

# Tidy Towns Competition 2003

## Adjudication Report

Centre: **Skibbereen**

Ref: **510**

County: **Cork West**

Mark: **239**

Category: **C**

Date: **05/08/2003**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2003	Mark Awarded 2002
Overall Developmental Approach	50	46	45
The Built Environment	40	32	32
Landscaping	40	32	32
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	22	21
Litter Control	40	30	29
Tidiness	20	14	13
Residential Areas	30	24	24
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	31	31
General Impression	10	8	8
<b>TOTAL MARK</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>239</b>	<b>235</b>

### Overall Developmental Approach:

The adjudicator would like to thank the Chairperson of Skibbereen Tidy Towns for the friendly helpful letter that accompanied the comprehensive documentation submitted with the entry form. All of the documentation was used on adjudication day and the very detailed map was most useful. It was noted that your committee has just 4 members and the adjudicator would like to welcome this new committee to the competition. The very strong local financial support and other supports are very obvious and the whole town appears to be behind the competition, and this is excellent. The annual Tidy Towns Plan documentation was again most useful. The Skibbereen Famine Trail is a very worthwhile development and this links with the heritage centre. Skibbereen is to be congratulated on the development of the heritage centre a few years ago. The old building has been most beautifully adapted to a productive new use. Both exhibitions are extremely interesting and the centre was quite busy on the day of adjudication - and the staff are so efficient!

### The Built Environment:

The planning application for Levis Quay sounds most interesting and just across the stream other development work is under way. At long last it seems as if this historic and interesting part of the town is to be restored. The new fire station is a very attractive modern building and it is good to see modern architectural trends coming into local authority development. The adjudicator looks forward to seeing the results of the schools' work on local shop-fronts. The digitizing of these is an excellent concept. Many shop-fronts are so well presented and a few that come to mind include the opticians,

Rose O'Brien's, and Chop Shop. The legal practise at 67 North Street is an excellent example of how a very straight forward presentation can be so extremely effective. At 20 Bridge Street, the Cahalane premises is a restoration or replication of a traditional shop-front and this works very well. The Eldon and West Cork hotels were also looking well. However, the old railway bridge at the West Cork Hotel will need re-painting for 2004, if possible. The production of the 'Business Guidelines' document and the similar approach for householders is a good practical idea. The playground on the Cork approach is a very popular amenity and is being well maintained. Fine stone wall at the veterinary clinic helps to "set off" that important building.

### **Landscaping:**

The planting of 700 trees at Newbridge Park by the residents is an excellent achievement as this is such a great environmental investment in the future. The reorganisation of the planted areas in the car park of Main Street has been examined and the low screens for the plants appear to be effective. You have indicated that you are to extend the programme of hanging baskets. A word of caution - make sure that this is not overdone as too many baskets can be somewhat overpowering. Two new roundabouts are under construction and hopefully the landscaping standard will be in line with the excellent results achieved at the Baltimore/Castletownshend Roundabout. The potential new park area on the Marsh Road will be a worthwhile addition to the town. It was a far-seeing initiative to commission the Town Landscape Plan. When adopted, this will act as a "road-map" for all future landscaping development. Excellent landscaping was noted at the South of Ireland Petroleum premises on the Cork approach. Mardyke Street has made a major effort in the provision of hanging baskets. A few boundary walls here need to be re-painted. A good display of trees and shrubs caught the eye at North Street by the church. Again, by the Bantry junction with North Street, very colourful and eye catching displays were noted.

### **Wildlife and Natural Amenities:**

The plan for the River Board Walk sounds great and the adjudicator looks forward to seeing the completed project in time. The River Walk is a great development and hopefully your plans to have it extended will be possible. Nearly opposite the new fire station, the small park area was looking very attractive on adjudication day. The plans for the Rock area are ambitious, but it would provide an excellent additional local amenity. Hopefully your plans for a nature trail will succeed and this can incorporate the information on the river. The river or stream that flows through the car park at the back of Main Street has potential to become something better than it is at the moment. Though some landscaping is evident here, there is further potential. Perhaps the weed growth can be dealt with to improve water flow - this growth may be a result of over-enrichment? This area also needs to be cleaned out, especially where the river/stream begins to flow under Main Street. The issue of the pipes discharging into the river also need to be resolved.

### **Litter Control:**

Litter control in Skibbereen was quite good on adjudication day and the weekly clean up is obviously producing results. It is noted that litter control is a very strong aspect of your overall work for Skibbereen. The Tuesday "clean up night" idea is good in that it gets people actively involved in the litter issue.

### **Tidiness:**

You have advised me that kerb-sides have been sprayed and indeed very little, if any, weed growth was noted at kerbs in Skibbereen. The objective to move the re-cycling centre will hopefully come to fruition before the competition in 2004. The re-painting of the old railway bridge has been mentioned above. At the GAA property, there is a very long and obvious road boundary wall. This is in need of urgent re-painting or power hosing. Some untidiness was noted in the context of new developments now under way. However you have not lost marks because of this.

## **Residential Areas:**

There appears to be about nine new housing schemes currently under development. You have come up with a novel and interesting idea of appointing Tidy Towns volunteers in each estate area. Again, this helps to keep people involved. The Orchard is an attractive estate and the part slate hung houses fit in well to the fabric of the town. The railing of a house opposite needs some attention. Some fine older terraced houses caught the eye in Upper Bridge Street. New development was also noted here. The Riverdale estate runs down in an attractive manner to the Ilan River. The large linear open space here has been cut, but the grass has not been raked away afterwards. An interesting development here is the Wildflower Meadow. The many grassed areas at Newbridge Court need to be cut on a regular basis. Some fine presentations were seen on Mardyke Road - attractive houses using a subdued colour. The Chapel Lane/Home Rule Terrace area seems to be a very old part of the town situated in it's elevated position. Both the old and the new terraced houses blend well together. However, a few of the older properties need to be re-painted. A high standard of housing at High Street was noted, while in North Street some buildings are in urgent need of re-painting.

## **Roads, Streets and Back Areas:**

Many roads have been resurfaced and this looks really well as does the footpath improvements. The presentation of the Cork approach is really excellent with well cut margins and neatly trimmed banks. On the Rossa Road, banks are in need of some trimming while on the approach from Schull more extensive work is required on the left hand side where the roadside bank is quite over grown. Cut grass here has not been raked. Closer to the new roundabout, the presentation is much improved. The fine low stone wall on the left hand side on the Castletownsend approach is extremely attractive. But otherwise there was little indication of recent work on the banks on this approach to Skibbereen.

## **General Impression:**

Skibbereen is a large and busy town with much through-traffic. The Tidy Towns Committee have a very clear focus on what needs to be done in terms of further town improvements. Their hard work is bringing obvious results that benefit everyone. Well done to everyone involved and congratulations!

## **Second Round Adjudication:**

It was very overgrown (presumably due to ongoing roadworks?) on the Ballydehob side of the town, as one approached, the roadworks' signage was virtually obscured! The Steam Mill would be a marvellous asset to the town if bought and developed in a manner sensitive to the town - as indeed would the fine buildings in the vicinity of the stream area. This adjudicator is in agreement with the comments of the First Adjudicator regarding this area of the town - the stream has been in need of some attention for a number of years now! Discourage the use of curved canopies and encourage their replacement with more traditional fabric awnings. Do resist the temptation to "gild the lily" by an over-emphasis on floral displays - the town should look good year round and, therefore, you should concentrate your efforts on tree-planting and permanent planting providing year-round colour. The colourful display of montbretia on the Cork side of the town was greatly admired. Although the standard of litter control was good on the day, this adjudicator would suggest the provision of more litter bins around the town centre.