

Tidy Towns Competition 2012

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Galbally** Ref: **452**
County: **Limerick** Mark: **293**
Category: **B** Date(s): **14/06/2012**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2011	Mark Awarded 2012
Overall Development Approach	50	45	46
The Built Environment	50	41	41
Landscaping	50	38	38
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	27	27
Litter Control	50	36	37
Tidiness	30	22	22
Waste Minimisation	20	9	9
Residential Areas	40	28	28
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	37	37
General Impression	10	8	8
TOTAL MARK	400	291	293

Overall Development Approach:

Galbally is most welcome to the 2012 SuperValu Tidy towns contest. Many thanks for your clearly presented application form which included photos and newspaper cuttings. It would seem that you have expanded your membership from 12 last year to 20 this year. This is a wonderful achievement, how did this come about? Galbally is scoring very well in TidyTowns and ranks among the gold medal winners. You list a range of communication devices and these are clearly succeeding since you managed to attract so much new support. Your Facebook page seems to be a new addition to this list and this has been very useful for other groups. Do you post news regularly on this? How many 'likes' do you have? It is a great Channel for photos in particular and this can highlight projects and success stories. You are working with a wide range of local bodies including local politicians, Ballyhoura and more. This wide ranging approach is excellent and hopefully will help you make the changes you want to see.

Have you considered preparing a three year plan as has been suggested in previous years? This would set out a strategic approach for your town and set actions you would like to see completed in the medium-term. Actions should be identified under each of the contest headings and realistic target dates set. It need not be an onerous task and there is lots of useful guidance available in the TidyTowns Handbook. It is wonderful that your school principal is also a Tidy Towns committee member. Do the children get actively involved in Tidy Towns projects? E.g. cleanups or wildlife surveys? Does the school have a green flag? Finally don't be too concerned with cutbacks, everyone is in the same boat and you need to focus on what you can do with the resources you have.

The Built Environment:

The town square is a wonderful open space that makes the town seem larger than it actually is. It has retained its vernacular building designs and layout and the well surfaced tarmac is a modern, if tidy finish. Disuse and

derelection is a problem in a small number of these buildings and this issue should be tackled. You should develop an inventory in conjunction with Limerick county council and in many cases a lick of paint would make the world of difference.

The war memorial statue is in a prominent position and is well maintained. Its flagpole however is lacking a flag and this would add colour and movement to this space. The interpretive signage in the centre square is not bad with it being clean and clear for the most part. Individual premises looked well such as O'Donovan's, Wallace's and Hedigan's. The red and black colour scheme works particularly well on O'Donovan's. The church is very well presented being clean and well painted. Its grounds were well maintained and some small flower displays were admired. Tubs at the boundary wall do need some attention however. The school is looking very well and was clean and tidy. The row of mature birch trees was admired. The Garda station is another fine building that adds great heritage value to the town.

Landscaping:

Landscaping in the town square is somewhat inconsistent. Lime and maple trees looked well but there are gaps and red Maple is perhaps not a good choice. Planting bed at the war monument is attractive and well weeded, while colourful hanging baskets were noticed on some premises. The black lamp standards were notably unadorned with the baskets for which they are intended. The stone bed in the central area is tidy and well weeded. The cotoneaster is nice but would need additional support as the flowers here seem too small to have any impact. Perhaps more shrubbery here would work and would provide year-round interest. Galbally is surrounded with rolling hills that are laced with hedges and tall trees. These are the main landscape features of your town and are worthy of conservation. Mature beech trees across from the church are of particular attraction.

Planting beds at the graveyard have become overgrown and weedy and so would benefit from some attention. Nearby mounds of soil and cut grass creates a neglected impression. The graveyard itself is magnificent with its tall beech trees and stone wall. The maintenance of this area is to a very high standard.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

Removing rubbish from the river can indeed benefit fish life and you are to be commended in this regard. There is something of a paradox to say you are 'planting wildflowers' and it should be noted that very specific communities of plants develop around riverbanks because they can tolerate occasional flooding and the force of scouring water. In this regard it is always recommended that the river be allowed to choose its own vegetation while advice should always be sought prior to works on a river (from Inland fisheries Ireland). It was noted that the national school holds flora and fauna walks and this is excellent. Are such events available for grown-ups to? This category is really concerned with raising awareness of your town's natural heritage so holding a spring flower ramble, a bat walk or similar event can do much to enhance people's appreciation of local habitats. The river is a lovely feature to have and is complemented by the old stone wall and mysterious arch (was there once a road here?).

Litter Control:

You are commended for your participation in the national spring clean. Do include some photos for next year e.g. before and after shots. Your photo in the local paper with smiling volunteers and sacks of rubbish says it all! Your clean up of the river is also an excellent initiative here. Your daily litter patrols are also vital in maintaining your town's image. You are right to be tough on persistent dumping. Can you work with Limerick county council to tackle this? Litter control was good on adjudication day with only minor issues observed.

Tidiness:

Last year's adjudicator listed a number of points in need of attention under this heading. Were these reviewed in a systematic way? It does appear that signage has been washed and railings painted in the square so we will give you the benefit of the doubt here.

The town is generally very tidy and greatly benefits from an absence of overhead wires to clutter the skyline. You are dealing with signage so there is no need to repeat every instance here. Older circus posters are still visible on a lamppost at the church while the river wall here is in need of repair. Stray referendum poster further down the road needs to be removed.

Waste Minimisation:

This can be a difficult category from many towns to progress in. You are promoting recycling and this is important but there is also a need to move higher up the waste pyramid, to prevention, minimisation and re-use. Composting is vital, is it practised widely? If not you could hold a composting workshop, perhaps with help from Limerick county council? Clearly you have already made a start on this with your waste shredded paper. You could also hold an event to raise awareness of food waste.

Does your school have a green flag? This is a most important achievement under this category. The first flag would be for waste minimisation and continued innovations could be applied across the community. Don't

think that because you are a small town you cannot make a big difference!

Residential Areas:

Your contacts with the local councillor with a view to enhancing the Aherlow Apartments is noted. Some attention is required at the row of houses on the Cahir road as walls are crumbling and verges need to be cut. Homes elsewhere were admired although Galbally has a small stock of houses in general. Those that were viewed were considered to be presented to a very high standard.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

Your meeting with Limerick county council engineer is noted. Did you make an audit to inventory of poor signage to present to him? This should be included in your application form.

The three-arched bridge on the way out of town is a real treasure. An adjacent site is full of rubble and creates an untidy appearance in this location. The road to the graveyard has a bent traffic cone that should be removed.

The approach from Garryspillane was in good shape with well trimmed verges and clean name sign. The TidyTowns gold-medal winner sign was admired.

General Impression:

Galbally presents a unique aspect in this part of South Limerick with its broad open square. Its attractive stock of old heritage buildings adds to its allure. Your re-energised committee is now well placed to make serious strides in this contest. Best of luck!