

Tidy Towns Competition 2012

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Newcastle West**

Ref: **465**

County: **Limerick**

Mark: **284**

Category: **E**

Date(s): **01/07/2012**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2011	Mark Awarded 2012
Overall Development Approach	50	39	39
The Built Environment	50	39	40
Landscaping	50	44	44
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	31	32
Litter Control	50	25	25
Tidiness	30	16	17
Waste Minimisation	20	9	9
Residential Areas	40	31	32
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	38	39
General Impression	10	7	7
TOTAL MARK	400	279	284

Overall Development Approach:

Your adjudicator would like to welcome Newcastlewest to the 2012 TidyTowns Competition and your participation is important to the competition. Thank you for the completed entry form together with supporting documents. The maps, photographs and press cuttings were of great help to your adjudicator. You continue to have the benefit of a very large committee again this year which is great together with good local and agency support. In regard to your communication media have you considered using texting and email to add to the existing mix? The engagement that you have with the Schools seems most positive. The TidyTowns Plan was studied with interest and this is a good working document with sound objectives year on year. The An Taisce / West Limerick Resources Environmental Training Programme is really excellent.

The Built Environment:

You have concentrated a lot of your effort on the Demesne which is understandable and the Bocce Court is a great addition together with the exercise equipment which must be very popular. Refurbished benches were noted in a number of locations and the new flags at the Quay were seen. The Desmond Complex was visited and the attractive buildings here sit well on their secluded site. Fine trees in this general area also caught the eye. Well done on getting the Graveyard Mapping project under way. Are you using Griffiths Valuation and the 1901 and 1911 Census data to augment the Graveyard research? The Industrial area on Sheehan's Road looked quite well presented and tidy when visited. In the town core area many buildings caught the attention of this adjudicator including that of J Riordan on Bishop Street. The fine stone facades to some buildings as seen from The Square and elsewhere are a key aspect of the character of Newcastlewest. This continues into Market Yard which is a very well presented and pleasant area in the town centre. It was interesting to see that many older facades survive and the older streetscape is quite intact in several areas. Desmond Hall is a fine visitor attraction in a key location. Hopefully the Castle tours concept will get off the ground. Along Station Road boundary walls at some of the industrial properties need to be painted. At Desmond College the long

well painted road boundary wall compliments the main building in a most satisfactory manner. The use of the Irish language on signage is required under present legislation and this should be encouraged where appropriate. On signage the Irish language must have the primary role.

Landscaping:

The new Wildlife Garden project has been noted. The reference to this was Map 1 F which sent your adjudicator to the Demesne but as no detailed map of the Demesne was provided this Garden could not be located. New fruit trees here are welcomed and these will be supportive of wildlife. A good landscaped area was admired at the St Mary's Road end of Rathina. Further back another excellent area caught the eye at the Knockine junction with St Mary's Road. On the Tralee end of the N21 a very good colourful presentation marks the turn to the Demesne. There is a sense of natural colour in the core areas of Newcastlewest and this is welcomed. Your adjudicator reminds the TidyTowns Committee that the cutting of roadside banks and ditches in the period 1st March to 30th August is not permitted under Section 40 of the Wildlife Act 1976, incorporating section 46 of the Wildlife (Amendment) Act 2000.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

Enhancement of the Great Southern Trail was mentioned in the entry form but details were not provided. The supporting documentation did not give details of the new work either. The Demesne was visited for a long walk and was really enjoyed. However internal signposting is really needed and this could be part of a series of colour coded walks. Your work on the wet meadow here is acknowledged but where is this located in the Demesne? A detailed Demesne map which must exist would have been helpful to the adjudicator. The 2011 Report mentioned a possible survey of the Newcastlewest end of the Great Southern Trail; was there any progress on this idea. The river area by the flags is well presented and a most attractive town centre area.

Litter Control:

New dog fouling facilities in the Demesne were examined and this a good approach to a major issue in Ireland. The entry form referred to the Bottle Banks that are accessible at all times at the Recycling Centre. This was visited and it seems to open on just two days per week which is extraordinary for a town the size of Newcastlewest. Perhaps the Bottle Banks are located elsewhere? Well done on the many cleanups that you have organised. Really terrible littering was evident on the road below Scoil Iosaf and a minor scattering was evident in Beechlawm Gardens. Overall litter control in general was quite good apart from the above issues.

Tidiness:

Well done on the Election poster ban and this is something for the rest of the country to follow. What is the programme of weed prevention and control mentioned in the entry form? Along Knockane there appeared to be extensive use of weedkiller to kill off grass. This practice is damaging to wildlife and is not generally acceptable in environmental terms. Weedkiller use was also evident in some estates. On Bother Bui the derelict site with the metal security fencing would be improved if timber fencing was attached to this. Between Chapel Close and Hawthorn Drive a very untidy site needed urgent attention. At the turn to the Demesne at Carroll Avenue the fingerpost is pointing in the wrong direction. Weed growth at kerbing along the approach to the Demesne was evident.

Waste Minimisation:

Well done to the three Schools on their Green Flag progress and do support them as they work towards the next flag. The segregation of litter at cleanups is welcomed. However the core of this category is about the reduction of the annual waste produced in Newcastlewest. Talk to the County Council Waste Minimisation officer who should be able to offer some guidance and the TidyTowns Handbook will also give you some good ideas. A local waste survey is suggested that would include at least water, electricity, cardboard and paper wastage should be considered for the year ahead.

Residential Areas:

Quite a number of the estates in all areas of Newcastlewest were visited. The overall presentation of many estates was quite satisfactory. At Ferndale excellent mature landscaping adds much to this estate. Nearby at Wingfield Orchard some dead trees at the entrance should be replaced with native species. Some kerb weed was noted at The Paddocks. Good young trees at Beechwood Garden were admired and along Bother Bui the older houses here some good colour use. A scattering of litter was evident inside the entrance at Chapel Close together with some kerb weed. Hawthorn Drive is attractively presented. At Liosan the very large green area with the seats is not being maintained while at the entrance to Kilcolman Drive the colourful plant containers need to be treated. Good trees and public grass areas at Daar Wood stand out. Grass areas needed attention at Temple Green.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

On the Tralee approach the traffic calming measures have greatly improved the quality of this approach to Newcastlewest. Improved road signage was noted on approach roads and elsewhere. On the N21 there seemed to be some improvement to verge presentation. On the Limerick approach road the new roundabout and associated landscaping has transformed this approach to Newcastlewest. The Rathina approach has the very attractive riverside limestone wall and the riverside trees here were admired. On the Knockane approach to Newcastlewest the overall presentation standard declines as one drives out towards the town boundary.

General Impression:

You are well focused on the TidyTowns priorities for Newcastlewest and your committee is well structured and organised. Good luck with your work in the year ahead when we will look forward to returning to Newcastlewest.