

Tidy Towns Competition 2005

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Newtowngore**

Ref: **149**

County: **Leitrim**

Mark: **167**

Category: **A**

Date: **27/06/2005**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2005	Mark Awarded 2004
Overall Developmental Approach	50	23	
The Built Environment	40	25	
Landscaping	40	24	
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	12	
Litter Control	40	25	
Tidiness	20	12	
Residential Areas	30	19	
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	21	
General Impression	10	6	
TOTAL MARK	300	167	

Overall Developmental Approach:

Newtowngore last entered the Tidy Towns Competition in 1998, and you are a most welcome new entrant this year. In 1998 your village had a total score of 156 marks out of a possible 300. In the last few years the competition has developed in scope and the adjudicator is sure that you village will benefit greatly from annual participation.

The really successful Tidy Towns Committees are those that succeed in harnessing the goodwill, skills and experience of a number of different groups and Agencies that have something to contribute to the implementation of the 3-5 Year Tidy Towns Plan. These groups and Agencies include the following –

- GAA
- Local Development Association
- FAS
- County Council
- Local SuperValu outlet
- LEADER Company
- The CLAR Programme (if you are in a CLAR designated area)
- Local School or schools
- Urban & Village Renewal Grant Scheme

Hopefully you will be able to harness the goodwill and experience of some of those agencies to help

you in your work for your village.

The adjudicator notes that a Tidy Towns Work Programme or Plan was not submitted with the entry documentation.

All towns and villages are required to have a simple straight forward 3 –5 Year Tidy Towns Plan for their area. This Plan is prepared by your Committee in consultation with the appropriate local organisations. It should be no more than seven to ten pages long. The purpose of the Plan is to guide the work of your Tidy Towns Committee and others over the short to medium term. For each year you should identify key tasks or projects that your Committee wishes to undertake and hopefully finish. It would be useful to have discussions with your Local Authority Engineer as the Plan is in preparation.

The Built Environment:

Newtowngore is a number of fine old low stone walls and these are part of the character of this attractive village. The mature trees and natural landscaping that come into the village add much to the overall appearance of the built environment. The machinery storage area looks a little untidy and would be greatly improved by screening or partial screening. Near the Newtown Inn the Machinery Sales Depot is also a little untidy and some painting here would make a great difference. The Newtown Inn was neatly presented and the young trees in the car parking area in front are coming along nicely.

The use of hanging baskets and flower tubs in carefully selected places would add an interesting splash of colour to any town or village. However do make sure that this is not overdone. You should be using hanging baskets and tubs to help bring out the character of your village. On the Ballinamore approach road just before the junction a building was noted which requires painting, and the large doors should be painted a contrasting colour.

Have you considered replacing some of the shop front signs in the town with signs that use more traditional materials such as timber and hand-painted lettering. This could be approached on a co-operative basis.

Projecting advertising signs were noted on a number of premises in the village centre and this needs attention. The issue is how many of these signs are really essential from a commercial point of view?

The Glen Prince Textiles premises (for Sale at time of adjudication) looked quite untidy and hopefully a new use for this building will be found at an early date.

Near the junction in the middle of the village an old church or hall was noted. The building appeared to be closed. Can a new community use be found for this building, or if privately owned perhaps the owner has future plans for this attractive building. It is important that the building be kept, rather than demolished.

Landscaping:

Natural landscaping, especially the fine trees, add much to the attractive appearance of Newtowngore. In many villages several small landscaped areas may be more effective visually than one large area that may be difficult to maintain. If you are considering developing new landscaped areas do keep the issue of on-going maintenance in mind. The existing planting is quite colourful. The issue of hanging baskets and flower boxes has been mentioned earlier in this report.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

In many towns and villages this is an aspect of the Tidy Towns Competition where there can be significant potential for development. All towns and villages have the presence of wildlife to some

degree. It is important that your Tidy Towns Committee would examine the wildlife potential, and see what you can achieve in terms of making your area even more wildlife friendly.

If you have not already done so, the starting point is to have a habitat Survey carried out of the wildlife in your area. Suggested habitats to be considered include the following –

- Urban habitats – gardens, waste ground, walls, graveyards, hedges
- Wetland habitats – rivers, ponds, lakes, canals, reed marsh, bogs
- Woodland habitats – forests, hedgerows, plantations, parks
- Grassland habitats – roadside verges, parks, wet meadows, dry grasslands

The Survey should produce a species list for each of the habitats relevant to your area

This need not be an expensive Survey. Perhaps there is a knowledgeable person in one of your Schools who might undertake this task for you. Basically the Survey would identify the animals, plants, birds, fish that inhabit your area and their associated habitats. It should be remembered that to carry out the Survey properly that it will probably take a year so that all habitats can be assessed at different time of the year.

Using the results of the Wildlife Survey your next step should be do draft a straight forward Plan to preserve the identified habitats in your area, and investigate the possibility of new ones. For example perhaps there is an old Pond in your area that is disused, but with a little work could be an important area for wildfowl.

It is most important to try and involve your local school children in this project, and in many Schools there is probably a teacher who may have an interest in this area who would be willing to get involved.

As part of the actions to be undertaken in your Wildlife Plan you might like to consider the provision of some weather proof and vandal proof display panels, illustrating and explaining the wildlife in your area. This has been done very successfully in many towns and villages in Ireland.

Litter Control:

You have made good progress on litter control and on adjudication day little litter was evident. It is very important that your Committee would develop a litter control plan for your town / village. The issue of litter control is not an issue just for the Local Authority. All citizens and especially your Tidy Towns Committee have a key role to play. Your plan should include such issues as surveying the litter bins that you have in your community and their adequacy, clean up days and the role of your local schools.

It is most important that litter bins are placed in close proximity to the largest generates of litter. The regular emptying of a litter bins if of course essential.

It is suggested that rather than having one litter clean up week that you would get better long term results by have one clean up day every two weeks in the period late May to end August.

Tidiness:

A lot of dead grass was not in and around the village following the use of weedkiller. Dead grass and weeds must always been removed as soon as possible - they look quite untidy. A blank pole serving no obvious purpose was noted near the machinery storage area, and should be removed if it serves no useful purpose. All other poles should be painted an attractive eye catching - blue or black? On the Carrigallen approach road the log storage area would be improved if screened from the public road.

Residential Areas:

The various residential properties in the village and on the approach are presented to a good standard and some attractive landscaping is also a feature of some properties. Do remember that road boundary walls need to be painted on a frequent basis, and certainly more frequently than the main property inside the wall.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

The overall presentation of all approach roads is of critical importance. It is this that gives the first impression of your town or village. Attractive well presented approach roads give a great impression of a community that cares about how others see them.

Your verges need to be cut in to the base of the stone wall or bank on a very regular basis. This will need to be done by a motor mower rather than a tractor and cutter.

A frequent problem with approach roads is that there is no road kerb to divide the road surface from the grass verge. A frequent result of this is that verges get badly damaged by parked vehicles. This is a problem especially where the grass verges are wide. Do talk to your Local Authority Engineer about this difficulty. If kerbing looks out of place in your rural setting then perhaps large stones can be used by the Local Authority to define the edge of the roadway.

Do make sure that any old stone walls on approach roads are not in need of repair. Gaps due to collapse can look quite untidy. Fences should be kept in good repair and do not cut long grass that may tend to grow up through the timber fencing. Hedging on approach roads needs trimming from time to time but do avoid bird nesting time of the year..

It is important to wash the town / village name signs from time to time and make sure that any poles used for such signs are painted. Likewise try and get the Local Authority to repaint the poles used for Speed Limit Signs.

Speed limit signs also need to be washed on a regular basis.

Field gates can become a feature of your approach roads. It may be possible for you to get agreement from the relevant landowners that all damaged gates will be replaced, and that all gates will be painted to a common colour scheme.

General Impression:

It is great to have Newtowngore back in the Tidy Towns Competition and your adjudicator wishes you luck in the future.