

Tidy Towns Competition 2013

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Foxrock** Ref: **1212**
County: **Dublin(DunLaoghaire-Rathdown)** Mark: **250**
Category: **C** Date(s): **06/06/2013**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2012	Mark Awarded 2013
Overall Development Approach	50	35	36
The Built Environment	50	34	35
Landscaping	50	30	31
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	15	15
Litter Control	50	33	34
Sustainable Waste And Resource Management	20	6	7
Tidiness	30	21	22
Residential Areas	40	32	33
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	28	29
General Impression	10	7	8
TOTAL MARK	400	241	250

Overall Development Approach:

Thank you for the excellent application presented in such a detailed manner which made it easy for the adjudicator to refer to the various sections with greater ease

The attached DLR Grant Submission was noted as part of the supplementary material in support of your application form

The adjudicator was very appreciative of the attached map highlighting the area designated for adjudication.

He was somewhat confused as to why the Mart Lane area that includes St Brigids National School Foxrock built in 1914 and the adjoining St Brigids Park housing estate was not included when everywhere else around it was. Your mission statement is one of simplicity but has a strong message to give out to the local community.

Interaction with the relevant agencies has been very beneficial particularly with the local development agency FACE as they may become the vehicle for any funding support in the years ahead although that may be somewhat of a pipe dream given the economic realities are still to be faced. Communicating your message is pretty straight forward through the tried trusted newsletters, information notices and via the instant access media such as Facebook, Twitter and possibly LinkedIn.

It is nice to report that you have excellent support from all sections of the local community and particularly the business people.

One notes the difficulties they encounter with parking for customers and because of the Tidy Towns Committee involvement in engaging with HRI a solution may be forth coming.

Indeed you are wished well in your meetings with the said body in the months ahead.

The Built Environment:

Foxrock is a village that has very rich built heritage and it obviously has more than some remnants of colonial influence, judging by the road names and the old estate like residences that one encounters.

Over the years it has evolved into an urban village of standing and now that there are defined boundaries it makes it easier for a committee such as Tidy Towns to actually plan work programmes.

The summary of the 3 year master plan has ambitious actions to be completed within a given timescale; this plan needs input from a number of statutory bodies and more importantly a level of funding to achieve its aims.

You are wished well in your quest to achieve the objectives in the plan

The work being carried out by the committee under this section is both practical and very much achievable.

Getting traders to react positively to your suggestions on theme colours and an overall branding programme for

the Village is just an indication of how effective you have been to date.

On walking about the core area and all the impressive tree lined roads one felt that it was nigh impossible to find blemishes but there were a few.

For the purpose of adjudication I included the Market Lane area and just noted that the name sign for St Brigids Park on the school boundary wall was missing.

The electricity pole at the wonderful Gable Restaurant and Bar is not only an eyesore but as it is leaning aka the Tower of Pisa it has become a bit of an obstruction on the footpath.

One of the parking signs outside the animal centre in the village is damaged and leaning slightly.

Parking in the core area could be problematic and slightly chaotic on busy occasions such as race days so hopefully you will be successful in your negotiations with HRI.

The idea of having six granite benches in the village is a practical one in that it will allow old and young to come a meet in the true village spirit.

The following business premises were admired for the manner in which they were presented

Kayes Auctioneers at the corner of the main junction is a very well presented establishment with a colour scheme that befits the rest of the Village.

The Gables already mentioned in another context ,O Coileain Craft Butchers and the attractive little Post Office.

The other premises in the shopping area such as the Pharmacy and Animal Centre had their premises well maintained and tidy.

Foxrock has such an array of large homesteads with rather equally large secure gardens that it would be impossible to single out one over the other.

One noticed that more than a few were for sale and I was intrigued by one particular house with possible Galway connections called Craughwell that housed the Kenyan Embassy.

Foot paths were in top class condition with one newly refurbished on Hainault Road.

In an overall context the standard observed is deserving of an additional 2 marks.

Landscaping:

It was noted in your submission that you have planted a number of geraniums or pelargoniums, cannot actually recall which but they are of the same family, at the base of trees.

This practice was brought to the notice of adjudicators who were told that it was not good practice and as I am not a horticultural expert maybe you should consult with the gardening specialist that is within your group.

The adjudicator noticed that a number of very established trees at the junction of Westminster and Brighton Roads had these pelargoniums planted at the base.

Other than that there were some excellent planting arrangements to be viewed on the day.

These included one at the above junction which had the Westminster Road nameplate and had a pebble base for easier maintenance and for all year round effect

The new arrangements at the entrances into the village from Cabinteely side and off the Stillorgan dual carriage way add a little vibrancy in colour to these areas.

The Village green was in excellent condition and the credit for this goes to the volunteers that take time out to maintain.

Plans to further enhance it look very innovative and hopefully they will be converted into actions prior to next year's competition.

A good performance in this category overall but do desist from planting flowers at the base of trees.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

Nature conservation doesn't relate solely to the country side and many wildlife habitats exist within villages such as Foxrock.

The myriad of mature trees and even individual gardens are havens for all types of birds and insects and it's possible to have some very worthwhile projects that promote the conservation of wildlife in your catchment area. I would concur with the comments of last year's adjudicator in encouraging contact with Birdwatch Ireland to help you devise a survey project preferably in conjunction with the schools that are within your area and that are amenable to become involved.

The simple steps such as the provision of more bird boxes and the planning of a biodiversity garden at a dedicated corner of the village green are all contributing to good practice in the preservation and encouragement of varying species of wildlife.

Litter Control:

Litter control is rather easier to achieve in the more relaxed and leafy areas of Foxrock but of course constant monitoring is the key because any lapses could get out of hand.

Dog fouling is an issue everywhere but there are deterrent signs to be seen on the main roads where dogs are walked.

Having traders involved in your anti litter campaign is more than a good idea as they will encourage customers to be vigilant in keeping the village free of litter.

As the ad for a well known multiple states "every little helps" hopefully I haven't over clichéd this in other reports.

On the day there was virtually no litter to be seen except two plastic bottles on Westminster Road not a likely place but there you go.

Ongoing monitoring is the key to keeping this problem at bay and you have good measures in place to do that

Sustainable Waste And Resource Management:

This category was first introduced into the competition over 7 years ago in 2006 and posed many challenges for

many communities in trying to interpret what it was that was needed in terms of relevant projects. The idea now is to encourage entrants to move beyond recycling and examine how waste can be reduced pre production. The master plan that you have submitted with the application contains some very worthwhile initiatives especially the water conservation sheet of tips. Do still consult regularly with the local environmental officer to be aware of workshops, seminars and new trends in sustainable waste management. Also keep linked to www.localprevention.ie and www.greenhomes.ie for further ideas and advice on relevant projects.

Tidiness:

All the approach roads and outlying extremities of the village were very tidy and credit to homeowners for keeping frontages and boundary walls in such pristine condition. The core area was very tidy and the commercial properties that included the busy forecourt of the service station were in very good condition. It is good to note that the traders as part of their regular meetings extol the need for keeping premises tidy and clutter free. Fly posting is not an issue and there were no unsightly dated posters pasted on poles that needed to be removed. All directional and name signs were clean and painted and more importantly very visible. Overall the standard seemed to be on par with what was reported last year and one hope that you will have some positive reaction from the ESB in relation to some of the issues in hand.

Residential Areas:

The standard of presentation in this category was of the highest order both in individual private homesteads and in more controlled housing developments. Some very fine homesteads were viewed on the leafy Westminister, Brighton, Hainault Roads and others and these were complemented by the most attractive of gardens. St Brigids which is a local authority on the outskirts of the village was also in good condition and the green area, if a little lacking in colour, was well maintained. Both Orchard and Brighton Cottages unique and compact were very well presented and full marks to the Tidy Towns Committee for helping residents in getting refurbishment works done over a period of time. Other areas visited were Mart Lane, The Birches, The Coppins, The Hedgerows and Gordon Avenue all were without exception in very good condition and again many had fine gardens on view.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

Entrances in to any village or town forms a first impression good or bad for a first time visitor. It was not the adjudicator's first time being in Foxrock but it has been some time since his last visit. Great improvements have occurred at the now recognised entry points on the Cabinteely end and on the entrance in off the Stillorgan dual carriage way. The addition of well designed name plates "Welcome to Foxrock" in English agus as Gaeilge have enhanced these entry points no end and identified the village of Foxrock to the visitor. The committee is to be congratulated for being instrumental in having these enhancements in the form of welcome signs an accompanying flower beds put in place. It helps when road surfaces and footpaths are in good condition and all signs are orderly and clearly visible, Foxrock does not have a problem in this respect.

General Impression:

It's been some time since this adjudicator visited the village of Foxrock and many very worthwhile changes have occurred in the interim. The boundaries of the village are now defined, although I feel that the committee should re define its designated adjudication area and include a few places that were not highlighted in the map. It was a pleasure to walk around an area that was not subjected to large volumes of traffic and take in the tranquillity of the surroundings whilst of course concentrating on the job in hand. You are wished well in the years ahead.