

Tidy Towns Competition 2012

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Abbeylock Estate
Corbally**

Ref: **2115**

County: **Limerick**

Mark: **189**

Category: **A**

Date(s): **20/06/2012**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2011	Mark Awarded 2012
Overall Development Approach	50	0	27
The Built Environment	50	0	22
Landscaping	50	0	24
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	0	10
Litter Control	50	0	25
Tidiness	30	0	17
Waste Minimisation	20	0	8
Residential Areas	40	0	28
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	0	24
General Impression	10	0	4
TOTAL MARK	400	0	189

Overall Development Approach:

Abbeylock Estate is most welcome to the 2012 TidyTowns competition and we are delighted that you have taken this step to improve your community through working together. Many thanks also for your map which clearly delineates the area to be judged. It is always worthwhile to try to expand on this area to include neighbouring estates and local businesses. For now you have six committee members and this is not bad. Do you get much voluntary support from elsewhere? It is important to use your communication tools to maximise your public support so it is hoped that all of the community is on board. You have made contacts with Limerick city council, St Mary's rugby club and Musgrave's cash-and-carry which will stand to you. Do rugby club members help out on projects? Does Musgrave's help you with sponsorship? Are there other clubs or organisations which could help out? How about Abbey Rovers AFC?

It is excellent that you have contacts with the local school, Ard Scoil Mhuire, and that they are involved with the green flag program. The green flag is very compatible with TidyTowns as their aims are similar. You can therefore learn a lot from one another when sharing projects. They are commended for their participation in litter collections.

In order to progress under this category it is recommended that you work on preparing a three-year plan. This will identify the strategic aims of your group and establish a long-term vision. It would then set out actions under each of the contest headings over a three-year timeframe. The TidyTowns Handbook is full of tips on how to go about this and you are urged to refer to this.

The Built Environment:

This category is used to assess the quality of the built environment, the presentation of buildings used for commercial, municipal and heritage purposes. As you are in an estate these are in short supply. In this regard it would be worth expanding your area to include an area of community focus.

Derelict sites would fall under this heading and it is noted that you are working with Limerick City Council to deal with one issue that you have. This is the correct way to go about this as they have powers under law that may be of use.

The canal bridge is an excellent example of a built heritage feature that made date to the 18th or 19th century. It's presentation and interpretation could act as an attractive point of entry to your estate.

Landscaping:

The treatment of your green area does fall under this category. The large green area has wonderful potential to be an attractive focal point for your community. It is currently well maintained but could be so much more. The central tarmaced area is clean and your plans to have lines painted are noted. While the grass is well cut the verges where it meets the kerbs need to be trimmed. Low level litter has accumulated throughout. Hedges and groups of trees add greenery and wildlife value, and so should be conserved. Dead grass and other material is being dumped in the long grass. Leaving grass to grow long is fine but edges should be trimmed to avoid the appearance of neglect. Additional trees could be planted to complete the screening of the fence around the football club.

Marginal green areas e.g. small patches near walls could be selected for a landscaping installation. The use of large, perennial shrubs fills an area and requires little ongoing maintenance. Small native trees such as cherry, rowan and birch add interest with flowers and bark texture. Talk to Limerick City Council landscapers or local gardening enthusiasts about how best to go about this.

The landscaped area by the canal is badly neglected and overgrown with weeds but it is a great location for something eye-catching. The seating area is structurally fine but is littered and the cobblelock is overgrown.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

Well done on organising the cleanup of the canal and for involving the children. Canals can be hugely important for wildlife as they act as corridors linking other areas. In this case your canal links to the River Shannon which is a special area of conservation and so one of the most important wildlife sites in Ireland. Why not contact the Limerick City Council heritage officer to see if the heritage event could be organised?

You have correctly identified that gardens can be of great value for wildlife and birds in particular. This also brings great pleasure to people so see how you can encourage planting for wildlife as well as bird feeding and nest boxes.

Litter Control:

Holding regular cleanup events is an essential part of litter control and complements more regular patrols. Litter is perhaps the most important category in this contest as litter will mask good works elsewhere. It is the first thing people will notice when visiting an area. How do you go about educating the children? Getting them out to collect it can be effective as can art contests.

Litter control was unfortunately not good on adjudication day with litter old and new scattered far and wide. Perhaps extra patrols and/or awareness raising measures are required by 2013.

Tidiness:

The standard of kerbing in the estate is generally quite good and is weed free. You do not have a major problem with graffiti although there is some on the pillars leading into the football club and on lamp poles. There is also graffiti on lamp poles inside the estate itself. The pylons running through your estate are unsightly but there is perhaps little you can do in this regard.

Elsewhere tidiness issues such as litter and weeding can be relatively easy to deal with.

Waste Minimisation:

You have identified a good range of actions under this heading and this shows you appreciate the problem at

hand. Does your waste collector collect segregated waste? It is noticed that you have the green bin collection, does this take plastic? Do you have a brown bin collection? If not you could consider holding a composting workshop with Limerick City Council or the Irish Peatland Conservation Council. This would help reduce costs and provide material for gardening and landscaping. You could advertise freetradeireland.ie as a means for allowing people to dispose of unwanted items without throwing them out.

You are planning to hold an event with Limerick City Council and this would be a great initiative.

Residential Areas:

The houses in Abbeylock Estate are all beautifully presented and well maintained. Some of the gardens have superb displays of colour with numbers 5, 7 and 27 being of particular note. Verges are very well trimmed and a number of maturing trees soften the appearance. Litter in front of people's houses was virtually non-existent. Boundary walls are predominantly retained and in good order.

There are no landscaped areas outside of individual gardens and this could be a project for your group. Consult with residents to enquire as to what people would like to see.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

The Abbeylock Estate nameplate is indistinct, hard to read, weedy and graffitied with obscenities. This is not a good impression for this fine estate. Otherwise roads and footpaths are in good order.

General Impression:

Abbeylock Estate is a fine estate that has some impressive amenities on its doorstep. The playing pitches and canal walk would be the envy of many centres. You have made a great start and clearly there is a willingness to get things done. We look forward to returning in 2013 to see the progress. Best of luck
!