

Tidy Towns Competition 2007

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Bantry** Ref: **666**
County: **Cork (West)** Mark: **272**
Category: **D** Date(s): **28/06/2007**
12/08/2007

| | Maximum Mark | Mark Awarded 2007 |
|--------------------------------|-----------------|----------------------|
| Overall Development Approach | 50 | 47 |
| The Built Environment | 50 | 37 |
| Landscaping | 50 | 37 |
| Wildlife and Natural Amenities | 50 | 27 |
| Litter Control | 50 | 26 |
| Waste Minimisation | 20 | 10 |
| Tidiness | 30 | 15 |
| Residential Areas | 40 | 28 |
| Roads, Streets and Back Areas | 50 | 36 |
| General Impression | 10 | 9 |
| TOTAL MARK | 400 | 272 |

Overall Development Approach:

Bantry is welcome to the Tidy Towns Competition 2008. Thank you for your comprehensive entry form and supporting maps which were of great assistance to the adjudicator. You have a well-structured committee and associate members who ensure that you never run out of manpower and reduce the obligation to attend a series of meetings throughout the year. Your ongoing work with enabling agencies is commended and is clearly of great assistance to you as you implement the 3-5 year plan for Bantry. The co-operation with the National Learning Network must be a great help in relation to your horticultural activities. It is clear that the co-operation of local businesses is intrinsic to your success and this too is paying dividends. It is refreshing to note that innovation is encouraged with the development of the BAGIT Challenge and the school that is selling compost as a mini-enterprise. Publicity is key to a co-ordinated approach to any large urban centre and Bantry Tidy Towns appear to have a well-oiled PR machine in place!

The Built Environment:

The Post Office was in traditional green and cream and was admired. The Christian Fellowship Church, new Garda Station and the Maritime Hotel were all crisp in presentation. Other impressive premises included James J. Crowley, Bantry Woollen Market, Crafts, the Bake House and the Schooner. A pretty seat with a planted pot in pastel shades was noted at Roost. Three vibrant hanging baskets brightened the well presented Nigels Bicycle Shop and O'Mahony Farrelly Solicitors looked particularly well. The impressive convent building and grounds were attractively presented with an abundance of roses and hydrangeas in full bloom amidst a well-trimmed lawn on the day of adjudication – unfortunately, however, kerbside weeds were also in abundance along the entrance! The Catholic Church and grounds were magnificent. The Community School grounds were immaculate but the buttressed wall should be painted before next year's competition. The Church of Ireland had an attractive display of hanging baskets and the sculpted hedge was noted. The use of the Irish language was spotted at Cois na Tine.

Landscaping:

Effective landscaping on the Skibberen Road was greatly admired. A pretty flowerbed was noted at the approach to Keys Terrace. Colourful island displays brightened up the Square with multi-coloured dahlias in full bloom. The Peace Park was impeccable as ever and is a wonderful amenity to have. The landscaped area to the front of the recycling centre was admired.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

Bantry is lucky enough to have a series of natural amenities that encourage the habitation by wildlife. Millstream, mature trees, waterside location and walkway are just a few of note. It is important that these continue to be harnessed and developed to enhance the quality of life in Bantry. The 'Birds of Bantry' signage was noted and indeed on the day of adjudication there were numerous seagulls feeding at the Quay area as the tide was out.

Litter Control:

The town centre was for the most part litter free with the exception of the usual urban problem of cigarette butts. Some litter was noted on the Glengarriff approach road and a considerable amount was also noted at the parking area at the Quays. The recycling point was strewn with litter. Finally a litter blackspot was noted in the alley at the Bantry Bookshop and the Youth Café.

Waste Minimisation:

St Finbarr's Boys NS is commended for its achievement in obtaining Green Flag status and this certainly sets the standard for all the other schools in the town! The school composting initiative is laudable and ongoing work with all the schools creating awareness as to the merits of reusing and recycling has been noted. It is encouraging to note that there are plans for the development of a civic amenity for Bantry. The current bring bank was in use on the day of adjudication and its expansion will be welcome.

Tidiness:

Bantry town centre is generally neat and tidy in presentation. However the seating area outside Paddy Powers was broken and shabby and should be repaired or replaced before Tidy Towns 2008. Modern blue public seating was noted at various locations throughout the town and its environs and looked well. Whilst the grounds of Bantry Abbey were neatly presented the boundary wall should be repainted. A grass bank on the Glengarriff is a popular site for promotional signage but it is imperative that broken or out-of-date signs be removed. The landscaped area at the hospital was a little weedy and the pump here requires repainting.

Residential Areas:

Tower St looked well for the most part and No. 13 in particular was well painted and had vibrant floral displays. The seated area at the Orchard was also admired. The maturing green area at Slip Lawn looked fantastic and it clearly makes a good football pitch too! Blackrock Terrace holds huge potential to be a most impressive row with period facades however it looked a little tired and neglected for the most part on the day of adjudication. Slip Grove was neat and tidy in presentation but please ensure to remove kerbside weeds! The residential area on the approach to St. Cainirs Terrace was well presented and in particular the garden with blooming hydrangeas was commended. It is clear the all residents at Coisc Riasc take pride in the presentation of their property. St. Finbarr's Terrace looked well but some boundary walls need to be cleaned. The houses to the rear of Drumleigh were admired but some of the residences at the front require repainting before Tidy Towns 2008. James Gilhooley Terrace did look well but the front wall was in a state of disrepair and the railing requires repainting. Beacon Hill was fresh in its presentation and the entrance wall was greatly admired.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

The Cork road is neat and tidy in presentation with only a few roadside weeds. The Ring Road was a little overgrown in places and there were no road markings on the day of adjudication. The road surface around the hospital was quite uneven in places and this was also the case in other back areas such as the approach to St. Cainirs Terrace. In general the streets of Bantry were well presented and the installation of broadband as just being completed.

General Impression:

Bantry continues to perform well in the Tidy Towns competition. It is clear from visiting Bantry that there is a high level of local pride in the town and rightly so! Keep up the good work.

Second Round Adjudication:

Bantry looked very well indeed on the day of the second adjudication! The Cork approach was almost perfect with its wonderful sea walk. A few minor improvements would bring it to perfection. These include renewal/painting of the following along the approach: - seating outside the boundary of the Westlodge Hotel, the cemetery gate (South-approach facing gate), Bantry House wooden gate, Maxol garage at lateral ends of forecourt, and the South West (approach facing) section of hoarding opposite new hotel (street facing section of hoarding is good). The Square is a great space with excellent views of the surrounding countryside. These views are of unspoilt hillside. Well done on achieving this accomplishment!

The town buildings are for the most part intact and retain their traditional elements with lovely streetscapes. The Old Courthouse/ Tourist Office was greatly admired. Interesting modern buildings such as the Library have been inserted sympathetically. We noted your recent infill developments such as "Quills". Like the first adjudicator we admired the Post Office, and other buildings too numerous to mention. It seemed that around each corner there was something to engage the eye and interest in the Built Environment, not least the very small scale but good terraces such as the lovely old terraces along Old Barrack Road with their sympathetic housing infill. The terraced houses in many quarters of the town rise in breathtaking fashion in back street areas which use old laneway connections to the town. This makes for very exciting stepping streetscapes of small scale buildings which are also well handled in most new infill.

A few premises like "The Loft Bar" could do with repainting.

The choice of naval blue for street furniture is appropriate and good.

Landscaping throughout is very good. Particularly noted was the area around the Convent grounds, the young tree planting in Wolfe Tone Square, the flower bed adjacent to Garda H.Q., parkland area on the Cork approach, the Cemetery /Sculpture/ Commemoration area on the same approach, and in many of the housing areas – old and new. The "Birds of Bantry Bay" signage at the Square harbour side was enjoyed, and, on that note, all the Heritage Interpretation signage was eagerly read. This is a great and highly accessible amenity for visitors.

One area that disappointed somewhat was the Harbour Road area. Barriers to car parking area and some bollards need repainting. There were caravans overflowing from the small caravan park onto the roadway on the date of second adjudication. Generally an untidy impression was created here. Some windows of the E.S.B. property were broken. An old shed along the seawall had its old corrugated roof falling off and a wall was broken nearby. The car park with the recycling facilities needs a block wall to be plastered, and generally this space needs softening e.g. landscaping and weeding. There was a box and bottles thrown beside the bank. The numbers of banks is outstanding at 20 plus, so there certainly was no "full" problem!

Residential areas were remarkably well kept in general e.g. Marino Heights (apart from one abandoned shopping trolley), Cois Riasc (very good ash tree planting), Slip Lawn with its excellent open space, and corner planting at Old Barrack Road/Georges Row, Beacon Hill, St. Cainir's Place etc. The local Tidy Towns Award (stone markers noted in many areas) must provide a great incentive inter housing area to excel! As the previous adjudicator mentioned, part of the school walls could do with repainting and there were two walls with graffiti in the vicinity of the school (not school walls). Some small amount of rubbish was noted at the area of the speed limit sign at the Glengarriff approach. A barrier at the school car park and a hand rail opposite at the school entrance need straightening and painting. Some signage could do with upgrading e.g. the yield sign leaving Slip Lawn and some in the vicinity of the Library.

As already mentioned the Cork approach is excellent, as is the Glengarriff approach, if less interesting given its suburban ambience. It would be good to see the advertising hoarding at Newtown Street/ Glengarriff Road removed as it is out of scale, and the adjacent car park upgraded. On the issue of advertising there is a need to simplify signs in many cases with respect to the simple expression of an idea rather than duplication or triplication of information on repeated signage.

The area between the hospital and Scart Road is in need of attention - weeding etc. Overall all access roads to the town are good, and it is here one's first impressions are created. However most travellers come from the East and Cork, and this is the jewel in the crown. That Bantry is lucky to have inherited such a gem is one thing, but that it has chosen to care for it in the way it has - is what we would most like to laud! It is indicative of the way it cares for its overall environment. Well Done
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