

Tidy Towns Competition 2012

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Hollycross** Ref: **2145**
County: **Limerick** Mark: **195**
Category: **B** Date(s): **19/06/2012**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2011	Mark Awarded 2012
Overall Development Approach	50	0	23
The Built Environment	50	0	24
Landscaping	50	0	26
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	0	9
Litter Control	50	0	33
Tidiness	30	0	18
Waste Minimisation	20	0	4
Residential Areas	40	0	28
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	0	25
General Impression	10	0	5
TOTAL MARK	400	0	195

Overall Development Approach:

Hollycross is most welcome to the 2012 Tidy Towns competition. We are delighted that Hollycross has made the decision to enter the contest and hope that we can be of assistance in helping you attain your goals. You have chosen not to complete any actions for this year and so for this reason you will be awarded a rather token mark. You can increase this quickly through a dedicated work program and you have already identified a number of projects you would like to see happen. Putting a little structure on this would result in a three-year plan. Advice on how to prepare this is available from the Tidy Towns Handbook but it would set a strategic vision for your village and identify actions under each of the contest headings. Actions should be ambitious but achievable and large tasks should be broken down into manageable chunks. You did not include a map in your application form and this is essential. Clearly mark the boundary of your village (usually the speed limit signs) and highlight the main landmarks and project areas.

You have made a good start with 10 on your nascent committee but you must be continually reaching out to the entire community to encourage as wide a level of participation as possible. Your contact with Ballyhoura will serve you well but also make contact with Limerick county council and any other regional bodies you think could help. You have no school but including the active soccer club is a good substitute. How do you plan to do this? Could they help out on projects?

You have set out on a path to transform your community and this will take time and perseverance but it will be worth it! Do visit your neighbours and see what you can learn from them.

The Built Environment:

Hollycross, being near Loch Gur, has been settled continuously by people for 6000 years! This is a

phenomenal built heritage that should be acknowledged and respected. It is a challenge for any community to conserve their heritage while simultaneously accommodating inevitable change. But being familiar with what you have is always the first step. How about hooking up with Lough Gur to hold heritage events?

Holycross has a small stock of buildings and as you have identified, no central focal point. It is possible to create one so perhaps this could be considered as a long-term action.

Currently Ryan's foodstore and petrol station is well presented. Its forecourt is clean and tidy although it's boundary wall needs some attention. Riordan's bar also has attractive features, painting its railings would be one suggested enhancement.

Is there a cross that gives the village its name? You mentioned the Bottle Lodge but without a map it was not possible to locate this.

Landscaping:

Holycross is set in a rural landscape that is characterised by rolling hills, native hedgerows and tall trees. These are the mainstays that should be conserved and where possible enhanced as part of any landscaping plan. More formal landscaping i.e. planting shrubs and flowers, should always be in moderation and in appropriate scale to its location. Hanging baskets etc only really work when adorning a building entrance or other small feature and require a relatively large level of resources. Shrubs and trees need less maintenance and provide features for year-round impact.

The roses at Ryan's garage were admired. Wooden beds are in place along the main road and could provide an attraction if maintained. Elsewhere landscaping needs some attention but fundamentally the stone walls and hedges are in good shape.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

This category encourages people to greatly appreciate their natural heritage. In very small villages such as Holycross your main habitats are hedgerows and tree lines and so these must be maintained correctly. Could you develop a Slí na Sláinte or Golden mile? This would allow people the opportunity to enjoy the outdoors and lends the opportunity for heritage walks or surveys of birds, flora and other fauna.

When planting try to integrate native trees such as cherry, rowan, whitebeam and hawthorn. Non-natives such as beech, sycamore, and maple should be avoided while evergreens, and especially cherry laurel, have no wildlife value whatever.

Litter Control:

This category is looking at how you manage your litter situation as much as what the situation is during adjudication. You should participate in the national spring clean in April, run by An Taisce. This is a great event to get people out to clean up an area. Perhaps the soccer club could get involved. You are already carrying out litter patrols and this is excellent. Do try to get some high viz vests with the Tidy Towns logo on the back to advertise the work you are doing.

Litter control on adjudication day was excellent with only minor items in out of the way corners noted. Well done.

Tidiness:

The crossroads are quite tidy and the natural stone walls here are very well maintained. You have correctly identified a nice project to continue this, or plant a hedge, where the metal barrier currently lies. Signage at the crossroads is in good order. The side entrance to the sports grounds does not look well with no identifying sign, potholes and abandoned metal railings (is it the home ground of a club?). It could be so much better! The Holycross AFC sign was later noticed on the dressing room building.

Generally however you do not have serious issues to contend with. An old well on the Lough Gur approach could be a nice feature if renovated.

Waste Minimisation:

Note that this category is not about litter but is concerned reducing our waste mountain. Recycling, although

down the list of priorities, is still important. Do you have any facilities? A clothing bank was later identified but what about bottles, electrical goods etc? Organising a waste minimisation workshop with Limerick county council would be a good start and will help you formulate ideas. Home composting is of huge value, you could hold a workshop. What waste items are common from the soccer club and petrol station? Try to work with them on prevention, minimisation and re-use.

Residential Areas:

Holycross has a small stock of buildings and no estates. In many instances homes have maintained their natural stone boundary walls and this is to be commended. The retention of hedges and native trees is also a nice feature in many locations. Elsewhere homes viewed on adjudication day are presented to a very high standard.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

Your greatest challenge is no doubt the speed with which traffic passes through your village. Slowing this should be a priority so do liaise with Limerick county council or the National Roads Authority if relevant. There are many ways of calming traffic and all should be explored including speed bumps and pedestrian crossings.

The other issue you have is a lack of any nameplates or welcome signs. These features are essential in giving your village a greater sense of place and identity.

General Impression:

Holycross is most welcome to the Tidy Towns contest and it is hoped that this is but the first of many visits to your village. It is hoped that this report has given you some pointers and motivation but do consult the Tidy Towns Handbook for there is lots of useful information in it. Best of luck!