

# Tidy Towns Competition 2012

## Adjudication Report

Centre: **Clonakilty** Ref: **669**  
County: **Cork(West)** Mark: **309**  
Category: **D** Date(s): **12/07/2012**  
**30/07/2012**

	<b>Maximum Mark</b>	<b>Mark Awarded 2011</b>	<b>Mark Awarded 2012</b>
Overall Development Approach	50	46	46
The Built Environment	50	44	44
Landscaping	50	41	42
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	31	32
Litter Control	50	32	32
Tidiness	30	18	19
Waste Minimisation	20	15	15
Residential Areas	40	32	32
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	38	38
General Impression	10	9	9
<b>TOTAL MARK</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>306</b>	<b>309</b>

### Overall Development Approach:

The adjudicator is delighted to welcome Clonakilty to the 2012 SuperValu TidyTowns competition. We are pleased to read that the level of support for TidyTowns in Clonakilty remains very strong with 13 committee members, 52 volunteers and 48 juniors, all getting involved in one way or another. This is very impressive and it demonstrates that the level of community spirit is high. The TidyTowns Group is commended on your organized approach to the competition which is reflected in your close relationship with local businesses (and wider community) and your innovative and practical initiatives for dealing with litter control – which include asking the shop/business owners to sweep in front of their premises in the morning and afternoon and identifying ‘zones’ for litter control. Your links with both the voluntary sector (including Foroige, Residents Associations) and the statutory agencies such as the Town Council and Fás are noted. Have the TidyTowns group considered approaching the West Cork Development Partnership for advice or possibly funding? The links to the Schools in the town are a very strong part of your work and this is strongly encouraged in the TidyTowns Competition. The Junior Litter Patrol is an excellent initiative and we were delighted to read of other joint projects such as the transition year students making window boxes for the TidyTowns Group. We would strongly encourage you to explore other possibilities for joint projects, perhaps in the areas of landscaping, wildlife and waste minimization? Thank you for your detailed entry form (and supplementary documentation submitted at a later date), photos and excellent map as they were most helpful during adjudication. However, it was quite surprising to note that there is no 3 – 5 year TidyTowns action plan in place for Clonakilty and that there was no reference to a plan by the adjudicator in 2011. It is considered that a plan is vitally important to help identify short, medium and long term projects under each of the TidyTowns Categories.

### The Built Environment:

This is the first time the adjudicator had visited Clonakilty for a number of years and it is pleasing to see that

the town continues to thrive and improve from year to year. The attractions at the town are numerous with its setting on Clonakilty Bay providing for a wonderful backdrop as one enters the town. We were delighted to observe that the parks and the amenity areas that offer views and pleasant seating areas have received considerable attention from your committee in 2012 and your hard work was evident as they were a pleasure to visit on adjudication day. The town itself provides a range of features of interest, not least the intact and wonderfully well maintained buildings and commercial premises, particularly on Wolfe Tone Street, Ashe Street, Pearse Street and Connolly Street. We were delighted to find that, despite recent events, the commercial premises of businesses in the town centre generally achieved a very high standard of presentation. As the vast majority looked very well, it does not seem fair to select a number of examples that illustrate the high standard on offer. A number of properties stood out however and they included; Shanleys, John O'Briens and O'Scanails on Connolly Street and the Credit Union, the West Cork Enterprise Board and the Old Mill on Kent Street. On Ashe Street, the Sweet Shop, Bags and Bling, the Lucky House and McCarthys Solicitors looked very well while Hennessys was admired on Rossa Street. The vast majority of properties on Pierce Street, looked well but Scullys, Forristals, Bettys Brosnan, Tigh Barra, Kevin O'Regan, Gearodins, Mickey Finns and the Phoenix Bar all caught the eye of the adjudicator, while the Imperial Hotel and the Clonakilty townhouse on Wolfe Tone Street stood out. The number, range and high standard of presentation of the numerous historical properties also drew positive attention with the Courthouse, the Old Linen Hall, the Old Brewery, the Catholic Church and the Methodist Church deserving of a special mention. Emmet Square is a highlight of the town and both the buildings and the lovely square looked exceptionally well during adjudication. We were delighted to read that the former house of Michael Collins has been acquired by the town council and plans are being prepared to turn the building into a museum. We look forward to seeing this project progress in the years ahead. It was heartening to see that the post office is based in the historical building adjacent to the bridge at Kent Street as this is a wonderful and productive reuse of a valuable historical building. It was also pleasing to note that the majority of new buildings that have been constructed in Clonakilty in recent times make a positive contribution to the town. Examples include the new buildings at the waterfront development whose modern design offers a contrast to the more traditional designs. We note your projects for 2012 and it is encouraging to note that an architectural conservation area in the town centre has been identified and that there is policy support in the Town Development Plan for maintaining shopfronts, signage and windows. The work on boundary walls in the Church car park and convent hill is also noted.

### **Landscaping:**

In the view of the adjudicator, this is a strong category for the town of Clonakilty and a number of high-quality schemes were observed during adjudication. The adjudicator was most impressed with the work that has been undertaken to Deasys yard, where the colourful planted beds intended to break up the extensive area of tarmac, were considered to be successful and they looked very well on the day. The adjudicator also liked the colourful planting positioned in the top of the natural stone wall at the boundary of Deasys yard as this helps to soften the appearance of Lamb Street Lower. The floral displays at the entrance to the town from Skibbereen, particularly on the roundabout and on the verge adjacent to it, helped to brighten up this approach. The approach from Cork was no less impressive with attractive landscaping beds and planters adding bright summer colours to the roundabout outside Supervalu. Further out on this approach road, the mature trees and landscaping combined to wonderful effect. Colourful floral displays were also observed at the courthouse, at the entrance to Connolly Street and outside the Imperial Hotel on Wolfe Tone Street. Other landscaping and planting schemes that deserve a special mention include; the landscaping at the central feature in Emmet Street Park and the excellent landscaping at the 'green elephant junction' (on Park Road)! This year, the adjudicator paid particular attention to the contribution made by businesses in the town centre in the window box competition (which it is noted is in its 27th year). We are conscious that this issue was the subject of comments by the adjudicator's in the first and second stages of the Tidy Towns competition in 2011 and we find ourselves in agreement that while windowboxes make an important contribution (particularly in terms of colour) to the buildings and principal streets of the town, an excessive amount of them should not be encouraged. Therefore, it is recommended that the group should monitor the number of windowboxes being provided and that the balance should be struck which recognises the positive contribution of planters and also acknowledges the significant contribution that the buildings make to the streetscape and the appearance of the town. The landscaping work undertaken to Croppy Park was also admired as this is a lovely (and popular) space that offers views of the Bay. It is noted from your entry form that a great deal of effort goes into the maintenance and planting of existing beds each year and given the number of schemes on display, this is not surprising. The landscaping work to the Bushmount Nursing Home, the Park View Social Housing Estate and the Parish Field was also noted.

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

There is a plethora of opportunities for wildlife projects in Clonakilty with Marine and coastal habitats, riparian habitats along the river and woodland habitat on the outskirts, all providing viable options. As the adjudicator pointed out in 2011, Clonakilty has also been included as a Special Conservation Area for Birds. We are delighted to see that you are continuing to work on a number of walks (such as the town centre and the retreat walk) for the benefit of the townspeople and visitors alike. It is also recommended that these walks should

traverse as many diverse habitats as possible in order to add interest for the user. Are maps available of these walks? Can some maps be provided in 2013? Have you considered preparing a wildlife survey and management plan? This would provide excellent baseline information of biodiversity in Clonakilty that could then be monitored on an annual or bi annual basis. Remember that the information gathered in the survey could also be used for additional information board's (for interpretive purposes) along the walks. We are delighted to read that the plants selected for your landscaping schemes make a positive contribution to biodiversity by providing a source of food and shelter.

### **Litter Control:**

The level of litter control observed in Clonakilty was good on adjudication day and you are commended on some of the relatively simple but practical initiatives to address this ongoing problem. The adjudicator liked the initiative whereby business owners take responsibility for the pavement directly outside the premises and the zones of responsibility sounds like a very practical and effective approach. The standard of litter control observed on the day was good with the Main Streets of the town in particularly good shape with no litter spotted. However, the town was not litter free as small amounts of litter were observed at the statue, on McCurtain Street, on Wolfe Tone Street and also in the Park in Emmet square. It is noted that litter was also spotted in Emmet Square Park by the adjudicator in 2011 and it is recommended that this area receives additional attention in your litter patrols. Well done also on your work to raise litter awareness in the schools and the junior litter patrol is an excellent initiative.

### **Tidiness:**

The hard work of the committee was particularly evident in this category with the vast majority of the areas in the town appearing weed free, with pavements and other areas neatly swept. Well done on your work in relation to fly posting as none were spotted and it is pleasing to note that you have concentrated on improving signage throughout the town. These works are very worthwhile and the adjudicator was very impressed with the standard of tidiness observed in the town. The attention paid to colour schemes in the town is also clearly evident, particularly on streets such as McCurtain Street. As ever, further improvements are possible. Despite your work on signage, there are a small number which continue to detract, such as the directional sign post poles outside the courthouse which were rusty and untidy looking, while the speed limit signage on Old Chapel Lane / Old Chapel Hill was in need of attention. A small number of flowerbeds throughout the town were in need of attention and they include the long linear bed adjacent to the bypass road close to the Croppy Park. The gates and the boundary walls of the national school on O'Rahilly Street will require paint for 2013 and a number of headless sign poles were noted outside the town Park, opposite Fairfield Terrace. The wooden boundary fence onto the bypass road opposite the Croppy Park would also benefit from some staining in time for 2013. The area around the Cinema was very disappointing with very weedy and overgrown landscaping beds in the car park and it was disappointing to note that some dumping had taken place immediately adjacent to the neighbouring vacant site that was very untidy looking. It is heartening to see that a number of projects have been undertaken under this category with footpath replacement ongoing, work at the fire station utility building has been concluded and that overhead cables were removed from Ashe Street, Astna Street and McCurtain Hill.

### **Waste Minimisation:**

We were delighted to read that the kerbside collection has been well received and that it is also proposed to introduce a compost collection. We would be most interested to read of the numbers in the town who currently subscribe to this service. The ESB car point was also observed and once again we would love to know if this is proving popular with local people. It was also noted from your submission that the recycling centre in the Clogheen industrial area accommodates the bottle banks. It is somewhat surprising that a town that is the size of Clonakilty has just one bring centre and there are concerns that the location is not conducive to encouraging recycling as it does not accommodate linked trips – in the same way that a bring bank located in the car park of a supermarket or a school would. For example, people are much more likely to avail of recycling facilities if they are in a location that is easily accessible and convenient. Has the provision of a bring bank in the car park, for example, of the Supervalu been considered? A further concern about the current location of what appears to be the only Bring bank in the town is that it may only be attractive to car users and it would appear that it is not convenient for non-car users (such as children and young people) who reside in the main residential areas of the town. It is strongly recommended that a waste survey is undertaken in the town in order to establish (among other things) how much recycling is taking place and how you think that this level could be increased. The TidyTowns Group should also consider some initiatives that increase the number of tourists who recycle while in Clonakilty. Have the segregated litter bins been considered?

### **Residential Areas:**

There are a good number of residential areas within the town, the vast majority of which were inspected during adjudication. In general, the standard of presentation of the public areas of the estate as well as the

individual houses and gardens was generally good but somewhat mixed with some areas achieving a higher standard than others. The Parish Field, which achieved an excellent standard of presentation drew positive attention during adjudication while Parkview (off Park Road) also impressed with its lovely green spaces and attractive and colourful landscaping. A large number of residential areas such as Redwood Park, Woodbrook, Seabreeze and Tawnies Crescent also achieved a good standard. Others, such as the Convent Way Housing Scheme, St Vincent Place and An Charraig are generally nice residential areas but improvements are possible by removing kerb weed, tidying up verges and maintaining landscaping beds where they are present. It is recommended that the Tidy Towns Group should continue to work closely with the residents associations by providing encouragement and advice and consideration should be given to holding a tidy estate competition. Perhaps a prize could be sponsored by either a local garden centre or shop or even the chamber of commerce?

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

The approach roads to Clonakilty were generally very good with the approaches from Skibbereen and Cork deserving of a special mention. While it is understandable that these approaches should receive more attention as they are the key entrances to the town, it is suggested that the less significant approaches, such as the approach from Lamb Street and also Old Chapel Lane, should also provide for a good standard. On adjudication day, the approach along Old Chapel Lane was reasonable but weed growth at the base of the natural stone wall and untidy signage detracted from it somewhat. The road surfaces in a number of locations were also a little disappointing, particularly around Lamb Street and on the approach road from Cloheen Meadows / Heights

### **General Impression:**

Hearty congratulations are due to Clonakilty for what is an excellent performance in a very challenging year. It is clear the strength of community spirit and determined approach of the committee have ensured that the events in late June have not deterred you, but have made you stronger. This is an excellent reflection on your committee, the people of the town and everyone else who was involved in making this year a success. Well done and no doubt that there will be further improvements in 2013.

### **Second Round Adjudication:**

It was a pleasure for this adjudicator to visit Clonakilty for the first time in several years and congratulations on your recent high achievements in the Tidy Towns competition. The place was buzzing and there is a strong sense of community spirit. The first impression as you enter town from the Cork approach is most impressive, with well-maintained wide verges and lots of colour. Attractive signage and scattered nuggets of information lead us on an interesting walking tour of your various landmarks. Spiller's Lane is a delight – such laneways form an intrinsic part of the your town's character. The post office was admired – particularly the sympathetic signage here. The tree-lined Emmet Square is a gem as are the residential streets surrounding it and down towards the old brewery. Volunteers were out in force on the day of our visit, keeping the park in its pristine condition. The main streets are colourful, however some premises are better presented than others. Many caught the eye, too many to mention here. Well done to those who aim to keep shopfronts/signs simple and in keeping with the traditional style of the town. Try to get all businesses behind the Tidy Towns effort to paint premises and remove clutter. The 'Jungle City' street art exhibition is fascinating and colourful. There was some littering evident on the day. Some litter had been thrown into the grounds of the Church of Ireland Parish Hall. There was also some paper blowing around to the rear of Walsh Printers. Outside Market House was quite littered as was the area opposite Clonakilty Town House. The flags at the entrance to Recorder's Alley are looking a bit tired. Painting the entrance gates here would make this area more inviting. It is great to see the old building being put to use, such as the Old Mill and the Grainstore, which both enhance their respective areas of town. The façade and signage at the Tourist Office require attention. The Fire Station is presented to a high standard and the use of this space to show wildlife information is clever. The modern credit union fits in well and is enhanced by the sculpture and water feature. Halla An Bhaile is another impressive building, further enhanced by the flower display. Residential areas we visited were generally maintained to a good standard. Convent Way was littered. The sculpture here was admired. The long quay apartments blend in well with the surrounds. The small park nearby is well-maintained. Ornate hanging baskets compliment the vast church and car park. Thank you for a fine presentation and we wish you well with new projects.