

# Tidy Towns Competition 2009

## Adjudication Report

Centre: **Skibbereen** Ref: **693**  
County: **Cork(West)** Mark: **270**  
Category: **C** Date(s): **23/06/2009**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2009
Overall Development Approach	50	38
The Built Environment	50	36
Landscaping	50	34
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	32
Litter Control	50	34
Waste Minimisation	20	10
Tidiness	30	17
Residential Areas	40	28
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	33
General Impression	10	8
<b>TOTAL MARK</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>270</b>

### Overall Development Approach:

Congratulations to the Skibbereen Tidy Towns Committee for participating in the Tidy Towns Competition 2009. Thank you for your submission and for your map. A hand drawn sketch of the town which highlights the places you regard as being most important for the Tidy Towns Competition would have been of greater help to the adjudicator. It is a pity that you did not include a 3-5 year plan. If you do not have one, the exercise of compiling such a plan would enable you to set immediate and medium term targets for yourselves, would help you decide which local bodies and agencies would assist you with your various projects and would focus attention on sources of funding. Your committee seems to have plenty of support from the community. In what ways do you interact with the Skibbereen town council and Cork County Council? Is there a particular reason why you did not make an entry under the question: 'How do you communicate with your community'? When you visit the schools what age pupils do you address and on what matters? Have you found this exercise to be worthwhile? It is great to read that your experience in this competition has been positive. May that experience last.

### The Built Environment:

Skibbereen has its own unique flavour. One wonders what is it creates that Skibbereen character. Is it the long streets of traditional build and colour? Is it the presence of heritage and period buildings scattered throughout the town? Is it the traditional signage of O'Laoghaire's seodóir or Hourigan's fóillíocht? Is it the tribute to the past in famine remembrances and in the tribute to '98? Whatever gives Skibbereen its flavour will that distinctive flavour survive into a new age? The number of unoccupied buildings along the streets, the obvious distress of many buildings on and offstreet, is a concern. The renewal work springs hope. Renovation to other buildings strengthens that hope. Right now Skibbereen is shedding much of its obsolete past. It seems a pity that fine buildings may make way for modern blocks. One awaits the new Arts Centre

with interest. Where development has occurred, as in the SuperValu district, there is a vitality about the complex and open area. The Morris building is a shining example of possibilities. The Thornhill complex invigorates its surroundings and makes access to the natural area behind possible. One bridge replaces another and also fills the air with possibilities. The hardware premises at Drinagh are an example of the design one wishes for in outer Skibbereen. The retail complex further on at the roundabout is alien to the indigenous town architecture. The stream is being exploited to enhance its environs. A lot that is good is happening. Skibbereen will retain its natural heritage centre at the Churches, the Arts Centre, the Credit Union and St Fachtna's. While the new heritage centre is a joy to visit and an important venture it will never compare with what has grown up naturally in the heritage heart of Skibbereen.

### **Landscaping:**

Private and public landscaping throughout the town is colourful and vibrant and echoes the bright sunshine of a June day. The Ballydehob roundabout is ablaze with summer joy. The summer colour at the heritage centre invites one to come and visit. Páirc Uí Dhonnabháin Rossa is attractive in colour and design. Éamonn Ó Cuív must have been an-shásta. There is a beautiful bed of colour at Blackthorn Place. The area around the churches is a delight. St Fachtna's brightens up its front with its baskets. One feels that along the street, despite the efforts of some places like Bridge House or the Four Seasons Florists that there is no coherent plan. The street could be brightened up no end if a plan were put in place. Shrubberies in some places need to be tended to. In some estates the designated landscaping areas have not been planted or are not maintained. There may be management companies in these estates which need to be made aware of their responsibilities. The playground is a tribute to your social value system. Your plan to commission a feature to represent the town of Skibbereen is praiseworthy.

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

The possibilities for progress in Skibbereen in the wildlife section are enormous. The beautiful meander of the river through town not only brings a peaceful air with it, it has many recreational possibilities also. The wildlife habitats in its environs must be many and varied. The marsh area also provides wildlife possibilities. In next year's submission describe the wildlife that is found around Skibbereen. There may be people in your community who have an informed interest in wildlife and who would be willing to assist you with this section of the competition.

### **Litter Control:**

There is very little litter evident around the town. This means that your efforts in this war are being successful. But the area around the playground is a concern. The emphasis in the litter section is not just on collecting and organising clean-ups. These are important but creating awareness of litter reduction is equally important. As a next step in your fight against litter make reduction your key ambition.

### **Waste Minimisation:**

Well done on your support for the Gaelscoil in their pursuit of Green Flag Status. Have they been successful? It could benefit your committee to study the booklet 'Race Against Waste'. Such a study would stimulate new waste elimination projects for you. Remember that the emphasis in this section is not on litter control but on minimising waste in your community. A lot of your submission on this topic centres on activities more suitable to the litter and tidiness sections.

### **Tidiness:**

Despite the traffic and the ongoing development and building, the centre of town presents a neat, cared-for image. Businesses and residents keep a close eye on their fronts. But there is a lot of unnecessary fly posting throughout the town and this should be tackled. An advert for a famine walk on May 10th, now that we are in late June, needs to walk. Kerbside weeds in many estates need attention. Even though Skibbereen is a bustling town the by-pass must have brought a peace to the town, as experienced during the adjudicator's stay.

### **Residential Areas:**

One of the appealing features of a visit to Skibbereen is the number of housing developments that have been part of town centre life in Skibbereen for generations, as along Mardyke St. These terraces add a dimension to the Skibbereen experience and though older look very well. Then the bungalows on Riverdale Road also creep in towards the town centre. It would appear that there has been an amount of house building in Skibbereen in recent years. The mix of older estates and the estates of the Tiger economy also add appeal

in their various designs. The entrances to the modern estates are nicely landscaped, there is plenty of open space. Very often this open space needs to be tended to. The vegetation is intruding onto the footpath at the entrance to Newbridge Park. This estate needs to have its open spaces regularly mowed or its general condition could rapidly deteriorate. Kerbside weeds, even in new estates, creates a neglected appearance, even in a new estate like Moorings Holiday Homes. Skibbereen is also blessed with many fine individual residences as on the Baltimore Road which bring colour and design to their surroundings.

### **Roads, Streets and Back Areas:**

The work done on roundabouts is not just pleasantly eye catching but is also thought provoking, as in the case of the Baltimore roundabout. The house owners along approach roads enhance the neighbourhood with their front gardens. The islands of landscaping to the fronts of houses on the Baltimore approach road is particularly noteworthy. There appears to be a policy with regard to maintenance of roadside verges that they be allowed grow wild if there is no activity, such as a house or business, inside the walls. If such a policy is in place it should be reconsidered. In many cases the appearance of the untreated roadside detracts from the treatment of their frontages by local residents. The Cork approach road is an exception to the non treatment of verges but here also there is need for upkeep. There are problems with some of the back streets and in a car park in that the amount of dereliction leads to indiscriminate dumping and graffiti.

### **General Impression:**

In your submission you have clearly identified the challenges that face people who are concerned for the appearance of Skibbereen and quality of life of its inhabitants. The co-operation of many other agencies in your community would assist you in your aspirations. Skibbereen is a joy to visit.