

Tidy Towns Competition 2008

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Howth** Ref: **158**
County: **Dublin(Fingal)** Mark: **259**
Category: **E** Date(s): **10/06/2008**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2008
Overall Development Approach	50	41
The Built Environment	50	33
Landscaping	50	34
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	29
Litter Control	50	28
Waste Minimisation	20	10
Tidiness	30	18
Residential Areas	40	28
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	30
General Impression	10	8
TOTAL MARK	400	259

Overall Development Approach:

Howth is very welcome to the 2008 TidyTowns competition. Thank you for your entry form and for your map which was very useful on adjudication day. However, the map would be even better if you could include street names to facilitate locating areas highlighted for particular attention - you might consider this for next year to make sure nothing is overlooked during the visit.

Your overall development standards are very high and hence your continued high marks under this category. For instance, your inclusion of the Pep Talk magazine was a great insight into the Howth community - hopefully this will develop into a regular 'update area' in the magazine to maintain the momentum. We are also pleased to hear that you engage with schools and the Howth-Sutton Community Council. However, in order to move onto the the next stage, you should now be considering a 3 strategic year plan for inclusion with your entry form for next year. This plan would be very useful across the board as it would assist you in creating a timeframe to undertake all the tasks you wish to do. By breaking these down into actual time commitments, progress can be more easily monitored towards and achieving targets can generate a greater of satisfaction and a feeling that you are really getting there. The other benefit of the plan is that it could show more people in the wider community the projects you are undertaking and you may find that by doing so this ill attract more commitment and support and even garner sponsorship for particular aspects.

This is particularly important when you consider your concerns on finding it more difficult to create an impact as much of the work is done. The plan would provide an opportunity to look at undertaking projects outside the landscaping and tidy categories, and perhaps do more towards more biodiversity or heritage initiatives in the area. This would also consolidate your contacts with other groups in the area, such as heritage or environmental groups, and assist you with developing ideas under these categories garnering additional points. Particular joint-projects could also feature in the special competitions in their own right.

The Built Environment:

Some of the industrial buildings on the entry into Howth are becoming quite run down. Perhaps you could work with the owners of these buildings and offer to work with them to paint the outside of the buildings, clean up the front areas or provide further screening? In contrast, it is obvious that much work has gone into the decoration of the Howth Railway Station and it was colourful, clean and bright on the day of adjudication. And St Mary's Church is a beautiful old church. The ivy added to the appeal of the building and the grounds were beautifully landscaped. The Pier development is looking wonderful and it is great to see the usage of this area as a mixed tourism and working area. Unfortunately, the area at the end of the pier still needs some work as there was quite a lot of graffiti here and it was quite overgrown. We were pleased to see the Green Flag flying at the Howth Primary School. The grounds of the school and the school building were highly maintained.

Landscaping:

The entrance to Deer Park Golf Course was good, however signage to the museum could be improved - on the day of adjudication we found it quite confusing. The waterside park area was extremely well maintained and very accessible. It was great to see a lot of seats available for people to relax and enjoy the surrounds and the playground makes the area very good for families. The flowers near the courthouse were a lovely planting. The seafront area is very well landscaped and provides an area that is suitable for children to play and people to relax and enjoy the scenery.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

It is a great addition to have a wildlife corridor such as the old tramline in an urban area. However, there were no signs for this area and the map did not assist us in being able to locate it. Hopefully next year this area will be signposted or further detailed directions could be added to the map. We would be interested in hearing more about the wildlife habitat at Deerpark and whether the community is involved in any of these projects.

Litter Control:

Overall litter standards throughout Howth were quite good. Unfortunately there was some litter on the waterfront road around the shops even though there were many rubbish bins which were not over filled. There also was a fair bit of litter at the end of the path. However residential areas were relatively free of litter. We are pleased to hear of your involvement in the IBAL anti litter league as these surveys all contribute to highlighting the importance of a litter free environment throughout the community. Encourage Litter reduction by working with the Schools to have students conduct litter services and research information on the devastation litter can have to wildlife and the natural environment. Allowing them to discover this information themselves can often assist in ownership of the issue among youth, rather than it just being something they are told to do.

Waste Minimisation:

We are pleased to hear that brown bins are being reintroduced to the area and that you have current green bin collections. Encouraging businesses to reduce waste is also an important undertaking. With so many restaurants in the Howth area you may wish to look at involvement in the Green Hospitality Award. This program is a step-by-step environmental management programme specifically designed for the hospitality industry and supported by the EPA. It is designed to help reduce waste in this sector and encourage better environmental practices. You could also look to run a local competition for hotels and restaurants in your area to encourage waste reduction and assist them in improving their environmental practices. As noted above, congratulations on the work being undertaken in the Green Schools program in your area.

Tidiness:

The report prepared by the Heritage Society on what needs to be fixed in the area including information signs, street names etc will be very beneficial once implemented. It was noted that some street signs were either non-existent or difficult to locate. We look forward to your future developments in this area. With the exception of the entry into the town, Howth is quite tidy and clean. This is a very good achievement considering the amount of tourists that visit the area.

Residential Areas:

Residential areas of Howth were being kept to a very high standard and it was wonderful to see so many mature trees in the area. In particular, residential areas along the Bailey Green Road the Harbourview Estate deserve special praise. Have you considered the creation of "Best Street", "Best Garden" or "Tidiest Estate" which has worked really well in other towns? This can encourage communities to take action in their own areas while indirectly assisting you in achieving your overall objectives.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

The entry into Howth was quite overgrown and untidy. It is very important to keep the entrance areas in good repair as these are the first impressions visitors have to the area. The road surface was obviously undergoing works, and it is hoped it will be fully restored at some point in the near future. The road surface at St Peters Terrace was cracked and would ideally be upgraded. Most road areas in the main shopping areas were of good condition.

General Impression:

Howth is an area that manages to successfully combine its role as both a residential area for city commuters and a magnet for tourists throughout the year. With its natural wildlife areas and plentiful trees, it is a lovely oasis so close to the city centre. Already its potential to be competing for the highest honours in Tidy Towns is very evident, and the development of the 3 year plan referred to above could be the beginning of that push to the top.