

Tidy Towns Competition 2013

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Douglas** Ref: **116**
County: **Cork(South)** Mark: **272**
Category: **H** Date(s): **12/06/2013**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2012	Mark Awarded 2013
Overall Development Approach	50	41	43
The Built Environment	50	35	36
Landscaping	50	38	39
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	29	29
Litter Control	50	24	25
Sustainable Waste And Resource Management	20	12	12
Tidiness	30	21	21
Residential Areas	40	32	32
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	27	28
General Impression	10	7	7
TOTAL MARK	400	266	272

Overall Development Approach:

Douglas is welcome to the 2013 Tidy Towns competition and thank you for your application. Please only submit one version of your entry form in order to avoid any potential confusion. Your map was clear and helped us find our way around the village. You have good links with Cork County & City Councils, FAS and SECAD as well as the many businesses, clubs, schools and churches in your village. Your active website is noted. Has this helped spread the word of about your activities and get more people involved? It is great that you have somebody dedicated to maintaining the website and keeping it up to date. As well as improving the environment and raising money for your activities, your events appear to be improving the community spirit and pride in Douglas village. You could provide one or two samples of your awareness-raising material as additional material. E.g. a newspaper cutting from the 'Douglas Post'.

Well done for your efforts in compiling your 5 year TT Plan Your plan is impressive and encompasses all TT categories. Please put the dates of the plan in its title. This Plan is 2013 to 2018 I gather from the text? It will help you to focus on priority areas and enable you to monitor your progress going forward. As well as your committee brainstorming sessions, did you seek the views or ideas from the wider community? (businesses, students, clubs etc) 5 years is a long time so you might consider putting timeframes (at least the year) on each of your actions. You could also assign each of your actions to a group/business/individual etc. It is a great idea to network with other Tidy Towns groups and positive to note that this has helped you with your own plans/activities.

The Built Environment:

Douglas's built environment has expanded rapidly in recent years but you have somehow managed to retain that Cork village charm. The shop front competition is a great idea and if it encourages businesses to give their building a lick of paint or add a few flowers, then that's even better! I really enjoyed walking around the 'community' area of both churches, schools, graveyards and Community Park. Repairs to guttering at the community centre are noted. The RC church with its open plan grounds looks very well. The car park to the rear of the adjoining scout hall is a little weedy. Interesting gardening projects were spotted through the railings at St. Luke's primary school across the way. Down in the commercial part of the village, you have two well-maintained shopping centres and many charming colourful smaller businesses along your main streets. Well done for your efforts to engage with owners/make improvements to derelict sites. Do you have contact with Cork Co Co on this issue as they have a legal role in derelict sites? Lion House is neatly presented with some good landscaping. The small ICA hall is well maintained. John O' Sullivan's bar was admired. St Patrick's Woollen Mills and the

Shipton Building are buildings of a different time and give a sense of the village's history. It is heartening to see original sash windows being conserved. Bank of Ireland is modern and clean. Barry's pub & restaurant was admired.

Landscaping:

Well done for your participation in the 'Million Trees in a Day' project, where you planted 80 trees near the flyover. The area near the flyover to the rear of Tesco is neat and well landscaped. A little attention is needed to landscaping near the traffic lights. The black membrane is very visible and unsightly here. The Community Park is a wonderful amenity and was being enjoyed by many young and old, during our visit. The new entrance is great for the park; many people seem to use it now to walk through on their way somewhere else. This will keep the park busy and hopefully discourage anti-social behaviour. Tesco has made good efforts to provide landscaping along the walled entrance to the deliveries area. What is the plan for the nearby fenced-off area? Would you consider one or two large flower/tree planters on your wide pavements close to Falvey's and across the way? This might give you a 'village centre' or 'plaza' feel to the area (subject to resources of course). The flower boxes and tubs add a splash of colour throughout. The Douglas Shopping Centre is very nicely landscaped as is McDonalds across the way. The roundabout here could be enhanced as it is a little bleak. The Ulster Bank grounds were also admired.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

We took a short walk in Mangala Woods – this is a wonderful amenity to have near such a built up area. Well done to all involved in maintaining and improving the trails for all to enjoy. The Sli na Slainte signs will also encourage more use of your amenities and act as directional pointers for visitors, who may find it difficult to find the woods at present.

The 'Butterfly Garden' is a lovely idea. I would have missed it in the park if I hadn't spotted the sign from outside the park as I walked past. Access and signage could still be improved. There were a lot of cars parked here so it wasn't really evident. What have been your observations in this garden? Have the school children carried out any surveys or projects here? The main thrust of this category is to determine what wildlife is in your area, then to raise awareness of it among community. You have some exciting initiatives in your plans and I wish you luck with those. Some schools are working on their 'biodiversity' theme as part of their green schools programme. In this case, working in conjunction with the local school would be crucial.

Litter Control:

Well done for taking organising the litter/recycling competition for schools. It sounds like it was a great success! Well done also for engaging with the scouts group and to their members who carry out the twice-yearly clean up of your lovely Mangala Woods. You have very supportive businesses that see a litter-free Douglas as a more attractive place to do business in. Well done to them for providing you with volunteers and assistance with your clean ups. You have also made contact with the Transition Year students who are helping you with practical activities. You could encourage them to work with you on a waste reduction project also. Littering was an issue in the back areas such near the rear entrance to Xtravision/Domino's pizzeria and the far corner of this car park. The laneway beside Topaz gives an untidy impression. Another litter black spot was the seating area across the road from the Community Park (original entrance). There was a small amount of littering in the Community Park itself. East Douglas Street was quite littered; other streets were fairly clean apart from a little litter along the street near Dino's chip shop. Your submissions to Cork Co Co regarding extra litter bins for Douglas are noted. Just be mindful that many Tidy Towns groups are removing litter bins due to misuse/dumping of household waste in them. It would be worth doing a survey of existing bins to ensure they are being used properly. The bottle banks were in good order. Litter is a challenge for you. You are getting an increase in marks for your efforts to raise awareness of litter in the community.

Sustainable Waste And Resource Management:

Well done for your efforts to promote 'reduce reuse recycle' on your website and local paper. The main thrust of this category is how we can help reduce waste in the community by preventing it, then how we can reuse and recycle the rest. Please have a look at the new guidelines where you should get one or two ideas to implement for next year. As a minimum you should state here the status of the local schools in relation to the Green Flag. Do they have green flags and what stage are they at? There are very close links between this programme and some Tidy Towns categories so you can help each other. You should also mention any water or energy saving measures, e.g. for watering plants/flowers during summer season. Does the school run any walk/cycle to school promotions? This cuts down on your carbon footprint and your traffic! Have you had any contact with Cork Co Co's Environmental Awareness Officer? The adjudicator is not expected to check out websites or other links so be sure to give a brief description of any awareness initiatives in your entry form.

Tidiness:

Well done for updating the visitor signage outside Topaz this year. A 'yield' sign is falling over in this area. As you rightly mentioned, you have a large area to cover in terms of weed control etc. It did not appear to be a major issue this year. There are 3 disused poles near the entrance to Marlborough Woods. Are there plans for these? Otherwise they should be removed. At the other end of this road, there is no stop or yield sign but again there are poles. Are traffic lights planned here? The cinema car park was a disappointment. Weed and litter control is required here. The area inside the new entrance to the park looks a little untidy/unfinished, mainly because people are making natural pathways across the grass area. The grass is very long outside this entrance. We

acknowledge that advertising is a necessary part of everyday life. However the banner at the South County Bar is blocking the upper windows and detracts from this otherwise attractive building. Similarly, advertising banners on your railings detract somewhat from the otherwise good appearance. Please keep an eye on your public seating areas. The paint is beginning to peel at the one opposite Falvey's. Some road signs require cleaning, e.g. near St. Columba's Hall. There is wire clutter on the Centra shopfront, otherwise the shop was neatly presented. Please include 'graffiti' under this category. Well done for your efforts to remove it.

Residential Areas:

The standard of all residential areas we visited was very high. The residents of Douglas take pride in their properties and neighbourhood! The Paddocks and Maryborough Woods are very neatly presented with some lovely mature trees observed. Please remove a broken sign from one of the poles at Maryborough Woods. It is a little untidy outside the unoccupied apartment complex on the Carrigaline Road. Cartan Park looked well.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

It is challenging for you to define your boundaries but you are improving year by year, with plans to erect 'welcome' signage and by clever use of landscaping at your entry points. Please continue to progress on this. The new bus/cycle lanes on Maryborough Hill are a great addition and hopefully are being well used! It is good to hear that the TT committee is feeding into longer term plans & strategies for the area, such as 10-year Douglas Land Use & Transport Strategy that you mention. It is great that you now have McDonalds on board to upkeep the roundabout, as part of the 'adopt-a-roundabout' scheme. The white signs here look attractive and welcoming. The wide pavements near Falvey's are clean and attractive. Good bicycle parking was noted and hopefully will be busier now with the new cycle paths going in! East Douglas Village St was presented to a high standard. The sculpture at the shopping centre was admired.

General Impression:

It was a pleasure to visit bustling Douglas village. Your village has expanded rapidly in recent times but you are embracing the changes in a positive way and working to bring 'old' and 'new' together. It might be worth seeking residents of your community interested in helping with specific tasks such as wildlife or waste prevention. Try and find out what skills are resources are in your community. You may be pleasantly surprised! Well done on taking on board the recommendation of previous adjudicator report and using them to your benefit. Thank you for a comprehensive application and we wish you well going forward.