

Tidy Towns Competition 2005

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Kinsale**

Ref: **116**

County: **Cork South**

Mark: **268**

Category: **D**

Date: **11/08/2005**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2005	Mark Awarded 2004
Overall Developmental Approach	50	46	46
The Built Environment	40	36	36
Landscaping	40	36	36
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	24	23
Litter Control	40	36	36
Tidiness	20	17	17
Residential Areas	30	28	28
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	36	35
General Impression	10	9	9
TOTAL MARK	300	268	266

Overall Developmental Approach:

Your submission of a three year plan proved helpful on adjudication day. Kinsale was really busy and this adjudicator was glad of an evening quietness to traverse the high streets of this interesting town. The walk up to the Ramparts is rewarding and gives a commanding view of the surrounding area. The Kinsale Drainage scheme was in full swing and in fairness the disruption was not excessive and does not affect your marks. As mentioned in last year's report, next year you will be commemorating 20 years of your great win back in 1986. We hope you will use the event to renew your energies and perhaps give recognition to those who spearheaded the victory.

The Built Environment:

One is tempted to ask: is there any end to development works in Kinsale? House building continues unabated and we very much welcome the amount of infill in evidence. However, your largest development with major environmental implications is planned for the former Convent of Mercy. We wonder at the amount of demolition envisaged and will you follow your policy of sash windows on the projected 173 units. Currently this site dominates the skyline on the main approach to the town. We feel obliged to mention the Town Hall again this year which is a real environmental gem. Walking the narrow streets of Market Street, Market Quay, Main Street and The Glen we were treated to a host of attractive traditional shopfronts. We notice the occasional shopfront has closed and awaits new trading usage. We have nominated Shearwater Accommodation Units for an archaeological award. We could not find fault with Market Square and its environs and the standard of fresh

painting here is superb. We feel of you could dedicate more areas for pedestrians only as it can be hazardous for people on narrow footpaths.

Landscaping:

Your excellent performance in landscaping is well outlined in previous years and the standard is well maintained. We look forward to the completed refurbishment of the Town Park on this focal point. The McCarthy sculptures are attractive and were being much admired by a touring group during our visit. There is immense pressure on Pier Road and the large private garden provides a welcome break on this busy road. You have many novel containers filled with full bloom displays and this is one of your strong points. We commend the commercial traders on their commitment to such a high standard. Without exception every street and approach road has generous displays of shrubs and flowers. The tree planting of previous years continues to pay dividend and you are also endowed with many mature trees from a previous generation.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

You have endless opportunity to promote wildlife and your efforts to date are acknowledged. The display board at the start of the walk on the road to Scilly could be improved. We might mention that Inishannon Tidy Towns have just erected some excellent display boards with informative illustrations. Also in North Cork the Blackwater Development have embarked on assisting Tidy Towns centres with some quality bilingual illustrations. The interest in wildlife is now growing and you have opportunity to make wildlife a tourism product in its own right.

Litter Control:

Over two days we observed the demand on litter control and the deployment of staff involved in this task. The litter pressure on the Pier Road is endless and we also note a litter trap in the harbour. We were informed that this litter is removed naturally by the water movement depending on tidal performance. Could litter from the harbour be lifted with a collecting net? In general there is a great welcome move to more recycling and you are playing your part. You have scored well again in this section this year and the amount of litter in evidence was very sporadic and small in quantity. One disappointment was some broken glass at the entrance to the walk beside the wildlife display board. We feel this entrance should be more defined with improved signage. Your close liaison with school authorities is praiseworthy but in truth litter problems in Kinsale are caused by adults.

Tidiness:

You still have your dereliction problems and these lead to untidiness. The Glen is disappointing and it is a paradox to witness such dereliction on a valuable property site. Your investment in placing overhead wires underground is commendable and contributes to tidiness. You have a good deal of unoccupied premises boarded up and creating a image of untidiness.

Residential Areas:

Your three-year plan does not allude to Residential Areas and we wonder will 'market forces' continue to dictate the amount and rate of house building in and around the town. We notice numerous small accommodation developments in town and many of these are valuable infill developments. Some seem to have engaged in excessive fortification with security gates and unfriendly notices. We hope this will not become a hallmark of Kinsale. The many quality period houses are equally complemented with small artisan type houses of the 19th century. The mixture of old and new is good and the common trait is one of attractive landscaping.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

The upper levels in Kinsale is a virtual labyrinth of narrow lanes and access points: but nothing if not

interesting. We hope you will pursue your efforts for more pedestrianised areas. The back areas of the town are among the best in the country, principally because of their commercial value and we applaud those small commercial operators who have given life and trading animation to so many side and back areas. The car park beside the TIO is very untidy and seems to have a multiplicity of uses: car parking, loading and unloading and storing of pallets. The murals here have gone shabby. Are there long-term plans for this site? The public toilets were locked all during inspection. With regard to signage we found the signs to Charles Fort inadequate in numbers and poor in presentation. We feel this fine visitor centre is deserving of much improved signposting: some of the finger signs en route are obscured with growth and badly maintained.

General Impression:

It was a spectacular view that greeted this adjudicator entering the town from the Pier Road on beautiful July day. The harbour was packed with sea vessels of all sorts and sizes and the town was crowded with visitors and excessive through traffic. The evening inspection was more enjoyable and gave opportunity to view many of the new developments and savour the rich display of landscaping. A delight as always to visit this town of renown: well done.

Second Round Adjudication:

The very high standards that we are accustomed to continued to be evident in Kinsale at the second adjudication. The comments above from the first adjudication appear very relevant. While there is a marvellous display of shop fronts and buildings on road frontages in the main streets of the town there are still a considerable number of buildings in the upper streets and in the area of Actons Building Suppliers premises needing attention. The town park was recently reseeded and work on the central water feature and surface was noted. All seating has been removed from this park, which seems a pity at the peak time of year. The water features outside the park were not in operation. Litter control is good although a litterbin on the pier road was overflowing at 6.00 in the evening – such can only lead to street littering. The Town Hall is a delightful place and seems little known by the vast number of visitors in Kinsale. The plight of the pedestrian needs to be given greater attention in Kinsale -to have cars on your heels on the narrow streets is just not acceptable. It is also hard to understand how parking is allowed on the pier road opposite the tourist office – a suggestion is to continue the double yellow lines from the park right up to the junction. The street furniture, paving and tree planting all give the town a very high quality standard. The initiative to have an influence on future building developments is laudable and hopefully this succeeds.