

Tidy Towns Competition 2009

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Finglas** Ref: **736**
County: **Dublin(City)** Mark: **242**
Category: **F** Date(s): **23/06/2009**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2009
Overall Development Approach	50	35
The Built Environment	50	38
Landscaping	50	35
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	23
Litter Control	50	26
Waste Minimisation	20	11
Tidiness	30	16
Residential Areas	40	25
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	27
General Impression	10	6
TOTAL MARK	400	242

Overall Development Approach:

Finglas is welcome to the 2009 National Tidy Towns Competition. Thank you for your well presented report along with photos and maps outlining your core area. It would be great to see your core area reaching into some of the surrounding residential areas as your involvement with the competition grows and develops. It is good to note the excellent level of awareness of the heritage of Finglas and the close developing relationship with the Finglas Historical Society. We note from your submission your engagement with statutory bodies and local Forums and Residents Associations. A natural progression for your submission would be to break down some of your planned projects into short and long term goals. This will help focus your group's efforts and allow you to reach achievable goals in realistic time frames. The other benefit of a plan like this it that it can show people in the wider community the projects you are hoping to undertake and when you hope to achieve them. This can also help you target sponsorship and build on successful sponsorship achieved to date.

The Built Environment:

As outlined in your report the progression of the village has been hindered by the slow progress of the regeneration strategy for Finglas. However it is a solid basis to ensure the future growth of your village. While many premises in the village centre are vacant your efforts to ensure vacant shop fronts are maintained and planting displays screen unused units will go a long way to maintain a safe and pleasant environment in the short term. The derelict building beside Superquinn on McKee Road was a good example of a well maintained empty unit.

The car park at the centre of the village was well maintained and surfaced and the colourful plant displays helped enliven the area. The forecourt of Superquinn and the Bank of Ireland were generally well maintained. However some weed growth at the base of the trees in front of the bank was evident and should be removed. There looked to be some old tree or planter beds around the sculpture outside Superquinn. These look

unsightly, detract for the setting of the sculpture and could be a trip hazard. Perhaps they could be filled in with contrast paving or cobbles or perhaps mosaic panels could be fitted to fill the gaps in the paving and improve the area.

Once again the grounds of St Canices Church were well maintained. The new developments along Mellowes Road including the Leisure Centre and the New Garda Station, which looked nearly completed with some newly planted trees, greatly add to the streetscape and sit well with the surrounding mainly residential areas.

Landscaping:

The use of vibrant hanging baskets and planters added a great deal of colour to the area. The use of the same scheme of baskets throughout the village helped unify Church Street with the Main Street and Seamus Ennis Road area even though the village is dissected by the Finglas dual carriageway. Well done on your efforts to secure funding to extend the scheme as it really helps create a cohesive feel to both areas of your village. The newly constructed and planted flower beds at the entry points to the village helped create a great first impression. Unfortunately the mass displays of geraniums were only just starting to flower at adjudication day so the full impact of the beds was not felt. Maybe you could try a mixed display next year to prolong the flowering period and create additional interest?

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

Well done to your schools and their teacher on the commitment shown in developing wildlife areas in the schools and ensure all planting has an emphasis on native and seed and berry bearing shrubs and trees. It is a great strategy to have the school children make the bird boxes through the schools, to encourage ownership of the boxes and hopefully reduce potential for vandalism. The Tolka Valley Park, although outside your core area, is a great wildlife resource even though it is located so close to residential areas. The filtration pond is a really innovative approach to drainage problems which also has great habitat potential. Perhaps as part of next years work you could consider some of the schools carrying out wild bird surveys within the school grounds? This could be linked in to the recent planting and installation of bird boxes, carried out in the school grounds, to see how successful they have been at enhancing the school grounds for wild birds. Birdwatch Ireland has advice on how to draw maps of bird activity around schools that could be used as a basis for a survey. This survey could form part of a wider survey of what habitats and wildlife you have in your area. A simple survey such as this can help inform where more planting may be needed and what types of plants can best enhance biodiversity in your area. The Biodiversity Officer in Dublin City Council or Bob Ward should be able to give you advice on where to start. This survey could be developed into a Wildlife Management Plan which could form part of an overall TidyTowns Annual Plan.

Litter Control:

Overall litter control was excellent on the day of adjudication. In the village itself very little litter was evident except for some areas around the shops on the Main street. Well done on all your efforts it seems as if the targeted approach by Finglas to address this problem has really been successful. There was some litter on the main Finglas Dual carriageway and this detracted somewhat from the approach to the village. Some litter was also noted on the grass verge along the school on Glasanaon Road. Perhaps the daily clean up project currently being done in St Fergals National School could be extended to other National and Secondary Schools in the Area? This is listed as one of your planned projects in this category and we look forward to seeing how this progresses. Although the litter wardens may need to keep a particular eye on these areas during the school holidays.

Waste Minimisation:

Well done on the progression of your schools in the Green Flag Programme. The sunflower collections in conjunction with Dublin City Council can also be considered here as this is an initiative that encourages the reuse of goods and so is a integral part of this category . The bring centre opposite the school was well maintained with no litter. The reverse vending machine is an innovative approach and the numbers of bottles put through the machine was impressive. Maybe posters could be put up near the machine to encourage people to reduce the numbers of plastic bottles they buy. As a follow up to your successful campaign to gain sponsorship for lunch boxes perhaps you could follow this through with a campaign to get sponsorship for the provision of reusable water bottles for schools?

As a follow on from the commitment of the Dublin City Council Finglas office to minimise paper waste by the increased use of emails perhaps you could encourage this initiative with other stage agencies and local businesses in Finglas.

Tidiness:

Once again the level of tidiness was reasonable given the size of the core area and the number of disused units.

The impact of graffiti in urban area cannot be underestimated as it quickly conveys an image of an uncared for and run down community. It is important to try to clean up graffiti as soon as it appears as this is shown to be the most effective way to prevent further accumulation. Well done on your efforts to keep this in check and a structured patrol may be an effective way to identify particular black spots in your area and to ensure Dublin City Council are notified as soon as any graffiti appears.

Residential Areas:

Generally residential areas were well kept. Paths and roads were in good order. The new signs were noted and fit in well with the other street furniture in the village. We hope to see this street signage extended in the coming years to include entrances to residential estates. The open space at Finglas Place and Ballygall Parade could benefit from some tree planting and may be considered as part of next years tree planting programme. Spaces such as this and the sloping green space alongside Ballygall road would benefit from mass bulb planting and this may be a project for the coming years. If there are areas which have impressive seasonal displays that we miss on adjudication day it would be useful to photograph them for inclusion in your submission.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

Generally streets and footpaths were in good condition. As noted in last years report your signage strategy should be encouraged and developed to create a cohesive signage network. The use of simple graphics such as the image of the church on the Church Street sign is a nice touch. This signage could also be extended to include information panels for your developing heritage trail. We look forward to seeing this project progressing next year. There is a high demand for parking in the village and we hope that a traffic management plan will form part of the village regeneration strategy to control parking. The entrance to St Canices church could be reviewed as parking in this area ruins the views of the church from the road and could be reconsidered.

Some of the street trees on the Finglas Dual Carraigeway and in some of the surrounding residential areas showed signs of suckering. This is growth from the base of the tree and suckers should be removed as in time they will sap the energy away from the healthier and more desirable branches on top. In particular a maple tree at the corner of Finglas Road and Main Street, opposite TSB, has a large growth from the base that is unsightly and restricts views at this junction.

General Impression:

As you are well aware Finglas faces a challenge in the short term to maintain a safe and attractive village feel while awaiting a wider regeneration strategy to take place. Your efforts to date in drawing on your community spirit shows in the presentation of Finglas on the day of adjudication. We would encourage you to draw on the excellent advice that is available to you from your Local Authority and the continued co operation with groups such as the Finglas Historical Society. We wish you every success for the future.