

Tidy Towns Competition 2005

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Skibbereen**

Ref: **294**

County: **Cork West**

Mark: **246**

Category: **C**

Date: **01/07/2005**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2005	Mark Awarded 2004
Overall Developmental Approach	50	46	46
The Built Environment	40	33	32
Landscaping	40	34	33
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	24	23
Litter Control	40	31	31
Tidiness	20	15	14
Residential Areas	30	24	24
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	31	31
General Impression	10	8	8
TOTAL MARK	300	246	242

Overall Developmental Approach:

Skibbereen is welcome to the 2005 National Tidy Towns Competition. Thank you for your excellent submission and supporting documentation which included an indexed map of your achievements for this year and your planned work programme. Of particular interest to the adjudicator was your new newsletter (P A L) which is distributed to households within the town and which communicates the objectives and strategies of the Tidy Towns Committee to the wider community together with feedback on accomplishments to date.

It is good to note that the committee works well with the county council and other statutory bodies and that it has the support of the local community in terms of both labour and finance. Skibbereen enjoys an attractive location on the heavily wooded banks of the river Ilen and is viewed at its best on approaching the town from the Killarney approach road. We note your plan for the amenity development of the elevated site The Rock in the town centre which also affords fine views of the town and anticipate your progress in this respect.

The Built Environment:

Skibbereen town centre is an attractive destination with its fine landscaped public open spaces and a handsome stock of three storey buildings many of which still retain their traditional architectural features. Shop-fronts are nicely presented in general and both the AIB and MJ Walshe premises were admired. In too many instances the upper stories of buildings are being badly maintained and look poor in contrast to beautiful shop-fronts at street level; buildings located across from the Post

Office premises are quite weather-stained and a three storey premises located beside the Bishop Kelly Memorial Technical Institute look dreadful. Public buildings such as schools, churches the fire station enjoy good maintenance and heritage buildings were admired. Both the Heritage Centre and Neill Accountants have been considered for an award. A stretch of wall along the top of the Drimoleague road looked drab and would be improved with cleaning and/or painting as appropriate.

Landscaping:

It is good to note the existence of a landscaping plan for the by-pass road; we anticipate developments here over the next few years. Landscaping is suggested to improve the roadside boundary of a large commercial premises and site on the road to the recycling centre; landscaping at the Fastnet Industrial Estate on the same road was observed and admired as was landscaping at the West Cork Unity Services Hospital and other grounds. The roundabouts on the N71 at the Cork and Killarney roads had been recently planted however the visual impact was weak as plants were still immature at the time of inspection, no doubt these will look good next year although weed growth on the Cork roundabout will have to be checked as it was rampant. Flower displays throughout the town centre were colourful and profuse, we note your landscape and hanging baskets project and your polythene green-houses. As mentioned previously we look forward to the amenity development of the Rock in the future and the sculpture site on the Schull road has been noted. The O'Donovan Rossa Park has been considered for a Landscape Award.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

The many sports grounds around the town are neatly presented in terms of their roadside boundaries and the Skibbereen AFC clubhouse out the Baltimore road was admired for its lovely entrance; childrens play grounds are presented to a high standard. The stretch of river at the SuperValu car park was almost choked with weed growth and litter was noted also. Swans and other wild fowl were observed in the river on entering the town from the Killarney road; the heavily wooded banks formed a pleasant backdrop. Plans for the further development of the river walk and the nature trail through Glencurran Wood are at the implementation stage with wild life signs and seating being a work in progress. This adjudicator looks forward to repeat visits to chart your progress.

Litter Control:

Litter control was quite good throughout the town however there were lapses; the first of these has been mentioned above, the litter in the river near the SuperValu car park; the road from the latter site to Market Street was also littered! Marks have not been lost on this occasion due to the details of your litter control activities being submitted in your application however the situation cannot be allowed to persist or there will be a loss of marks under this heading. We note from your application your regular Tuesday evening clean-ups and the participation of all schools in the National Spring Clean Up events; some schools have applied for Green Flag status and all take responsibility for the areas immediately outside their premises; A big thank you is due to all the school children of Skibbereen! Well done on the inclusion of the beach in your clean-ups.

Tidiness:

We note and commend you for your special weed control project. the recycling centre curtilage looked dreadful with its pot-holes, weeds, dumping at the bins and its poor fencing; in view of the fact that this area has such a high public profile remedial action here is urgent. An old bicycle, traffic cone and other items were featured in the river bed at the steps in the town centre; a building site here was problematic also no doubt the development will be finished to a good standard of presentation.

Residential Areas:

The Retirement Village on the Baltimore road was a work in progress at the time of adjudication and appears to be shaping up beautifully; The Moorings looks promising also.

The majority of dwellings and estates enjoy a high level of maintenance and landscaping in new developments will mature to give a settled appearance. Encourage residents to be vigilant in respect of their roadside boundary walls and areas outside; some poor boundaries were noted to dwellings on the road to the recycling centre. the councils housing policy and schemes which are a work in progress are noted and appear to meet the needs of the growing community admirably.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

The verges of most approach roads to Skibbereen were overgrown on adjudication day; footpaths and road surfaces were generally to a good standard and stretches of limestone kerbing was admired. Car parking was orderly and appears to be adequately catered for. Most street furniture is well presented important exceptions being a service pole at The Corner House and a public seat outside of the Arts Centre; the public toilet block looked well from the outside. The wirescape free status of North Street was admired hopefully the same will be achieved for Market Street in time.

General Impression:

Skibbereen is an attractive town with handsome features in both the built and natural environments where every effort is being made to preserve what's best about the town whilst meeting the needs of its growing 21st century population.