

Tidy Towns Competition 2005

Adjudication Report

Centre: **O'briens Bridge**

Ref: **279**

County: **Clare**

Mark: **205**

Category: **B**

Date: **24/06/2004**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2005	Mark Awarded 2004
Overall Developmental Approach	50	40	
The Built Environment	40	26	
Landscaping	40	29	
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	23	
Litter Control	40	22	
Tidiness	20	13	
Residential Areas	30	21	
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	23	
General Impression	10	8	
TOTAL MARK	300	205	

Overall Developmental Approach:

The O'Brien's Bridge Development Association is welcome back to the National Tidy Towns Competition 2005 after an absence of four years. Thank for your detailed entry form and accompanying notes, maps and photographs which were most useful on the day of adjudication. And well done to all concerned in receiving Heritage Council Awards in 2003, 2004 and 2005. The development and restoration of the three mile 17th century riverside heritage amenity tow path and seven bridges/archways is commendable. Your Committee of 12 is obviously working in harmony to make your village a place for locals and visitors to admire and enjoy.

The Built Environment:

The village has many business premises and some of these were well presented, namely The Village Bistro; The Old (I missing on sign) Mill Pub and Restaurant and A. O'Conalin's. Little Dreamers was very attractively presented, and the customers looked very happy. There are a number of premises in the village sadly in need of attention, including Ryan's Inn; the building with all the old calor gas signs, and the premises beside the entrance to the new housing estate. The sign over the Post Office needs attention, and the outside walls of the shrine need painting. The lamp standards were looking good.

Landscaping:

Many of the business premises and private dwellings had window boxes and hanging baskets and these were admired, as were the raised beds and planting area at the shrine. Would suggest planting larger flowering plants and/or small shrubs (sustainable) in the raised beds to create more impact (your Tidy Towns handbook with help with this). The shrub border was in full bloom but in need of weeding. Very good selection of native Irish trees planted by the tow-path on the way to the Inishlosky Church site, but they could be better staked and the tree-ties are too tight, and the grass should also be removed at the base to encourage healthy growth. The ESB sculpture is well positioned and admired, as was the sculpture in the centre of the village, but the water feature was full of litter.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

The Riverside Amenity Walkway project, supported by the Heritage Council, is much admired and the adjudicator enjoyed a leisurely lunchtime walk there. The area is a wonderful habitat for all types of flora and fauna. A pair of swans was busy looking after three cygnets. The wild flowers were in full bloom - dog roses, marguerite daisies, foxgloves, willow herb, butter cups, meadow sweet, to name but a few. Ferns and grasses also abound. The further into the walk the better the standard, but attention needs to be given to the section close to the village where the pathway is in poor state, garden refuse needs removing, and the concrete bench needs both a back and seat. Improvements need to be made to the surface of the tow-path towards Goose Island which is rutted by car tracks and the grass was very high.

Litter Control:

On the day of adjudication the village didn't present a very good picture under this heading. There were many litter bins, differing in size and colour, and all in need cleaning and emptying, and litter was strewn all around the village. Dog litter was also noted on the tow-path. Perhaps this problem might be helped by organising a voluntary litter collection campaign, say for one hour on one night a week.

Tidiness:

The village was generally tidy, but one of the picnic seats outside Bonner's Pub encroached on to the pavement, necessitating pedestrians with buggies to have to go on to the roadway. There were also some crates of bottles blocking the path.

Residential Areas:

There are some very nice, well maintained, private dwellings in and around the village, and there was also one eye-catching dormer house on the main street. The new Housing area is almost clinical in its presentation and could be improved by the planting of trees in the green area. No doubt you will encourage the residents to plant up their gardens in due course.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

The welcoming signs at both entrances to the village need painting, and the directional sign for the Doonass Falls/Lough Derg Way need paint/repair as it tilting to one side. The Coarse Angling sign on the Limerick Road is obscured by the hedgerow. The Lough Derg Map is very well positioned, and provided great help to the adjudicator when asked directions by some Australian visitors lunching at the picnic bench (which needs painting) The road in the centre of the village was in good order, but the side roads - to Doonass and also down the Cul de Sac (not helped by the construction site on the right) were not in such a good state of repair.

General Impression:

O'Brien's Bridge is a lovely village - a haven for tourists interested in walking, angling and all types of waterside activities, being located on the banks of the majestic River Shannon. Unfortunately, you do have the problem of the 'rat run' and the HGV's using your village as a shortcut. Please do continue to work with the local authorities to try to improve this problem. Keep up your good efforts to improve your standing in the National Tidy Towns Competition.