

Tidy Towns Competition 2006

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Newcastlewest** Ref: **465**
County: **Limerick** Mark: **248**
Category: **E** Date(s): **07/07/2006**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2006
Overall Development Approach	50	36
The Built Environment	50	32
Landscaping	50	38
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	28
Litter Control	50	24
Waste Minimisation	20	8
Tidiness	30	14
Residential Areas	40	27
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	34
General Impression	10	7
TOTAL MARK	400	248

Overall Development Approach:

Newcastlewest is welcome to the National Tidy Towns Competition 2006. Thank you for the well completed entry form, well executed map indicating all the places of interest, street names, etc, and for the accompanying documentation and photos. All of which helped greatly on the day of adjudication. It is noted that you work closely with the Arra Development Co, the Community Council and Demense Committee, and receive support from Limerick County Council, West Limerick Resources and Arra for your activities, including bi-monthly meetings with the County Council.

The Built Environment:

Newcastlewest is indeed a very large town, as stated by last year's adjudicator, but fine one, with some superior buildings. Some of these were well presented including the Church and grounds; the Garda Station and gardens; Desmond College; Courtney School had a centenary Celebration and was undergoing major work; St Ita's fine stone building with imposing walls; Fire Station; Library; old Cargenie Library, as was Desmond Hall with its fine sculpted knight and well maintained courtyard. The two cemeteries Church Hill and Calvary well were well maintained, but the gates and outside walls of the latter need attention. The Famine Cemetery was also in good order. The new Gaelscoil O Doghair looked well, but the newly planted gardens were suffering from the dry weather. The town is also a very busy commercial centre and many of the business premises were attractively presented, but some caught the eye – MacMathu 's; Whelans's; both the Bank of Ireland and the AIB; Knights Inn; Tinteán and L A Fowers to name but a few. Of course, there are many premises much in need of refurbishment and quite a lot of these are on Maiden Street, and also on South Quay, which is often the only section of the town seen by motorists. Would have to agree with last year's adjudicator in that there are far too shoddy signs about and fly posting was again very much in evidence. There are many industrial premises on Station Road, and the new Newcastle West Business Park entrance was admired. The Square, with its very fine architecture, is now further enhanced by the presence

of the Cailin Deas Cruite na mBo sculpture by local sculptor. Clíodhna Cussen. Also noted land had been set aside for the decentralization of the Revenue Commissioners.

Landscaping:

The floral displays, including the rose bed, and other displays of summer bedding, hanging baskets all along the South Quay and by the IRA monument were admired, as was the flower and picnic area on the Abbeyfeale approach. The planting at the Grotto on Church Street was excellent, as was the planting at the Knockane Grotto. Well done to those involved in restoring St Bridget's Well. There are many fine mature tree plantings about the town and the landscaping the NCW Business Park was admired, as were the gardens at Desmond College and liked the idea of the Tree Dedicated to the Class of 2006. The tree planting at the top of Church Street, with the metal protectors, looked very well, as were the plantings by St Ita's Terrace, and at the entrance to The Paddocks. All the trees planted in the Castle Demense are maturing well. And the floral display at Lilac Close was top class, and maintained to a very high standard. The landscaping feature, with lovely trees, flowers and seats, in the square very much complements the Sculpture. Your plan for landscaping the New Bridge area is noted. Many of the business premises, some already mentioned above, boasted some very fine floral displays, and other premises should be encouraged to follow suit.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

Well done on completing the project in the Castle Demense, and as the adjudicator walked thought the parkland noted many people, young and old, enjoying the amenity, and also noted the Children' Playground is having a facelift. The area around the tree, planted by the President McAleese needs attention. Duck's Island – although the duck's were on the missing list – is very attractive and is a wonderful natural wildlife habitat. Your plan for the introduction of information boards depicting the flora and fauna of the Demense is noted, is the upgrading of the wild duck habitat by the riverside walk.

Litter Control:

This is an area which needs a great deal of attention, and on adjudication day litter was noted in many areas of the town, including along the Dromcolliher, Killeline and Tournafulla roads; all about the Knockane area; at the Famine Cemetery; Adult Learner Support Centre; all around the Town Centre; by Duck's Island and in the River by the silver foot bridge; and on the roadway and lane entrance to Ballygowan. You also have the problem, experienced by many towns, of the dumping of cigarette butts outside pubs and by seating areas. You have many litter bins, varying in standard, located all about the town, but people don't seem to be taking notice of your "Stop it – Don't Drop" campaign.

Waste Minimisation:

This is a new category for 2006, and your committee needs to study the Race Against Waste booklet which gives information on composting, recycling clothes and the schools Green Flag – noted Scoil Mhuire is flying their Green Flag, etc. You already have a one of the finest Recycling Centres in the County, where one can take an amazing array of goods to be recycled as stated at the entrance, user friendly opening hours. You may also get some other useful information on this category from the Environmental Section of Limerick County Council.

Tidiness:

There are just few areas in the town requiring attention – hedge trimming was lacking on the hedgerows with the Town; the base of the wall at the cemetery end of Station Road is untidy; the dumping of foliage debris by the cemetery entrance in the Demense should be discouraged; there are a few old farm entrances and buildings in need of attention; The Texaco and Kennedy's? (is missing some letters) garages are rather untidy, the lovely new entrance to the RFC grounds is marred by the lack of weed control, and the Knockane area need upgrading.

Residential Areas:

Newcastlewest has many new housing developments, some complete and some still under construction, and many were admired – The Paddocks; Woodfield; Palm Grove; Beechwoods area; Meadow Court; Arraview; Hawthorn Drive; development on the Old Mill road; Cois Tempall; Daarwood, and Ferndale. The green areas in the estates were well maintained, but at Ferndale the developer is commended for retaining the mature trees and apple orchard, though the greens were about 30cms high. Ash Crescent and Temple Green looked well but boundary walls at the former and the surrounding green area of the latter needs attention. As would expect for a town the size of Newcastlewest, there are many very fine private dwellings all about and some feature beautiful gardens. There are also some lovely, well maintained, stone terraces about the town, one particularly nice one on the Tournafulla road. The stone signage at the entrance to the estates is very fine – well done.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

Work was well underway on the 'Bridge of Tears' project. Signage on all approach goods were in good order, and the way some signs were set in cobbles stones was attractive and helpful for green maintenance. The road surfaces were good, but the Killeline and Tournafulla roads need attention. The pavements were also generally good, but leaf debris had gathered on some. The bi-lingual green signage, with the Newcastlewest coat of arms, throughout the town was admired.

General Impression:

Newcastlewest, with its Knights Templar history is a very fine town, and has the potential to advance further in the competition. You have done much to improve the town for all to enjoy, but a little more attention to detail is needed, and much more work needs to be done to overcome, what was very visible on adjudication day, the litter control problem.