

Tidy Towns Competition 2012

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Garryspillane** Ref: **219**
County: **Limerick** Mark: **251**
Category: **A** Date(s): **14/06/2012**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2011	Mark Awarded 2012
Overall Development Approach	50	33	34
The Built Environment	50	38	39
Landscaping	50	36	39
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	17	17
Litter Control	50	32	33
Tidiness	30	22	23
Waste Minimisation	20	4	4
Residential Areas	40	25	25
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	30	30
General Impression	10	7	7
TOTAL MARK	400	244	251

Overall Development Approach:

Garryspillane is most welcome to the 2012 Tidy Towns competition. Many thanks for your completed entry form, hand drawn map and additional photos. You seem to have expanded your support base since last year, adding three new younger members, and this is a great achievement. This continual process of renewal is essential for the success of Tidy Towns and ensuring that your community is participating to the greatest degree possible. Your monthly meetings are a great way of keeping in touch, how often do you hold wider public meetings? Would many turn up to these?

You are still maintaining contact with Limerick county council and Fás and this is excellent. Are there any other sporting or social groups that could participate? You clearly have good contact with local businesses and well done to all those who contribute in whatever way they can to the Tidy Towns movement. It is unfortunate that you have no school but you clearly have opened up to young people in other ways and this is to be commended. You are congratulated on holding your annual fundraising event and an additional one this year in Easter. This no doubt brings people together as well as bringing in much-needed funds.

Have you considered drawing up a three-year plan? This would set out your plan for the medium-term through identifying actions under each of the contest headings. It need not be an onerous task and there is plenty of guidance in the Tidy Towns Handbook.

The Built Environment:

You are to be commended for taking on board comments from last year's report and giving these attention. This attitude is exemplified through your approach to the derelict cottage.

The town itself is quite disparate and does not contain a core stock of buildings. The Post Office is a fine traditional structure that is clean and well maintained. The playground is a wonderful addition for the village and was extremely well presented on adjudication day. The Maxol petrol station and adjacent testing centre and car sales forecourt are dominant features for the village. They were extremely clean and well presented even if there is a little bit too much hard space for this adjudicator taste.

The welcome inn was looking well and decked out with tricolours in support of 'the boys in green'. Its car park and picnic areas were clean and litter free.

A number of older limestone buildings caught the eye and particularly farm outhouses bring the past into the present. The derelict cottage certainly looks well after your treatment but see the wildlife section for further comments here.

Landscaping:

More than anything else it is the wonderful displays of flowers and shrubs that set Garryspillane apart as one drives through the village. Each one seems more impressive than the last! This presentation is an enormous credit to your energy and commitment and well done for us.

Being a rural village the bulk of your landscaping is done for you by a combination of nature and man toil. Hedges, green fields and tall trees are set against the rolling hills and farmsteads and lend the area its character and sense of place. Maintaining, and where possible enhancing, these features should be a priority. Do ensure the hedgerow vegetation is protected. It was noted in one stretch that cherry laurel has been planted in a hedge and this should be removed (cherry laurel is 'most unwanted' alien invasive species, has no value to wildlife and may eventually strangle the hedge).

Planting displays and stone beds were really too numerous to list individually but all were looking superb. The 'cross of tree' is a nice feature.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

It is great that you have been working on a wildlife area. Don't forget that wildlife is all around you in fields, hedges and gardens. Small habitats such as these can be rich in native plants and animals and should be enhanced where possible. E.g. a number of grassy banks could have their native hawthorn hedges restored. Be sure to use only native species so no beach, sycamore or horse chestnut. Do consult the tidy towns Handbook in this regard as it is full of useful information and tips.

Your wildlife garden is a mixed bag. While commending your efforts it would appear that most of the plants are non-native. Some are nevertheless beneficial to insects, such as the foxglove varieties, however laurel shrubs would have no such value. Your photos showed a carpet of bluebells and they should be encouraged and conserved in favour of garden introductions if wildlife is the real aim of this corner. I'm afraid I would recommend removal of laurel and sycamore from this area and letting the rest go to nature.

Litter Control:

Well done to your group and your Fás workers for doing four cleanups this year. Does the general community participate in these? You say you plan the spring clean in May but have you considered the national spring clean in April? This is run by an Taisce and they would send you gloves, bags etc. Does your group conduct regular litter patrols? You mentioned that you have a problem with dumping, are you working with Limerick county council to resolve this?

Practically no litter was noted on adjudication day so this is a great performance by Garryspillane - well done!

Tidiness:

Garryspillane seems like a tidy place for the most part and certainly this adjudicator did not notice any significant issues. The grass verges are very well trimmed although hedges may need to be cut back in some instances. This should only be done outside the nesting season (so from September to February) and should only be cut in, not down. This allows tall trees to emerge and so preserves their value for wildlife.

You have taken on board observations from last year's adjudicator and this is to be commended. Your communications with Limerick county council regarding signage is acknowledged. Do be persistent and in

time this approach will be rewarded. Your difficulties with flyposting is noted although you seem to have kept this nuisance under control. A pile of rubble across the road from Maxol creates an untidy appearance here.

Waste Minimisation:

This category encourages groups to focus on how we can halt the generation of waste. Ireland produces more waste than any other European country and much of this ends up in landfill. While recycling is important there needs to be a focus further up the waste pyramid to prevention, minimisation and re-use. A good start would be to contact Limerick county council with a view to holding a waste minimisation workshop. This could focus on composting, ways to reduce food waste and finding new owners or users for unwanted items. You could also consult the Tidy Towns Handbook which has additional information.

Residential Areas:

Garryspillane has a small stock of houses and no estates. Many of the impressive homes have maintained attractive stone boundary walls or low whitewashed walls and these are much in keeping with the village character. Others should be encouraged to follow suit, especially where timber fences are concerned. Homes themselves were presented to a very high standard and many attractive gardens were admired.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

The lovely stone welcome signs to Garryspillane were admired on approaches and were accompanied by the usual high standard of planting and landscaping. The black and yellow theme on gates and even the bridge and kerbing is an eye-catching touch. There are a number of traffic cones on the side of the road at the Maxol garage and one even in a hedge. If these serve no purpose they should be removed.

General Impression:

Garryspillane could be somewhere to simply drive-through but through your efforts you have really put this village on the map. Your planting schemes are especially eye-catching. Well done and keep up the good work!