

Tidy Towns Competition 2012

Adjudication Report

Centre: **westfield wetlands** Ref: **2075**
County: **Limerick** Mark: **208**
Category: **B** Date(s): **28/06/2012**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2011	Mark Awarded 2012
Overall Development Approach	50	25	25
The Built Environment	50	27	28
Landscaping	50	21	24
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	23	24
Litter Control	50	25	26
Tidiness	30	18	19
Waste Minimisation	20	3	5
Residential Areas	40	26	27
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	26	26
General Impression	10	4	4
TOTAL MARK	400	198	208

Overall Development Approach:

Westfields is most welcome to the 2012 Tidy Towns competition. Many thanks for your completed application form, photos and additional information. Many thanks also for this year including a map of your area with the clearly defined boundary on it. This is an essential item to the adjudicator who may not already be familiar with your area. You also highlight the locations of projects and this too is essential.

Do note that a three-year plan is distinct from an application form. The former set earlier strategic vision for your area and sets objectives under each of the contest headings. Within these in turn are individual actions to be undertaken during the three years of the plan. You are encouraged to refer to the Tidy Towns Handbook for there is much useful information and how to go about this process.

You continue to have 10 on your committee from across the area and this is a good number. You are also engaged with a wide variety of stakeholders including all your local schools and this really is the ideal. Your communication strategy is vital in maintaining momentum and community support. Do you feel at all residents are aware of your group and what you do? Door-to-door, face-to-face contact is still the best way to achieve this. Do you get people out on a voluntary basis to help on projects? This is always a good indicator of the local level of support that exists. In what way do you liaise with the schools green schools committee is? Do they participate in projects? You might find that a website or Facebook page would help you win your communications. Facebook in particular can be very useful in attracting new members, posting your photos or promoting events.

The Built Environment:

The area is generally mature residential and the built environment is very well set against tall trees and natural

stone walls to lend a leafy and affluent aspect. The Salesian infant school is a large building with a variety of styles and was flying its green flag on adjudication day. It is missing an 'N' in infant but otherwise it was well presented. Its colourful murals are an eye-catching addition. The railings around the small set down area would benefit greatly from a coat of paint.

The new ramp is a great addition to your area and will hopefully make enjoying the wetlands more accessible for all.

Landscaping:

Your sensory area sounds like a remarkable project. Its location was not shown on the map and this would be most important for 2013 as the adjudicator would very much like to inspect it. Is it located along the walk to the wetlands? New apple trees were noted along an attractive stone seating area. The park here is beautifully maintained and an attractive stone planter was admired beside the wildlife interpretive panel.

The Marian shrine at the secondary school is very well-kept and clearly regularly tended to. The landscaped area nearby is very effective in this location.

The Westfields Park is a fantastic amenity and walkways and cycle paths are in good shape. Japanese knotweed has infested some areas so do consult with the NPWS and Limerick city council parks department on how to eradicate this. Himalayan Balsam is also here, another 'most unwanted' alien invasive species.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

This area should really be your trump card as few areas can boast of having a special area of conservation within their boundary. Last year's adjudicator suggested doing a survey to investigate the degree of biodiversity that is present here, was this considered by your group? The ideal project would be to monitor the flora and fauna in the wetland with a research team, perhaps comprised of school students and interested naturalists in your area. What you have in the wetlands is a living laboratory that is not only full of wildlife but carries out important functions such as flood control, water purification and capture of nutrients that have been washed to this point from the entire Shannon basin. You have scope for walks, talks, art and photography initiatives.

There is an infestation of Japanese knotweed, an alien invasive species, just off the walk near the garden. Please contact NPWS to discuss ways of eradicating this. A Slí na Sláinte sign was noted near the roundabout and you should give details of this for 2013.

Litter Control:

You do not mention your monster clean or spring clean here. Did these go ahead? Do be sure to give yourselves full credit for any work you have done. From the photos it appeared that you took part in the national spring clean and this is a great initiative. Last year's adjudicator noted a litter black spot at Ardrú bar, has this been addressed? Do you carry out regular litter patrols? You should always wear hi viz vests with your logo across the back in order to raise awareness of your group and the work you are doing.

Litter control on adjudication day was generally to a very high standard. Well done. The grassy hill near the roundabout had gathered a number of items so perhaps additional attention is needed here.

Tidiness:

Well done for dealing with graffiti. This is a particularly pernicious issue that ideally needs to be addressed in a timely manner.

Last year's adjudicator, made a number of suggestions. While you are not obliged to implement these it is recommended that you show that they were considered.

Generally the area is extremely tidy with no major issues to report. Kerbs are weeded and signage is in good order. Graffiti is a minor issue in back areas so hopefully you can stay on top of this.

Waste Minimisation:

You say here that you continue to liaise with shops, hotels and schools, which is good, but do not provide any further details. You seem to be engaged in a composting program so do give us the full story. Composting has lots of benefits and should be encouraged. There are a lot of other things you could be doing here. Do you have recycling facilities and are people aware of the full range of items that can be recycled? You could encourage the use of 'no junk mail' stickers or promote freetradeireland.ie for people can find new owners for unwanted items.

The school's participation in the green flag program is excellent and they would have learned much about this topic. Talk to them to see what projects can be applied across the community.

Residential Areas:

Westfield Park and Westfield Court are beautifully leafy suburban areas that are very well presented. Their attractive nameplates at the entrance to the estate were admired. The size and range of trees here is wonderful and a delicate display of flowers was admired at the rockery. Green areas are very well trimmed while the 'Westfield Marsh special area of conservation' sign looks well.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

The approach to the North circular Road from the city centre is lovely, affording views across the Shannon. The bridge is decked out with flags while a fantastic flower display is on show at the roundabout. Road surfaces are good while smart, bilingual nameplates are in place.

General Impression:

Westfields is a beautiful part of Limerick that has been endowed with rich natural heritage. Work with your community and relevant agencies to assist in the maintenance and upkeep. Best of luck!