

Tidy Towns Competition 2012

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Patrickswell** Ref: **1064**
County: **Limerick** Mark: **227**
Category: **C** Date(s): **15/06/2012**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2011	Mark Awarded 2012
Overall Development Approach	50	0	30
The Built Environment	50	0	28
Landscaping	50	0	39
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	0	15
Litter Control	50	0	32
Tidiness	30	0	13
Waste Minimisation	20	0	5
Residential Areas	40	0	25
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	0	34
General Impression	10	0	6
TOTAL MARK	400	0	227

Overall Development Approach:

Patrickswell is most welcome to the 2012 Tidy Towns contest. It is hard to believe that it has taken you 12 years to get around to entering! Many thanks for your entry form, additional information, hand drawn maps and photos. You submitted two entry forms - one written in one typed. This can result in some confusion so perhaps for next year you could decide on one or the other of the formats. Your belief that Patrickswell is hard to 'tidy towns' due to its length and ribbon development has some validity but lots of other centres, in Limerick and beyond, have very similar characteristics. You are already established as a Limerick in Bloom contestant (and indeed winner) so in many respects you enjoy a running start in Tidy Towns. However Tidy Towns differs in that it has much broader environmental concerns and in this regard you are encouraged to engage in projects across all the contest's categories. Do get your hands on the Tidy Towns Handbook as it is full of useful information and tips on how to approach the contest, particularly for areas that may be new to you.

You are encouraged to prepare a three-year plan and this itself would gain you additional points. Again referred to the Tidy Towns Handbook but would in essence this would set out your strategy for medium-term projects. Target dates are set for projects under all categories so you can monitor progress from year to year. It is especially useful where difficult tasks may require outside input and a longer timeframe.

You are engaging with your local school which is excellent. Many groups have a member that also sits on the school's board of management so perhaps this would be worth considering.

The Built Environment:

Do ensure that your projects are listed under the appropriate heading so, for instance, the creation of new planting beds will be considered under the landscaping section.

This category really looks at the standard of conservation of your building stock, presentation of buildings and the use of Irish. Patrickswell is a long town as you have pointed out and still lacks an obvious heart. A challenge for the town is to create focal areas to create a sense of 'centre' and which are on a human scale (as opposed to much of our infrastructure which is geared towards cars). Squares with statues, installation art, landscaping set pieces with seating are common examples in some towns and villages.

Existing buildings derive from a range of styles in Patrickswell. The Dragon Chinese restaurant is very well presented and retains its traditional features including sash windows. The Dark Horse is a fine stone building which is enlivened with murals and bunting. The modern units with barbers and photo studio look well and cobblelock here is clean. The pink derelict building needs attention, you could work with Limerick county council on addressing this, and other derelict buildings.

Topaz/Gala has an exceptionally clean forecourt with well-kept lawns and clean signage. The new row of buildings that includes the post office is of a traditional design and is attractive. The gable wall however stands out and would be remediated with some paint.

The treatment of derelict building on the Adare side of town is excellent while the nearby Garda station is well presented with its maturing trees and attractive flowerpots. The Cú Chulainn Bar looks really well but is let down by its Christmas decorations (in June!)..

Landscaping:

This is clearly Patrickswell's ace card and it is obvious on entry to the town that you know what you are doing here. In the town itself the most dominant landscape features are tall trees and hedges and these connect the town to the wider countryside. These trees and hedges are of conservation value and should complement more formal planting schemes. Do avoid installing laurel hedging (as listed in your planned projects) as they are an alien invasive species and of no value to wildlife. Much better it would be a native hawthorn hedge that would provide resources for birds and insects along with attractive flowers and berries.

Also, try to balance beds of annual flowers with features that are of year-round interest such a small trees and shrubs. They require less maintenance and resources and so can save you money. Greenery around Centra is effective but one of the eucalyptus trees is dead and should be removed. The well that is your namesake is clean and tidy but more could be made of this significant location. The entrance to the lorry depot is excellent with a nice range of shrubs and trees.

The new kerbing at the entrance to Shannon Developments with its colourful displays of flowers is a wonderful enhancement in this location while the nearby roses were also admired. The rusty pole here however it needs to be painted.

Do note that it is inappropriate to hang hanging baskets on electricity poles as there is a safety issue here. Contact the ESB for further advice.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

This category encourages communities to engage with their natural surroundings. Locally important habitats for plants and animals include hedges, tall trees, streams and woods. A good start would be to identify those areas on a map. Could you develop a loop walk or Slí na Sláinte to take some of these features in? Many groups organise dawn chorus events, bat walks and heritage trails and you could contact the Limerick county council heritage officer for more information on how to go about doing this.

Do involve your local school which could be instrumental in establishing a wildlife garden or bird survey. As mentioned landscaping can be complementary to wildlife so do see where opportunities exist. Using native over exotic trees for instance or even leaving some areas grow wild.

Litter Control:

This category looks at how you approach the issue of litter control as much as what conditions are like on adjudication day. You are commended for your participation in the national spring clean and well done to Patrickswell for getting involved. Do include some photos of events such as these as it gives the adjudicator a sense of what you achieve and the level of participation. Does your group partake in regular litter patrols? You should wear high viz vests with your logo across the back when doing these as it lets people know about the efforts you are making. There was a good level of litter control on adjudication day but some minor areas

detracted - the road outside Punch's needs to be swept of cigarette ends.

Tidiness:

Well done on your dedicated approach to weeding and this is surely a constant battle. The town benefits from not too much overhead wire clutter and perhaps it would be worth contacting the ESB to see if the remaining ones can be put underground. Do be aware that hanging baskets on electricity poles may present safety issues for example for maintenance workers so please consult with the ESB on the status of these.

A few potential points of improvement include: removing an empty pole at the entrance to the lorry depot; painting the rusty field gates beside Superbites and removing an old traffic cone here; a white pole outside Next Door does not seem to serve any function; white poles at Centra would be enhanced if painted; a 'children crossing' sign across from the barbers is worn and serves no function here while a rowan tree in an old tyre has seen better days. Old stone walls should be repaired e.g. beside the pharmacy.

Waste Minimisation:

You do not give details of any projects under this heading although you do mention that the school is well advanced in the green flag program. What kind of projects have they been involved in? Could any of these be rolled out across the community? With your involvement in landscaping is the scope to grow your own annual bedding plants? Do you compost waste vegetation at the end of the season?

Recycling, while not the priority, is important. Do you have recycling facilities? You could carry out a waste audit of your town including contacting your waste contractors to see what volumes of waste are taken away. You could then set about trying to reduce these figures. There are many more tips in the Tidy Towns Handbook so do refer to this.

Residential Areas:

The Belgard Grove estate is a beautiful collection of well-kept homes that was presented to a high standard. The traditional terraced row of cottages sloping up the hill are all well presented and looking well. The large estate across the road has beautiful tall trees and old stone walls but, it would appear, no nameplate.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

The approach from Limerick is well presented and your work on planting schemes and on margins and in the centre of roundabouts is excellent. Signage is good and the bilingual name plate is attractive. The road safety sign on this approach however is old and dirty and should be removed.

General Impression:

Patrickswell really stands out for the quality of floral displays on the town outskirts. You have made a great start in the contest and it is hoped that you can initiate projects under all headings for 2013. Best of luck!