

Tidy Towns Competition 2009

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Newbliss** Ref: **612**
County: **Monaghan** Mark: **208**
Category: **C** Date(s): **07/06/2009**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2009
Overall Development Approach	50	35
The Built Environment	50	29
Landscaping	50	22
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	15
Litter Control	50	28
Waste Minimisation	20	10
Tidiness	30	13
Residential Areas	40	25
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	24
General Impression	10	7
TOTAL MARK	400	208

Overall Development Approach:

Thank you for the application form and the attached map, which was very helpful to the adjudicator in identifying relevant places and areas of the village. The committee of 9 is obviously very active if the appearance of the village is anything to go by. The 3 Year Plan referred to in last year's report was not included, so it was difficult to determine what had been done since then. It is good to note that you have ongoing working relationships with the Local Authority and other agencies, such as FAS and Monaghan Integrated Development Ltd. Your comments about the competition are appreciated and I know that progress may be slow, but do keep up the effort as the village has more potential than its present standing would indicate.

The Built Environment:

The village is small and compact and has a broad main street which houses a number of both commercial and private premises, some with fine stonework frontages. Road surfaces are good and the addition of new footpaths, and street lighting enhances it even further. The work undertaken at Cill Laobhain GAA Grounds was noted and the grounds themselves were neat and tidy. Your efforts to get owners of the few vacant properties to upgrade their premises are commendable, so hopefully you will be successful as it will benefit the village in the long term. The following properties were very well presented: Larmers and its unusual combination of services butchery and laundrette –brilliant!, McGinns shop front with its wonderful stonework and simple old fashioned sign, The Nite Bar, Martin's Londis and Dan's Bar. Hopefully, the garage premises mentioned in last year's report will be tidied up in the near future, as it certainly takes away from the overall look of the village. Newbliss Engineering was tidy and looked like as if it was refurbished since last year. The main churches in the village were all presented to an acceptable standard, as was the National School, so due credit to those entrusted with their upkeep. An unusual directional sign gives an international dimension to the

village.

Good to note that you have plans to refurbish the Heritage House, as it has such significance for the village of Newbliss or as gaeilge Lios Darach.

Landscaping:

The standard of landscaping was good and you have succeeded in getting the mix of shrubs, perennials and annuals in balance in certain parts of the village. Your application has alluded to the fact that you are in the process of putting additional tubs in place.

I would suggest that you might consider putting a few planters in place at stone seat in the centre of the village, as it would add a bit of colour to the area. Trees are important plants in any village or town landscape, and one feels that Newbliss would benefit from an additional prudent tree planting programme as parts of the village, with the exception of the main street, look very exposed. Maybe the committee might consider getting in touch with village renewal section or its equivalent in Monaghan County Council to seek advice on the matter. There were some nice individual gardens to be viewed on the outskirts of the village.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

The application has not mentioned specific projects in this category; unfortunately, I do not have a copy of the plan referred to in last years report, so I cannot comment on what has been done in the interim. If you haven't done so already I would suggest that you get in touch with the Wildlife Officer in the County Council to help to a) identify suitable locations and b) draw up a plan that will involve the local school children.

Litter Control:

The litter situation was not too bad considering that this a weekend day, maybe the local community are taking responsibility for keeping the village reasonably free of litter! Regular litter picks need to be organised and again the involvement of the local schoolchildren in these picks, plus something like an Anti-Litter poster campaign would increase more awareness and get a better response.

Waste Minimisation:

Good to note that you have agreed with the Local Authority on the acquisition of a recycling unit or bring bank, ensure that you site the centre at a suitable central location. Waste Minimisation is about how to avoid creating excessive waste where possible and then considering environmentally friendly ways of dealing with the waste created. The Committee should consult the Race Against Waste publication and the website to see what actions would be beneficial to Newbliss. It may be worthwhile to invite a representative out to talk to the committee in order to impart knowledge that would help you put a project together pre next year's competition. Once again, it is important that the local school children be accommodated in any possible new project, as they are already involved in a mini-recycling programme.

Tidiness:

The road verges and kerbsides were pretty clean and tidy, and it looks like any residue is cleaned up fairly regularly. Some of the footpath brick work on the main street needs to be cleaned and a section of concrete fencing near the same area needs to be painted, as well as repaired. Simple improvements often have major impact, especially in central areas of a village or town. There were one or two premises that need attention, most notably the previously mentioned garage forecourt and the area with the for sale sign on the Cootehill side of the main street. Signage is clean and visible, and fly posting at the main shops and pubs was kept to a minimum. I would endorse the comment in last year's report that owners of galvanised roof properties should try to have them coated.

Residential Areas:

The village in essence is a residential area and for the most part all homesteads were well maintained, with adjoining areas and boundary walls in a very presentable state. The terrace of houses on the Clones Road, an old style development, was extremely well presented in a uniform manner, so well done to the residents for putting in the collective effort. The new housing development Ciall Dara on the Monaghan road is very well laid out and complemented by an excellent iron boundary railing. Overall, a very good standard was achieved in this category.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

Entrances in to the village were for the most part very acceptable, new footpaths extending outwards from two entrances Cootehill and Monaghan added to the good standard of presentation. The basics, such as verges and hedgerows, were treated in a manner conducive to the encouragement and preservation of wildlife. The entrance from Three Mile House is slightly spoilt by the derelict property on the left as one enters, can the owner be approached to even consider camouflaging the property in some form. The Ballybay road sign at exit on the main street needs to be re-sited and cleaned, as it is slightly obscured at the moment.

General Impression:

The most positive comment in your application is contained in this section, "a number of residents are making a big contribution to the village and we hope to build on that". This should give encouragement to the committee of 9 to continue its good work to date. You are wished well for the future.