

Tidy Towns Competition 2005

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Droichead Nua**

Ref: **40**

County: **Kildare**

Mark: **231**

Category: **F**

Date: **08/08/2005**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2005	Mark Awarded 2004
Overall Developmental Approach	50	43	42
The Built Environment	40	31	31
Landscaping	40	36	36
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	25	23
Litter Control	40	20	21
Tidiness	20	14	13
Residential Areas	30	25	24
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	30	30
General Impression	10	7	7
TOTAL MARK	300	231	227

Overall Developmental Approach:

The information supplied with the entry form was very comprehensive and helped to give an in depth understanding of the work progress in Newbridge as well as the aims and objectives and the challenges. The map was also very useful at adjudication time. The newspaper cuttings included in the submission show great commitment to the tidy towns movement and pride in the town and surrounds. There is a considerable amount of building development in progress at present and this is both causing disruption and changing the face of the town. Continued planning is needed to help merge the old with the new while retaining the character of the original town.

The Built Environment:

There are many fine landmark buildings in the town and these continue to look well. The Riverbank building is attractive forming part of the new Newbridge. The Bank of Ireland, Credit union buildings (with enormous extension in progress), Garda station, Bord na Mona buildings and FAS buildings all appear well. The post office needs attention to décor. The Catholic Church and bridge are two-landmark buildings and highlighting the bridge in future developments would be welcome. The new Whitewater centre will represent a huge change to the main street with the shopping complexes, carparking and traffic that accompany such developments. The Finlay Ford building at the top of the town is impressive and the shopping areas of Dunne's, Applewood, McDonalds and Tesco all appear well presented. The railway station is a fine building and looks very well despite the poor standard of landscaping surrounding it. The schools look well. The railings of the school

opposite the Catholic Church would benefit from painting. The attractive Georges street pedestrian area creates a nice atmosphere and the associated areas of Eyre street, Market square, Anne and Patrick Square and the area of Henry street.

Landscaping:

There are many fine examples of good landscaping features through the town and surrounds. The riverside park is attractive without being fussy and avails well of the waterside walkway. The St. Conleths garden is a lovely feature and can easily be accessed by passers by or visitors to the church. The grass care would be helped by a higher standard of maintenance. The entrance to Bord na Mona adds greatly to the main street and the tree/shrub border by the Garda station is welcome. The small planting feature beside Coughlans and Co is attractive. Landscaping in the vicinity of the Tesco/Dunnes/McDonalds/Applewood centres is well done and when the trees mature will add greatly to that area. Landscaping at Newbridge Cutlery is also well noted. The landscaping by the Wyeth roundabout and entrance is of a very high standard and deserves special mention. The provision of the many planted containers on the main street and along houses on the streets adjacent to the main street adds a great sparkle of colour for the summer months and is very welcome. Great efforts have been made in this regard and well done. The railway station landscaping needs urgent attention – the islands through the carpark have been overcome by weeds and the original planting has deteriorated also the large bank area on approach to the carpark needs proper landscaping to present an attractive approach to the station– note is taken of the intended development of this area in the plan. Individual houses along the approach roads and in the housing estates contribute well to the overall landscape of the town. Many of the housing estates are well landscaped at their entrances and open greens using good tree planting and well cared for grass. The terrace of housing along the riverside by Canning Place provides a lovely example of well cared for gardens. Housing estates at Mooreview, the Grange and the Priory, The Oaks and college park and Moorefield drive area all good examples of entrance landscapes. There are some tubs in the Market Square where the planting has deteriorated and these could be replanted.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

The Wildflower Park and riverside areas are a lovely strolling ground and provide great wildlife interest both by the riverside and in the wildflower area. The signboards are interesting and useful. Perhaps further walks could be established on the other side of the road at the bridge. The St. Conleths gardens contribute well also.

Litter Control:

Despite the good work being done on litter control there is still an amount of litter gathering in places through the town. Litter was noted on the main street and in the carpark for the town centre. The recycle bins are well signposted and appear to be well used. Some rubbish left beside the bins is unhelpful

Tidiness:

There is a good level of tidiness generally. The building developments are unhelpful to tidiness but these are temporary and should be finished off in a proper manner- this is an issue that tidy towns committees should be aware of – to see that proper reinstatement of sites is made before developers leave the site. Removal of overhead wires underground would be helpful.

Residential Areas:

There is a good standard of upkeep and maintenance in the vast number of housing estates that have been developed over the past 10 years. The large open greens and entrances are well landscaped and the trees and lawns will with time improve as the trees mature. The Annual Best kept estate competition is a great idea and this promotes a very good standard in the estates.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

The approach roads from Naas are particularly attractive and great credit is due to the Wyeth and Old Connell Stud for their contribution in this regard. The road surfaces are reasonably good in most areas. The rural style hedgerow and roadside verge style appears very quickly on leaving the town and it is important that this style is maintained where possible. Attention to details of footpaths and kerbs is always an issue closer to the town. The approach to the railway station is attractive with the very wide well kept verge and mature trees.

General Impression:

Newbridge has made great strides in many aspects of the town style – ranging from the riverside park and wild life area to the new building developments and street side colourfully planted containers. There are many aspects of the old tradition such as the terraced houses and traditional buildings, which will need to be retained in good order as the town becomes more developed and in danger of losing its character.

Second Round Adjudication:

Not having visited Droichead Nua for several years it was particularly interesting and instructive to see the enormous amount of development, with its good and bad points, chiefly the former. The liveliness and prosperity of the town was very much in evidence. Against this,

visual inconsistencies at the centre of the town were still apparent. The low-profile buildings on the east side of the main street do not accord with the taller buildings opposite, giving a lopsided look, except in a few places where additional stories have been created on the former. Several excellent public buildings were noted, such as the Garda Station, side by side with tackier ones, such as An Post.

Pedestrianisation of side streets – which was new to this adjudicator though it may have been done some years ago – has created a distinctly people-friendly atmosphere. The design of the street name-plates and the litter bins were admired, and so were the attractive lamp standards in George's street – these should be extended to other streets. Inconsistency of planning and development was also seen at the handsome railway station where the building is beautifully maintained and adorned with decorative floral displays, but the precinct is marred by the bleak car park where the few stunted trees and shrubs, and the waste ground by the bridge, attest to a paucity of creative ideas. It is assumed that the Local Authority has plans in place for traffic management to follow the opening of the vast Whitewater Centre, for at present traffic management is poor. There was considerable litter in the main streets: have fines been imposed? – there is nothing like a number of well-publicised prosecutions to create a better public awareness. Your mark under Landscaping is very high indeed: wherever there is planting, either on a large or small scale, the effect is superb. Droichead Nua has now entered the upper section of the competition – hence the second adjudication. Do take note of the detailed comments of the first adjudicator which should be helpful in your preparations for 2005: this may be a crucial year for Droichead Nua with the challenge of the new centre. Every good wish for your further progress.