

Tidy Towns Competition 2012

Adjudication Report

Centre: **College Gate** Ref: **2087**
County: **Limerick** Mark: **196**
Category: **A** Date(s): **26/06/2012**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2011	Mark Awarded 2012
Overall Development Approach	50	24	24
The Built Environment	50	25	26
Landscaping	50	24	25
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	14	15
Litter Control	50	29	30
Tidiness	30	17	17
Waste Minimisation	20	3	3
Residential Areas	40	25	26
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	26	26
General Impression	10	4	4
TOTAL MARK	400	191	196

Overall Development Approach:

College Gate is most welcome to the 2012 a Tidy Towns competition. Many thanks for your completed entry form and map of your estate. A challenge for many entrants like College Gate, which are estates in a larger urban context, is setting your boundaries. You have so far chosen to define your area as solely within the estate however it is already seen that you have linkages to adjacent areas. Perhaps it would then make sense to encompass the Mary Immaculate College and secondary school, and the Centra/petrol station within your marked boundary. These areas would then be included in the judging and so your area benefits overall. You could also consider approaching neighbouring estates to include them as they will also have stake in enhancing the local environment. Your map could be enhanced by labelling street names and highlighting the location of projects undertaken.

Putting new ideas together is best done under the umbrella of a three-year plan. This would define the overarching vision for your area and set medium-term goals in order to meet these objectives. Actions should be set out under each of the contest headings with realistic timeframes associated with each. The Tidy Towns Handbook is full of useful hints and how to do this and you are urged to refer to this.

Finally it is good that you have contacts with the college and Laurel Hill School. Have you considered doing a joint project? Is the school in the green flag program? Such endeavours would be most useful in broadening your support base and building community spirit.

The Built Environment:

You are commended for conducting the audit of your estate's built environment. A copy of this would have been useful for the adjudicator to peruse. This category normally discusses the presentation of municipal

heritage buildings. Expanding your area may bring some of these into your remit. The laneway linking the streets were spotlessly clean and brightened up with flowers in tubs. Some of the begonias are not doing so well however. Would small shrubs be more appropriate here as they would provide low maintenance year-round effect?

Your efforts to liaise with the ESB to enhance the small area around the substation, which is littered and graffitied, are noted and it is hoped that this can be addressed.

Landscaping:

On entry to the estate the impression is one of leafy greenery. These birch and whitebeam trees are excellent in providing a variety of colours and textures throughout the year. The newly planted raised beds add colour and are a fine addition for this year. The grass here is well trimmed.

The small common green area looks well. It's grass was well trimmed and the low, natural stone wall forms an attractive boundary.

A beautiful apple tree was admired across from number 41. While the flowers are pretty it is not recommended that flowers be planted at the base of trees as they divert water and nutrients away from the tree.

The hanging baskets on the wall near number 36 are nice touch (if not in the way of the footballers).

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

It is good that this area is being considered as part of your activities. Restricting the use of herbicides is a good start. In a small area such as this you are limited somewhat in your scope. Do you have a nearby park or Riverside area that you could adopt? You are close to the River Shannon, which is part of a special area of conservation. Could you join with a local expert or wildlife group to hold a walk or guided tour? You could contact the heritage officer of Limerick City Council to see what projects might be feasible for you. Within your estate activities such as wildlife gardening or feeding garden birds may attract support.

Litter Control:

You are undertaking weekly and ad hoc litter checks of your estate. Do you also encompass neighbourhood areas outside your estate? For instance a nice project might be to hold the national spring clean, run by an Taisce in April, to clean up a local common area, park or roadside.

Litter control was excellent on adjudication day and your group is commended for maintaining this high standard.

Tidiness:

Last year's adjudicator made a number of recommendations under this heading, e.g. in relation to washing signs. Where these acted upon?

Generally however this adjudicator found College Gate to be extremely tidy with no major issues. It's a beautiful estate with residents that clearly take great care in its presentation.

Waste Minimisation:

Your audit of water consumption is a good project with which to address the issue of waste minimisation. Traditionally groups have looked at solid waste here but water and energy are increasingly relevant to people, particularly as they impact upon costs. However traditional waste minimisation should also be addressed and even changes in a small area can help to make the big changes that we need. Is waste segregated prior to disposal at the kerbside? Do you have a brown waste collection? If not you should start a composting movement by holding a workshop with Limerick city council. Do you promote the use of municipal recycling facilities e.g. for electric goods, hazardous substances (paint, medicines etc). You could promote freetradeireland.i.e. to allow people to find new owners for unwanted items. If Laurel Hill School is in the green flag program they will have tackled many of these issues and liaison with them would be a most fruitful exercise.

Residential Areas:

These semi-detached homes are all looking very well and individual homes presented to a very high standard. Lawns are well trimmed while a number of attractive flower displays were admired in gardens. The use of suitable trees, especially birch and rowan accentuates this well tended appearance. The use of baskets and pots of summer flowers at a number of homes is a very attractive feature.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

Somerville Avenue provides a beautiful approach to the estate with its mature lime trees and natural stone walls. The brick walls are equally shady however there is some graffiti here that is unsightly and should be addressed. Lamp posts & poles have also been graffitied. Signage on the Avenue is good however. The boundary wall of the estate itself is a fine featured that creates a very good impression. The two stone name plates are clear and clean.

Road and path surfacing through the estate are to a very high standard while weeds are not an issue along kerbs. A nice project would be to screen the remaining wire fence separating you and the service station.

General Impression:

College Gate is a small estate with a very high standard of presentation. To progress in the contest it is suggested that you broaden your horizons to include your neighbours in an expanded Tidy Towns group. Best of luck!