

Tidy Towns Competition 2011

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Ardpatrick** Ref: **441**
County: **Limerick** Mark: **294**
Category: **A** Date(s): **30/06/2011**
02/08/2011

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2010	Mark Awarded 2011
Overall Development Approach	50	38	38
The Built Environment	50	40	41
Landscaping	50	42	42
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	28	28
Litter Control	50	40	41
Waste Minimisation	20	13	13
Tidiness	30	18	19
Residential Areas	40	28	29
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	34	34
General Impression	10	9	9
TOTAL MARK	400	290	294

Overall Development Approach:

Welcome Ardpatrick to the 2011 TidyTowns Competition and we are delighted to see that you are making such significant progress with each passing year. There is no doubt that your Committee of 9 members are very determined, ambitious and hardworking as your improvement in the competition is very noticeable. A suggestion in the adjudicators report last year was to include 2 student members in the Committee with full responsibilities for projects. Have you considered this? Please let us know. Your links with the Council, Ballyhoura, Bird Watch Ireland and Local Garden centres are noted. These contacts are clearly working well as the improvements that are evident across many TidyTowns categories in Ardpatrick would not be possible in the time frame without full co-operation and help from the key support agencies, so well done on your comprehensive approach. It is also good to hear that close contact have been maintained over the past year with the School and that you are learning from one another in the process – this is a very strong part of the Tidy Towns Competition. Try and ensure that there are joint projects in a number of categories such as landscaping, litter, wildlife and waste minimisation. This will help to foster a sense of ownership amongst the school children giving rise to significant benefits at a local level. Your communication strategy was noted and although it is clearly working, there appears to be a heavy reliance on printed material. Have you thought about creating a web site? Perhaps this is a project that the school could help you with? Thank you for your detailed and comprehensive entry pack with cover letter, completed entry form, photos, Ardpatrick Parish Newsletter and Green Schools Newsletter. The pamphlets on Carraig Mor and Ardpatrick were also examined. The Plan you submitted was also read with interest, but it is recommended that a more detailed document is prepared – one that considers projects under each of the competition headings and which are set out in a 3 – 5 year time frame.

The Built Environment:

Ardpatrick is a charming little village that the adjudicator visited for the first time. A strong feature of the village is its built environment with well maintained natural stone walls and a number of buildings of note such as the Church and the Community Centre. These are both very attractive buildings that seem to enjoy a high standard of maintenance and presentation. Carrigmore Park is also a lovely amenity and the new stone plaque (on the Carraig Mor!) was read with interest. This is a wonderful use for the former site of the creamery and the information plaques (including the new bilingual sign) were observed. It was noted that a range of materials were used in the park and the adjudicator wondered if any of these were from the Old Creamery? The milk cart and urns are also a nice addition that is consistent with the overall theme of the park. Is there a composter for the Tidy Towns group located here? If so, this should be included in the waste minimisation section. Further into the village, the garage looked well while the Greenwood Inn caught the eye with its decorative machinery in the front garden area. We note that your projects for 2011 include working with the new owners of the Sunvale Inn. It is great to see that the building has been purchased and it will get a new lease of life as a restaurant and B&B. Given its inclusion in the County Development Plan as a Protected Structure, the building is clearly a key feature of the village. It is also a shame to hear that your water feature remains under repair. The information panel about Ardpatrick was read with interest and the adjudicator wondered about the location of the ancient monastery of Ardpatrick. Perhaps some details can be provided on this in 2012.

Landscaping:

A number of very impressive landscaping projects were observed during adjudication day. Planting at the triangle at the village cross roads is stunning. It accommodates a wide range of plants, shrubs and flowering plants and it provides an explosion of colour on this important approach to the village. The planting at Carraig Mor (on the site of the old creamery) was also admired. The mature landscaping between the garage and the triangle and the mature trees beside the park drew the attention of the adjudicator as they appear to be a haven for birdlife. Bishop Murphy Park is an excellent amenity that provides a lovely focal point for the village, while the glen of the saints is an original feature. The colourful planting in the ground of Scoil Padraig was also admired. According to your entry form, your projects for 2011 include the planting of 4 new shrub and flower beds on the grass margin at Bishop Murphy Park. These beds were noted during adjudication and they bring colour to these verges and to the centre of the village. The colourful raised plant bed at the base of the new statue was also observed.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

It is great to hear that your bird life population is thriving (possibly as result of your bird boxes!) and that you have a growing population of blue tits and house martins. It is noted that house sparrows have taken over the house martins nest and this is a common problem. Have you considered undertaking a survey with bird watch Ireland? Their opinion should also be sought in relation to your planting schemes in order to ensure that native species favoured by bird life are used as much as possible. Other examples of native species that can be planted are found in the Tidy Towns hand book. Perhaps for next year, you can provide a description of the plant scheme in the village park and Carraig Mor and outline what native species were used. Have explanatory information signs for the plants and trees been considered for interpretative purposes in the village park? We read that you have carried out maintenance at the bridges on the Kilfinane and Kildorrery roads. Please note that clearance of any plant life from a river bank should only be done carefully and preferably under supervision as much of this growth can make a significant contribution to the habitat. This is the reason why surveys are particularly important as they can identify which plants are significant and which are invasive and should be removed. More information is available on www.invasivespeciesireland.com

Litter Control:

It is noted that you have a very high mark under this category by national standards. The standard of litter control observed on adjudication day was very good and only one or two bits of litter was observed – at the chain link fence at the creamery park. Well done on your performance in this category as your approach to litter control is clearly working. You are also encouraged to keep involving the school children in your spring clean and litter picks as a means of raising awareness. The bottle bank at the park was also spotless – well done as these facilities can be difficult to maintain.

Waste Minimisation:

The category of waste minimisation is an excellent opportunity for Ardpatrick to increase their marks in the competition. Your joint vegetable garden project with the School is an excellent initiative, but there is potential for other projects under the theme of waste minimisation. Ideas that could be considered by the Council include composting grass cuttings and plant waste and growing your own plants. Constructing planters and bird boxes from recycled material could also be considered. What about undertaking a survey of households in Ardpatrick to ascertain how much waste is being produced and then coming up with initiatives to reduce

this? Other ideas for waste minimisation projects can be found in the tidy towns handbook. The School WoW (Walk on Wednesday) is also an excellent initiative and the posters were seen during adjudication.

Tidiness:

There seems to be a zero tolerance approach to weed growth in Ardpatrick! On adjudication, the hard work of the committee under this category was clearly observed with weed free verges and roads, clean signage and no evidence of any graffiti. Well done. You are also commended on your attention to detail as the painted kerb stones at the bottle bank looked very well. Some small improvements are possible as the boundary wall of the School and the black rails would benefit from paint in 2012 while the speed limits signs coming from Kilfinane were obscured by growth. Also, the pole of the Ardpatrick sign on the Kilfinane approach would benefit from paint.

Residential Areas:

The standard of presentation of individual houses in Ardpatrick was very high indeed and this indicates excellent support for the work of the tidy towns group and great local pride in the village. Keep up the good work.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

The approach roads to Ardpatrick were generally impressive, with the approach from Kilmallock being particularly impressive due to the nice landscaping at the triangle and the tidy and well maintained verges. The approach road from Ballyhea was also attractive, with clear signage and trimmed verges. The approach from Kilfinane was reasonable while the surfacing between the Church and Bishop Murphy Park was in poor condition. The section of road between the cross roads and Sunvale (on the same side as the garage) had an untidy verge.

General Impression:

Well done on another successful year in the Competition Ardpatrick and its great to see such a determined and committed group who are performing consistently well. As you are now one of the top performers in your county (and in the competition), you should be aware that it is much more difficult at this level of the competition to achieve large increases in marks and simply maintaining high marks is an achievement.

Second Round Adjudication:

Ardpatrick is perfect gem, the wonderful consequence when a committee of creative, committed locals decide to project the past to enhance the present and protect the future. Well done on the selection of items for inclusion in the thought provoking Carraig Mór Park that greets one on arrival. From the probable ice age bolder; to the various examples of raised bog; to the section of the old creamery wall and milk churn and even the creative display of tools this condensed compendium of the various elements of the area's past is a triumph.

The next generation have also played a role in your overall presentation. Well done to the school on securing its Green Flag and for the fine display of window boxes in an area totally free of litter or spoil. Good news that the Sunvale Inn has been purchased and will soon become a positive visual element in this pivotal location. The church and grounds are very well presented as the centre piece of your display with the small scale corner grotto adding an agreeable interest point.

The Murphy Park is presented in an exemplary fashion. If the long running attempts to repair the leak in the fountain pond continue to be unsuccessful that perhaps the time is opportune to reconfigure the layout of the cascading water fall so as to retain this important element as a recirculation water feature. Filling in and planting the pond in the foreground would be a better option than the existing position.

The attention to the bird life of the area and the display of information concerning them was admired. Is there any plan to make the Glen of the Saints more accessible in this context? Perhaps the long term opening of a wood walk might be considered.