

Tidy Towns Competition 2012

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Croom** Ref: **448**
County: **Limerick** Mark: **275**
Category: **C** Date(s): **15/06/2012**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2011	Mark Awarded 2012
Overall Development Approach	50	38	39
The Built Environment	50	36	37
Landscaping	50	36	36
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	29	29
Litter Control	50	31	31
Tidiness	30	20	20
Waste Minimisation	20	10	10
Residential Areas	40	31	32
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	33	34
General Impression	10	7	7
TOTAL MARK	400	271	275

Overall Development Approach:

Croom is most welcome to the 2012 Tidy Towns contest. Many thanks for your clearly compiled application form, three-year plan and additional information. You are doing extraordinarily well to have 22 people on your committee and no less than 30 to 50 volunteers upon whom you can call for additional support. This would be the envy of many centres! This level of community support and involvement goes to the heart of Tidy Towns and for this you are commended. You provided a long list of other groups that are active in your town, does this suggest you have links with all of these groups? That would be impressive indeed! You also have a long list of communication tools and this is clearly vital to maintaining high levels of enthusiasm.

Many thanks for your three-year plan which, it is noticed, will be coming to an end this year. There is no indication as to how you are progressing with this, did you manage to complete most or all of your actions? You will also need to start work on your plan for 2013-2015 so hopefully you will have learned lessons that can be applied to good effect here.

Do feel free to use photos liberally in the application form as they can give the adjudicator a sense of what was achieved with a particular project or the level of support you received. For now however your setup seems to have attracted a broad and committed support base and this will be the bedrock upon which your future success will be built.

The Built Environment:

Your support from local businesses is paying off and congratulations to all those who helped out during the year. Do make sure that you try to list your projects under the appropriate heading as some of the actions you mentioned would be judged under tidiness, e.g. anti-graffiti measures or cleanups of untidy areas.

Táirne Uí h-Ailpín is to be complimented for its colourful facade and flags, these add colour and movement. The Garda station is attractive while the car yard was tidy despite the level and nature of activity here. It is perhaps a poor location to store waste tyres however. The murals on the derelict buildings create a real point of interest around the town, well done to the students concerned. The Croom interpretive panel is clean and interesting. The mill on the river is a beautifully presented building and it's lovely to have its wheel and mill race intact.

The old church of Ireland church is sadly no longer in use but it is great to see that its grounds are still maintained to such a high standard. Its specimen yew trees are particularly impressive. The nearby Roman Catholic Church is also well presented and was flying flags. Individual premises on Main Street are in good shape e.g. the betting shop and Hickey's and the mural on R. Cregg is attractive. A tatty billboard on the gable wall of the post office detracts seriously however from the street scene.

AIB and the credit union both looked well although the former bureau de change sign needs to be refreshed. The facade of the disused store beside the health centre needs attention. Have you considered installing bilingual street nameplates?

Dereliction is a problem in the town but one which can be addressed through liaison with Limerick county council.

Landscaping:

You have completed a large number of projects under this heading and for each you are commended. Do note that it is inappropriate to hang baskets of flowers on electricity poles as this may create safety issues both for your group and maintenance personnel. However, hanging baskets from buildings and other areas, e.g. outside the Garda station, are most attractive.

You have a wonderful setting for your park and it already has many of the assets one would hope for. Do consult with Inland Fisheries Ireland on your plans and certainly before any construction commences as they will advise you on how best to protect and enhance fish habitats.

Roses planted in stone beds on the wall along your road are very attractive although the white flowers are perhaps too small to have any impact in this location. Planters on the bridge over the Mague are very well placed and survived some very stormy weather.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

Well done for cleaning litter out of the river. Some photos here of what was achieved would have been welcome. You do not say what the theme of the seminars were that you attended with Ballyhoura development. You also mention a research survey, which it is noted came up in the 2011 report also, but no further discussion of the research was provided. Is this a work in progress? We would welcome a copy of any report that may have been produced as this no doubt would attract additional points. How have the schools been involved in this, if at all? The Mague is a wonderful amenity for town and it is noted that you have an Angling club. Did their members help with the cleanup? Progress on your part is noted and the planned design was admired. This clearly has the potential to contain a significant wildlife element. Have you considered holding a wildlife event e.g. a bat walk, Dawn chorus or heritage trail. Your contact with the Limerick county council heritage officer would be useful in this regard.

Litter Control:

You are congratulated for your participation in the national spring clean and, again photos would have been welcome here. Your weekly litter patrols are no doubt useful, is this frequency sufficient to maintain a high standard? You clearly have a comprehensive approach to this issue as evidenced through the school involvement and your approaches to local businesses.

Litter control was very good on adjudication day. The recycling bank on the church car park was spotless, well done! Some minor litter was noted in front of shops on the Adare road.

Tidiness:

Last year's report made a number of observations and recommendations under this heading, were these taken into consideration? Your problems with graffiti are acknowledged and hopefully with your persistence the perpetrators will desist.

The town is generally very tidy with the already mentioned billboard the only major detracting point. Bins need to be washed while are otherwise in good shape.

Waste Minimisation:

You are clearly engaged in a number of initiatives under this heading that indicate you appreciate the task at hand. Many of these were also listed last year and in the spirit of 'continuous improvement' are there any new projects that could be undertaken? For instance how prevalent is the practice of home composting? This would be hugely beneficial in reducing waste piles. Perhaps it could be the subject of a community workshop.

The schools green flag is enormously important here so to do give full details of their achievements. Those that have a green flag will have done the waste module and so are in a position to pass on useful tips that could be applied across the town. Do you engage with local businesses in waste minimisation efforts? Waste means money for them so waste minimisation can benefit the local economy.

Residential Areas:

You have a number of residential associations, such as Kylefea and Elm Park. This is excellent. Are there other estates and could they be encouraged to follow suit?

The Gleann Má and Cois Má estates have attractive homes that are enhanced by mature trees and colourful hanging baskets. The stone nameplates were admired although a broken park seat needs to be repaired. Some excellent individual presentations of gardens were admired here.

Elm Park was particularly attractive on adjudication day with tall trees and well maintained verges. Caemore Court has a lovely colour scheme and was also enlivened with birch trees. Roses and displays of other flowers are stunning.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

The approach from Adare was good but could be improved. The name sign was clean but the planting here lacked colour, while a broken wooden fence created an untidy impression. Further along the presentation of natural stone walls set in front of tall trees creates a nice setting.

The roundabout on approach from Cork/Limerick has a nice colour scheme and was well weeded. Signage here is in good order. Nearer town the small 50 KPH sign needs to be cleaned and/or painted. The next yellow sign is also dilapidated. The Bruff approach was very presentable and signage generally is in good order here.

General Impression:

Well done on your excellent level of participation and ambitious work programme that you have set of yourselves. We look forward to returning in 2013 to stroll in your new park. Best of luck!