

Tidy Towns Competition 2012

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Adare** Ref: **440**
County: **Limerick** Mark: **304**
Category: **C** Date(s): **15/06/2012**
28/06/2012

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2011	Mark Awarded 2012
Overall Development Approach	50	46	46
The Built Environment	50	38	38
Landscaping	50	44	45
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	30	30
Litter Control	50	34	35
Tidiness	30	18	19
Waste Minimisation	20	10	10
Residential Areas	40	33	33
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	39	39
General Impression	10	9	9
TOTAL MARK	400	301	304

Overall Development Approach:

Adare is most welcome to the 2012 Tidy Towns contest. Many thanks for your completed entry form, map, five-year work plan and photos. Unfortunately this adjudicator did not have the facilities to watch a DVD during adjudication. Adare is Limerick's foremost tourist town and this status is reflected in your long history at the top tier of tidy towns entrants. You continue to attract significant community support for your activities and this is impressive. You are also engaged with a wide range of agencies but would it be possible to broaden this even further? E.g. through including sporting or other social groups. Did you consider the idea of setting up a website as suggested last year? If this is not feasible why not launch a Facebook page? This is free, very simple to set up and has been used to great effect by other groups. It is ideal for advertising events, posting photos and even attracting new volunteers.

Your five-year action plan will be coming to an end next year but it was difficult for the adjudicator to ascertain how much progress is being made. Perhaps, as suggested in last year's report, you could set a specific actions with target dates.

It is wonderful to read that you are engaging with your local schools and this relationship is no doubt to your mutual benefit.

The Built Environment:

Adare enjoys a unique built heritage that is layered like pages into the past. Your significant addition in 2012 has been the removal of overhead wires around the park boundary and this greatly enhances the street scene.

The Main Street looks very well and great attention has been paid to the control of signage above ground level and a subtle, but effective colour scheme. The Arches restaurant, Stacpoole fashion, Isobel and Aunty Lena's particularly caught the eye. The numerous detached buildings are a mainstay attraction for visitors and are complemented in many instances by old limestone walls. The facade of the building beside Blue Willow is in need of attention. Collin's bar further up the street is superb.

The Reathkeal road is looking well and Raincín's well-conserved shop front was particularly admired. AIB on the Kildimo road is a wonderfully proportioned building in sympathetic limestone and complemented by dense foliage. Londis is looking clean and was flying flags, adding colour and movement.

Our Lady's Abbey National school was looking exceptionally well and is clearly well loved. The garden is superb and it was proudly flying its green flags.

Landscaping:

The town park is a major asset for Adare and it was wonderful to see how well maintained it is. The range of mature trees, as well as the high standard of furnishing etc really lift this amenity beyond expectations.

Businesses in Adare are to be commended on the many small displays of flowers e.g. at Blue Willow, Serendipity and Blue Lavender. Planting at the entrance to the tourist office and car park was weed free and consisted of a nice selection of shrubs, complementing the trees and providing year-round effect. This is continued in and around the car park to good effect.

Overall it is felt that Adare does a wonderful job of landscaping both in the town and along its approaches. In this adjudicator's view this is down to the abundance of tall trees and general leafyness of street aspects combined with the stone heritage buildings and town park. This leaves annual flowers as an adornment for individual buildings and points of interest which provides an appropriate level of scale and colour. Well done!

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

This category encourages communities to appreciate their local natural history. Habitats that are of value to plants and animals include tall trees, parklands, hedges, stone walls and even gardens. The river Maigue no doubt has fisheries value and may well be home to internationally important species such as otter and kingfisher. The nearby Currachase Woods is a special area of conservation for its rare old woodland.

These areas could be identified on a map which could then be the basis of the wildlife survey to be undertaken by schoolchildren or local enthusiasts. Your river walk is a great amenity and lends itself to bat walks, dawn chorus events or heritage trails. There is lots that could be done.

Planting wildflowers seems to be a contradiction in terms and while gardens can be made to be wildlife friendly, in natural habitats such as rivers it is best to leave the natural vegetation in place.

Litter Control:

You are commended for taking part in the national spring clean, you seem to have attracted a lot of support for this. How often are litter patrols carried out? Are they on a rota or a voluntary basis?

Litter control on adjudication day was excellent, well done. The bring bank was absolutely spotless, a fantastic achievement.

Tidiness:

The removal of overhead wires certainly adds to the air of tidiness that is to be found in Adare. The volumes of traffic, and heavy goods vehicles in particular, does detract somewhat from the enjoyment of the area. Have you discussed ways of addressing this with the National Roads Authority? A number of suggestions were made in last year's report, for instance to do with bins around the town, where these taken into consideration? The footpath on the Rathkeale road is poor and uneven lending an untidy aspect to an otherwise well maintained area.

Waste Minimisation:

You are to be commended for your participation in the Green Communities although it is unclear what this entails or whether you are involved in other waste minimisation projects. How many of your schools have green flags? Full details should be given here. The first green flag is focused on waste minimisation so they can give advice on what projects could be applied elsewhere. While recycling is not a priority in the waste pyramid it is still important. What facilities do you have and are they utilised? How is composting promoted in Adare? Do you have composting facilities for your landscaping waste? You could also contact Limerick county council to hold a waste minimisation seminar or carry out a waste audit of businesses in the town. There are other ideas within the Tidy Towns Handbook.

Residential Areas:

Adare has some genuinely exceptional residential areas that are filled with character and colour. The row of terraces on the Rathkeale road is gorgeous but let down slightly by a rough wire fence and some unkempt verges. The mature lime trees though are a wonderful feature. Ascaill na Páirce is new but maintains the traditional scale and it too has wonderful trees. Desmond drive continues this trend.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

The approach from Limerick is very impressive with its tall trees and the attractive old entrance to Adare Manor. The tree planting in the roundabout here was admired however signage here is poor, being overabundant and in poor physical shape. The Rathkeale approach is similarly adorned with tall trees. The sign off Currachase Park is in poor shape and should be removed or replaced.

General Impression:

Adare has maintained its high standards and deservedly attracts great interest from visitors. The levels of traffic do detract from the ambience and it would be nice if a long-term solution could be conceived. Meanwhile it still holds many delights. Best of luck!

Second Round Adjudication:

Despite the traffic delay in our approach to the town we found the experience of arriving in Adare quite delightful. You have so many anchors for tourists from the handsome Adare Manor and its parkland setting to the well-known cottages with their thatched roofs. The on-going repair of these roofs was noted and it is great to see their continued conservation. The other buildings that form the built environment of Adare are very well-maintained. The two page list of protected structures which by my count numbers 69 in total is most impressive. Many a town would be delighted to have a fraction of that number. The centrally located car park is very well positioned to serve the impressive Trinitarian Abbey, the adjacent school as well as the many tourists that visit Adare. The low hedges provide a suitable screen for the cars and buses. Across the road the town park is a splendid facility and is very well maintained. We noted it was a gift from the Dunraven family but the plaque could be much easier read if the stone were cleaned. Another interesting sign providing information on the washing pool would benefit from being cleaned also. The oak tree planted by Councillor Michael Brennan for National Tree Week in 2002 has grown very well. Perhaps the name of the tree could be added to the stone and enrich the botanical value, especially for enthusiasts. I am in full agreement with my colleague, the first adjudicator regarding the landscape of Adare; it is rich because of the wealth of established trees and when flowers are used they add enhancement to the landscape. Have you considered establishing a tree trail to highlight the Champion and Heritage trees of Adare? The removal of overhead wires is a great achievement and we noted your approach to weed control and collecting litter with the suction machine. Congratulations and well done.