

Tidy Towns Competition 2010

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Bandon** Ref: **108**
County: **Cork(South)** Mark: **272**
Category: **E** Date(s): **29/06/2010**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2009	Mark Awarded 2010
Overall Development Approach	50	40	41
The Built Environment	50	36	37
Landscaping	50	40	41
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	20	22
Litter Control	50	30	32
Waste Minimisation	20	12	12
Tidiness	30	18	19
Residential Areas	40	28	30
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	30	30
General Impression	10	8	8
TOTAL MARK	400	262	272

Overall Development Approach:

It is several years since this adjudicator was assigned to Co Cork and it has been most heartening to see the substantial improvements made in Bandon in the interim – in spite of the recent flooding. Thanks you for your photographs of the latter. There may have been a positive side to that natural calamity in that some works had to be taken in hand as a matter of urgency. (Digging machinery was seen in the river on the date of the visit.) The town itself was looking quite smart at the end of June: the immediate changes that struck the adjudicator were tidier streets with most of the overhead cables removed, better painted street houses, and fewer mass produced and plastic signs. Progress may seem slow to those working on the projects but look remarkable to someone who has been absent for a period. This discloses an admirable determination on the part of the TidyTowns Committee and the official and voluntary bodies who co-operate – as well as the people of the town. It is good to see than in your 4-Year Work Programme you are not attempting all projects in the first year but introducing them by degrees. The important thing is to have objectives identified.

The Built Environment:

The churches once again struck the visitor as unusually fine and central to the fabric of the town, both architectural and spiritual. No sign identified the handsome Gothic church in North Main Street which turns out to be the Heritage Centre. Colour is important to most other buildings. The façade of the Town Hall was attractive in sage green and the adjacent Court House in orange and white – a handsome civic enclosure, but the Kingdom Hall needs freshening up. Another is bounded by the Post Office, the Allin Institute, well maintained business premises with the Sean Hales monument as centrepiece. Such organically evolved spaces are not so prominent on the south side though the obviously new Riverview shopping centre with the pleasantly arcaded effect of Howard Court is the commercial counterpart. Riverside Hall appears to be a commercial reinstatement and a successful-looking one. Again what impressed the visitor was the handsome streets, especially South Main street with its dignified buildings, of which the Credit Union is one of

the best presented examples. A pity the corner building than contains another Post Office and the Library does not respect the scale of the streetscape, demeaning it. O'Brien's Sadlery and adjoining dwellings is a remarkable discovery and an effective reinstatement. Sculpture – memorial, portrait and imaginative – has a strong presence in the town; the War of Independence memorial is somewhat drably situated – a good candidate for bright planting.

Landscaping:

The bright playground with its colourful mural probably comes under Landscaping. The Allin garden was looking well – just what is needed to brighten this civic space with its red seating and especially its well nurtured roses. The quiet green space by the Court House 'unter den linden' at the Lorden memorial was having its paving expertly renewed at the time of the visit. The GAA park is most impressive. Welcoming landscaping on the approach roads was appreciated, most notably on the Clonakilty side. Plenty of tubs and troughs throughout the town add that extra bit of colourful punctuation. A great deal of work has been accomplished. The Community Garden project will be looked forward to: be sure the site is easily accessible to the public and not simply something that will impress motorists.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

Trees are normally considered under this heading. It was very interesting to read that you planted 300 young trees during the year; this has been noted and will be entered for the Trees Award – it is not known at the time of writing if this has been surpassed. Excellent wild life informational boards were seen. A riverside walk was closed, probably because of flooding. You do not mention nature study projects in schools – this is part of the 'invisible' entry and could gain you additional marks if it were known about by the adjudicators.

Litter Control:

Your pictures show the amount of work undertaken in certain areas by voluntary helpers. Have you been able to identify the chief sources of littering? If so, a well publicised prosecution has been quite effective in some other centres. In an ideal world litter picking would be unnecessary and the dedicated helpers could turn to more creative community activities.

Waste Minimisation:

It seems that at least four of the schools (perhaps more?) have achieved the Green Flag: congratulations to the pupils and also to their teachers and parents. Many household are now finding that they are learning about recycling, composting etc from the younger generation.

Tidiness:

There is a great deal of ongoing work under this heading. A rusty corrugated iron structure was seen on St Patrick's Quay. Considerable kerbside weed was seen at Radharc and Bhaile: this is something that each householder should take responsibility for – a couple of minutes each month. Some less than tidy areas that were noticed by the adjudicator were a run of shabby building frontages on McSwiney-McSweeney Quay; the Court House boundary wall that needs repainting, the obtrusive gable hoarding immediately north of the bridge on the left which simply should not be there, and another further on on the right. There are also shabby frontages on North Main Street. It is very encouraging to read that you have identified black spots like these are intend to take action.

Residential Areas:

Bandon's real charm stems largely from its fine residential streets. Castle Road-O'Manhony Avenue is a typically attractive sequence. On it was also seen an unusual and most imaginative development, The Ramparts, a coach-house type of settlement attached to partially-restored romantic-Gothic buildings. Smart apartment buildings were seen to be nearing completion on the north bank of the river. Exemplary new stone houses were also seen nearby, just north of the footbridge; and not far away is The Shambles, an interesting development of interlocking courtyards within an older shell – this may have been there for some time but it was new to this visitor. The 'backs' of South Main Street facing onto the Bridewell River are now much more presentable than heretofore with some very imaginative mews-type apartments. Attractively stepped hillside houses were remarked upon at Radharc an Bhaile; when the trees grows up it will be less bleak.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

Car parks are well maintained. Road surfaces are reasonably good and paving varies from excellent to fair. The by-pass is useful if undistinguished; another would be equally useful on the north side. Elegant lamp standards were seen in the principal streets – it is interesting what a lift they give to an already fine perspective. Red and white metal bridge railings were admired. Would a weir – since watercourses are a topic

– on the Bridewell river, raising the surface so that at low water the sludge could not be seen – be an engineering possibility (if not a financial one)?

General Impression:

It was a real pleasure to revisit Bandon and see the conspicuous improvements that have taken place in recent years, and also to read the committee's very positive plans for the future. This handsome old town seems to be re-entering a phase of new grandeur in spite of the economy and the deluge. Every good wish for your imaginative and socially desirable work.