

Tidy Towns Competition 2013

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Ongar**
County: **Dublin(Fingal)**
Category: **D**

Ref: **2156**
Mark: **180**
Date(s): **10/06/2013**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2012	Mark Awarded 2013
Overall Development Approach	50	0	26
The Built Environment	50	0	31
Landscaping	50	0	25
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	0	20
Litter Control	50	0	25
Sustainable Waste And Resource Management	20	0	4
Tidiness	30	0	11
Residential Areas	40	0	13
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	0	20
General Impression	10	0	5
TOTAL MARK	400	0	180

Overall Development Approach:

Welcome Ongar TidyTowns Committee to the 2013 Supervalu TidyTowns Competition. Your first entry into this competition is very welcome. Your entry form is illustrated with colour photographs and the map identifies the salient features of Ongar. Your population category is small town D. We note that your committee was formed just last March. Given the population of Ongar a committee of 5 is quite small for the amount of work that you need to do. The frequency of your meetings seems appropriate. Relevant agencies are supporting you and, hopefully, others will be added over time. In addition to the communication channels that you list, is there a parish newsletter that you could also use? Free newspapers that circulate in your area should also be used. Schools that are in the Green Flag Programme can be of assistance in doing joint projects with your committee on topics such as energy conservation, waste elimination, wildlife surveys, etc.

Your comments about the benefit of the competition to your community are well made. We note in your entry form that you have, or are working on, a 3-5 year plan. Please enclose a copy of this in next year's entry. It may earn marks and it will be returned to you. Also include a copy of your newsletter, leaflets, press cuttings, etc. They too, will be returned to you.

The Built Environment:

Ongar will face challenges in gaining marks in this category. You are limited in the number of public buildings that you have, public amenities, infrastructure such as canals, bridges, parks, etc. Work with what you have. The criteria for this category include streetscape quality, quality of shop fronts, street furniture, etc. Pay careful attention to the criteria given in the entry form for each category. Ongar is new so you do not have the problem of trying to conserve old, traditional shop fronts. Those that are fortunate to have attractive old shop fronts worry about losing them. Ongar Community Centre is a new, colourful building with outdoor basketball courts. Well maintained. New planting – trees, shrubs, grass. Castaheaney Educate Together National School is new and already has 2 Green Flags. Small amount of grassed area, young trees, shrubs. Neat and tidy. St Benedict's National School is also new and colourful with 1 Green Flag. Landscaping needs attention. Car park servicing these needs weed control. Schools and car park are clean, tidy. No litter/graffiti. Ongar Square has 3 trees, seats, obelisk, litter bins, paved area.

Landscaping:

It is noted that you are in contact with the Bio-diversity Officer of Fingal County Council. Some local authorities operate a free tree service which supplies young trees to tidytowns groups, residents associations, etc. If you have not already done so you should ask the Bio-diversity Officer of Fingal to supply free trees. Manor Square Park is landscaped and is clearly being used as a children's playground with inevitable collateral damage. North Street landscaped area – grass, trees. Children playing on raised central feature. Hanging baskets were noted as follows: Chill Inn 1, O'Connell Properties 1, Kelly's Lounge 2, Day Today 1, O'Malley's Butchers 1, Hickey's Pharmacy 2, Dunnes 4. Surprisingly, small gardens of quite a few residences were neglected.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

This is a category that lends itself to a partnership project with a school in the Green Flag Programme. It is good to start with a wildlife survey of your area to identify species, habitats, etc. Web sites such as birdwatchireland.ie have useful information. Area 3 on your map marked "open space/amenity area" had a very large area of uncut grass on adjudication day. Some tidytowns groups deliberately leave such areas uncut to increase the bio-diversity of the area.

Litter Control:

You will note that the title of this category is Litter Control and not Litter Elimination. The fight against litter is never ending. Ongar does have a litter problem. Main Street was lightly littered, mainly paper and cigarette butts. Manor Square was lightly littered – various items mostly at the bin shed. A black plastic sack of rubbish was on the footpath beside an ESB box/bin shed. The Paddocks had 3 plastic bags of empty beer tins on the footpath outside the door of a small utility building which needs to be painted. Chipping Row had a black plastic sack of rubbish outside a bin house. Also loose litter – mainly cardboard, cigarette boxes/butts. The Crescent had light littering in parking bays, mainly butts. Beer cans thrown in hedge.

Surprisingly, there was litter in the tiny gardens in front of apartments. Area 3 on map – open space/amenity area – playground – fenced area where dogs are exercised has lots of litter. Graffiti. Grass needs to be cut. Litter included drinks containers, paper, and sweet wrappers. Litter bins in playground were overflowing. Rubbish dumped behind wire screens at end of The Avenue. Don't despair; littering would have been worse but for your litter picking events and litter patrols. TidyTown groups tend to launch their annual anti-litter campaigns with An Taisce's Spring Clean. If you have not already done so you should register with An Taisce for their 2014 event. They can also help with gloves, plastic sacks, etc.

Sustainable Waste And Resource Management:

This is a category that some TidyTown groups find challenging. Consult the TidyTown Handbook for advice and tips. There are also useful web sites e.g. www.stopfoodwaste.ie, www.greenhouses.ie. Schools in the Green Flag Programme get a flag if they operate a waste reduction regime in their school. The entry form has a waste pyramid (actually it is upside down) which shows the hierarchy of priorities in the Race against Waste (see also that web site). If you are lucky one of your schools may have developed a programme in its quest for a Green Flag.

Tidiness:

Your action in relation to tackling fly-posting has earned you marks. Weed control is also in this category and Ongar Square needs weed control in its kerbs. There was graffiti at the playground. Otherwise there were no tidiness issues evident on adjudication day.

Residential Areas:

It would be invidious of an adjudicator to compare named parts of Ongar. Your residential areas are new but vary considerably in design, quality, etc. Informing residents of your entry into the Supervalu TidyTown competition hopefully will result in additional volunteers. On adjudication day this adjudicator visited many of the residences in addition to those already mentioned in other categories. These include Ongar Park, Delhurst Mews, Avenue, etc., Hayworth Drive, View, Stralem Crescent, etc., Annally Drive, etc., Latchford, Rosedale. A maintenance team was working in Willan's Way – grassed areas neat and tidy. They may have also worked on Annally – very good landscaping. No neglected areas.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

This category is more relevant to villages, towns and urban areas. The road network is new or relatively new so you are not trying to arrest the decline in road infrastructure, fill potholes, etc. Neither do you have to worry about hedges, old stone walls that are deteriorating, etc. In short, on adjudication day there were no issues impacting adversely in this category.

General Impression:

The points that you made in relation to ownership issues, receivership, not being taken in charge yet, management companies, etc., are all well-made and are taken into account during the adjudication. You have gone through your first adjudication. You have earned marks. The TidyTown Competition is over 50 years in existence and goes from strength to strength. There are entrants that have been contestants since its inception. This year South Dublin County Council set up a network of TidyTown groups to exchange ideas, learn from

each other, etc. There are similar networks in other counties, but not all. If Fingal County Council does not have one perhaps you would encourage them to set one up. We look forward to receiving your entry into the Supervalu TidyTowns Competition in 2014