

Tidy Towns Competition 2014

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Newtowncashel** Ref: **485**
County: **Longford** Mark: **311**
Category: **A** Date(s): **30/06/2014**
25/07/2014

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2014
Community Involvement & Planning	60	47
Built Environment and Streetscape	50	40
Landscaping and Open Spaces	50	44
Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities	50	33
Sustainable Waste and Resource Management	50	15
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	62
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	29
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	41
TOTAL MARK	450	311

Community Involvement & Planning / Rannpháirtíocht an Phobail & Pleanáil:

Newtowncashel is welcomed to the 2014 Tidy Towns competition. Thank you for your well presented application and supporting documentation. Your committee of 12 and 25-30 volunteers makes Newtowncashel unique in that the entire community are part of the committee, given that you have a population of 50. You are also fortunate to have workers dedicated to the enhancement of the village. Your engagement with the local authority, local businesses and networking with other Tidy Towns groups such as Ballymahon, provides valuable support to your group through advice, funding and other assistance that maybe necessary throughout the year. The School involvement as you state compliments the work of the Tidy Towns committee. The village is set in lush countryside with its winding roads edged by stone walls and wooden railings. This together with the many mature trees and beautiful sculptures are part of the village landscape, which thankfully have been restored to their glory, gives the village its own uniqueness. The new lighting system installed in the village is the result of many years of planning and the committee are to be commended on this project.

Built Environment and Streetscape / An Timpeallacht Thógtha agus Sráid-dreacha:

The built environment and streetscape does not disappoint the visitor. The presentation of J. Hopkins shop gives a lovely approach to the village. Thomas Ashe Hall purchased last year, an important amenity for the area is decorated to a high standard. A noticeboard outside the hall provides essential contacts for the community. The G.A.A. centre is well maintained. The Church and its grounds are impeccable. The Health Centre building would benefit from flower displays to brighten the appearance. The local shop was well presented. The amenity at the Quarry offers educational features on stonework and the many nooks and crannies for the visitor to explore is superb. You are to be condemned on your continued work to develop and keep this area. The adjudicator was saddened to hear about your missing statue. The corner butterfly garden is another place of interest with a suitable array of plants which will facilitate and provide a charming setting for many insects and birds. The mounded green area again offered more interesting features and provides nice picnic amenities. The area around the picnic tables would be easier to maintain if they were placed on a hard surface and not on grass. The new energy efficient street lighting with its no overhead wires gives a whole new dimension to the village and compliments the entire streetscape. The site of the heritage centre still has its sign in place. Adjacent to this are some old farm implements positioned to the right of the magnificent Rose garden. Perhaps an information board on their title and usage in past times would make interesting reading for the community and visitors to the area.

Well done on your endeavour to maintain the closed pub in the village, hopefully the doors will be open again by next year's competition.

Landscaping and Open Spaces / Tírdhreachú agus Spásanna Oscailte:

The village with its rural setting has superb landscaping in the mature trees and hedging that form the village boundary. Landscaping throughout the village using year round seasonal planting is commended. Many areas of colourful plants were noticed, in particular the lovely blue hydrangeas at the house across from the G.A.A centre. The recessed flower beds in the walls were also noted. The weeping tree and wildflowers in Butterfly Park looked splendid. The beautiful landscaping at the village entrances sets the scene for the village as one approach. The copper beech trees make a good contrast against the grey stonewall, but planting of flowers under trees is not recommended. Around the G.A.A there is excellent planting of hedging. Do try and avoid the over use of weed killer around edges as it was noticeable around the gravel area at the G.A.A pitch. With so many flower beds to be maintained your "adopt a bed" solution was good thinking. It gives responsibility for the caring of flower beds to allocated members of the community.

Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities / Fiadhúlra, Gnáthóga agus Taitneamhachtaí Nádúrtha:

Quarry Park provides a natural setting for wildlife as well as providing an amenity area for the community. The newts and frogs were just some of the wildlife noticed in the park. One wonders how much wildlife is actually living in the rock of the quarry along with the stone walls that border the village. Many birds could be heard in the Quarry Park and the Butterfly garden was humming from the sound of birds. Your study on wildflowers with a horticultural expert of flora and fauna in the area will be very interesting when concluded. Have any members of you group been involved in this study? The Quarry with its unspoilt natural surrounding provides a safe haven for all types of wildlife and this was evident on adjudication day as many birds were both spotted and heard. The bees were also spotted in the wildflower areas around the park.

Sustainable Waste and Resource Management / Bainistiú Acmhainní agus Dramhaíola Inbhuanaithe:

Thank you for your copy of results of waste audit carried out in 2013. It is good to carry out these audits and better to note from the results that more people are composting now than before and this proves that more and more people are becoming aware on the importance of recycling. The Green Schools programme is a superb educational tool for pupils and the wider community on managing waste and the more efficient use of resources. The harvesting of rainwater which you are aware of and using will be an important saving to all Tidy Towns groups. With water charges being introduced it is essential for groups to harvest rainwater for the watering of plants. A long term plan would be a move away from bedding plants that require large volumes of water. This will save water and funds and hopefully will filter through to the wider community. Groups should look at how the amount of food that is wasted can be reduced, such as buying unnecessary food and using leftover food where possible instead of bringing it to landfill sites. The local authorities prevention network website have added a specific Tidy Towns page to this website providing practical tips and advice on sustainable waste and resource management. The website address is <http://localprevention.ie/tidy-towns/>. This hopefully will be of benefit to groups.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

Your vigilance on litter is proving successful. The Schools involvement is also proving that educating the youth to refrain from dropping litter on the ground and using bins is excellent as it stays with them into adult life. Litter free towns and villages are less likely to be littered by passers-by. Well done on your dawn patrol and the wider community awareness. The village was tidy on the day of adjudication. No weeds were noticed at kerbs and no overhead wires. The bring bank was neat and tidy. Do ensure that overhanging briars over stone walls along the footpath are cut back.

Residential Streets & Housing Areas / Sráideanna Cónaithe & Ceantair Tithíochta:

The village can be proud of its residences throughout. They are all well maintained to a very high standard. Your committee are doing excellent work in maintaining unoccupied dwellings. Thankfully the village has no unfinished estates with all stand alone houses. The gardens are bright and neat. Their landscaping brings excellent colour to the streetscape.

Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes / Bóithre Isteach, Sráideanna & Lánaí:

The approach roads to the village are presented to a high standard with well-maintained grass verges. The stone walls and wooden palings together with neat hedging and mature trees forms a boundary for the village and gives a good first impression as you enter from any direction. Some wooden railings, behind the trees on the Lanesborough approach road are in need of repair. The village pumps give an old feel and forms part of the village history which make nice focal points.

Second Round Adjudication:

It has been at least ten years since I last visited Newtowncashel and it remains resplendent. Tucked away in rural Longford it is certainly a jewel in the surrounding boglands. Numerous bog oak carvings allude to the environs and effectively turning the villalgescape into an art gallery. This is followed through in the wonderful amenity that is The Quarry Park – a true oasis. The access gateway should be kept clear of overgrowth. Buildings throughout the village are neatly presented including the pub, shop church and hall. Please ensure that paintwork is refreshed as required, for instance, the white pillars at the cemetery, Health Centre, blue gates and the school should be repainted for next year competition. You are highly commended for the vast swathes of grassy banks, which are maintained to the highest standard. Effective tree planting is also a feature through the relative wide geographical area that Newtowncashel encompasses. Deep red dahlias were in abundance in the village and this has superb impact. The residence at J. Hopkins looks fantastic, as do many of the residences throughout the village. Just two pieces of litter

were noted as the adjudicator passed a soft drinks can and a crisp packet at different locations on the Longford approach. To add to the uniformity it is suggested that agricultural gateways should be uniform in presentation in so far as possible. At the moment these have varying degrees of tidiness. You are commended for embracing the unusually bright 'blue' of public lighting and street furniture. Congratulations on your success to date in the Superval Tidy Towns Competition perhaps you will regain the top title in the coming years? Best of luck.