Tidy Towns Competition 2005

Adjudication Report

Centre:	**Clonakilty**	Ref:	**640**
County:	**Cork West**	Mark:	**276**
Category:	**D**	Date:	**11/08/2005**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2005	Mark Awarded 2004
Overall Developmental Approach	50	47	47
The Built Environment	40	38	38
Landscaping	40	36	36
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	28	27
Litter Control	40	37	36
Tidiness	20	17	17
Residential Areas	30	27	27
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	37	36
General Impression	10	9	9
TOTAL MARK	**300**	**276**	**273**

Overall Developmental Approach:

Welcome to the 2005 National Tidy Towns Competition. Clonakilty is a wonderful town enjoying a superb location stretching from sea level to hill thereby enjoying many elevated sites with scenic panoramic views of both the town and Clonakilty Bay. The town has a lot of history with a rich agricultural, industrial, political and social heritage. What is unique to Clonakilty has been successfully identified and celebrated in the form of historical and educational tours and visitor attractions and amenities. Thank you for a detailed and rich submission; the person responsible for compiling it is to be commended. The only difficulty encountered in reading the comprehensive map was the need for a magnifying glass to identify the small handwritten print successfully. However the entire submission facilitated adjudication and made possible a comprehensive understanding of Clonakilty town.

The Built Environment:

The "Clean your Face" initiative which was orchestrated for properties in the town and which took place in spring/early summer has been effective in most buildings putting the best face forward and paying attention to their presentation. Clonakilty's built environment is a handsome stock of single, two and three storey buildings many of which date back to earlier generations and some of which still retain their traditional sash windows and other valuable architectural features. The town has a handsome stock of new buildings also which were admired for both design and presentation. A number of premises are being considered for both the "Shop Front Award" and the "Irish Shop Front

Award". Unfortunately there are still a number of dated beer signs. No doubt over time these will be replaced with more attractive signage. Some properties need attention paid to their upper storeys. An example is the De Barra premises, West Cork Mobiles and Batemans Shoe's to name but a few. Buildings overall were less well presented in Ashe Street than elsewhere. New shopping developments are inviting for their attractiveness and variety of wares; these include Millers Lane, Hearts Courtyard and or course not forgetting the new Supervalu Shopping Complex. Heritage buildings were admired for their presentation and current use.

Landscaping:

The large number of landscaped areas around the town ensures that its populations is well served with recreational amenity opportunities. The green amenity area overlooking Clonakilty Bay was excellent in presentation and the brightly painted red seats were a nice touch. Emmet Square as in previous years featured a beautifully landscaped green and mature trees. A stand of mature trees on the entrance from the Skibbereen road plus another stand at the entrance from the Cork road were perhaps the most noticeworthy feature of all approach roads and entrances to Clonakilty. Flower displays were admired for their colour and profuseness as so many locations around the town that it is not possible to mention them all however they include the flower display at the junction of Casement Street and Connolly Street, the grotto area and flower displays on the entrance at the Cork road, hanging baskets on poles in the town centre, displays on properties such as Cash and Co, bedding plants on roundabouts particularly those on the Ring roundabout/junction and many more. There appears to have been a successful balance achieved between seasonal and permanent planting. Well done!

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

Wildlife panels on the bird life and fish life of Clonakilty Bay were noted on Kent Street, These were both attractive and informative and great interest by visitors was evident on adjudication day. The banks of the river through the town were clean and on three occasions on which the adjudicator visited Clonakilty work was in progress on the river bed itself. Well done on the river walk and wildflower garden initiative. The intention of the town council to develop land at Deasy's Quay as an inner bay amenity park, part of which will be the starting point of a wildlife tour of Clonakilty Bay is an exciting initiative and one that is earnestly looked forward to by the adjudicator. The authorities are to be commended on the Flood Control Study and the further amenity opportunities that will open up as a result of this initiative. This adjudicator looks forward to charting your progress under this heading over the next few years.

Litter Control:

Litter control was very good on the occasion of the three visits noted above by this adjudicator. There was a light scattering at various points around the town, none of which could be described as being a serious problem. Our thanks is due to the children involved in the twice daily litter patrols, we are indebted to them. Both the daily sweeping by Council staff and the use of the new suction sweeper must play an important part in the litter free status of Clonakilty. The cigarette end receptacles are an excellent initiative as is a continuous monitoring of dog fouling around the town and the provision of free poop-scoops in retail outlets for dog owners. Congratulations to the Convent National School on the attainment of the Green Flag status. The removal of recycling bins from public car parks around the town and their relocation in the new waste and recycling centre which opened in March 2005 has improved the visual amenity of the town substantially. A fine performance under this heading.

Tidiness:

Well done to all the school children involved in the National Spring Clean week. Both the FAS workers and town council employees are doing their job well regarding the monitoring and elimination of unsightly weed growth in Clonakilty; the standard was very good in this respect.

Despite the number of development sites in the town the overall appearance was one of tidiness. No doubt the undeveloped site located across from the Supervalu shopping complex will be developed in due course and one beside was a work in progress. We note the prohibition on the erection of election posters within the urban area and the discouragement of the erection of billboards at town entrances with notification of upcoming events. This reduces the amount of visual clutter that is common is Irish towns.

Residential Areas:

Residential properties are presented to a high standard in general, ranging from beautiful detached dwellings with the mature gardens on the entrance from the Skibbereen Road to the beautifully painted terraced houses in the town centre on Casement Street. A number of terraced properties at the top of MacCurtain Hill could be improved. Those near the top of Patrick Street were beautifully painted and amenity areas at the junction with Old Maple Road and Old Chapel Lane were admired. New developments in this area including Sea Breeze Heights feature stone work which appears to be indigenous to the area and which is most attractive; the same point can be made in respect of Cois na hAbann at the Skibbereen end of the town. A development beside the Sacred Heart School was also admired. The housing policy of the town council has been noted and presents a model for other councils to follow.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

Street furniture was generally well presented and the provision of cigarette end receptacles has already been noted. We note your plan for the erection of feature lampstandards in time along some streets. MacCurtain Hill suffers badly in visual terms with the effects of its wirescape which is in sharp contrast to the wirescape free aspect of Kent Street; Ashe Street also has unfortunate wirescape. No doubt these problems will be addressed in time. Some of the older street namesigns, for example Patrick Street and Kent Street, could be refurbished. Verges on the Skibbereen approach road were surprisingly overgrown, particularly at the Gold Medal Winner sign for 2004. Loose natural stone boundary walls on the western road was especially admired and road surfaces on the new footpath here were complementary. An attractive stretch of stone wall at the junction with Patrick Street, Maple Street and Chapel Lane was also admired. Traffic islands and roundabouts in general were well presented and clearly signposted.

General Impression:

Clonakilty is a most attractive town enjoying a magnificent location affording scenic panoramic views from elevated sites. It is a town with a handsome built and natural environments that serves the needs of its population and visitors. Clonakility looked beautiful at the time of adjudication and it is good to note exciting new initiatives in the pipeline.

Second Round Adjudication:

The extensive material submitted with the entry form shows a great commitment to progress and development within the town This in turn is reflected in the very high standards observed at second adjudication. The “Clean your face “ initiative together with the concerns expressed about dividing shop fronts and using separate colours all seem to have succeeded in achieving a very high standard of building presentation. There is a very wide range of buildings styles present in the town. The refurbishment of old stone buildings for new uses makes great sense and has been done successfully. It is marvellous to have such an amount of residential housing right in the core of the town. Many of these street side homes are beautifully painted and present a very attractive picture. Similarly the standard of shop premises has improved and shops needing attention are few at this stage. The landscaping as mentioned above shows many fine features. The containerised summer colour plantings were at their peak and paint a wonderful picture through the town Congratulations to all who continually care for these containers and make them look so well. The recycling centre is well

organised and a great new facility. Infill houses are welcome as they retain the residential aspect of the town well. The waterfront areas and wild flower planting looked well. Approach roads give a lovely impression of what is ahead and no disappointments follow.