

Tidy Towns Competition 2012

Adjudication Report

Centre: **FitZhaven/Castlewell/Castlecourt** Ref: **2141**
County: **Limerick** Mark: **189**
Category: **B** Date(s): **21/06/2012**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2011	Mark Awarded 2012
Overall Development Approach	50	0	20
The Built Environment	50	0	26
Landscaping	50	0	23
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	0	10
Litter Control	50	0	23
Tidiness	30	0	18
Waste Minimisation	20	0	3
Residential Areas	40	0	28
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	0	33
General Impression	10	0	5
TOTAL MARK	400	0	189

Overall Development Approach:

Fitzhaven Castlewell Castlecourt is most welcome to the 2012 TidyTowns competition. We are delighted that you have taken this first step and entered our competition. Many thanks for your application form, however this was mostly blank while you did not indicate that any projects have been undertaken under any of the categories! In order to progress in the contest it is important that you engage with the various headings and develop projects under each one. You did not include a map of your area and this would be essential as the adjudicator would not want to miss out on any highlights. Ideally a map should be hand drawn, perhaps by someone with some artistic talent, and highlight the location of your projects. You have four on your committee and you indicate that numbers are low at volunteer events. In this case there is no substitute for knocking door-to-door and systematically engaging with your neighbours. Face-to-face contact works much better than leaflets. Get people to sign up to an e-mailing list so that they can be updated on events. You could use the national spring clean as a focal point and even if people cannot participate they are at least informed of your existence. Get yourselves high viz vests with the TidyTowns logo across the back so when you are out and about you are simultaneously promoting your group. This would seem to be your most pressing issue and would be essential in order to progress in the contest.

You do not indicate that you engage with schools but there are many in your locality. This would be most worthwhile as students have much to offer the development of the community.

The Built Environment:

The old well feature is a most attractive and unique structure for your estate and an important piece of local history. It is noted that you plan on doing some improvement works here and these would be welcome. The

surrounds are littered while the spotlights are broken and the paving weedy. A small interpretive plaque would be very effective here in describing its significance.

Landscaping:

Your estate is attractively landscaped with a range of maturing trees such as birch and sycamore. Small trees are great for housing estates and native trees have the added bonus of being good for wildlife. Sycamore is not native and is quite a dark tree. Birch is much lighter and has an attractive bark. Rowan, whitebeam and cherry are all native and produce spring and summer flowers followed by berries for the birds in autumn. How do you decide what type of trees go where?

The grass verges throughout are very well trained.

The central green area is a fine central focus for the estate, however the grass here is not as well maintained as elsewhere. Herbicide has been used along margins and this has left an unsightly fringe of dead vegetation. Most of the trees here are in good condition, however a small number are dead and need to be replaced.

This shrubby area beside the well is effective in scale in this location but is poorly maintained, being weedy and littered.

In general it was found that communal landscaped areas are neglected while providing greenery from a distance they do not look well up close.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

This category encourages communities to greater appreciate wildlife and natural heritage. This is just as relevant to people living in suburban estates as it is for those with more obvious wildlife habitats in rural areas.

Gardens are important habitats for a range of small birds and they are quite easy to attract given a degree of shelter and a food source. Lots of people in your estate are probably already feeding birds but perhaps you could make an event out of – say, with a local bird enthusiast.

Litter Control:

You indicate that you participate in the annual national spring clean with An Taisce and this should be detailed in this category. Do you find that much rubbish is collected? Are there particular black spots? In addition to the annual cleanup do you carry out regular patrols? Litter is usually the main concern for most people as it has such a visually negative impact.

Litter control on adjudication day was found to be quite poor with a low level of cans and wrappers throughout. It would seem that a slightly higher level of routine patrols would lift the area to the high standard that is expected in the TidyTowns contest.

Tidiness:

Your estate is extremely tidy and you have no serious issues to contend with here. Kerbs are weeded and there are no overhead wires to clutter the skyline. There are a few small issues that would be worth addressing such as minor graffiti on the wall pillars entering the estate; a nearby 'children at play' sign is dirty and facing away from the road. The finger pointer signs are attractive but the lettering needs to be repainted. Graffiti is an issue on a wall adjoining the central green.

Generally however these are considered to be minor points and overall the estate is very tidy in appearance.

Waste Minimisation:

This category encourages communities to take action in reducing our waste mountain. While recycling is popular it is only fourth under the waste pyramid after prevention, minimisation and re-use. How can your community help address this (and reduce your bin charges while doing so)?

Some simple ideas to get you started are: distribute 'no junk mail' stickers to reduce paper waste; hold a home composting workshop; encourage the use of municipal recycling facilities; promote the use of freetradeireland.ie so people can find new owners for unwanted items. You could get more ideas by holding a waste minimisation seminar for residents in association with Limerick city council.

Your local schools may participate in the green flag program in which case they would be well versed in waste minimisation issues creating contacts here would therefore benefit your group under this heading.

Residential Areas:

Houses throughout the estate are impressive in the design and level of upkeep. They are greatly complemented by the abundance of trees and other greenery. Some stumps of palm trees that were killed in the winter frost remain. Fitzhaven square is most attractive with more luxurious greenery and numerous small displays of colour.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

The entrance to the estate creates an excellent impression with its lines of trees, trimmed grass and natural stone wall. Elsewhere the road surfaces and footpath structures are of good order. The entrance to Fitzhaven a looks well and the landscaping here is effective if lacking colour. The paint is flaking from the pillars and addressing this would enhance the appearance. The black marble name plaque just inside the entrance is very smart. Road surfaces in Fitzhaven Square are very poor, could you contact Limerick city council to address this?

General Impression:

Your estate is a fine place with much to offer its residents. Your participation in TidyTowns will hopefully be of benefit to you as you start to develop a work plan. Building greater public support will help you in your aims and create stronger community support. You are wished every success in this endeavour.