

Tidy Towns Competition 2012

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Skerries** Ref: **178**
County: **Dublin(Fingal)** Mark: **306**
Category: **E** Date(s): **03/07/2012**
30/07/2012

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2011	Mark Awarded 2012
Overall Development Approach	50	47	47
The Built Environment	50	37	38
Landscaping	50	40	41
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	33	33
Litter Control	50	36	36
Tidiness	30	20	20
Waste Minimisation	20	15	16
Residential Areas	40	30	30
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	36	36
General Impression	10	9	9
TOTAL MARK	400	303	306

Overall Development Approach:

Skerries is welcome to the SuperValu TidyTowns competition for 2012. Thank you for your submission together with supporting documentation. Also for your map which was extremely helpful. Your committee of eight and volunteers work well in the community. Your volunteers taking on specific responsibilities that they undertake to do, is an excellent method for people who like working tasks rather than meeting. Your adopt a patch and adopt a beach initiatives are all excellent ways of encouraging more people to come on board and get involved. Your adoption scheme is also a similar initiative for watering plants and works well to encourage volunteers. The committee together with all volunteers work well and engage well with all the relevant bodies to ensure that the vision for Skerries is released.

The Built Environment:

On entering Skerries the first stop took the adjudicator to the Garda Station which is an impressive building with lovely window boxes. On the road passing the monument that towered over the town with its superb landscaping was a joy. This is a real focal point that leads you from the town on to Red Island. On the way to Harbour road the two grey houses that featured doors painted blue and brown caught the eye of the adjudicator and were admired. Skerries sailing club with its pier looked splendid. Passing the lifeboats building and the storm in a tea cup which all are well presented buildings. The rain arrived as Martello Tower beckoned and the red island houses were all superb. Children were leaving the Guichen way to shelter from the rain. Despite the rain this area was impressive and the adjudicator promised a return visit on a finer day. Back in town the Malting House Inn and SuperValu were well presented. Skerries Community Centre is a fine modern building of red brick with all weather pitches. A visit to Skerries Mills and the Tourist Office was superb. The red LW Ennis cart of a different era parked outside the mill made an attractive feature.

Landscaping:

Landscaping at the Mills has a wild look to its appearance. This is now becoming quiet a large plantation of willow for a community biomass project. The landscaping at the pier had some lovely shrubs which are hardy enough for the sea climate. There is a different type of landscaping around the monument in the town with its carefully tendered plants and planters of nice summer bedding. The community centre car park has got a face lift with some superb planting by volunteers of all ages, now called the Thursday Club. The plants were started from seedlings in the volunteer's gardens and it is great to see that not only are they planting them but they are also maintaining them. The landscaping in Skerries has seasonal colour. Springtime must dazzle with all the daffodils swaying in the wind. The Guerrilla gardeners are busy planting fruit trees in all the local schools.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

A town like Skerries located at the sea has a natural habitat for the many species of wildlife that are living in the vegetation. It is good to know that there are volunteers lining up that want to adopt a beach. What a novel way of protecting the coastline. This seaside location increases the bio diversity of the area naturally and the nuns field on the Rush road is a fine example of this. Skerries Mills has as abundance of vegetation growth, river and pond that all attracts wildlife to the area. Bird Watch Ireland is doing great work with educational talks and walks and the introduction of the red kite to the area is a great achievement.

Litter Control:

Like selling bottled water your should sell your novel idea of adopting a patch ensuring that patch is kept clear of anything that does not belong there. Litter in Skerries has no hope of surviving on the streets, in the estates or on the beach. What a success story for other areas to adopt. Not only are the children being educated in the unacceptability of litter but they are getting exercise, fresh air and a cleaner street, beach and town to be proud of. Well done on your work with the green schools programme and the many volunteers that you have gained along the way through adoption to combat litter in the town.

Tidiness:

Skerries by its very nature and location extrude an air of tidiness. The town has a very natural appearance of tidy while having areas that if set in a different location would be considered untidy. Long vegetation in some areas looks untidy but not here, as the location suits the style. Traffic was flowing freely with no hiccups. A small amount of weed growth was noted at the wall near the Tony Sherlock plaque and the Dublin road roundabout was a little bit untidy. While these would appear to be minor offences in any tidy area small discrepancies do distract. Footpaths were in good condition and suitable to their job.

Waste Minimisation:

Well done to all involved in the Skerries allotments group. This project is applauded for its design. You are ticking most of the boxes if not all. Waste minimisation is to reduce the production of waste in the community. You engage with the local schools green programme. You compost grass cuttings. Your encouragement of train usage is noted. Sending emails and not paper around to communicate with agencies allowing more saving of paper. Nothing goes to waste in this town. Even left over paint was put to good use. During clean ups the waste is segregated. The list goes on. Well done and the adjudicator applauds you in this category.

Residential Areas:

Skerries are fortunate to have many attractive dwellings that make up the streetscape. Houses like the two storey grey houses as you approach Harbour Road are fine examples of this. So too are the traditional thatched houses that were noted at different locations throughout the town. Sherlock Park had very attractive dwellings. Across at the corner of Sherlock Park two houses were very much admired with beautiful gardens. The houses in Red Island were very attractive. There were many housing estates such as Greenlawns and Churchfields which were all well presented and a credit to their residents.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

The approach roads had a welcoming feel. The roundabout on the Dublin road did need some attention and the street sign by the wall at this roundabout was a little rusty. The Tidy Towns floral plaque could also be improved somewhat. The hedges, planters and floral displays that are part of the approach roads all gave a very hearty Cead Mile Failte. The road surface on the station road was also uneven.

General Impression:

This town is an experience to visit. There is so much to see and do. Some rain fell on the day of adjudication but it did not dampen the spirits of the many walking enthusiasts that could be seen around. This group has done tremendous work from adopting, to cutting down waste and the work continues. Well done and continued success in the competition.

Second Round Adjudication:

It was a pleasure for this adjudicator to visit Skerries after a number of years absence. It continues to perform well in the competition. The streets of the town looked well cared for on the day, in terms of the built environment. By the harbour area, the sailing club looked very fresh with jaunty flags fluttering in the breeze and the Storm in a Tea Cup Cafe looked very charming. The Malting House Inn was freshly whitewashed and created a good impression. Some of the buildings on tree-lined Church Street were not as fresh as others. These included a number of premises and houses were for sale- sadly a sign of the times we're living in, no doubt. The thatched cottages throughout the town, were admired, as ever and their retention is to be applauded. Some of the signage should be refreshed before next year-such as some street nameplates. The directional signs to public lavatories at the harbour were quite faded and those at the Dublin road roundabout were a little grubby. The shed at the entrance to the harbour area could be repainted before next year's competition, also. This adjudicator is in agreement with the comments made by the first round adjudicator in relation to the roundabout on the Dublin road, although the nearby stone nameplate was admired with its jaunty display of daisies. The large grass area at the car park at Red Island had been freshly mown, although the cut grass had not been fully removed. Litter control was generally quite good on the day, with only the odd paper evident at the Red Island car park and along approach roads. The recycling area in this location was reasonably well maintained. Road surfaces throughout were rather rough -perhaps you could approach Fingal County Council in this regard? Colourful floral displays made a positive impression on a sunny second adjudication day.