

Tidy Towns Competition 2004

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Portmagee**

Ref: **158**

County: **Kerry**

Mark: **233**

Category: **A**

Date: **09/06/2004**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2004	Mark Awarded 2003
Overall Developmental Approach	50	40	38
The Built Environment	40	33	32
Landscaping	40	33	33
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	21	20
Litter Control	40	32	32
Tidiness	20	16	17
Residential Areas	30	23	22
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	27	27
General Impression	10	8	9
TOTAL MARK	300	233	230

Overall Developmental Approach:

Thank you for a most interesting and comprehensive submission, richly embellished with great detail of Portmagee's history and heritage. You have entered the spirit of Tidy Towns with great commitment and we congratulate on your efforts and success to date. It is many years since this adjudicator visited Portmagee and the changes for the better have been most impressive. You have much to commend you and your scenic location in the south west part of Ireland makes you special. The road from Baile and Sceilg is dramatic and would be more dramatic if one did not encounter the fog. Your policy of adhering to an agreed plan is the way forward. You are fortunate to have the benefit of a CEB scheme for nine years. A work of caution, don't over rely on such schemes as the voluntary aspect of Tidy Town is fundamental since its inception.

The Built Environment:

It was a delight to find all public buildings being presented to such a high standard. The school, church and community centre are all excellent in appearance. Of particular appeal was the Garda Station, sporting a new roof and well landscaped. The Moorings, An Post and Bridge Bar looked well. The public toilets are the best inspected by this adjudicator and have been mentioned as an example for others to pursue. Congratulations on this achievement as traditionally we have had much criticism in this area of Tidy Towns.

Landscaping:

You have scored well in this category and we commend you on the amount of tree planting and in particular on the high floral display throughout the village. The work at the Waterville approach is excellent and provides a very positive image for the village. You should try and extend this standard to other areas of the village catchment area. There is some attractive tree planting within the church grounds. However, you should now tackle the boundary of the cemetery behind the church. It is too rough to paint so we suggest the planting of a fuchsia hedge: this has been done successfully elsewhere and it would be indigenous to the area and to Kerry in general. When planting trees, plant for the next generation and give plenty of space for longterm maturity.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

You give a wonderful outline in your submission of your activity in this section and we look forward to you identifying the various species of the area's wildlife and have them named and perhaps featured on a display board. Indeed, you will get most of the information you need in the Sceilg Experience. You have potential for increasing your marks because of your location. The river bank mentioned last year offers opportunity for advancement here.

Litter Control:

Well done on your standard in this section. Litter control in all parts of the village is good and the high number of visitors is well catered for in keeping the area litter free. Well done on the condition of the bottle bank, which is not being abused as we all too often find in other areas.

Tidiness:

You have problems here and they stem from a number of derelict houses, badly presented open spaces and in particular untidy back areas. To your credit, the boating area is quite tidy and there seems to be an agreed discipline among the boat operators, be it tourism related or fishing. As mentioned last year the car park is excellent and we urge you not to let the standard fall here.

Residential Areas:

Houses in Portmagee are well presented and individuals are playing their part. Your policy of assisting residents to put out window boxes seems to be working: hence the bright colour in the sea front houses. You are also experiencing a great amount of house building which augurs well for population stability. You should encourage developers to build in a style appropriate to the character of an attractive seaside village. We also urge you not to abandon the use of timber windows and doors. You have some good examples of traditional materials being put to good use.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

The quality of roads and surface is excellent and we commend Kerry Co. Council for maintaining such a good standard. The long low sea wall freshly painted is very distinctive and appealing. Your challenge here is to maintain the standard. Bear in mind the importance of side and back areas and try and have those untidy cleaned up for next year. We acknowledge that in most cases this is a matter for individual owners, but you are best placed to influence them towards action. The bridge to Valentia is impressive. The painting of the tower would be an added feature, but should only be done if you can maintain it. The Sceilg Experience across the bridge is a world class visitor centre giving wonderful interpretation to thousands of visitors from all over the world. It is of immense benefit to the village and we are glad to learn of your close liaison with management. One small point, why is the use of Irish so limited in your signage and why are the signs at this world class visitor centre in English only?

General Impression:

It was a real treat to visit Portmagee and see the great progress underway. You have scored well again this year. You are now at a stage when attention to detail will be necessary if you are to raise your marks. Stick with your plan and bring the community with you. And finally, the hidden treasure was nearly missed by this adjudicator. Prompted by your secretary's comment regarding the Beehive meditation room added in 2003 this adjudicator returned from leaving the village to encounter an exquisite exhibition and illustration of monastic life in the room adjacent to the church. Let me conclude with one of the typed inscriptions: 'more beautiful than a rose in a bowl of snow is the love that shattered the stone'. We hope you will continue to shatter the stone.