

Tidy Towns Competition 2013

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Donnybrook** Ref: **1346**
County: **Dublin(DunLaoghaire-Rathdown)** Mark: **241**
Category: **C** Date(s): **29/06/2013**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2012	Mark Awarded 2013
Overall Development Approach	50	0	33
The Built Environment	50	0	32
Landscaping	50	0	35
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	0	24
Litter Control	50	0	26
Sustainable Waste And Resource Management	20	0	8
Tidiness	30	0	14
Residential Areas	40	0	32
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	0	30
General Impression	10	0	7
TOTAL MARK	400	0	241

Overall Development Approach:

Thank you for the very well completed application form and the supplementary material in support of your application.

The attached map indicating the area to be adjudicated was very helpful to the adjudicator who is reasonably familiar with the area but having the boundaries defined was a big bonus.

Donnybrook is welcomed back to the competition as an urban village after an absence of 6 years and one hopes that it will be the start of a long and fruitful re association with the competition.

The committee of 15 is representative of all sectors of the community but I would advise to re structure into a main committee core of 4/5 and then formulate a number of sub committees to cater for individual sections that make up the competition.

Good to note that you have a number of communicating options that promotes the Tidy Towns ethos in an area where there is probably large mobile population as well as established residents.

The key is to get an enough of impetus together to make things actually happen.

I would also suggest that devise a simple 3 year plan of work around the competition headings and work towards the objectives within that plan.

One has to be careful to include action items that are achievable and that reflect what you can actually achieve as a committee.

The type of interaction that you have with the Dublin City Council Community Development under their Vibrant Villages and Urban Communities as outlined in the application is very important

Getting local schools involved is also very important as school children contribute immensely to projects and as well as that it provides an education for them on what civic spirit is all about.

Finally the adjudicator was impressed with the comments on how the competition has impacted on the community in a positive way.

You are encouraged to keep this forward planning momentum going and do consider the year plan as suggested.

The Built Environment:

The Committee has been very active under this category heading since its inception in all I have noted 18 projects of different scale that you have an association.

Of course some of these projects are very much dependent on the input for the local authority and also

dependent on the availability of funds that are restrictive because of severe budgetary cutbacks. The comment on Donnybrook being a disability friendly village is very laudable and shows that as committee you taken cognisance of the fact that many of the local population are senior citizens.

Conveying that message to the traders and other business is very important as it allows them the opportunity to make practical contributions by adjusting entrances or internal facilities accordingly.

One would have liked to get a copy of the historic study if it was available and maybe this could be included in supplementary material for next year's competition.

The following is a list of observations and comments that the adjudicator noted during the adjudication walkabout. The island area with bollards and planters nearer to shops as one comes from the south side of Donnybrook Road adds appeal to the area and gives a tidy appearance.

One older established hostelry on the south side of the village core could do with updating its name sign.

The following business premises were admired for the manner in which they were presented O Connells Bar Restaurant, McCluskeys Bar a long established business, Dunnes Of Donnybrook, Spar, Kielys, Donnybrook Fair, Insomnia and the long established and excellent take away Borza's. This just represents a cross section that appealed to this adjudicator but is not a reflection on the remainder.

In the very central and impressive Herbert Park it was noticeable that the play ground equipment and indeed the general play area was somewhat the worse for wear.

Some of the seating in the park is also in poor condition and should be replaced.

Donnybrook RC Church which is one of the focal points of the Village was as allays very well presented and credit is due to the people that are responsible for its upkeep.

Muckross Park College looks as if it is about to undergo change judging by the planning notices on the railings of the building.

Overall the standard was quite good and no doubt further improvements in this category will be forthcoming in the years ahead.

Landscaping:

Good to see the standard annuals such as petunias, alyssum, begonias, impatiens being used to good effect in combination with perennials and long life shrubs in and around the village

To maintain this standard of presentation requires a lot effort and resources as well as patience so well done to the local council team and the volunteers entrusted with this work.

This adjudicator was impressed with the extent of floral combinations that prevailed in private planting arrangements most notably in gardens in Arranmore Road, on the main Donnybrook Road up to Morehampton Road, Mount Eden Donny Brook Manor and on the Herbert Park road.

Trees are the most important plants in any urban landscape, yet relatively few towns and villages have enough of them but Donnybrook has such array of mature trees in the core area and on the established roads of the main Donnybrook Road.

The residents of Beech Hill are to be congratulated on presenting their green area in such fine fashion

It was good to note that you are directing attention to the area leading into the St Brocs Cottages a lovely terrace of cottages that had some very colourful window boxes on display.

The centre of the village is adorned by hanging baskets on commercial premises and by planter tubs in the island area at the south end of the village.

The small garden at St Marys National School was also admired

For next year's competition and as part of your 3 year plan I would suggest some consultation with the local authority horticultural section with a view to putting your ideas for landscaping forward and seeking expert advice.

Alternatively you may have somebody within your committee that has professional gardening experience.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

Nature conservation doesn't relate solely to the country side as many wildlife habitats exist often exist in the centre of towns /villages and on their outskirts.

Open spaces, graveyards, derelict sites, canals, railway lines, stone walls and buildings themselves provide a home to a host of plants and animals.

Donnybrook is fortunate that it has a number of well appointed natural habitats right adjacent to the village.

Both Herbert Park, the Dodder River and its banks are as you say gems in your midst and getting personnel from Bird Watch Ireland to become involved in a series of talks is very worthwhile.

As in the case of landscaping it would be a good idea if you seek advice from a wildlife enthusiast that may be known to you to come up with a mini plan that could have a series of objectives such as the production of wildlife information notice boards in Herbert Park that would complement the existing history information boards.

For instance an information board on the Dodder its history and its wildlife habitats would be very welcome by the myriad of people that pass through the park and by the banks.

If you are in a position next year to act on the above do involve the school children from St Marys National School.

Litter Control:

The main street for want of a better description Donnybrook Road is very busy with both transient car, bus, truck and cycle traffic and also has high footfall of people.

This can lead to unnecessary litter at various places and especially at times of matches and concert events that take place in the adjacent RDS and the Aviva.

Many people also frequent night time entertainment venues in the locality and this can also lead to litter

problems.

There are a number of lane ways in the area that could be potential litter traps.

On adjudication day litter was observed on Brook Vale Road, at the main Bus Stop and in near the crescent area of the village.

The committee is doing its utmost to promote the message of anti litter but it takes time and especially in place that such a high through put of people most of whom are transient.

A litter management plan will also form part of your main plan and that means consultation with the local authority, traders and residents, seeking up volunteer rotas that do regular picks to supplement what the cleaning department of the council do.

School poster competitions are also good ways of fostering an anti litter ethos in children and adolescences.

You state that litter awareness is everywhere but to be honest I didn't see any stand out notice or eye catch posters.

But what you are doing is very positive and can build upon with additional initiatives.

Sustainable Waste And Resource Management:

This is a category that caused quite a lot of concern for many centres around the country under its former title waste minimisation.

The category has now evolved to put forward the message of curtailing the actual production of unnecessary waste.

What you have listed as ongoing projects are probably more in keeping with actual management of waste and now what you need to do is to actually look at ways of stopping the production of certain waste.

For instance the schools can organise and promote package free lunch days for the children.

The allotment scheme is also a contributor in that it gets people to grow their own produce thus reducing the dependence on the convenience packed equivalent.

To acquire more knowledge and to get more project ideas consult the following websites www.locaprevention.ie and www.greenhomes.ie and also make contact with the local environmental officer to be aware of any relevant local programmes that may be in the offing.

Tidiness:

The standard was quite good in this category but there was evidence of excessive weed growth along a few areas such as Brook Vale Road, a few spot at the base of the wall at Muckcross Park College and at the base of a few trees on one of the side roads (where footpath construction was taking place) off Donnybrook Road North. The area around the Topaz Service Station could be tidied up and revitalised a little with a new planting arrangement.

A few back areas that are visible to the public were a little untidy and things like pallets and barrels need to be camouflaged or housed if possible.

What you are doing in terms of engaging with the local authority, traders and local residents is very positive and evidence of this can be seen in housing areas such as Brocs Cottages and Belmont Avenue. Also the commercial core of the village is very orderly and relatively free from clutter. Keep up the good work.

Residential Areas:

The standard in this category was very good and it is obvious that most of the residents of Donnybrook have a sense of pride of place.

Again it would be impossible to do justice to each area visited in this short report but all were visited by the adjudicator bore out what you have stated in your application submission in that each was as well presented as the other.

The adjudicator would be reasonably familiar with parts of Donnybrook and areas such as Belmont Avenue, Eglinton Road, Auburn Avenue and Mount Eden but did not realise that it such attractive town cottages that were discovered during the adjudication walkabout.

St Brocs Cottages and Pembroke Cottages were in splendid order and a credit to their owners.

Very good performance overall and credit is due to individual householders and residents associations for their ongoing work.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

It is quite disturbing to read that people drive into the heart of Donnybrook to dump waste in many of the side streets and lanes that are part of the Village.

Is this a one off and can these people be identified and brought to answer for their misdemeanours and fined heavily for good measure?

As you rightly state in your submission Donnybrook is a maze of little lanes as well as very well appointed side roads.

It is hard for you to define what your exact area is going to be but when you do maybe you should consult with the council and discuss and decide Donnybrook begins and ends

Then request that dedicated place name signs be put at theses boundaries that will clearly identify the Village of Donnybrook.

General Impression:

It is good to see Donnybrook re entering the competition after an absence of 6 years and joining some of the neighbouring urban villages that have entered in the last number of years.

The committee is on the right road, excuse the unintended pun, and will make progress in the competition in the immediate years ahead.

This year is just a starting point and when you define you're exact boundaries it will make for easier planning for the competition.

You are wished well with your continued work.