

## National Enterprise Town Awards: Skibbereen

We are profiling all the towns to enter this year's [National Enterprise Town Awards](#). Today we are looking at Skibbereen in Co Cork.

Skibbereen is a market town with a population of almost 3,000 people in the urban area. It serves a hinterland of about 10,000 within a 10-mile radius. It has a busy cattle mart and the NCT and driving licence centres for West Cork.

From a town that was devastated in the 1980s following the closure of the Erin Foods co-op and mass emigration of school leavers from the town, it is heartening to see its rebirth through the 2000s right through to today.

Examples include:

- [O'Donnell Furniture Makers](#) have roots steeping in West Cork History, back as far as 1902 when 'John Reen, great grandfather of the present day Managing Director, Aodh O'Donnell, made a chair from a local ash tree' (source:
- [West Cork Distillers](#), established in 2003 by 'three lifelong friends who set about establishing a distillery to produce the highest quality spirits & provide sustainable employment in this beautiful and remote part of Ireland'. In 2013, West Cork Distillers leased the 10,000sq ft. West Cork Bottling plant to start producing fine spirits. This was following in 2016 with the purchase of the former Erin Foods factory where a new visitor centre is due to be opened imminently.
- [Spearline](#), a market leading network Intelligence company' (source:[www.spearline.com/team](http://www.spearline.com/team)) was founded in 2003 by CEO Kevin Buckley and CTO Matthew Lawlor. It has a global presence in 60 countries and works with an impressive roster of high profile clients such as Google, Microsoft, Airbnb and Skype. Between them Spearline and West Cork Distillers now employ in excess of 120 in Skibbereen excluding indirect employment through their respective buildings' redevelopment and refurbishment.
- [The Ludgate Hub](#) with its 1GB connectivity supporting the town has turned Skibbereen into a 'connected community' supporting global business in a wonderful location on the Wild Atlantic Way. 'The Ludgate Hub in Skibbereen is leading the way as a demonstration of what is possible if a rural community is given access to high speed broadband'. Its development has brought considerable business to the town with 100 new jobs to date and no sign of slowing down.
- [The Fresh Fist Deli](#) has its origins in Union Hall and Rosscarbery but now employs 25 people operating out of its Skibbereen base at the Carbery Enterprise Park (source:) It is heartening to see a food production facility operating once more in Skibbereen, using sustainably sourced raw materials i.e. fish for their fish cakes and pies.

It is clear that Skibbereen has a lot to offer including the economic and social benefits brought to the town by events like the Taste of West Cork Food Festival and more.

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