

Tidy Towns Competition 2009

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Newmarket-on-Fergus** Ref: **83**
County: **Clare** Mark: **249**
Category: **C** Date(s): **19/06/2009**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2009
Overall Development Approach	50	28
The Built Environment	50	36
Landscaping	50	41
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	22
Litter Control	50	28
Waste Minimisation	20	13
Tidiness	30	18
Residential Areas	40	26
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	30
General Impression	10	7
TOTAL MARK	400	249

Overall Development Approach:

We were pleased to receive the 2009 Tidy Towns entry form and very helpful maps from Obair Environmental Panel on behalf of Newmarket-on-Fergus.

Your committee of 8 members, holding fortnightly meetings year round, has achieved much in the town. Your hard work has, no doubt, been instrumental in gaining the support of Clare County Council, Pobal, LDSIP and local Clergy. The use of public meetings, Obair Community Newsletters, Parish Newsletters, local media and the local Farmers Market are very appropriate methods of spreading the Tidy Towns message to the community. Your links with the local schools via your Litter Awareness Campaign is encouraging as it is important to instil an early sense of pride in the young residents.

The fairs and events taking place in Newmarket-on-Fergus are excellent vehicles for promoting community spirit and co-operation and we hope they have been enjoyed by all.

The Built Environment:

Newmarket-on-Fergus has a good mix of established buildings and several new business premises and residential developments which have enhanced the overall presentation of the town.

Premises which impressed during our visit included the Catholic Church with neatly cut grassed areas, Fr Murphy Memorial Park (where the grounds were being cut during our visit), K Hayes Foodstore and the neighbouring houses which were very well painted. Varden's Pharmacy, Cummanes and Mama Mia also looked well. The Obair offices and Family Centre were immaculately presented. Thirsty visitors had a good

selection of pubs including The Weaver's Inn, The Pub, The Sports Bar, The Hunter's Lodge and O'Neill's. Supervalu and the Spar supermarkets were neat and tidy.

The Temperence Hall had attractive hanging baskets but the plinth of its wall and that of the Handball Club would benefit from a fresh coat of paint. We noticed a window which was falling off its hinges at the side of the Handball building. McDonagh Memorial Park, home to Newmarket Celtic AFC, was well presented.

The new commercial development on the Limerick Road will be an excellent addition to the town when the units are fully operational.

Landscaping:

Newmarket-on-Fergus has earned a reputation for its lovely rose beds over the years and certainly the display for 2009 has continued that tradition. Superb displays were viewed on the Ennis Road approach and on the Limerick Road, where there were large, well maintained green areas and neat fencing.

Shrubberies and the lovely new flowerbed at The Green were admired. The sculpture and story of Caitlin, surrounded by the stone plaques commemorating the various Parishes, provided a very interesting focal point. We were pleased to see that the water feature was being maintained during our visit.

The O'Regan Park is a beautiful and well cared for amenity and the entrance from the Limerick Road was very attractive with roses, neat paving stones, chain link fencing and good pathways.

Landscaping at residential estates in the town was of a high quality and the displays at the Avondale estate were particularly appealing. Hanging baskets and planted containers were visible at residential and business premises throughout the town.

Congratulations to all who have obviously worked hard to present lovely co-ordinated displays in the town.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

The O'Regan Park holds great potential for some exciting projects under the Wildlife and Natural Amenities category. It was not obvious from your entry or indeed, last year's report, whether you have already carried out any surveys of the existing wildlife and birdlife in the area but if not, we would strongly recommend that you consider doing so. Perhaps the local school could be involved – it would be an excellent experience for the pupils.

We noticed the new O'Regan tree within its protective frame and we hope that it will have a long and healthy life. It is a pity that it is necessary to go to such lengths to protect a tree but unfortunately this type of vandalism seems to be affecting many towns these days.

Litter Control:

It is good to note that you have the services of a full time man involved in litter collection but it is also important that everyone shares the responsibility for ensuring that litter is kept under control. Litter bins throughout the town were generally in good condition and working well within their capacity.

There was a small sprinkling of litter within the town – a few items near the lovely rosebeds on the Ennis Road approach; an old tyre and a couple of cans in the parking area across the road from the GAA grounds and a few cans in the river under the bridge in O'Regan Park.

On the approach to the town from the N18 several pockets of litter were observed near the Carrigoran Roundabouts and along the stretch of pavement leading to the Limerick Road roundabout. While these areas may not technically fall within the town boundary, we recommend that you organise litter patrols so that the problem does not escalate.

Waste Minimisation:

The Recycling Area near the Library was very clean and tidy and the location was easily accessible.

The collection and disposal of recyclable waste from elderly citizen's homes is an excellent project, well done. Your continuing litter segregation and the Spring Cleanup Promotion are also very commendable activities.

Other projects which you may like to consider include:

- The organisation of a waste minimisation workshop with the co-operation of Clare County Council (this could be organised as part of a Tidy Towns Meeting for the community)
- Contact local businesses and select a central store where recyclable items could be brought (waste paper, cans, glass, printer cartridges, etc) and liaise with the County Council to organise collections from the central area.

Tidiness:

Signage throughout the town was generally clean and visible and the large cream welcome sign indicating services was excellent. We also noticed the colourful welcome sign with the rose motif nearby.

We noted your intention to paint the Bus Stop on the Ennis Road and we also observed a Bus Stop on the Limerick Road which required attention. There were supports for a missing bench nearby – it would be good if this could be reinstated. Posts holding floodlights outside the Church were showing rust and needed to be painted. The painting of the white lines at the Church steps will be very helpful to visually impaired visitors, well done.

It was good to see that the site of the old petrol station (Halpins) has been acquired by a client and hopefully it will not be long before new development takes place. Another positive sign was the fact that several older properties in the town were undergoing renovation. We understand that The Tradaree Arms is no longer trading and as the building is in a prime location, it would be important to ensure that it does not slip into disrepair.

The old bench had been removed from outside the Library but we would suggest that the metal bars at the entrance porch should be painted and the planting of some colourful shrubs could significantly enhance the front of the building.

Your promotion of a No Poster policy is commendable and seemed to be paying dividends during our visit.

Residential Areas:

There was a fine selection of residential properties in the town. We admired Newmarket House and the lovely terrace of homes at The Green. The semi-detached properties near the Church were well maintained and had neat green verges with lovely flowerbeds. The colourful begonia beds and ornamental white swans at Tynagh were very pretty. Houses along the Ennis Road were generally well decorated and had neat gardens. A large white property near the school seemed to be vacant and the garden was overgrown – perhaps your committee could arrange for grass cutting to be organised.

While most housing developments did have clearly visible nameplates, it would be helpful if nameplates could be provided where missing. Avondale had an attractive Grotto, fine green areas, shrubberies and flowerbeds, a credit to all involved. Daisybelle Cottage nearby was cute. Boheraroan Estate had a well built natural wall at the front of the development, good open green areas and well staked young trees. Homes in Kilnasoolagh Park were generally well maintained and the grassed areas were neatly trimmed. Lough Gash development had a well built stone boundary wall and a selection of sapling trees had been planted. The pavement outside the development was in need of some attention and weeds needed to be removed. Residential developments on the Ballycar Road were attractive and well presented.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

The Limerick Road, with its clearly marked cycle lanes and excellent green verges, was a very impressive introduction to Newmarket-on-Fergus. Major resurfacing work was taking place on the Ennis approach during our visit and although it was causing some difficulties, the traffic was coping relatively well. Hopefully the end result will be worth the suffering.

A small amount of resurfacing was needed at The Green – near the sculpture/water feature.

General Impression:

The issues of concern, which you raised in your entry form, are common concerns for most towns in the Country today. At times it can feel as if they are insurmountable but by tackling them in co-operation with the local authority and various organisations in the community most issues can be resolved.

You have made good progress so far and as a result, Newmarket-on-Fergus is an appealing place to visit and we look forward to spending more time there in the future. Well done to all.