

Tidy Towns Competition 2012

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Ballinacurra Weston** Ref: **2133**
County: **Limerick** Mark: **185**
Category: **A** Date(s): **25/06/2012**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2011	Mark Awarded 2012
Overall Development Approach	50	0	27
The Built Environment	50	0	22
Landscaping	50	0	28
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	0	15
Litter Control	50	0	24
Tidiness	30	0	14
Waste Minimisation	20	0	5
Residential Areas	40	0	24
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	0	22
General Impression	10	0	4
TOTAL MARK	400	0	185

Overall Development Approach:

Ballinacurra Weston is most welcome to the 2012 TidyTowns competition and many thanks for your entry form and hand drawn map. You have nine members on your committee and this provides you with a solid base upon which to move forward. The fact that you have 50 to 60 residents turning up for volunteer days is an impressive show and clearly indicates that the community is determined to take ownership of the issues that face them. It is hoped that you find TidyTowns to be a force for positive change in your area. As a first-time entrant you may find the competition format to be new so you are urged to consult with the TidyTowns Handbook. This is full of useful tips on how to proceed under each of the contest headings. Ballinacurra Weston is facing serious challenges and your 'residents first' report makes sobering reading. TidyTowns believes that constructive engagement with regional agencies should be encouraged as this can help you overcome difficult issues. Your committee is encouraged to work on a three-year plan. This would allow you to set strategic objectives and list actions under each of the contest headings. It will allow you to target your resources efficiently and win points across the spectrum of headings. You mentioned that you are working with Rosbrien school, is it a national school or post primary? It is of huge value to be involved with the local school as students can teach a group much about environmental enhancement. They are encouraged to take part in the green flag program and this is very complimentary to Tidy Towns.

The Built Environment:

Your main challenge is dereliction and this is something you acknowledge throughout your application form. Who do you liaise with on addressing this issue? You have clearly identified the locations of problem properties on your map. You say you intend to begin work on painting exteriors but elsewhere you say you have been unable to get permission to do this. It is perhaps the biggest issue in terms of the areas appearance. In a three-year plan you could identify exactly what actions are required for each property and

which agency you should be working with. This may help you divide the task into manageable chunks. The murals are fantastic features and are a great display of the children's talent and imagination. The Marian shrine is a nice focal feature for the estate and is complemented with two attractive birch trees. The broken branches towards the bases needs to be pruned and this will help them grow tall.

Landscaping:

Your community 'garden of hope' is a fantastic initiative and was admired for its range of trees and shrubs. It is very well maintained and is complemented by the picnic seating and murals, which adds a human dimension. It is recommended that plants are grown directly in the ground rather than pots while native species would be more suited to the climate. The butterfly bushes would provide colour and attract insects in summer while apple trees will mature to create a nice line here. They will need to be pruned after a few years. The raised bed with pansies is an attractive feature and well done to the boys and girls who made this happen. Some weeds are coming through so it does need some maintenance. Overall the impact here is good, could it be replicated throughout the estate? The park with play area is sadly overgrown and neglected but could be a focal point for games and landscaping. How about a massive tree planting programme, or 'neighbourhood', or creation of playing pitches? Another garden well planted with a colourful display of flowers was admired. Imagine how this would look if trees were grown along the boundary walls. Yet another had a wonderful mural with butterflies, again trees would frame this area to great effect.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

It is excellent that you are incorporating wildlife into your garden of hope and this is a wonderful way of bringing people into direct contact with nature. Simple projects with the school, such as surveying areas to learn the names of common birds and plants can bring greater appreciation of the natural world, even in built up areas. Open green areas can be made more wildlife friendly by planting native trees. Species such as rowan, whitebeam and a cherry provide year-round colour and texture while shrubbery e.g. dog wood, rose and blackthorn would provide cover in which birds can nest. You are encouraged to contact the Limerick city council heritage officer in order to find out more about how to plan this. A community bird box building day would encourage people to attract birds to their garden.

Litter Control:

You are encouraged to work with Limerick city council and the gardai to combat illegal dumping. Elsewhere litter is a major concern to most residents as it gives the impression of neglect. One way to combat this is to carry out regular litter patrols and where high viz vests with the tidy towns logo across the back. This can reduce the incidence of litter and promote your group and the work you do. Litter is a problem in the estate and greater attention to regular patrols would be needed to address this.

Tidiness:

Your efforts to control weeds are noted. Ideally weeds should be removed by hand as herbicide is bad for wildlife. Try to come up with projects that tick a number of boxes e.g. planting schemes can screen an untidy wall while boosting landscaping and providing a refuge for wildlife.

Waste Minimisation:

Do you have access to recycling facilities? Is your waste segregated prior to collection (i.e. green bins/brown bins?) Bear in mind that recycling, while important, is only fourth on the list of priorities after prevention, minimisation and reuse. Some ideas include holding a composting workshop, distributing 'no junk mail' stickers, holding a hazardous waste collection day (or collecting half used tins of paint to paint murals on a boundary wall). There are a lot of ideas that may be applied but raising awareness of the problem is the first step. If your school is in the green flag the first area they look at is waste minimisation and so you could learn a lot from each other's experience.

Residential Areas:

A number of homes were looking really well on adjudication day with well maintained facades and manicured gardens. Number 63 and number 41 Clarina Avenue deserve special mention.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

Your estate seems to be lacking in nameplates so it's identity for the visitor is absent. Perhaps some bilingual name stones could address this. On entry to Clarina Avenue the lack of trees is of note, and in contrast to many other residential areas of Limerick.

General Impression:

Ballinacurra Weston faces significant challenges but the number of community gardens and attractive homes shows that community spirit is alive. Trees have the potential to further transform your neighbourhood and could be acquired at low cost from the nursery. It is hoped that your continued participation in tidy towns will help you further your aims. Best of luck!