

Tidy Towns Competition 2012

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Curragh Birin Residential Area**

Ref: **2143**

County: **Limerick**

Mark: **184**

Category: **B**

Date(s): **19/06/2012**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2011	Mark Awarded 2012
Overall Development Approach	50	0	24
The Built Environment	50	0	26
Landscaping	50	0	24
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	0	10
Litter Control	50	0	22
Tidiness	30	0	19
Waste Minimisation	20	0	5
Residential Areas	40	0	24
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	0	26
General Impression	10	0	4
TOTAL MARK	400	0	184

Overall Development Approach:

Curragh Birin is most welcome to the 2012 Tidy Towns competition and we are delighted that you have taken this step towards improving your area through volunteer action. You did not provide a map of your area and this will be most important for future years. The adjudicator needs to know the boundaries of the area you maintain as well as the location of any particular projects you have been working on. In the absence of a map the centre of your area was taken to be the shopping centre with Next Door and the Groody bar. You have 20 people on your committee and this is a healthy number for a residents association. You have indicated that you hold monthly meetings and monthly workdays. You list Limerick city council as a support agency but no others. Could you liaise with the traders in the shopping centre? Are there any sporting clubs or other social groups? You do not indicate whether or not there are any schools in your area but forming relationships with schools is of tremendous value. You have a small enough estate so communicating with people may not present a problem. It is important that as broad a group as possible is included in your efforts.

As a new group you are encouraged to refer to the Tidy Towns Handbook as this is full of useful information on how to proceed on each of the contest headings. It is important that you select even small projects under each one and this can best be achieved through preparing a three-year plan. This would set out your vision for your estate and mark the various actions that you need to complete in order to achieve that vision.

The Built Environment:

This category assesses the quality of your built environment. For instance the presentation of public or commercial buildings. In this regard the only building is the shopping centre and this acts as a focal point for activity in the community. It is essential that you liaise with each of the business owners and work together on

issues of upkeep and presentation. The buildings are very well kept and freshly painted with generally good signage and presentation of shop fronts.

Landscaping:

You have identified that you would like to see more trees in the estate. Do you have any green areas? Flower displays can be used effectively in an urban setting to enhance buildings and shop fronts. Could you work with business owners to see if these could be provided for 2013? Trees and shrubs are excellent for year-round effect and for screening larger areas. In this regard much has already been done around the shopping centre, it just needs some attention to remove weeds and clip the shrubs.

Where did you have in mind to install the rockery? This should be indicated on the map for 2013. If you had a green area you could create a community garden and even allotments for vegetable planting. You could work with Limerick city council and how this might be achieved but such initiatives have been extremely successful elsewhere.

Walking through the estate there is a conspicuous lack of flowers in people's gardens. Could this be encouraged in some way? Perhaps by holding a workshop.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

This is not a category that many associate with housing estates however in fact gardens are important for wildlife in cities. Birds can be attracted by installing cover and a food source. Evergreens should be avoided. Trees such as rowan, hawthorn and whitebeam in particular are good as they flower and produce berries. Setting out birdfeeders can help to attract birds and this is now very popular. You could work with Limerick City Council to hold a wildlife gardening event to advise people on how they can create wildlife havens in their own back gardens. Including a native tree element in landscaping also benefits wildlife while plants like the butterfly bush are great for attracting insects.

Litter Control:

You could participate in the national spring clean which is run by An Taisce every April. They will send you all a kit and is a great way to get people out. Do take photos and include in your application form. It is unfortunate that you have to endure problems of fly tipping but hopefully you can deal with this. Does your group carry out litter patrols? You could get high-vis vests with the Tidy Towns logo across the back to let people know you're out and about tackling the problem.

The area around the shopping centre was quite littered while litter at a low level was present throughout unfortunately.

Tidiness:

The estate is generally tidy in appearance and there are no major issues to contend with. Weeding of common areas, e.g. outside Troy student residence would greatly enhance the appearance here. Grass verges are well trimmed while road and footpath quality is good.

Waste Minimisation:

This category is concerned with addressing the growing waste mountain. Do you have recycling facilities? Do you have green waste collections? If not why not hold a home composting workshop? This is great for gardening as well as reducing waste. If you have a school are they involved in the green flag program? If not there is a similar Green Homes projects run by An Taisce and would help reduce waste and energy costs at home.

There are other tips available in the Tidy Towns Handbook by holding a waste seminar with Limerick City Council would also provide ideas. Encourage the use of 'no junk mail' stickers which would cut down on paper waste.

Residential Areas:

Your area is predominantly residential. Your estate has no nameplates (as you have identified) and these are urgently needed to ascribe some identity to the area. The houses here are fine semi-detached, suburban style residences and are presented to a very high standard. Gardens are well maintained and verges well trimmed.

Common green areas look very well with a selection of maturing trees. One or two are dead and need to be replaced but these do not stand out too much. In general the estate is presented to a high standard, just a little more attention to litter and weeds along curbs would improve appearance is all the more. There seems to be only one black spot, next to 160 – 167 and perhaps this is where you have your issues with fly tipping. This would be ideal for a community landscaped area that could be a focal point the estate and give it a unique identity.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

Roads and footpaths are in good order throughout. The lack of any identifying names is considered to be a major problem as you currently have no features to lend any sense of place. Clearly residents care for care for their but to really create a community people need to feel like they are somewhere that is somehow different to anywhere else. How can the residents of Curragh Birin achieve this? The approach road to the roundabout was unfortunately badly littered, especially along the path and verges.

General Impression:

Curragh Birin is a fine estate and clearly has a committed body of people. You do not need to do much more to raise the bar and create a place to live that is exceptional. Best of luck!