



PRESS RELEASE

Council's Growing Places Initiative Reaps Rewards

Biodiversity Scores Points For Tidy Towns

Fingal County Council is delighted to see that our 'Growing Places' project is noted as a very positive initiative and scored accordingly by Tidy Towns adjudicators in the recent Tidy Towns Awards.

With 25% of the overall marks available for 'Landscaping' and 'Wildlife & Natural Amenities' categories in the competition, all of the Fingal entrants increased their scores on the Wildlife & Natural Amenities section compared to 2009, with Balcadden in particular upping an incredible 14% on 2009 marks for this category. Many other towns gained an increase of between 2% and 6% for this category.

Tidy Towns adjudicators commented particularly on Swords that 'Growing Places is an excellent initiative', and on award-winning Skerries that 'the creation of meadowlands is another sound initiative'. Suggestions from the adjudicators included tree-planting projects, native species planting projects, hedgerow and mature tree management, and wildlife surveys.

Growing Places was introduced earlier this year and is designed to gradually convert some appropriate public open spaces in the county from sterile mown grass to wildlife-friendly meadows. 2010 is the first year of this initiative, and overall, it has been received positively by many of the residents, community groups, schools and Tidy Towns committees in Fingal. We plan to build on this

years work in 2011, and hope that Tidy Towns entrants can use this initiative to benefit their entries.

Fingal County are one of the few local authorities to employ a full-time Biodiversity Officer, a fact noted by the competition adjudicators. Entrants are encouraged to work with our Biodiversity Officer with regard to carrying out wildlife surveys, dealing with ecologically sensitive areas, proper handling of invasive species, and creating a sustainable and environmentally sound habitat for wildlife to flourish. A Draft Biodiversity Plan for Fingal 2011 – 2017 was recently open to public consultation, and it is hoped that the plan will be adopted in the near future.

For further information on Growing Places, Fingal's Biodiversity Plan, or on initiatives that your community group can undertake to improve our natural habitats, please contact Hans Visser, Biodiversity Officer at 01-890 5605 or email hans.visser@fingalcoco.ie

ENDS 16/09/10