

Tidy Towns Competition 2012

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Weston** Ref: **2140**
County: **Limerick** Mark: **191**
Category: **B** Date(s): **25/06/2012**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2011	Mark Awarded 2012
Overall Development Approach	50	0	27
The Built Environment	50	0	29
Landscaping	50	0	26
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	0	9
Litter Control	50	0	23
Tidiness	30	0	16
Waste Minimisation	20	0	5
Residential Areas	40	0	25
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	0	26
General Impression	10	0	5
TOTAL MARK	400	0	191

Overall Development Approach:

Childer's Road is most welcome to the 2012 Tidy Towns competition. It is hoped that your participation in this contest will help build community spirit and allow you to achieve your aims. Many thanks for your completed entry form which identified projects completed and planned. You supplied a map showing the boundary of your area but it had no text to mark the location of landmarks or where projects are. This is essential as the adjudicator may be unfamiliar with your area and wants to inspect those areas upon which you have been working.

You have 7 on your committee and as you are a new group perhaps it is a bit early to judge the level of community support. This will hinge on your communications strategy and, as you have identified, door-to-door, face-to-face contact is frequently the most successful strategy. Do you use electronic communication e.g. group e-mails or Facebook? This is a low-cost method that can reach a lot of people.

You indicate that you are in contact with Limerick city council, the regeneration agencies and the JP McManus foundation. Do list the local and voluntary groups with which you were in contact while it is excellent that you have included local businesses. This broad-based approach is the way to go and maintaining the open door should be a feature of your activities in the years to come. Including the school is essential in this strategy. How are they involved with Tidy Towns? Do you engage in joint projects?

Finally, to maintain a coherent approach to the contest you are encouraged to prepare a three-year plan. This would identify your strategic objectives and list actions under each of the headings along with realistic targets. You will find details of how to go about this in the Tidy Towns Handbook.

The Built Environment:

The church is a striking building, surely one of the few wooden structures of its kind in Ireland, and is a dominant focal point of your community. It is well presented and works to the boundary were noted.

The youth centre is a brightly coloured addition in the area and was looking well on adjudication day. The neighbouring credit union and cafe were similarly well presented. The car park to the rear was quite tidy and the new all-weather pitch is a fantastic feature that is getting good use!

The Lady of Lourdes primary school and neighbouring mid West school for hearing impaired children were looking well. The green flag was flying but a little worse for wear on a pole that needs to be straightened. The grounds are tidy and well trimmed but in need of some additional landscaping to soften the straight lines.

Landscaping:

Your map should identify all significant green spaces in your area. You should aim for maximum effect and low maintenance and to do this trees and shrubs, preferably natives, should take preference over displays of annual flowers. You state that you plan to plant shrubs at the base of trees but this is not recommended as the shrubs will deprive the trees of water and nutrients, leading to poor tree growth.

The park in front of the church is a lovely green area with an attractive stone focal point and planting beds. While the blue flowers are attractive the daisies are not doing so well. Planting here is perhaps too small for any real effect so larger, perennials shrubs are recommended to better fill the space and provide year-round effect. The murals along the wall here are very effective against a white background and have successfully masked a dull, grey wall. Well done.

The garden to the rear of the community Centre is a lovely spot with good quality furniture and attractive paving. The beds are quite weedy though so some attention is needed here. The green area at Greenmount Avenue was well maintained and trees are attractive here. Additional planting here is noted and hopefully it will screen the metal fence in time.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

This category encourages communities to greater appreciate their natural heritage. Even in an urban context there are great benefits to people from enhancing wildlife features. You mentioned a local amenity, the Baggott estate, however this was not marked on your map and so could not be inspected. It sounds attractive and your idea to promote nature walks is a good one. Don't forget that wildlife can be encouraged through landscaping schemes, particularly through planting of native trees wherever possible. Species such as rowan, birch and whitebeam are suitable for urban areas by providing spring flowers and autumn berries. You could hold a wildlife gardening workshop for residents who want to attract birds, bees and butterflies as they can be quite easily achieved.

The disused railway track is now effectively a wildlife reserve since it has been abandoned by people. Could be opened up as a green highway as has been done elsewhere?

Litter Control:

How often do your litter patrols take place? Do you wear high-viz vests with the Tidy Towns logo across the back? This would raise your profile and could reduce incidents of littering. Do you participate in the national spring clean run by An Taisce in April? This is an excellent event for getting people out and cleaning up an area. Does your local school participate in cleanups? You could help raise awareness to hold an art contest. There was a low level of litter throughout so perhaps more frequent patrols are needed to attain the high standard required in this category.

Tidiness:

You are commended for carrying out an audit of what needs to be done and this should be included in your application form.

Dereliction notwithstanding the area is generally tidy and well kept. Some issues create an untidy impression however and these include cracked and broken footpaths and graffiti on lampposts & poles.

Waste Minimisation:

Well done to the Lady of Lourdes national school for their green flags and award for most batteries recycled. This is a great achievement and the Tidy Towns group could learn much from them as they have already addressed the issue of waste minimisation in a comprehensive way. Do be conscious of how to promote recycling as leaflets create significant waste in themselves and so may be contrary to the aims of the category. Bear in mind that recycling is only fourth in preference after prevention, minimisation and re-use. How about holding a home composting workshop? Or encouraging people to put 'no junk mail' stickers on their doors? There are a lot of innovative ways to deal with this issue. Some estates collect half used tins of paint to paint boundary walls, or hold a bring and buy sale so that all unwanted items can find new owners.

Residential Areas:

It was great to read how some of your residents have attended gardening courses. Could this message be spread throughout the community as gardening is such a popular pursuit these days.

Dereliction is a problem in residential areas and this is acknowledged in your application form. You are encouraged to continue your engagement with relevant parties to address this serious issue.

Elsewhere many homes made a great effort to enhance their presentation. Litter is a problem throughout however. Some very attractive gardens were admired with number 43 and its next-door neighbour being particularly attractive.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

Your idea to install name plaques at the entrance to estates is excellent and these should be bilingual. Bilingual street plates were admired throughout and these are worthy of conservation.

General Impression:

Childer's Road faces a lot of challenges however the will to make things better and the community spirit are in evidence throughout. Your entry to the Tidy Towns will hopefully galvanise this effort and strengthen your resolve to continue the improvements that have already been achieved. Best of luck!