

Tidy Towns Competition 2007

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Dursey Island** Ref: **1248**
County: **Cork (West)** Mark: **207**
Category: **A** Date(s): **29/06/2007**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2007
Overall Development Approach	50	25
The Built Environment	50	25
Landscaping	50	20
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	35
Litter Control	50	25
Waste Minimisation	20	5
Tidiness	30	15
Residential Areas	40	25
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	25
General Impression	10	7
TOTAL MARK	400	207

Overall Development Approach:

Dursey was entered into the National Tidy Towns competition by Comhhdáil Oileáin na hÉireann as part of an overall initiative to assess the current environmental standard of the islands for residents and visitors alike. And as a Tidy Towns entrant each island is entitled to compete for the Islands Award funded by the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht affairs. It is intended to follow up this assessment with more special initiatives designed to benefit the beautiful islands of Ireland. A number of islands already directly enter the competition and supply adjudicators with information on community involvement and plans for the future. As this is a key feature of Tidy Towns, the adjudicator has awarded the marks for such involvement evident on the day of adjudication only. However your island would gain even more marks under this category by directly entering the competition next year.

The Built Environment:

Dursey has a very small population, 'around' 8 or 9 according to a resident. The main centres of habitation are the villages of Bailehalla, Kilmichael and Terragunna. Around half of the houses are unoccupied. Many are ruins and others are used as outhouses. There are no public buildings of any kind in operation. The post office and school have long been closed.

Landscaping:

There is no evidence of landscape work in recent times. The stone walls that are throughout the island, many of them topped with sheepwire, are a historical feature in themselves as well as a very valuable habitat area for calcareous plants.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

It is hard to describe the sheer density of wildflower species on Dursey. It is fair to say that a trip of any distance along the main road is a visual delight on this June day. Devil's-bit scabious, catsear, foxgloves, stoncrop and wild thyme produce a riot of colours all along this route. Many of the fields, although grazed provide their own displays of colours with clovers, daisies and eyebrights. The air seems to be alive with birds, larks, meadow pipits and swallows filling the island with birdsong. Ravens and grey crows were seen further up the hill. Weather did not permit a visit to the cliffs as mist descended rapidly. While the sun was shining, the hum of insects in the absence of any man-made noise was unforgettable.

Litter Control:

Some litter was noted around the cable car pylon and generally around the pier. Some of this was car parts. There are no litter bins in evidence on the island.

Waste Minimisation:

There was little evidence of recycling, waste transfer or storage facilities on the island. Therefore a nominal mark has been awarded only, although the potential exists to make real progress under this category.

Tidiness:

Around the pier there was some debris from fishing activity. However, clutter was most noteworthy in the villages where much discarded or unused materials were in evidence. Some junked cars were seen near the cable car.

Residential Areas:

While many of the houses are disused or in ruin, several others are brightly painted and in very good condition. Many of the disused buildings are not without their own attraction as they are very old stone buildings, pleasing in appearance and great habitat for plants and birds such as swallows. Much of the clutter such as old pallets and other material does look a little unsightly.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

The main road that runs the length of the island is in quite good condition. It is easily good enough for walkers or cyclists. The undulating landscape makes for very interesting walking terrain along the paved road while the way-marked walking route provides a fantastic experience.

The bending roads through the villages does allow the visitor to see behind houses, and into sheds and other working areas. Much of these would benefit from tidying if this were possible.

General Impression:

Dursey Island is a truly lovely place which many more people would visit if it were better known. For the wildlife lover, amateur or otherwise, the entire island is an unforgettable experience. For the walker, Dursey offers a fantastic opportunity to spend a day at a relaxed pace in a place far from the commotion of modern life.

It is unfortunate that this is detracted from by some of the clutter found during the visit. If this could be addressed, Dursey could be a unique experience in a very beautiful setting.