

Tidy Towns Competition 2007

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Beaumont** Ref: **1320**
County: **Dublin (City)** Mark: **197**
Category: **F** Date(s): **27/07/2007**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2007
Overall Development Approach	50	25
The Built Environment	50	25
Landscaping	50	15
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	5
Litter Control	50	30
Waste Minimisation	20	5
Tidiness	30	25
Residential Areas	40	30
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	30
General Impression	10	7
TOTAL MARK	400	197

Overall Development Approach:

This area was entered as part of the drive by SuperValu to work with communities to approve the environmental standards of their areas through participation in the National TidyTowns Competition. Areas were entered on the basis that they fall within the catchment area of the nearest SuperValu store and this 'baseline assessment' is intended to provide a basis on which progress could be made over the coming years through partnership with residents, businesses and local agencies. As such it should not be interpreted as a critique of the area but rather an opportunity for everybody to work together to make their hometown a better place to work, live and visit. As part of SuperValu's strategic approach to sustainable development in the area, a nominal mark has been given to reflect this. Further marks will be awarded in future years where more tangible TidyTowns structures are developed and local environmental plans prepared and implemented.

The Built Environment:

Beaumont is a mature, mostly residential, Dublin suburb. Like many suburbs it is difficult for the visitor to immediately locate a distinctive heart or 'town centre' to the area, where one might perhaps expect to find some commercial or civic buildings. This is of course largely a product of the history of the area's development but much could still be done to create a focus which would indicate one is entering a distinct and unique area of Dublin. This would be a very worthwhile project that could be developed in partnership with Dublin City Council over the coming years. If there is a centre today most people would probably agree that it is provided by Beaumont Hospital, the biggest reason for people from all over Ireland to visit the area. And as such, it certainly doesn't detract from its environs and looked immaculate on the day of adjudication. The adjudicator also admired the many well-kept housing developments throughout Beaumont which clearly indicated a strong pride of place in the area. In particular, I must point out the prominently located Beaumont House pub which looked especially well on the day with its well maintained facade and floral decorations. Just one example of the great strides Beaumont could make under this category in future years.

Landscaping:

Appropriate urban landscaping is an area that we are gradually becoming adept at in Ireland after many years of economically induced lack of creativity and Beaumont has great potential in developing this aspect of Tidy Towns, particularly on the large open space to the rear of the 'Crescent'. It may be in private ownership but it could be a great community resource were it opened up. The grounds of the hospital are beautifully landscaped, with tall, mature oak and scott's pine trees and could act as a model for future landscaping of green areas. Street landscaping is mostly of the usual variety seen throughout suburban Dublin with maple and lime trees planted along the road side. While attractive, there is the potential of introducing a greater variety of species, particularly natives, which greatly improve the visual street scape by breaking the tree line and providing a greater display of shape and colour. There are, of course, also wildlife benefits which are described beneath.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

The development of wildlife areas in urban areas has become a major focus for Tidy Towns, not only because of the vital importance of indigenous species in sustaining our natural environment, but also because wildlife areas in themselves bring us closer to nature and promote the need to protect Ireland's biodiversity. While many excellent projects may be underway in local schools or by keen interest groups in the area, unfortunately these could not be seen on the day of adjudication. I apologise if any were missed, but this type of activity would become more obvious if environmental plans are developed and implemented - plans have a double positive affect of highlighting existing initiatives as well as exploring the potential for new ones - so many more marks could be won under this category in future years.

Speaking of potential, the aforementioned open space to the rear of 'the Crescent' which, in addition to being a wonderful community amenity, could be developed into a great wildlife area. The hospital grounds could also be made considerably more wildlife friendly if the grass was allowed to grow and the use of herbicides and pesticides was halted. The grass need only be cut once in early spring and once again in September and allowing the flowers to blossom would attract insects and provide food and cover for birds. While this year a nominal mark is being awarded under this category, I look forward to visiting the area in future years when hopefully Tidy Towns participation will drive greater interest in this area

Litter Control:

Beaumont was practically litter free on the day of adjudication and a great credit to the residents and council officials involved. Even the hospital grounds, with its many visitors thronging the area, were spotless. A suitably high mark has therefore been awarded under this category, although further marks could be won when more information on the strategic approach to maintaining this litter free environment is made available to adjudicators in future years.

Waste Minimisation:

Without details of ongoing community projects, it was difficult to ascertain the extent of progress being made under this category and I would look forward to seeing whether progress has in fact been made in future assessments. However taking into account the existing council facilities and SuperValu's own commitment in this area, I believe a nominal mark is appropriate for this year. There are however plenty of ways in which local communities can assist in tackling this growing problem, such as promoting best practice in businesses and schools, encouraging household composting through local workshops and lobbying for access to appropriate recycling facilities. How this has been achieved in other areas is contained in the Race Against Waste community booklet available from the Tidy Towns Unit in the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government.

Tidiness:

I am also very happy to report that Beaumont is indeed a very tidy place with little by way of clutter, such as unused street poles, blockages on paths, graffiti or excessive unsightly weed growth throughout the area. While there is considerable through traffic - coming in and out of the hospital in particular - at no time did it seem to this adjudicator that it became overly oppressive, so overall it appears to be well managed. A suitably high mark has therefore been awarded under this category.

Residential Areas:

As mentioned above, this adjudicator was generally impressed with the standard of residential areas throughout Beaumont, but if I were to praise one in particular I would have to say Beaumont Grove looked extremely impressive on the day of adjudication with its beautifully presented gardens, a minimal amount of litter and neat and tidy road scapes. The open area is a bit overgrown, but as stated above, this can be a positive as it encourages wildlife - I would therefore suggest simply trimming the edges to bring it to the same high standard of presentation as the rest of the development. Overall, as this year is a baseline assessment, the adjudicator had little information on the level of community input in residential areas. It is hoped that as

Beaumont progresses in TidyTowns it could attract even higher marks than those allocated this year.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

As stated above, one of the major projects to be undertaken over the coming years could be to give Beaumont a far better sense of place through the creation of an obvious town centre. This could be helped through the erection of road signs on all approach roads welcoming people to the area thereby better defining its boundaries. With the development of the hospital, Beaumont has certainly greater prominence in the public mind than it had in previous years and this advantage could be worked on to develop the concept fully. As things stand, it was difficult to ascertain whether certain roads were actually part of adjoining areas or Beaumont. Nonetheless, as I have pointed out above, they all appeared quite good on the day with little evidence of litter or clutter. There were also no obvious black-spots to tarnish this overall impression so Beaumont definitely deserves the high mark awarded under this category.

General Impression:

In summary, the impression one got on the day of adjudication was that Beaumont is a very nice place to live and visit with well kept residential areas displaying a strong sense of community pride. If this could be harnessed in partnership with local businesses and local agencies Beaumont could make real progress under TidyTowns in coming years. As stated above, its immediate challenge, like many suburban areas, is to create a more visible sense of location through developing a town centre and defining its outer boundaries. This may appear difficult, but TidyTowns has demonstrated over the years how areas can make real progress, not only in improving their environmental standards, but creating a real sense of place and visible community expression. I very much hope that this report will help in a some way in encouraging Beaumont to develop its latent potential.