

Tidy Towns Competition 2006

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Newbliss** Ref: **612**
County: **Monaghan** Mark: **190**
Category: **B** Date(s): **29/06/2006**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2006
Overall Development Approach	50	34
The Built Environment	50	25
Landscaping	50	21
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	13
Litter Control	50	26
Waste Minimisation	20	9
Tidiness	30	9
Residential Areas	40	22
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	23
General Impression	10	8
TOTAL MARK	400	190

Overall Development Approach:

Your well-filled entry form (which was a little hard to read in places) showed that you continue to maintain contact with all local groups and clubs, which is admirable, and also with FAS and the County Council. You might consider using the map of Newbliss in the Rural Places series printed by the Ordnance Survey: it is to scale, all buildings and roads are shown, you would find it surprisingly up to date and you would only have to name places of interest to the competition on it. This year's map took a bit of time to understand. Newbliss is a village of contrasts - from excellent to quite poor. It is on the latter that you will need to concentrate in the coming years and this mainly concerns commercial buildings, open or apparently derelict sites and some very obvious minor black spots which it should be possible to improve without much bother.

The Built Environment:

The Market House, the Church of Ireland church in its pleasant setting and the Presbyterian church with its well kept graveyard are the principal buildings of architectural significance and all appeared as well maintained on the date of the visit. The Masonic Hall looked particularly trim. Of the business premises, Nite Bite was especially smart. Emo was well presented, while taking account of the comment of last year's adjudicator; Keating's Fuels was also well presented but the pity is that such flashy premises do not blend with the traditional streetscape: no adverse marking here, but one would prefer to see such structures on the approach roads. Several buildings require their gables to be painted. The two large commercial premises, Darragh Boats and Newbliss Engineering, unwittingly destroy the appearance of their streetscape. Between them they seriously inhibit a more significant rise in marks this year under this heading. (The structures at the former Railway Station are not considered as they are outside the village area, but they do give a poor impression of Newbliss from the Monaghan road.)

Landscaping:

There is no major public landscaped area, though open spaces in estates are well planted and the grounds of the Church of Ireland church with its upward sweeping lawn caught the eye most favourably. Small plantings were quite effective, particularly the square tubs of annuals, creating a sense of care and some welcome colour. (Inspection of the landscaping at Rockcorry might suggest ways in which you could achieve something similar.) The popular children's playground looked very well. Do you plant bulbs, such as daffodils, for spring flowering along verges: if so, you should note it on the form as otherwise it is not possible for the adjudicator to know.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

The planting of trees comes under this heading. The wild meadow below the rise to the Church of Ireland church was favourably noted. There does not seem to be a major wild-life project, such as the round-the-year one at Drum. You do not say if you are involving school children in wild-life activities - though probably you do.

Litter Control:

There was considerably less litter than last year, though some was seen on the Cootehill and Clones ends of the village and in the main street. Congratulations to those who pick up litter and those who participate in the annual spring clean.

Waste Minimisation:

This is an above average mark in the first year of this new category - one which will assume greater importance as time goes on. Next year, please give details of the ways in which businesses contribute to recycling. A bring bank was not seen - probably there is one though it is not marked on the map. It is good to read that the school operates a recycling programme.

Tidiness:

All residents and landowners are responsible for keeping their frontages clean and tidy: most do. The two important commercial concerns already mentioned contribute to the untidy aspect of the village. An untidy open site was seen almost opposite, and small instances that could fairly easily be dealt with (but have not been) were, for example, the weeds over the handsome arch of The Inn, the boundary wall of the houses on the Clones corner which badly needed freshening up with paint, a similarly stained boundary wall opposite The Stag, rusty corrugated iron roofs on the left as you arrive from Cootehill, a site on the Scotshouse road next to a new residence, an exceptionally unkempt site next the Masonic Hall, and some hedges that needed trimming. (It is not expected that hedges in the rural area should be trim - they are correctly left to nature.) A very considerable rise in marks would occur if these - some of which also relate to other headings above - were attended to.

Residential Areas:

The older street houses are what gives Newbliss its special character. While it is unlikely that you will be able to restore the front gardens which used to run along the terraces on either side of the Market House, as seen in old photographs, many of these fine houses were looking well with good paving in front of them. The superb town mansion opposite the Clones road looked as if it was being restored. Unpainted gables in some cases have already been mentioned, and a derelict terrace on the Monaghan road is unfortunate. The most pleasing change was the promising new houses adjacent to the Scotshouse road - they blend in scale and features with the older ones and look smart and inviting, and indeed suggest that painting of some of the older houses in brighter colours than at present would enhance the streetscape enormously. Of the outer estates, one which does not seem to have a name almost opposite the Presbyterian church was particularly admired - spruce and smart with an imaginative traditional arch effect over the doors.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

The surfaces of the main roads were good, and of the Scotshouse road excellent. The car park alongside Darragh Boats was uncared for; work was ongoing at the car park opposite the Presbyterian Church: here is an opportunity for imaginative planting, and perhaps sturdy wooden fencing would give further visual interest. The paving and elegant lamp standards have been remarked upon in previous years. The approach from Clones is the most impressive, because of the excellent fencing and hedge maintenance; good roadside fencing was also favourably noted at Lisdarragh House.

General Impression:

It has been an interesting and pleasant exercise to visit Newbliss after a break of some years and to see the improvements that have been made under the influence of the Tidy Towns Committee. It has also been something of a disappointment to see how the potential has not been reached, particularly under Buildings, Landscaping, Wild Life and Tidiness, and it is towards these that the committee should direct its energies, eliminating the rather glaring contrasts that are at present noticeable. One keeps remarking 'Newbliss should

do better!' because all the right ingredients are there. Every good wish for enhancing these ingredients.