

Tidy Towns Competition 2012

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Kings Island** Ref: **1148**
County: **Limerick** Mark: **193**
Category: **B** Date(s): **20/06/2012**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2011	Mark Awarded 2012
Overall Development Approach	50	27	29
The Built Environment	50	27	30
Landscaping	50	24	24
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	12	12
Litter Control	50	17	17
Tidiness	30	12	13
Waste Minimisation	20	7	7
Residential Areas	40	26	28
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	25	27
General Impression	10	5	6
TOTAL MARK	400	182	193

Overall Development Approach:

King's Island is most welcome to the 2012 Tidy Towns competition. Many thanks for your completed entry form and A3 map. King's Island faces many challenges but perhaps uniquely it has numerous opportunities and attractions. It sets itself apart from other centres in its combination of built history, wildlife and proximity to a major city centre. You have nine people on your group and this seems small for the size of King's Island and the number of people living there. Could this be expanded? A larger committee would allow you to share the burden and focus on target areas. You are doing really well to have contacted all the groups that you list and clearly are not alone in your efforts to enhance the community. Working together you can achieve your goals despite the inertia in the regeneration plan implementation.

Your communications strategy is vital in this regard so a range of tools is required. Your Facebook page can be very effective in keeping people up to date, promoting events, and highlighting projects. More traditional routes such as radio, local papers and leaflets also have their place. Do you have a website? Work with your local volunteer centre to try to attract people to work on projects, even if there is less interest in formal roles on the committee.

You seem to have good contact with local schools and this is excellent. Do your schools participate in the green flag program? This would be a tremendous step for them. Do students take part in cleanups or other projects?

Best of luck with your first-ever King's Island Festival, hopefully it will be the first of many!

The Built Environment:

King's Island has at least 800 years of history layered upon its streets and King John's Castle is the epicentre of this. However traces are everywhere in ancient walls, street layouts and names such as Fish Lane and Sheep Street. In this regard the past is always present and the appreciation of this heritage goes a long way to creating a unique sense of place. The renovation of St John's Castle will create a major attraction for King's Island and represents a huge opportunity for the area.

The remains of the city wall are well presented and the small information panel puts them in context. The green area by the city wall is nice although some broken branches need to be removed. The bed at the nearby St Mary's education centre is sadly neglected. Presentation at the Sally Ports is not bad but weeding is needed at the base of the wall. The King's Island primary care centre is a fine building that has been sensitively designed for this location. The plaza in front of the Michael Hogan statue is tidy although weeds, dilapidation and old/dirty signage detract from the castle entrance.

Nicholas Street is enlivened with its cobbled surface and antique shops and we look forward to seeing the proposed works here come to fruition. St Mary's Cathedral is an attractive and well maintained feature. The courthouse looks excellent and is complemented by a modern sculpture installation. The protruding sign for the Limerick Museum needs a clean white lettering on the wall is missing but the building is otherwise attractive.

Landscaping:

The landscaping along the main road towards the care centre is effective in its scale however it is neglected. Shrubs need to be cut back from the path and weeds removed. It is also littered. The triangular cross and the Castle entrance has heather but is really too small to have any impact although flowers on the other side add some colour.

The small plaza at merchants key has nice trees and good quality paving but needs to be swept while some summer flowers would enliven this area. The birch trees at the courthouse are excellent here. The grotto at St Mary's Park looks quite well and the grass is clearly being maintained.

The new Astroturf pitch is a great facility along with the playing field. Some finishing works are needed here as loose wires and plastic tubing are protruding from the ground.

Overall it was found that no formal landscaping seems to be taking place and this leads to an era of neglect. This seems to be an area that could be readily addressed.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

King's Island is fortunate to be surrounded by one of Ireland's most important sites for nature conservation, the lower River Shannon special area of conservation. Among its unique species and habitats are otter, bottlenose dolphins, Atlantic salmon and river woodland. There are also protected plants here such as the triangular club rush. You are doubly fortunate to have a walkway where people can enjoy this. The wet fields in winter are home to Whooper swans, redshanks and lapwings. The regeneration agencies have done a lot of survey work in this area and this should be available to you.

Do note that the riverbank is legally protected under its SAC designation and 'controlling growth' should not be done without prior consent from the National Parks and Wildlife Service. Contact your Ranger for more information and perhaps you could arrange an information walk or talk.

Litter Control:

Do you organise cleanups with volunteers to tackle particular areas. The national spring clean in April is a great event for this. Do you have high-viz vests with 'Tidy Towns' across the back? Wearing these during cleanups helps to raise your profile and may help change behaviours. Note that recycling comes under the waste minimisation category.

Generally it was found that litter control was not bad on adjudication day however for an area of such tourist significance in Limerick a higher standard is expected. While there were no particular black spots there was a low level of fresh items throughout.

Tidiness:

Last year's report made a number of recommendations in this category including painting the railings of the

sports field and addressing graffiti. Have these been considered for further action? Try to remove cable ties from lampposts (perhaps remnants from the referendum campaign).

Attractive green lamp standards are let down by flaking paint. A white pole in front of the castle at the bridge appears to be serving no function and should be removed from this key location.

Waste Minimisation:

This category encourages communities to help in addressing our growing waste mountain. Recycling is important but is of lower priority on the waste pyramid than prevention, minimisation and re-use. A good start would be to carry out a survey with your waste contract on the volumes of waste generated by King's Island. Where does it go? What is it made up of? Armed with this information you can set targets and monitor progress. Since we all pay for our waste, reducing volumes can save money and this can be no bad thing in this day and age! Working with local businesses is most worthwhile, while schools could get their first green flag on waste minimisation and lead the way for the community.

Residential Areas:

Communicating directly with residents associations is of key importance in this category and it is great that Convents Street has recently joined your ranks. The Lee estate is very tidy in appearance and its bilingual nameplate was admired. The landscaping bed at the entrance whoever is neglected.

Assumpta Park is looking well but a derelict area along by the playing fields looks very poor and has been subjected to vandalism

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

Roads and footpaths are in very good order. Signage is clean and in good order. The visitors car park was clean and tidy.

A derelict site with dead vegetation is an eyesore on the pedestrian approach to the castle. It is further let down by dilapidated hoarding advertising the mediaeval quarter.

Homes along Crosbie Row are delightful with their beautiful displays of roses and tidy.

General Impression:

King's Island has all the ingredients of a great place to live and visit. It has been let down historically but hopefully these issues are being addressed. Contact local politicians if you feel more needs to be done. Best of luck!