

# Tidy Towns Competition 2009

## *Adjudication Report*

Centre: **Bantry** Ref: **666**  
County: **Cork(West)** Mark: **285**  
Category: **D** Date(s): **18/06/2009**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2009
Overall Development Approach	50	43
The Built Environment	50	40
Landscaping	50	38
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	27
Litter Control	50	30
Waste Minimisation	20	12
Tidiness	30	19
Residential Areas	40	30
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	38
General Impression	10	8
<b>TOTAL MARK</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>285</b>

### **Overall Development Approach:**

Congratulations to Bantry Tidy Towns Committee for participating in the Tidy Towns Competition 2009. Thank you for your comprehensive, attractively compiled submission and for the supporting literature which shows that you are an enthusiastic group of people, committed to the improvement of the appearance of Bantry and to the enhancement of the quality of life in Bantry. This adjudicator would prefer a map that is easily negotiated. The survey map supplied with its numerous numbered sites was a heartache to follow and suitable for a person who is familiar with the town. In the presentation of your submission bulleted concise points would highlight your work and would be more advantageous than the present essay format. The information required for adjudication is not readily available in the essay style format. You appear to have an active committee that meets regularly. Your involvement with the various local agencies seems to be mutually beneficial. Of great interest and relevance is your encouragement to the schools to pursue Green Flag Status and their subsequent success. Hopefully you can achieve your ambitions and build on the success of previous years.

### **The Built Environment:**

The town centre of Bantry is a joy to behold and experience. The Atlantic Ocean itself is but one element of the main street experience, its menace curbed by the sturdy but attractive stone pointed wall. The vast space at the town centre has been developed into a pleasant open plaza, the surface with its sandy, creamy nuance highlights the tones of colour in the surrounding buildings. Trees, sculpture, streets, lamps, pillars, railings combine to invite one to come, sit, relax and enjoy. It expresses the personality of the town. It seems unfair to single out but O'Callaghans/Evans has to be remarked upon for its traditional, gentle decoration. The modern soft curve of the Garda station enhances the traditional street architecture. Now sit on another seat and look in the opposite direction. An entirely different experience but still as exciting in its own way. The mature trees act as a backdrop and kindly shelter to the mix of heritage buildings and the fire station. In

Biblical terms 'It is good to be here'.

What might be an eyesore, the thatched building at O'Mahony's foodstore, is well maintained. Derelict sites are problematic and symptomatic of the major economic and social changes in the town. A visit to Barrack Street is a visual feast. What a treat to find a letter box so freshly painted and contrasting with the surrounding colour scheme. The Social Welfare Inspector at No. 6 has a down at heel appearance. Exit the plaza through New Street for another uplifting experience. The Church now towers over all it beholds but the wheel and library vie for attention. The rainbow range of colour on the street is a joy, the West Cork Carers Group front a sharp contrast to the carer at No 6. The splendid contrast in colours between walls, doors, windows and reveals is the stuff of John Hinde.

The convent is another building commanding wonderful views ensuring that the nuns could keep an eye on the antics of their pupils from afar. Another building to attract attention is the Post Office, the terrace by it adding to the dignity of the surroundings. Bantry is worth a visit just to stroll about the streets.

### **Landscaping:**

Your submission promises a feast of eye catching landscaping. And the visitor experience is a happy one. Drive past Áras na Sagart, fabulous landscaping with the bridge over the stream. The approach road past the Church has a landscaping standard to aspire to. Businesses and householders alike buy into the landscaping theme and create a paradise of colour. But keep an eye on maintenance. Last year's landscaping project becomes this year's landscaping maintenance headache. Bantry Peace Park is a legacy from former Tidy Towns Committees and it needs to be more cherished. The great landscaping opportunity using the rock from Ard na Gréine down hill would benefit from dressing. Fine landscaping in estates deteriorates rapidly if not tended to regularly.

### **Wildlife and Natural Amenities:**

One might say that Bantry has it all, surrounded as it is by wooded hills and the sea. This must be a wildlife paradise. Your submission describes that wildlife comprehensively. And your submission is frank and honest in its assessment of the value people place on biodiversity. You have plans to change this situation and that is the start. Bantry has great potential for progress in this section of the competition. The Bantry Inshore Search and Rescue is a fine structure, the concrete railed walk an invitation to old and young to share the wildlife experience. Access is so important. Information boards show that work has been done and do provide access to the natural environment.

### **Litter Control:**

Your involvement with the schools, your participation in the Anti Litter Challenge and in clean ups, the regular patrols are important in the fight against litter. Changing attitudes and creating awareness of litter reduction are important elements in this struggle. Bantry can be proud of its clean appearance. It is disappointing to report any incidence of dumping or litter in a place so cared-for.

### **Waste Minimisation:**

The Bring Bank in the car park is centrally and discretely located, the stone wall and the landscaping prompt one to keep the place tidy. One reads of the parents' cooperation with the schools in removing items for recycling. The main emphasis in your submission is on recycling and recycling is central to the waste minimisation section. You might also interest the community in other waste minimisation projects.

### **Tidiness:**

The centre of Bantry is pristine in cleanliness and general appearance. This is a wonderful achievement. Traffic seems to flow freely without menace. The BAGIT Challenge seems to be an innovative way of keeping Bantry clean and tidy. The numbers involved illustrate the need people feel for such work. Yet some of the estates visited are more problematic. Ensure that signs, for example the ones with parking times, are maintained. I missed the graffiti wherever it is.

### **Residential Areas:**

The Town Council deserve plaudits for the name signs on the various residential areas. Further praise is merited for the use of Gaeilge as at Cnoc Riase, Béal an Ghleanna. St Cairins Place has panoramic views. Its surroundings are colourful and it is obvious that this could be an award winning estate. Some estates have an untidy appearance. While Slip Heights is beautifully secluded the maintenance seems slipshod. Willowford Developments would have started out with landscaping that was full of promise but is now in need of better management. The estate up by St Gobans College presents itself with attractive colours but the open space is not mowed regularly for the youngsters to enjoy. In other estates the kerbside weeds create an unease. The

estates on Knocknaveagh Road are delightful with attractive design and landscaping and good maintenance.

**Roads, Streets and Back Areas:**

The approach road from Skibbereen is the keynote approach to Bantry. No matter what direction one arrives from one sweeps mostly downhill into town, this natural sweep adding to the charm. But the Skibbereen approach is even more special. The spacious open spaces, the trees of Bantry House Hotel and the West Lodge Hotel bestow a prosperous appearance on their surroundings. The sea is a natural delight. The fine footpaths and stone walls invite one to follow them into the town centre. But the views down the Church approach road are even more spectacular, hinting strongly of the clerical influence on this town for many decades. The natural rock shepherds one along on the approach from St Gobans school. Beautiful. The Ballylickey approach road disappoints. Yes various eras and styles of housing create interest. But there appears to be no coherent vision or practice of the roadside maintenance. The plethora of signage detracts from the rich, lush surrounding vegetation. Coming from the Dromleigh Resource Centre the appearance of the fine houses is diminished by the lack of attention to weeds. Scart Road is delightful. The lanes leading into the main street are full of interest and colour and in general are well maintained. The area at the rear of Cnoc Riasc is neglected, its appearance worsened by the litter and dumping. The link road from here down to the Church is another delight.

**General Impression:**

No wonder pride leaps at one from the pages of your submission. Bantry is an experience to be proud of. There has been much transformation in recent years but the town has retained its cosy, welcoming character. Maintenance of landscaping is a challenge. One hopes that your committee gets support from Resident Associations in the maintenance of their estates. You deserve all the support that comes your way.