

Tidy Towns Competition 2006

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Sneem** Ref: **349**
County: **Kerry** Mark: **278**
Category: **B** Date(s): **18/07/2006**
01/08/2006

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2006
Overall Development Approach	50	45
The Built Environment	50	36
Landscaping	50	37
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	27
Litter Control	50	36
Waste Minimisation	20	8
Tidiness	30	17
Residential Areas	40	28
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	35
General Impression	10	9
TOTAL MARK	400	278

Overall Development Approach:

Sneem is welcome to the 2006 National Tidy Towns Competition. Thank you for your excellent and well thought out submission, which included your development plan and which has been considered for the Sustainable Development Award. It is exciting to note that Sneem has adopted the thirteen principles of Agenda 21 and intends to implement these wherever possible in the interest of community development and for the sustainable development for your natural and cultural heritage. It is astounding to note that Sneem and environs has over thirty-one voluntary organisations, the majority of which provided support and services to the community with an average of twenty meetings of these organisations per week. It is understandable how Sneem has managed to be a top performer in the Tidy Towns Competition over the last number of years, even with such a low population. We wish you every success with your implementation of your fine development plan.

The Built Environment:

Your colourful and nicely presented built environment is one of the most attractive features of Sneem and indeed the churches, school, community hall, shops and the petrol station were all presented to a standard of excellence. Gable walls were nicely treated also. The plastic protruding sign on The O'Sheas Pub premises limits its potential for achieving an award although its standard of presentation is excellent in other respects. The Stonehouse is another attractive premises also however the open ended straight edged type of canopy would be more suitable than the existing ones. The open mesh type shutter/security grill would be more attractive on the Post Office premises than the existing solid ones which have a very deadening effect on the streetscape. We note the site for the new hotel and anticipate it will complement its setting within your lovely village.

Landscaping:

Your beautifully maintained greens are another most attractive feature of Sneem and your public art is a nice touch together with your new stone seats. Your Garden of the Senses is indeed a wonderful development and was thoroughly enjoyed by the adjudicator and you have rightly identified it as a template for other communities. Your treatment of Rhododendron e.g. trimmed to form a continuous hedgerow creates a nice roadside boundary. A few Cordyline plants appeared not to be thriving so well. Mature trees had been noticed and appreciated.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

Well done on the sensitive maintenance at the riverside campsite which facilitates the needs of both visitors and wildlife whilst respecting the natural environment. Well done also in building an inclusive access for all your visitor and community attractions. The installation of additional bat roosts and specialised nesting boxes is an excellent initiative. The use of compost from your community compost scheme highlights the concept of the cycle of life and promotes waste minimisation and recycling. It is good to note that you seek expert advice from the local authority conservation officer. Sneem can rightly be described as a haven for wildlife.

Litter Control:

Notwithstanding that litter is an exceptionally difficult problem for Sneem, the source of the problem being the large number of tour buses and passengers at the height of the summer season, the litter control was to an excellent standard in your lovely village on the day of adjudication. Some scraps of paper were noted but given the amount of visitors at the time of adjudication this was quite insignificant. Perhaps the most serious cause of litter was cigarette ends which were carelessly tossed about and walked into the ground. Your litter control procedures are most effective.

Waste Minimisation:

It was a little unfortunate to note the bags that had been deposited beside the bring bank and it is important that this problem is not allowed to persist. We note from your submission that the community, and the Tidy Towns Committee in particular, focus their attention on litter segregation, which of course is the foundation stone for recycling. Commendations are due also to the staff of the Resource Centre and FAS workers for their clever reuse of office and building waste. We wish you every success in having your bring bank expanded. A further initiative which you may consider would be to conduct an audit of the waste produced by each sector of the community with a view to minimising the amount of waste generated, in addition to collection for recycling.

Tidiness:

Although the town was virtually litter free, notwithstanding the cigarette ends, Sneem was in need of a thorough sweeping at the time of our visit, the most problematic item being hay and straw which had blown around the place, together with stone chippings. A number of building sites were noted however these appear to be maintained in a tidy fashion and no serious overspill was noted into the village. The site behind the public toilet block continues to be problematic and one wonders why this gate is not maintained closed for total enclosure. Well done on your signage which was most attractive and we admire the use of local traditional skills in the production of these.

Residential Areas:

The small estate near the Leisure Village was admired for the nicely painted dwellings and the well maintained green open space. Work in progress on the development site on the road leading to the sports grounds was noted, no doubt the finished product here will be presented to a standard that is synonymous with Sneem. A number of gardens were admired throughout the village and on approach roads and the Leisure Village was admired for its landscaping. The hand carved namestone for the residential development is a nice touch. A good overall presentation.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

Street furniture is excellent as are stretches of stone wall which have rehabilitated in the traditional manner. The stone features on the green which have not been seen by this adjudicator before are an attractive element which will need very little maintenance. Some stretches of roads are in need of resurfacing, the most noted being the environs of the public toilet block and the roadside area to the boundary wall of the sports ground, however we note that this takes time and money and that the most you can hope for is one resurfacing a year and we appreciate the difficulty and cost involved. No doubt all of the wirescape in your lovely village will be ducted in the not too distant future.

General Impression:

A colourful built environment, well tended greens and a waterfront area with a range of diverse wildlife habitats are all part of Sneem's trademark which the community values and intends to make permanent by adhering to

the principles of Agenda 21.

Second Round Adjudication:

It was high tourism season when the second adjudication was carried out and the village was jam packed with cars, coaches and visitors: not the most conducive for any adjudication. However, no marks are lost or gained for high visitor numbers or busy traffic. The first impression is of a Sneem that is changing rapidly with an inordinate amount of house building. We must state that the new housing scheme on the Sportsfield Road is devoid of any traditional character. However, we await final development before commenting in full. The square was overflowing with visitors and yet the greenery and high bloom colour shone through like a beacon. The grass too was being cut during our visit. The roses were also in full bloom at the Garden of the Senses. One small point, the gable end of Dan Galvin's shop is in need of painting at this very obvious location. The row of houses down from Christians foodstore is one of the most impressive in the region, with bright colouring and pleasant design. We note the development of a new hotel on the Kenmare approach and await with interest its conclusion: an other opportunity for enhanced landscaping. The road margin here is also undergoing a change and we hope it will be finished in good taste. The wild flowers on the Kenmare approach are such as to make some of the cultivated roadside gardens superfluous: what a delight in August. Once again a fine performance by this attractive village. By the way the map submission by Sneem is a classic and a delight to read.