

Tidy Towns Competition 2012

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Annacotty** Ref: **1955**
County: **Limerick** Mark: **228**
Category: **C** Date(s): **19/06/2012**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2011	Mark Awarded 2012
Overall Development Approach	50	30	32
The Built Environment	50	30	31
Landscaping	50	27	27
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	20	23
Litter Control	50	29	28
Tidiness	30	19	20
Waste Minimisation	20	4	6
Residential Areas	40	27	28
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	27	27
General Impression	10	6	6
TOTAL MARK	400	219	228

Overall Development Approach:

Annacotty is most welcome to the 2012 TidyTowns competition. Many thanks for your clear application form with map, photographs and additional information. Annacotty has made great progress in the short year or so since you re-entered the contest. There is a sense of energy and pride that comes through the pages of the application form. It is fantastic that this transformation is underway. You have retained 17 on your committee and this is a good number for a town of your size. Do you get additional volunteer effort e.g. from estates? It will be a continuous challenge for you to maintain wide support but it is essential that as many people are included as possible. You are certainly very active on the meetings and activities front and no doubt this has attracted popular support. You are engaging with a wide variety of local and regional bodies and this is a valuable support network. Fás had been suggested as possibly providing assistance in litter control and landscaping but with cutbacks across the board this may be hard to get now. You are using a wide range of communication tools which is excellent and your river mural has received excellent coverage in the local press. Facebook can be a particularly useful tool in posting photographs, promoting events and raising awareness of special issues. It should complement your website and other outlets.

Your village action plan was reviewed and contains a lot of excellent actions. It would be enhanced if target completion dates were inserted and if actions were sorted under the various contest headings. This will ensure that your actions are balanced across all areas. See the TidyTowns Handbook for further details on preparing a three-year plan.

The Built Environment:

Well done on painting the creamery wall. This is a big job and it is vital that a building of this prominence not be allowed fall into disrepair. Do liaise closely with the owners and address any issues as quickly as possible.

Currently, while the building itself looks well the grounds are becoming weedy and this gives an neglected impression.

The main cluster of buildings in the town looks excellent with the Black Swan, Londis and Eamon Nichols of note for their attractive appearance.

The newer part of the town is also attractive with Copper and Spice restaurant being particularly striking.

Landscaping:

The biodiversity corner is a wonderful achievement for you and your town as a whole. You are urged to think carefully before installing a boat as a landscaping feature, does it really reflect the town's heritage? So many towns have them that they can be slightly corny.

The mural is wonderful, hats off on this unique and striking feature! What a legacy for the 5th class of Lios na Groí! The birch planting looks well however the heather is not thriving. It is suggested that additional planting intervention is not needed here as the river is such a dominant feature. The proposed flower baskets on the bridge however may brighten this rather grey structure.

The Jackie Power statue is an excellent feature and contributes a focal point for the town. The surrounds are fine although nasturtiums are probably not ideal in these pots as they conceal everything else. The cobblelock needs to be swept of leaves etc. Flower baskets were admired at Londis but this stretch would benefit from some additional planting e.g. shrubs or small trees in tubs.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

The Mulkear River is a special area of conservation for its habitats and species that are important at a European level. It's wonderful that you have been actively involved in the Mulkear LIFE Project as you are very fortunate to have such an important feature so close to the heart of your town. You have clearly taken it to your heart however and this is a model for conservation at a community level. It is noted that many of the actions you have listed here are not relevant to wildlife directly so do make sure actions are listed under the correct heading. The competition to design your TidyTowns logo was a great idea and the winning entry was admired. Your plans to develop river walkways and wildlife let panels were admired.

Don't neglect wildlife elsewhere in your village as gardens, tall trees, hedges and grassy margins are all of local value for biodiversity.

Litter Control:

It's great to read how illegal dumping has decreased with the increased frequency of your cleanups. You are pursuing this issue on many fronts with action on dog fouling and trying to get the schools involved. Do note that some actions listed here are judged under the waste minimisation heading. You refer to the fact that you wear high-viz vests when on litter patrols, do these have TidyTowns written across the back? This would be an effective promotion for your work.

Sadly the steps for the mural were badly littered on adjudication day. Elsewhere unfortunately litter was found to be a consistent problem while one person enjoying a drink on the balcony of the Mill bar was seen to flick his cigarette butt into the river.

Tidiness:

Your signage audit is noted and this shows a proactive approach to this particular issue. The town centre is generally very tidy and this is aided greatly by the lack of overhead wires. The lamp standards are a little tall but are attractive in their subtlety. Traffic bollards outside Londis would benefit from a lick of paint and, in some cases, straightening. While you are correct that "weeds are plants in the wrong place" they can still be unsightly if growing in kerbs, cobblelock or at the base of buildings. In these cases control is still needed although not necessarily with weedkiller.

Elsewhere there are very few tidiness issues that you need to contend with.

Waste Minimisation:

You are engaged in a number of projects under this heading and it is good to read that you have moved

beyond recycling. Your home composting workshop with the Irish Peatland Conservation Council is judged here and is an important development. How many people attended and of these how many are practising composting? How can this message be delivered to those who were not at the workshop? You're reusing where possible during TidyTowns activities and this is good. Your recycling facilities by noted and hopefully these are in good use. Have you tried swap shops or web fora for exchanging unwanted items? (E.g. freetradeireland.ie)

Residential Areas:

It is great to read that all your estates have residential associations. Is each one represented on the TidyTowns committee? Well done to Elm Vale and the Oaks for the progress they have made.

Annacotty square is an attractive enclosed residential area that benefits from mature tree planting. Many residents had decorated their doors with flowers to good effect. The car park was slightly littered however and needed to be swept of debris. At Salmon Weir the grass in the common area needed trimming (even the margins if a wild look was intended). Willow Crescent has some particularly attractive landscaping.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

While Annacotty is well signposted from Limerick it was noted that you have no welcome sign or nameplates (something you have acknowledged in your application form). Appearances on approach is a good however with leafy gardens and natural stone walls creating a good impression.

General Impression:

Annacotty is looking good and making great strides in the contest. Wildlife is providing a particularly strong focal point for your activities. Elsewhere a little extra attention to litter control would be welcome while getting your school involved would be a tremendous bonus. Best of luck!