very pleasant planting of shrubs and annuals give an excellent impression on the Glandore side, as do small scale floral decorations elsewhere on public and private property. The landscaping of the school grounds is very impressive indeed. The extensive lawns at the housing estate provide a wonderful open space, but mown grass should be removed immediately after cutting.

WILDLIFE AND NATURAL AMENITIES

The variety of fine hardwoods backing the village on all inland sides, and the estuarine and lagoon components of the sea side, must provide excellent wildlife habitats. As last years adjudicator suggested, these could be identified and signposted. There are helpful suggestions in the Tidy Towns booklet, including guidance sheets supplied by Conservation Volunteers Ireland.

LITTER CONTROL

In spite of the difficulties mentioned in your questionnaire, litter control was good.

TIDINESS

Certainly the backs of the houses as seen from the Glandore approach do look untidy; this could only be remedied by a considerable investment which would extend the sea wall now

existing at either end, right across the central area. Such a project would bring an enormous visual improvement. The only really untidy area is between the road and the harbour, where the wall needs repair and there is much weed growth; the authority responsible for the harbour should take responsibility for clearing up debris on its property. A nearby small warehouse needs attention. There was also much weed in the area round the ice plant. Builders debris somewhat marred a triangular site on the approach from Skibbereen. An untidy entrance noted last year had not been appreciably tidied, and a very untidy corner was noted between the Church of Ireland gate and a beautifully painted pink house. There was a poorly tended section of verge opposite the Union Crafts shop, and much weed growth in the car park of the Community Hall.

RESIDENTIAL AREAS

As mentioned by last years adjudicator, there is an abundance of well-kept properties, old and new. It is particularly good to see the local tradition of stone building continued in some new houses. The gables of the otherwise well-painted estate-houses on the Castletownsend road have become stained and need attention.

ROADS, STREETS AND BACK AREAS

Approach roads are well presented both from Glandore (mentioned above) and Castletownsend - the fine arch of sycamores and old stone walls on the latter give a delightful initial impression. Stonework through the village is excellent, whether old or new, except at the quay (mentioned above). Public seating facing the bay, adverted to last year, had not been painted by adjudication day. The area marked No dumping opposite the school needs attention.

GENERAL IMPRESSION

A village of immense charm where the problems listed are relatively minor and could be overcome gradually through a phased plan.