

"Caring for our environment"

Centre : **NEWMARKET-ON-FERGUS**
County : **CLARE**
Category : **C**

Results

Date of Adjudication : 15-07-2001

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2001	Mark Awarded 2000
Overall Developmental Approach	50	28	31
The Built Environment	40	30	29
Landscaping	40	33	34
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	15	16
Litter Control	40	25	25
Tidiness	20	14	14
Residential Areas	30	21	21
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	29	29
General Impression	10	6	6
TOTAL MARK	300	201	205

Newmarket-on-Fergus, Co. Clare

OVERALL DEVELOPMENTAL APPROACH

There is a need to submit a three to five-year work plan, as this will be helpful in adjudication for a specific year. The Committee must be complimented on the numbers of members, as this would seem to be a healthy group size for addressing a town of this size. The methods of funding are creative and would seem to involve a larger collection of the community than other forms of fund raising. The information presented on the entry form was helpful. However, a development plan is now necessary as part of the adjudication process. This plan does not need to be prepared by a professional. A one or two page document will suffice. It would be important to point out that this document should not focus on a maintenance programme, but more on the direction and future image that the Tidy Towns Committee seeks to nurture for Newmarket-on-Fergus.

THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Newmarket-on-Fergus is a fine town with many good public buildings and good modern design. There would seem to be a good integration of many of the new areas of development. However, there is a contrast between the new housing estates and the old streetscapes. This presumably could be addressed through the development of a colour scheme for the town. Colour would seem to be an important aspect of the streets and there are several creative areas, such as Rose Garden, where the walls to the car park have a very odd but interesting theme. However it is strange that there are no roses used on these walls to offset the large-scale imposition of the car park walls to the National Road. Rose Cottage has a very pleasant setting, however the thatch would seem to be in need of immediate maintenance. The Texaco Station is undeniably out of scale with the rest of the town and possibly far too imposing on the National Route as one enters the town. The Library needs painting and this is a criticism that extends to all the libraries in County Clare and the Tidy Towns Committee should raise this with the County Librarian. In general it must be stated that all the public areas of the town are well presented and that an organised plan will benefit in the better presentation of the whole town.

LANDSCAPING

There are many areas of the town that the Tidy Towns Committee have addressed in this section, and it would seem that landscaping is an important aspect of the Committee's involvement. Glencragga Park is very well presented. However the placement of the "No Dumping Sign" does reduce the visual charm. The smaller roads connecting the town to the surrounding countryside are very well presented and planting at the Y-junction with trees is a very good long-term investment. There is a need for the use of more

native species, given the close connection of the town to the surrounding countryside and it would be recommended that the large grass areas in the centre of the housing estates be more fully developed so that they extend the concept of garden into the public space. The landscape treatment at the junction of the existing N18 and county road 518 is very effective and extends the theme of the Rose Cottage. There is perhaps some need to address potential landscape opportunities within the streetscape area at the centre of the town. Though space is very limited, the use of display plants would aid in reducing the harsh road environment.

WILDLIFE AND NATURAL AMENITIES

This category has not been fully expressed as an area of endeavour by the Tidy Towns Committed. Essentially the drop in the mark refers to the non-availability of information as to how the town is integrating with wild life concerns. Though the river walk is seen as an important element to the amenity spaces of the town, there is a need for clear identification as to how this category will integrate with projects done with the schools and conservation elements to the surrounding landscape. It is noted that there is a very high preference for the use of foreign plants throughout most of the recent planting projects. This further alienates the landscape efforts from the surrounding landscape and the Committee must clearly identify if this is an issue that the town is seeking to encourage.

LITTER CONTROL

In general, litter control is very effective, given the significant use of traffic along the National Road and the population size of the town. The re-cycling area beside the Library is very clean and well presented, though it could be better screened. Perhaps the only area where litter needs better control is near the Loughgas shop.

TIDINESS

Newmarket-on-Fergus is quite a tidy town, considering the impact that a National Route can have on a small urban setting. It is perhaps necessary to review the detailing of kerb edges where the National Route does impact on the footways in the centre of the town, as many of the kerbs have been pushed out of place because of the large trucks. There is a need to ensure that many of the fittings, such as litter bins and other street elements are scrubbed down so that the paint surfaces are clean. For example, the litterbin at the entry road to the Library could be better presented. This again should be stated for directional signs. Car parking is another issue that can impact on the tidiness impression of a town and the main shopping street needs better control of this issue.

RESIDENTIAL AREAS

The housing estates look very well and distant views of the town, from surrounding country roads, indicate a very pastoral view with gardens integrating the town with the surrounding

countryside. Gardens and local hedgerows play an important element in this category and the contribution of colour associated with flowers and roses has been very effective. The fire damaged structure in one of the estates is a very unfortunate event, but it is hoped that the repair works will allow it to become a home as soon as possible. Colour variation within the housing estates is good and in many cases there is a need for larger plants so as to accentuate the countryside image.

ROADS, STREETS AND BACK AREAS

The National Route has a tremendous impact on the town which leads to the wearing down of the edges to footways. The Committee should canvas for sharper road markings in the vicinity of the town. Many kerbs are quite worn out and in some cases verges need better repair. For the most part the street system connecting to the National Primary Route enters into cul-de-sac areas which do not wear out with heavy traffic. However, there is a strong need for maturing street trees on these side streets, as the size of the roads are larger than some of the surrounding countryside roads. This would help in reducing the suburban image that seems to attach itself to the new housing estates. The entry road from the Mughan hill fort, with the roses and well mowed grass, looks very well and is a good entry point to the town and surrounding countryside. There are some speed ramps that need marking, as unaware motorists would not clearly see these traffic calming features. In general it must be stated that this town has accommodated the National Primary Route in a very successful manner, even though it may be awkward for national traffic to move through the town.

GENERAL IMPRESSION

Like with many towns in Clare, colour plays an important element in defining the character and individuality of the town. There would seem to be a trend for many of the houses to be using the lighter pastel colours and this is removing the strong contrast colours that are often associated with small Irish towns. The need for a colour plan that extends and integrates the many structures in the town should be addressed in the Development Plan as this is an element that the general public can contribute to an effective Tidy Town entry. There is a need to address the front gardens and increase the number of street trees so as to further encourage a rural setting within the town. The modern public buildings provide a very interesting visit and assistance should be provided to the Tidy Town Committee to develop a proper landscape setting that matches these buildings. The Committee must be complimented for the attached photographs.