

Tidy Towns Competition 2012

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Ardpatrick** Ref: **441**
County: **Limerick** Mark: **298**
Category: **A** Date(s): **19/06/2012**
28/07/2012

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2011	Mark Awarded 2012
Overall Development Approach	50	38	39
The Built Environment	50	41	42
Landscaping	50	42	43
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	28	28
Litter Control	50	41	41
Tidiness	30	19	19
Waste Minimisation	20	13	13
Residential Areas	40	29	29
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	34	35
General Impression	10	9	9
TOTAL MARK	400	294	298

Overall Development Approach:

Ardpatrick is most welcome to the 2012 Tidy Towns competition. Many thanks for your completed application form, three-year plan, additional information and photographs. You are one of the leading performers in Limerick and it is wonderful that you are continually striving to maintain this momentum. You are commended for addressing each of the questions/suggestions in last year's report in a systematic way. Thank you also for your map but the writing on this was a little hard to read, perhaps as it had been photocopied. You retain a committee of nine and this is not bad for a town of your size. Could it be bigger? It is always worthwhile trying to attract new members, if only to let people know that the door is open. You continue your engagement with a wide range of local and regional agencies and this is excellent. Other sports clubs, social groups are other clubs that could also participate?

Well done on setting up a Facebook page. This will complement existing communication channels and is particularly effective in showing photographs and promoting events. Do you hold public meetings? Congratulations of producing your second three-year plan hot off the heels of your first. How did you find this exercise? Did you consult with the wider community before setting the objectives? It's very impressive to review these documents and see how much has already been done. Do you get voluntary commitment from outside your committee? Many people want to help but don't like meetings.

The Built Environment:

Well done on taking the suggestion from last year's report and repainting the boundary walls and railings of the school.

Any issues with derelict buildings should be addressed here. Note that in the event that contact with owners cannot be made Limerick county council does possess powers under legislation. You should consult with them to find a way forward.

The Sunvale Inn occupies a prominent location in Ardpatrick and it is wonderful that it is about to be renovated. We look forward to visiting again in 2013 to view progress. The church is a magnificent centrepiece for the town and is resplendent in its new coat of paint. It is complemented by its natural stone surround and well maintained lawns. The Greenwood inn is looking superb and clean flags added movement and colour. Similarly the community centre is very well presented.

Landscaping:

The new rose bed at the church was admired along with the well tended lawns, trees and planting beds. Larger shrubs are effective here while the use of small annual flowers perhaps lacks impact in this location. The Carraig Mór installation is exceptional and a remarkable legacy of a demolished building. The display really is first-class, what is the origin of the unusual boulder in the centre? How impressive that you even managed to recreate a miniature bog, complete with sphagnum moss and cotton grass. Well done also for quickly repairing the wall and plaque after it was damaged. The newly planted area on the edge of town is taking shape. Planting wildflowers, in this adjudicator's view, is a contradiction in terms. So you were wise not to go down this road. The trees here will eventually mature and provide resources for birds etc. Conifers are not to this adjudicator's taste as they grow too large, are dark and provide nothing for wildlife. The beds on the island here was being tended on adjudication day and look wonderful. The beds at the Greenwood inn are very nice while the display of farm machinery in the neighbouring field was admired. Bishop Murphy Park is a real delight and immaculate in presentation. The tall birch trees work really well here while all that is missing are some flags and water in the pool. Overall landscaping in Ardpatrick is a triumph and a real highlight of this visit.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

You need a comprehensive approach to this topic in the form of the wildlife action plan. This would map locally important habitats and identify what, if any, conservation issues they face. You are already doing a lot of work in this regard, it just needs to be brought together. Identify awareness raising projects, such as your excellent dawn chorus and survey plans. How about a bat walk or spring flower ramble? Do you have Slí na Sláinte or Golden mile? This would provide opportunities for people to enjoy their surroundings and it's no problem if you have to veer outside your normal boundaries. The banks on the Nóinín river have been stripped of vegetation on the Kilfinnane approach. This promotes erosion which in turn is deleterious to fish habitats. Inland Fisheries Ireland should always be consulted prior to works of this nature on a river and they can advise on best practice.

Litter Control:

It is great that you took part in the national spring clean in April. Photographs would be great here to give to the adjudicator a sense of what was achieved. Did you collect much rubbish or was it focused on tidying a particular area? You are commended for carrying out daily litter patrols. Do you wear high-viz vests with the tidy towns logo while doing these? These would help raise awareness of all the work you are doing. Litter control on adjudication day was exemplary. Well done for maintaining this high standard.

Tidiness:

Ardpatrick is an extremely tidy town and major issues do not arise. It is noted that putting overhead cables underground is a long-term project but do persevere as it has been done to great effect elsewhere. One minor issue to note: gravel should be swept from the path along the Kilmallock road. An untidy wire fence next to the Bishop Murphy Park could be effectively screened with a native hawthorn hedge.

Waste Minimisation:

Well done to the school for its fifth green flag! This is a wonderful achievement and reflects the years of dedication to reducing their environmental impact. How does the tidy towns committee liaise with the school in terms of applying projects developed by them across the town? In other words the green schools ethos should not stop at the school gates.

Do give full details of the events to which your delegates were sent? What were the key messages that were taken home? Are there actions arising from these that will now be applied?

While low down on the waste pyramid recycling is still important. Do provide details of the facilities you have here for 2013. Have you considered conducting a waste audit? Identify how much waste is generated by Ardpatrick, where it goes and what it is composed of. This will then allow you to set informed targets and

monitor success.

Residential Areas:

Homes along the Kilmallock road were admired and all were presented to a high standard. Numerous gardens with colourful displays of flowers were noted. Boundary walls are mostly well preserved and perhaps in time those with incongruous timber fences can be persuaded to convert. Elsewhere Ardpatrick has few houses and no estates but all that were visited on adjudication day were presented to a very high standard.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

The Kilfinnane road is attractive and the simple, old-fashioned welcome sign is a nice feature here. The beautiful bridge across the Noinin river is another point of interest here. O Sullivan's garage on the Kilmallock road is very clean and tidy. Painting the metal railings here, to green perhaps, would help them blend in. The approach from Kildorrery is superb with a host of features greeting the eye. The presentation of tall trees here, along with the Stalbridge is a particular attraction.

General Impression:

Ardpatrick is superb in its presentation and this adjudicator truly enjoyed his first-ever visit. You have once again proved your worth at this level of the competition. Well done!

Second Round Adjudication:

It was this adjudicator's first time to visit the lovely village of Ardpatrick and I was absolutely delighted with the experience. The Carraig Mhór feature on the site of the former creamery building is a special place which has much to interest the visitor. It includes historical items such as information on what the old building looked like and this seemed even more realistic with the display of the pony cart and churns. The section of bog plants was highly appropriate and the care taken to provide universal access was thoughtful. Of course the focal point - the very interesting rock was most effective. May we suggest that some consideration now be given to providing information signage in Irish to add to the visitors' experience? Bishop Murphy Park in the village is well maintained and work was on-going on the day. It provides a pleasant peaceful location for contemplation for locals and visitors alike and to have a picnic. The water feature was not in operation on the day but otherwise the park is well maintained. It was noted that the footpath outside the park is in need of improvement and it would be good to have it continued to surround the Community Centre and onwards to the church. On the opposite side of the road, a footpath down to the well painted Sunvale Inn would also add to the character of the built environment and help to reduce the damage being caused to the side of the road. The flower beds here are of good quality but they are not necessary because they contrast with the rural scenery in the adjacent fields. We suggest that you consider removing these flower beds and plant a low hawthorn or field maple hedge to form the boundary line of the village and the adjacent fields. The flower beds could be grouped into a larger display at the timber sign for Bishop Murphy Park. This would make much greater impact in the village centre and encourage people to stop when passing to have another look and even stay for a walk or have refreshments. We admired the garden in the school grounds and noted that the boundary wall was well painted. The impact of this wall can be softened by the use of wall/climbing plants such as Cotoneaster or ivy planted at the base. Congratulations and well done.