

Tidy Towns Competition 2007

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Kilbarrack** Ref: **1315**
County: **Dublin (City)** Mark: **196**
Category: **F** Date(s): **27/07/2007**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2007
Overall Development Approach	50	25
The Built Environment	50	30
Landscaping	50	20
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	20
Litter Control	50	25
Waste Minimisation	20	6
Tidiness	30	15
Residential Areas	40	25
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	25
General Impression	10	5
TOTAL MARK	400	196

Overall Development Approach:

The Kilbarrack 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:

Kilbarrack is a very large mainly residential suburb stretching from the 'black banks' on the coast road and working its way inland. Normally the adjudicator has a detailed entry form from the TidyTowns group, including a map describing an area not less than one kilometre radius from the original urban centre to assist in the assessment. Without such information it was difficult to ascertain where Kilbarrack begins and ends, crossing as it does areas with Sutton, Raheny and Donaghmede addresses. This made detailed assessment very difficult. Nonetheless the prominent buildings noted on the day, the Fire Station, the Dart Station, the Shopping Centres on Swans Nest Road and Greendale Road, the churches and schools were all looking well on the day. The redevelopment at the Dart station was particularly notable as was the adjoining residential area that replaced the 'high density' structures that previously dominated this site. The housing stock is evident of the way in which Kilbarrack has been developed over the years with styles very dependent on the era in which they were built. But generally all houses appeared very well maintained, some with impressive gardens nurtured with evident pride. Indeed, in traversing the many residential areas I was struck by the

thought that many of these areas still traditionally referred to as Kilbarrack, have in effect become stand-alone communities with their own shopping areas and schools, as has occurred in many urban areas in Dublin, and each could actually enter TidyTowns in their own right! In fact this could be a very productive manner to maximise the benefits of participation.

Landscaping:

I did not notice any particular areas of civic landscaping although a number of premises had done great work within their own precincts as had residents with their gardens and well maintained grass verges at the fronts of houses. Street trees were noted and welcomed, although one wishes greater use of native species could be used to brighten up the usual maple and lime planting. There is also a great opportunity to develop the many large open spaces throughout Kilbarrack and create more amenity areas for residents; there are too many to mention here although this is an aspect that would be focussed upon in future assessments.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

At the moment gardens offer the best opportunity for wildlife with the potential of the open spaces largely untouched. I am sure that the schools have carried out a lot of work in this area which would attract marks under this heading, and this kind of information could be included in the entry form for next year. A wildlife survey of the area should definitely be carried out as a start identifying both the habitats and species that currently exist. This would provide the plan for future development under this heading. It would quickly demonstrate that urban areas have fantastic potential to encourage wildlife.

Litter Control:

There were only small amounts of litter to be seen and on the day and it was great to see a warden picking up rubbish around the playing fields on the day of adjudication. As in many urban areas, however, there were a few blackspots where litter had obviously accumulated for a while which a well organised TidyTowns could target.

Waste Minimisation:

Without details of ongoing community projects, it was difficult to assess the extent of progress being made under this category and I would look forward to seeing whether progress has in fact been made on 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 local 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, and indeed many other useful tips, is contained in the Race Against Waste community booklet available from the TidyTowns Unit in the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government.

Tidiness:

Overall there was a general sense of tidiness to most the areas visited. Graffiti is unfortunately a problem in parts of Kilbarrack as other areas, and the car park at the Kilbarrack Shopping Centre will definitely be improved when the old Esso garage building is removed or refurbished.

Residential Areas:

As stated above residential areas throughout were well presented and maintained with mature areas looking really well. It will take a while for the newer estates to settle in but this will happen in time and participation in TidyTowns can assist this process. Signage could definitely be improved, particularly in the newer areas to help generate a greater sense of place. Open spaces in the estates are generally well maintained, although again more interesting landscape features could be introduced to make these more attractive amenity areas. With the scale of residential areas, probably comprising very many residents groups each tackling problems unique to their own areas, a TidyTowns group may have difficulty co-ordinating the efforts of so many. Dividing these into distinct TidyTowns areas following existing local identities could be the best approach to making a lot of progress under this heading.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

Roads and footpaths are generally well maintained. Greater signage along main roads and streets as well as in residential estates would greatly improve the area's (or sub-areas within it) sense of identity. On occasion the backs of prominent buildings are visible from residential areas, and the same care shown to keeping their frontage's clean and well presented is less obvious. A dedicated approach to removing graffiti and waste should commence with the co-operation of the businesses concerned. Also screening techniques could be used to soften these back areas so that they blend easier into the surrounding housing developments.

General Impression:

The sheer scale of Kilbarrick makes it difficult to make a one size fits all comment and as stated in this report dividing the area into its distinct districts would make participation more manageable and allow for customising targets to suit each area's requirements. But overall I was impressed by the the general presentation throughout and believe an area so full of youthful energy as well as a rich historical past could do really well in TidyTowns. The priority would be planning, with initial focus on the most obvious issues that would generate community interest and assist in developing stronger partnership with the council to develop the area. I am sure that many such initiatives are already in existence. TidyTowns could represent an opportunity to bring them all under on the one umbrella initiative using the annual adjudicators' reports to guage progress. I really hope to see Kilbarrick participating in future years, but in any event, may I wish all the people in the area the very best wishes for the future.