

Tidy Towns Competition 2007

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Oilean Chleire** Ref: **688**
County: **Cork (West)** Mark: **269**
Category: **A** Date(s): **28/06/2007**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2007
Overall Development Approach	50	20
The Built Environment	50	40
Landscaping	50	35
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	35
Litter Control	50	33
Waste Minimisation	20	11
Tidiness	30	25
Residential Areas	40	28
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	35
General Impression	10	7
TOTAL MARK	400	269

Overall Development Approach:

Cape Clear Island did not send in an entry form this year but was instead entered by Comhdháil Oileáin na hÉireann as part of its Island Tidy Towns Initiative. This was unfortunate as the adjudicator was denied access to very valuable information normally forwarded by the Tidy Towns group, and this is an integral part of the Tidy Towns assessment. Because of this the island was unable to sustain the high mark that Cape Clear Island has received in previous years. The development approach of this island is thus adjudged upon evidence of co-operation between island organisations and other bodies such as local authorities, although the adjudicator did have regard to the island's excellent record in the competition up to last year. If the island enters next year, I am sure its excellent mark under this category would be restored.

The Built Environment:

The main focal point of human habitation is around Tra Chiarain, or the north harbour. Here there are a variety of commercial and residential buildings to be seen. There is a mixture of styles and ages of buildings here from the very modern Siopa Beag to the church (Cill Chiaran) which makes the harbour area very pleasing to the eye. A further mixture may be seen among the buildings of the co-operative, the observatory and the cottages of The Lane. Also attractive are Ciaran Danny Mike's, the holiday homes and youth hostel of Cuan Inbhir. The old Telegraph Station and Parish Hall are very neat and unintrusive despite their size. The priest's house, national school (the first I've seen with a solar panel!) and the Irish College are all very well-kept. The telephone exchange, with its associated wirescape and mast jars somewhat with the rest of the island's architecture. Use of Irish language throughout is consistently good. The lighthouse and signal tower are very dramatic buildings as are the remains of Dun an Oir Castle.

Landscaping:

In common with many of the islands, there is little ornamental planting throughout much of the island.

However, Tra Chiaran is an exception to this. Here a great effort has been made to present the area well with planters, tubs, verge maintenance and management of wild and naturalised plants. Work is also evident around various features, memorials and monuments such as the Millennium Wall.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

Unfortunately, the visit did not allow nearly enough time or good weather to see all the flora and fauna that Cape Clear might offer. However, two peregrine falcons were seen on the way into the harbour, which was a great start! Also seen on the boat were fulmars, razorbills and storm petrels. Choughs and ravens were seen on the higher cliffs. Loch Ioral and surrounding wetlands were lovely to look at but heavy rain precluded any birdwatching.

The roadsides had a beautiful display of heathers and gorse with a mixture of grasses, ox-eye daisies and clovers all adding to the colours.

Litter Control:

With very few exceptions, litter was practically non-existent on day of visit. There were well-placed bins in the harbour, as well as at least one notice discouraging litter on the island. One dump site was found located just off the Leaca Mhor. This unfortunately included illegally dumped refuse. Several cards are dumped here and there is evidence of burning of both household and commercial waste.

Waste Minimisation:

The recycling centre at the harbour looked well-used and well-maintained. Included in the public information at the harbour was a notice on the 3 Rs. The café (at the Siopa Beag) and the pubs use real cups, plates etc. Islanders I spoke to were well aware of the 'bag' recycling scheme and the need to reduce waste on the island.

Tidiness:

With the obvious exception of the dump site described above, the island is almost entirely free of unnecessary clutter. The main areas of human habitation look extremely well-kept.

Residential Areas:

Although the island's population is spread quite widely across the island, there is little of the apparent neglect of gardens and frontage that can be seen on some islands. The care that is taken of the cottages on The Lane typifies the standard of much of Cape Clear.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

Road surfaces are comparatively good. There are several commercial vehicles such as taxis in regular use. The flowers and shrubs occurring naturally make the roads of Cape Clear delightful to walk or cycle although the gradients involved in covering the whole island make this no task for the faint-hearted. Cape Clear Ferries positively encourage cyclists by advertising free passage for your bicycle. There are very well-made and positioned placename stones in each area of the island.

General Impression:

It is obvious that much work goes into maintaining the high standards seen on day of visit. From both a natural and built environment perspective, Cape Clear offers very much. Helpfully, this is extremely well signed in North Harbour and friendly assistance is available in the Oifig Failte. The free bilingual guide to Oilean Cleire and the excellent Bealach Oidhreacra lead the visitor to much of the island's many fascinating features. The high marks awarded this year are testament to the inherent standard of the island, evident even without the information provided on the entry form. Therefore, it is very important that Cape Clear Island renews its active participation in the Tidy Towns Competition in the coming years so it can regain its high marks under the overall development category. The various projects and initiatives of the island are deserving of this recognition in terms of their contribution to the development of the island and the broader conservation of its natural and wider environments.

Congratulations are due to all those islanders who have worked so hard.