

Tidy Towns Competition 2012

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Ballygrennan Close Estate**

Ref: **2069**

County: **Limerick**

Mark: **191**

Category: **A**

Date(s): **28/06/2012**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2011	Mark Awarded 2012
Overall Development Approach	50	25	26
The Built Environment	50	23	24
Landscaping	50	20	22
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	10	12
Litter Control	50	26	27
Tidiness	30	17	18
Waste Minimisation	20	3	3
Residential Areas	40	26	27
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	26	27
General Impression	10	4	5
TOTAL MARK	400	180	191

Overall Development Approach:

Ballygrennan Estate is most welcome to the 2012 TidyTowns contest. Many thanks for your clear application form and map of your estate. We are delighted to learn that you find participation in TidyTowns to be a positive experience. You continue to have five on your committee and this is a fair number. Do you have many additional people upon whom you can call for voluntary help? You say that you are meeting every three months but this does not seem all that often. Is it sufficiently frequent to make progress through your work program? Do you have high-viz vests with 'TidyTowns' across the back to wear during work evenings? This is a small thing but it is very effective in promoting your group and your work and encouraging people to take part. It is great to read that you are engaging with the full range of support agencies and that they are giving you the help you need. Real progress can only be made through positive engagement by all parties. To this end you have an expansive range of communication channels and maintaining these is essential to keeping the wider community on board. Your engagement with the local schools is excellent. Do they take part in the green flag program? This is a most important initiative in teaching the younger generation how to reduce our environmental impact. You are encouraged to use photos freely in your application form as this gives the adjudicator a good sense of how effective your projects have been and the issues you face. Finally it would be good to see you complete a three-year plan as per the guidance in the Tidy Towns Handbook. This would simply involve you identifying actions in each of the contest headings. It allows you to set long-term goals and to break these down into manageable actions.

The Built Environment:

While it is unfortunate to see houses being demolished this surely is the best course of action where they have become rundown or are attracting antisocial behaviour. You have identified a number of projects here

including painting a large wall. While this is costly and tedious it is essential that graffiti be eliminated in order to prevent its occurrence in the first place. Areas where houses have been demolished were noted and these are now well-kept green areas. Many of the remaining houses are well-kept with attractive gardens and mature planting. The community building looks very well and is made most attractive by hanging baskets and other colourful displays of flowers.

Landscaping:

The Marian statue was admired and is being very well maintained. The grass is neatly trimmed and the lovely flowers around here were admired. Shrubbery here is very effective in terms of its size and ability to provide long-term impact. Ballygrennan Estate and approach roads benefit from a number of mature street trees and new ones should be planted where opportunities arise.

You mentioned that you would like to plant hawthorn hedges and these would be suitable to screen the concrete walls, adding wildlife habitat and simultaneously creating landscaping features. The central green area is very tidy and well kept and it was great to see it so well used on adjudication day.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

Attracting birds to gardens has become extremely popular in recent years through both feeding them and providing nest boxes. Why not hold an information evening for residents who would like to learn more about garden birds and how to attract them. You are very close to an area of wetlands that is included in the lower River Shannon special area of conservation. This makes it a part of one of the most important areas for biodiversity in Ireland. It holds populations of otters and kingfishers as well as countless other plants and animals. You could learn more about this by arranging a talk or a guided walk with your local NPWS Ranger. It would be great to get the school involved to raise awareness of the value of wetlands for clean water, helping prevent floods and capturing nutrients that are being washed into this place from throughout the Shannon basin. This also lends itself to art projects or research for science subjects. There is certainly lots of scope to get involved.

Litter Control:

Litter is probably the most important aspect for many residents as it affects the perception of an area regardless of anything else that has been done. You have a Tús worker and carry out daily litter patrols and this suggests that you have a good handle on this issue. Litter control was moderate on adjudication day and clearly there is an effort being made here. Do try to conduct additional patrols in order to attain the high standard that is sought.

Tidiness:

The estate has some tidiness issues but has much going for it in this regard. Footpaths are well constructed and road surfaces are not too bad. Graffiti is not a major problem while signage is generally good. Could lamp posts be painted to brighten them up? Kerbs have been sprayed with herbicides but the dead vegetation needs to be cleaned away. The area around the central green is very tidy.

Waste Minimisation:

Your skip hire day does go against the aims of this category so could there be alternatives? E.g. a bring and buy sale to raise funds for your group, or arrange a hazardous waste collection with Limerick City Council. You could collect half used tins of paint to paint a wall around murals and make bird boxes out of waste wood. You have good access to recycling facilities but bear in mind that recycling is only fourth in preference after prevention, minimisation and reuse. Home composting is an important element in waste reduction and can provide you with material for landscaping schemes. How about holding a composting workshop for residents with Limerick city council? If your schools are not already in the green flag program they should be encouraged to get involved. If they are, full details should be given here.

Residential Areas:

You say you would like to link in with other estates and this is excellent. Moyross enters TidyTowns as a unit which includes most of their estates. Would you consider entering under their umbrella? You are welcome to continue entering under your own name but partaking in a joint project would be to your mutual benefit. A number of attractive gardens were admired on adjudication day with the home beside the community building deserving of a special mention.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

The new Ballygrennan Estate signs were admired though something larger in scale may be needed to provide a welcoming effect. The sign near the green area was also admired and gives a sense of identity to the area.

General Impression:

We were delighted to return to Ballygrennan Estate this year to see the progress that has been made. You are right to say that you are just like everywhere else but you do have an exceptional community spirit that shining through. Best of luck and keep up the good work
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