

Tidy Towns Competition 2013

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Bantry** Ref: **666**
County: **Cork(West)** Mark: **304**
Category: **D** Date(s): **23/06/2013**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2012	Mark Awarded 2013
Overall Development Approach	50	45	45
The Built Environment	50	41	41
Landscaping	50	42	42
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	31	31
Litter Control	50	32	32
Sustainable Waste And Resource Management	20	14	15
Tidiness	30	19	19
Residential Areas	40	32	32
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	38	39
General Impression	10	8	8
TOTAL MARK	400	302	304

Overall Development Approach:

Bantry is very welcome to this year's Tidy Towns Competition. It was clear to us on adjudication day that you have been active over the past year on several fronts. It is great to see that your committee has sixteen members and that there are a further sixty individuals who act as associates in the litter patrols. You can be proud of achieving this substantial level of engagement by the local community.

Thank you for your clear and understandable map. It made our task on adjudication day much easier. It was great to see your heritage trail and how more light is being shed on notable features such as Bridewell Lane. These are really commendable initiatives and we saw how visitors to Bantry were taking an interest in them. You deserve credit for your 3-5 year plan: this forward planning is always encouraged because it harnesses several projects, taking account of finance, with a fixed time horizon. Well done.

The Built Environment:

Bantry has many aspects to its built environment. It combines the seaside elements of a fishing port, a busy commercial core and several engaging residential elements. The ground rises rapidly on the periphery and this feature allows impressive views down over the town. Bantry is fortunate in having such a generous central square. It is unusually elongated, opening out its arms towards the sea. The wide space allows fine civic buildings to address each other on either side across the central space.

The eclectic mix of small retail outlets in the town gives it, its unique character. We admired the public library; it is a novel and impressive building in its surprising setting, set off by the large mill wheel which was in full motion on the day. The Deerpark House Nursing Home, off Abbey Road, is very well kept. We noted the very impressive stone-built Gate Lodge at Bantry House, with the archway feature: this is a unique landmark associated with the massive stone piers on the frontage. The Garda Station is also unusual, with its attractive maritime theme; it was well presented.

An Muileann apartments are situated in an area where there are some vacant shops: however, we found them neat and tidy. Well done. The Fire Station, the schools and Áras Beantraí were all in good order. Both the Church of Ireland and G.W Biggs & Co were nicely presented. The tourist office is fortunate to occupy such attractive premises. The Golf Club on the Glengarriff Road looked fine on adjudication day.

Landscaping:

Bantry has lots of opportunities for creative landscaping and it makes quite good use of them. The projects undertaken by your committee were commended. The Peace Park is very neat and tidy. We admired the Spirit of Love Sculpture and the associated multi-media planting. It is a very attractive and unique feature. The interpretative panels were clear and clean. They are well formulated. The gravel walk at Garryvurcha graveyard makes a fine addition to the place.

At many points we saw how your local initiatives in tree planting are maturing nicely. These will surely enhance Bantry for the next generation. The landscaping project at the Bathing Box is very well done. We noted the use of indigenous species and driftwood. The stone seating blends in well also. We noted that the planting beside the Garda Station is not completed and the graveyard had some plots that would benefit from tidying.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

This is a topic where Bantry has great potential for advancement. It is a place that is blessed with a wonderful multifaceted environment. We note that your plan envisages more pedestrian links, opening up new aspects and this is something to be encouraged. On adjudication day we spotted some nest boxes of birds in the town centre. This is a great idea and the encouragement of local wildlife might be brought further. We recommend that you engage more closely with the local schools. Children are great supporters of Irish nature. You may also consider approaching organizations such as BirdWatch Ireland that can offer further guidance.

Litter Control:

This is topic where your initiatives have brought good results. We loved your selection of the motif and slogan (Tobin loves Bantry). This cartoon character is a novel initiative and it is bound to bring the children on board. Well done. Mol an óige agus tíocheaigh sí. We found a substantial amount of litter at the inner end of the harbour. When the tide is in, it piles up against the quayside at Wolfe Tone Square.

Sustainable Waste And Resource Management:

We were impressed with the scale of your recycling facility. We counted 23 bottle bank receptacles and six clothing bins. The place was neat and your CCTV must ensure people do not dump there. We noted the mural on the wall beside the E-car station. It is a novel solution to your graffiti problem. Congratulations.

What this category seeks to do is to bring places like Bantry up to the next level in the pyramid where the emphasis is on reducing the generation of waste in the first instance. There are some straightforward ways of achieving this, such as minimizing the amount of wrapping we use every day, or through composting. Guidance on this topic can be got from Cork County Council.

Tidiness:

Bantry is closely engaged with the topic of tidiness. During our visit we saw a man busy making his rounds sweeping away rubbish off the pavement close to the centre of the town. Well done.

The Peace Park was neat and tidy. The public toilet and seating at the island ferry pier need attention but the other public toilets were in better order. The toilets opposite the Garda Station were neat and tidy, their setting enhanced by the black and white mural. We note the graffiti on the walls of the central shelter at the town square.

There is a derelict boat at the slip opposite the Garda Station: at high tide it is half-submerged - could this be removed from such a prominent situation by the harbour authority? Last year's adjudicator commented on the sofa abandoned in the Hill Road car park - it is still there. We noticed several buildings on Marino Street, opposite Bridewell Lane, are currently on the market and we hope they attract new buyers who will undertake refurbishment.

The heritage trail information panels were highly praised. You might consider the impact of the extensive hoarding that surrounds the parking area opposite the Maritime Hotel; it is quite intrusive, especially on account of its prominent location. Both Meelagh Bridge and the adjoining filling station deserve some attention. Casey's filling station was well-presented.

Residential Areas:

Bantry's housing stock is both varied and of a high quality. Recent additions have added a wider variety. Many of the individual houses on the Glengarriff Road looked well. Cois Riasec would benefit from some cleaning up. The identity of individual housing estates still presents a challenge to visitors where they lack names. You might approach the local residents associations to encourage an initiative in this regard. There is lovely cohesive planting at An Fánán and the smooth road surface was noted also. Slip Lane, with its D-shaped layout, is very well kept. Molaim sibh.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

Bantry's road network serves the place well and it is generally well maintained. You might consider the extent of signs on the N71 approach on account of the excessive clutter they present. We noted the new signs at the

Abbey slipway and at Newtown; there is attractive planting also. Laherdawn Business Park is well kept. At the time of our visit the road to Meelagh Valley was being resurfaced, this will assist traffic circulation. We came across the Cineplex close to the harbour and we were pleased to see how neat it was. Your project at Bridewell Lane is highly commended; this is a narrow and mysterious place, with a rich history, it adds another dimension to the town. Well done.

We came across the stone arch that is incorporated in the building of Kevin O'Donovan, solicitor; this is an architectural gem that deserves to be cherished.

General Impression:

The visit to Bantry made a great impression on the adjudicator. You have made very good progress and it is clear that you understand the wide variety of the local assets that can enrich the environment for the benefit of the community.

We can now look forward to progress on your projects, such as the walkway. Well done and good luck with all your endeavours. Go n-éirí an t-ádh libh.