

Tidy Towns Competition 2012

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Mount Gerard Court** Ref: **2068**
County: **Limerick** Mark: **224**
Category: **A** Date(s): **21/06/2012**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2011	Mark Awarded 2012
Overall Development Approach	50	0	26
The Built Environment	50	0	32
Landscaping	50	0	34
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	0	10
Litter Control	50	0	29
Tidiness	30	0	20
Waste Minimisation	20	0	3
Residential Areas	40	0	32
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	0	32
General Impression	10	0	6
TOTAL MARK	400	0	224

Overall Development Approach:

Mount Gerard Court is most welcome to the 2012 Tidy Towns competition. We are delighted that you have taken this first step! Tidy Towns is all about community involvement and volunteerism. Maintaining positivity in the face of challenges is much easier when you are working together. No community is too small to enter Tidy Towns but having said that you are encouraged to form a Tidy Towns committee with a broader boundary, perhaps to include representatives from the Mary Immaculate College and Scoil Mathair Dé and another estate or two. While there are obviously limits to how far you can expand this at least it would set your application in the context of the neighbourhood and not just your estate. It would also give you greater scope to carry out bigger and better projects.

In this regard you are encouraged to prepare a three-year plan that would define your boundary and set targets for where you would like to see your neighbourhood in the future. Look at the main assets that you have and how they can be enhanced, acknowledge difficulties or problem areas and seek outside support in addressing them, and finally don't be afraid to think big and be ambitious!

You will find advice on how to prepare a three-year plan, and lots of other issues, in the Tidy Towns Handbook which is available from the Department of community and social affairs and you are urged to refer to this.

The Built Environment:

The Mary Immaculate College is an imposing building but one that is presented to the highest standard. The landscaping here is nice with a range of trees, although cherry laurel is probably not a good choice (it requires a lot of maintenance and becomes very dense).

Scoil Mhathair Dé is a much more low-key building but is equally well presented with immaculate grounds and a range of planting styles.

The old wall clearly has some heritage value, do you know the significance of this? Is the ivy-covered structure related? Is this an ESB station? It is quite untidy looking with a graffitied door and various litter items.

Landscaping:

The estate is beautifully landscaped and this is one of your strong points. The mature trees at the entrance are most attractive while lawns are very well manicured. The one planted corner in the bend is attractive but annual flowers in this location seem like high maintenance and will not have year-round impact. Nevertheless the overall effect is good.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

You have not indicated any projects under this heading. Here communities are encouraged to greater appreciate natural heritage and even in an urban location this is relevant! Gardens can be havens for birds and insects which will come given the right level of cover and food. Learning the names of common plants and animals that live close to us gives us an insight into the diversity of life and each species has its own story to tell. There is great scope here to work with the schools on doing surveys, artwork or practical projects.

In terms of what you could do there are possibilities for a landscaping using nativee, berry-producing trees, allowing Ivy to grow on walls and old trees and not cleaning the stone wall - there is a wide range of lichen and plants that live on stone walls and they add colour and character.

Litter Control:

This category looks at how you manage litter as much as the presentation on adjudication day. With a wider area you could focus on cleaning black spots or maintaining boundary roads. Your problem with dog foul is noted and there is a campaign underway by Limerick city council to address this. Are you liaising with them to distribute leaflets? Litter cleanups or art contests are popular ways for schoolchildren to get more involved in this issue.

Litter control was excellent on adjudication day and only one stray item was noted during adjudication. The area around the ESB substation does need to be addressed however.

Tidiness:

The estate is very tidy in that you have no major issues to contend with. Kerbs are weed free, surfacing is good and there are no ugly features such as overhead wires. There are some minor issues that could be addressed however: a hole in the ground across from the convent entrance could be a hazard; while kerbs needs to be swept of dead leaves and debris.

However the overall impression is very tidy indeed.

Waste Minimisation:

Note that this category is distinct from litter control. Ireland produces more waste per person than any other European country. Much of this is landfilled or exported. We therefore need to address the generation of waste at source. Recycling is popular and remains important but is only fourth under waste pyramid after prevention, minimisation and re-use. In practical terms there are a lot of projects you could do, e.g. distribute 'no junk mail' stickers; promote freetradeireland.ie so that new owners can be found for unwanted items; compost grass cuttings and other green waste from landscaped areas; highlight the availability of recycling facilities; encourage home composting etc

Are the schools participating in the green flag program? This would be a most valuable endeavour and the first task is waste minimisation.

Residential Areas:

The small cluster of homes in your estate are all beautifully maintained and presented. Boundary walls are

uniform in structure although the dash would benefit from a coat of paint. You could pool your resources here and do them all as part of the community workday.

The gardens are wonderfully leafy and lush and this creates a calming effect. The base of boundary walls has become mossy in places and could benefit from a sweep. However these are minor points and the overall appearance of the estate is first class. Well done.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

The entrance to the estate is in very good order and the redbrick name plaque was admired. The colourful display of summer flowers complements this well. The tall trees and ivy-covered walls are real features here and create a leafy ambience. The stone planters with marigolds etc also add to the scene.

Road surfacing at the crossroads is very good while footpaths are structurally sound. Road markings are clear and signage mostly clean. A neighbourhood watch and '3 tonne' sign need to be cleaned however.

General Impression:

Mount Gerard Court is a beautiful estate of which you are clearly proud. You are welcome to continue as you are but it would be of benefit to you to expand your area and bring other groups into the fold. We look forward to visiting again in 2013. Best of luck!