

Tidy Towns Competition 2012

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Watergate** Ref: **2082**
County: **Limerick** Mark: **182**
Category: **B** Date(s): **27/06/2012**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2011	Mark Awarded 2012
Overall Development Approach	50	23	23
The Built Environment	50	26	24
Landscaping	50	20	21
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	10	10
Litter Control	50	24	24
Tidiness	30	17	17
Waste Minimisation	20	3	3
Residential Areas	40	26	27
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	28	29
General Impression	10	4	4
TOTAL MARK	400	181	182

Overall Development Approach:

Watergate is most welcome back to the 2012 Tidy Towns competition. Many thanks for your application form. You did not include a map in your entry and this is a vital part of the application. Particularly since you are in a built-up area it is important that you clearly define your boundaries. This should be a hand drawn map that indicates the locations of the chief landmarks of your area and highlighting where projects have taken place.

It was noted that your committee has been reduced by one since last year and that is unfortunate. Are there ways to boost your numbers? Merely as a suggestion, your neighbours have entered Tidy Towns under the Limerick city centre title and its boundary extends up to, but not including Watergate. Would you consider joining with them? This would give you access to official bodies while they in turn are lacking in residential representatives. There is a clear opportunity here for mutual benefit.

Making contact with regional agencies, such as Limerick city council will be essential, not just in finding sources of funding but for getting practical support.

What is the name of your local school? Do you have formal or informal links with this? Does it take part in the green flag program? It is a source of great hope that you say that the numbers of children are growing in your area. City living has much to offer but in return city's need to make themselves more family friendly by providing a safe environment and infrastructure such as play areas.

The Built Environment:

You say you have tried to have something done with derelict buildings on Mungret St. do provide us with more details, did you write letters, meet local politicians? The issue of derelict buildings should be dealt with in

cooperation with Limerick city council. They have a variety of powers here which may help you address the situation.

The milk market is a fantastic amenity that brings trade, employment and general activity to your area. Do you liaise with local business owners on joint projects? Your efforts to provide facilities for young people are laudable, but do give us more detail on what is happening here.

There is no doubt that the building beside Molly's bar is a major eyesore. You could achieve results here by working with other neighbours such as the pub and milk market businesses as it affects them too.

Is the old wall a part of the original city wall? It seems to be of heritage significance but there is no interpretive sign.

Landscaping:

Landscaping is minimal although this is hampered by the lack of much open space. Last year's adjudicator made some suggestions, were these considered? The vegetation in the old wall adds colour and texture here. Some planters with flowers would add some colour. The hedge around the railings at St Michaels court is a valuable feature in providing a large amount of greenery.

The green area at the rear of Tara Court, although small, does have some nice birch trees and has potential to be an attractive space. Some play facilities for children would be great but even in the short term if the grass was trimmed and litter removed it could be a nice play area.

Bonfires have scorched green areas. They are destructive and result in toxic air pollution and so should be discouraged. Work with the Gardaí here if necessary. The basketball court is well surfaced and the hoops intact (if a little bent). The play area is littered and weedy.

Generally it was found that there is scope for attractive landscaping if you had some voluntary effort and advice. Why not consult with Limerick city council parks department to see what could be done?

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

It is a shame that you gave up on your graveyard project. Is there no scope to have the area cleaned up? Are there ongoing problems with antisocial behaviour? If so you should work with the gardai to address this.

Your school could get involved in a wildlife project e.g. to attract birds to their garden. You are very near to the River Shannon, which is a special area of conservation. Here you can find otters, kingfishers and a great variety of wild plants. Why not arrange an outing with the school as part of the 'Heritage in Schools' program?

Do consult with heritage officer of Limerick city council to see what projects you can hold or help them out under their biodiversity action plan, which will be launched this summer.

Litter Control:

It is great to read that the children are involved in patrols for litter every day. Have you considered taking part in the national spring clean, run by An Taisce in April? This might be a good event with which to tackle your graveyard.

The area was quite littered on adjudication day with shattered glass on the road as well as bottles, cans etc. It is suggested that additional litter patrols are required along with greater public awareness of the consequence litter has the quality of everybody's lives.

Tidiness:

The derelict building aside Watergate is a tidy area with no major issues of contention. Signage is good although some would benefit from being washed. The entrance to Tara Court is a little untidy with bent railings and some graffiti. Debris and weeds create an untidy impression around the car park here.

A number of issues present themselves within Mungret Court and it is suggested that you try to deal with these in a systematic way. Some can be tackled with a volunteer day while others will require outside assistance. However none is insurmountable and there is no fundamental reason why this area could not be an attractive place to live and play.

Waste Minimisation:

Do note that this category is distinct from litter control and relates to how we can reduce the volume of refuse that we generate. Do you have access to recycling facilities? You could promote freetradeireland.ie where people can find new owners for unwanted items. It would be great if your school was involved in the green flag program as their first task is to address waste minimisation. If it has a green flag please tell us next year, if not why not talk to them about entering the scheme?

Residential Areas:

Your plans to have proper signage for your area is essential and you are encouraged to work with Limerick City Council to address this. Try to get signage that is bilingual and reflects some of the character of your locality.

Do you try to involve all residents in your activities? Do make sure that you reach out to minorities such as the elderly or immigrants as they can feel marginalised.

Mungret Court is an attractive block and some residents have made the most of their garden space. Could others be encouraged through a gardening workshop for instance, or direct assistance if they are unable? Similarly, some boundary walls would be greatly enhanced if painted.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

Maintaining a safe environment for children, indeed all residents, is vital. If traffic volumes/speed is an issue you should discuss this with Limerick county council. There are a variety of traffic calming tools at their disposal and this could greatly improve the quality-of-life the residents.

General Impression:

Watergate has much going for it and you are encouraged to persevere in your efforts to see projects through. Joining with Limerick city tidy towns group may give you an extra boost in terms of support and guidance so you are encouraged to consider this. Best of luck!