

Tidy Towns Competition 2005

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Skerries**

Ref: **646**

County: **Dublin**

Mark: **263**

Category: **E**

Date: **12/08/2005**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2005	Mark Awarded 2004
Overall Developmental Approach	50	46	46
The Built Environment	40	33	33
Landscaping	40	36	35
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	28	28
Litter Control	40	34	34
Tidiness	20	17	17
Residential Areas	30	27	27
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	33	33
General Impression	10	9	9
TOTAL MARK	300	263	262

Overall Developmental Approach:

The adjudicator would like to welcome Skerries to the 2005 Tidy Towns Competition. The Committee provided a very high standard of comprehensive documentation that was most useful during the adjudication. The Skerries map was also just the right size and scale. The Tidy Towns Committee obviously enjoy a very close working relationship with Fingal County Council and this has obviously brought many benefits to your annual work programme. In October of this year it will be time to move on your Tidy Towns Plan to cover the years 2006 to 2008.

The Built Environment:

Skerries has managed to retain the very attractive atmosphere of a traditional seaside village, and at the same time handles many visitors per day in the visitor season. It is disappointing to read that the under grounding of cables in Strand Street may not start until 2008. The Heritage Trail is an excellent development and the adjudicator nominated this project for the Tidy Towns National Heritage Award, and it will be considered among the many other nominations from around the country. The painting of the Railway Station was still awaited on adjudication day and hopefully a firm commitment on the start of this job will be given shortly. The "Terns in Flight" is a beautiful piece of sculpture and fits the location so well. The Skerries Mills Complex was quite busy on adjudication day and the adjudicator noted the very high standards of operation there. It was encouraging to see the number of properties that were being renovated at the time of adjudication. For example on Quay Street new two storey in-fill development was noted that echoes the existing

buildings perfectly.

The Prosper building obviously fills a very important need in Skerries. However the adjudicator is of the view that this building does not 'fit' very well with the buildings immediately to the left and right which are single storey structures. The raised area over the entrance did not look quite right.

Landscaping:

The overall image of the landscaping in Skerries is superb and the choice of flowering plants and shrubs was excellent. The various competitions organised by the Tidy Towns Committee integrate excellently with you work on landscaping. Perhaps the most impressive landscaping is that on the Skerries side of the tunnel where the impact of the colour here was staggering. Your tree planting programme with Crann Phadraig of 5,000 trees to date is certainly delivering a visual return on your considerable investment in both time and money. The grass areas by the Terns car park had not been cut recently and the grass itself looked a little burnt. Other landscaped areas that caught the eye was that at the junction of New Street and Dublin road. Here the colour of the plants was most suitable given the colour of the stone at this location. The yellow roses at the Catholic Church were much admired, as was the small landscaped area at the Library.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

Your committee has made so much progress in regard to wildlife and natural amenities in recent years and your marks in this category are very high. The adjudicator was highly impressed that your choice of trees and shrubs is so strongly influenced by wildlife feeding needs. At The Mills the adjudicator recommends that the narrow grass strip in front of the low fence (at the entrance) that is used as a viewing area, by either slabbed or a timber surface should go down. As it is the grass is being worn away and looks quite untidy. It was good to see one of the Swans at The Mills on adjudication day.

Litter Control:

It was under the category of litter control that the adjudicator was highly disappointed on adjudication day and the mark allocated this year for litter control reflect this. However the adjudicator was very impressed with how you approach the issue of litter control and that you have a policy paper on litter control. However on adjudication day litter was noted in the following locations. Much litter was noted behind the low stone wall at Red Island in front of the large grass area. Some small plastic shopping bags of rubbish had been left here, together with bottles. Some aged litter was also noted just inside the arch. The Red Island car parks and the Playground area also had a surprising amount of litter. The beach in front of the Sea Scouts premises had quite an amount of litter. Over three hours later into the adjudication there was a lot of litter on the road at the same location. The area of the toilets on South Strand was littered as was the southern end of South Strand road. Litter was also noted on Shenick Road, and in the area of the tunnel quite close to the landscaped area on the Lusk side of the tunnel. Litter was also noted on Dublin road.

Tidiness:

Both Recycling facilities were tidily presented on adjudication day. At South Strand car park weed growth at kerbs was a problem. The same problem was noted by the bus stop at the southern end of Rush Road. At the access route to the beach at the southern end of Rush Road the rusty railings here needed to be painted.

Residential Areas:

Quite a number of the housing estates in Skerries were visited and in general the standard of presentation was quite high. However grass areas need to be cut on a regular basis if they are to have a lush green appearance. In some estates the grass had been cut too tightly and the overall effect was one of burnt grass. When grass areas are being cut it is usually necessary to cut the

grass back from the top of the kerbstones by hand. Some very attractive cottages were noted on Church Street.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

The approach roads to Skerries were generally impressive on adjudication day. Major work appeared to be underway on South Strand Road. The adjudicator noted the Committee policy of not producing manicured verges on approach roads, given the needs of wildlife, and that point was accepted by the adjudicator. However in some cases some slight additional verge and bank cutting would have improved the appearance of approach roads.

General Impression:

The Skerries Tidy Towns Committee are to be congratulated on their great work and the community who support them so strongly, together with Fingal County Council who obviously take so much pride in Skerries.

Second Round Adjudication:

Skerries has many fine facilities and good advantage is being taken of these- the Watermill, harbour area, Red Island and South Strand are great assets. Where overhead cables have been removed this is welcome and unfortunate that a date of 2008 has been set for the next stage. Good standards of shop premises, individual homes and housing estates were noted. Landscaping continues to be one of the strong points in Skerries – the maturing of many street side trees is giving a lovely character to the town. The roundabout and adjoining lands at the bridge are spectacular and seemed to be at their peak at second adjudication. At Red Island the grass, parking areas and surfaces were in very good order particularly considering the very fine summer. The road surface on the Dublin Road is very uneven. Pipe laying in Skerries is causing some disruption but of course this is only temporary. The Garda was noted for its very fine road frontage display. Some kerb weeds were seen along Sherlock Terrace and also gutter weeds were very prominent on Head to Toe premises. Bindweed appears to have taken a serious hold close to the carpark at the Watermill. Litter did not seem to present as serious a difficulty at second than earlier. The variety of residential housing and the inclusion of residence right through the centre of the town is a lovely feature of Skerries.