

Tidy Towns Competition 2014

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Newbridge** Ref: **369**
County: **Kildare** Mark: **297**
Category: **G** Date(s): **18/06/2013**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2014
Community Involvement & Planning	60	54
Built Environment and Streetscape	50	39
Landscaping and Open Spaces	50	42
Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities	50	38
Sustainable Waste and Resource Management	50	16
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	42
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	32
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	34
TOTAL MARK	450	297

Community Involvement & Planning / Rannpháirtíocht an Phobail & Pleanáil:

Welcome to the SuperValu Tidy Towns Competition 2014 and we note that you are a participant for about 30 years. Your committee of eight people hold monthly meetings throughout the year and additional meetings are held by project groups. You are actively involved in making submissions to the local authorities and you have strong links with residents, voluntary groups and schools and receive support from local businesses and public bodies. Your means of communication include a range of media. Links with the various schools (teachers, parents and pupils) is impressive. Many thanks for attaching a map of the area with project locations marked for our attention. We note the 3-5 year plan and thank you for providing a summary of projects with the map for 2014.

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

Newbridge is looking very well and very busy. On Main Street, we liked the façade on the Post Office and admired the plant containers enhancing that area within the street. We admired the street signs which are a good example for other towns to copy. The entrance to Bord Na Mona offices, the Riverbank and Library all enhance the street and are embellished with floral displays. It was good to see public toilets available in the town centre. Such facilities are a rarity in Irish towns. The Liffey Arms pub, The Gables and the Granary Bar & Restaurant buildings were in splendid condition. The Man's Shop, and adjoining buildings had great petunia in window boxes. Newbridge College and grounds is an impressive complex, some minor litter was observed in the car park. We liked the impact of climbing plants on the building. The Pfizer complex looked well and we note that they assist in the maintenance of some areas outside their site. St. Conleth's Church is a fine structure; we admired the floral displays both sides of the door and good quality paving on the footpath outside. Opposite, there are two schools, St. Conleth's and St. Mary's which are fine buildings and we were impressed with the many Green Flags proudly flying. Congratulations to the Patrician Primary School on their centenary celebrations; the red and yellow brick buildings looked very well. The Greyhound Stadium is a fine complex. St. Mark's NS had beautiful planting and a name stone and we noted the new trees inside the gate. Sarsfields GAA club grounds was well presented. The new Department of Defence building is an imposing structure and the AFC site opposite also looked well. Other important buildings include Áras Slainte and the Sports & Leisure Centre both of which contribute well to the built environment. Newbridge Silverware is an interesting building and we noted the sculptures and flowers outside. Newbridge Industrial estate has a mix of good and poorer quality buildings. Lidl is clean but some trees would add character. The commercial complex including KFC, McDonalds, Tesco, Woodies and Dunnes Stores is a busy part of your town. In general it looked very well. There is scope for more tree planting in the large car park sections. St. Patrick's Church (Col) was admired and we noted the well painted bollards outside. At St. Patrick's NS we noticed three Green Flags; unfortunately two of them are torn. There is space for a few trees inside the front boundary wall. Ballymany Shopping Centre looked inviting as did the Maxol service station and Mace complex. Keadeen Hotel has an impressive entrance and we liked the Begonia beds on each side. We compliment the Kildare County Council on

the provision of a public toilet in the Main Street; such facilities are too often missing in Irish towns. We admired the blue oval plaques with information on certain buildings in the town.

Landscaping and Open Spaces / Tírdhreachú agus Spásanna Oscailte:

It was good to see people relaxing in the sunshine on the banks of Liffey Riverside Park, which is maintained to a very high standard. We admired the arches, seating, picnic tables and floral displays and the view of the River Liffey at this point is delightful. The rest of the park is delightful and maintained to a very high standard and is well used. Newbridge has examples of fine specimen trees and some of particular note were observed on the wide grass margins on Station Road. When trees are established it is important to remove the stakes as the stems can get damaged from the ties or stake. This problem mainly arises in some residential estates mentioned below. The many baskets on railings and plant containers at junctions, including the Edward Street/Whitewater Road were admired. However, with 190 plant containers on display, we wonder if you are overstretched because that is a huge maintenance task. While we appreciate the use of plant containers demonstrates your high level of interest in the improvement of Newbridge, we wonder if in some cases such as at the water tower, if a different approach such as the use of climbing plants (ivy) would be more effective and have long term value. Military Road caught our attention for its range of perennial plants. The use of permanent planting is encouraged rather than relying on annuals which are more time consuming. In that regard, we also admired the planting at Moorefield Park entrance. This type of planting is more beneficial in terms of impact compared with many containers that require high maintenance. Roundabouts at the M7 junction are fantastic. In particular, we liked the Warrior and hounds. Some weeds such as Cleavers can smother the desired planting and this is happening along part of the boundary of Sex Road. We note the many other actions in your report such as the ongoing maintenance of grassed areas, the planting of trees and the removal of fallen trees.

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

The Liffey Linear Park is your main source of wildlife and we note the development approach is to conserve and protect it and encourage more wildlife by planting blackthorn, hawthorn and hazel trees. You have a rich natural area surrounding your community and it is fortunate that Pollardstown Fen is just two kilometres away as well as the Curragh Plains and the Hill of Allen. We noted the seeding of a wildflower meadow and its use by school children. Appreciating your local wildlife resources is vital in order to achieve under this category. In this regard researching and raising awareness is more important than 'doing' at the early stages. Biodiversity is under threat globally and sadly Ireland is a part of this trend. Habitats of value include specimen trees, hedgerows, treelines, streams, woodlands and wetlands. List the plants and animals to be found in your natural environment and recognise their significance (native, protected, or alien invasive?). This would be a very useful project for schools. Perhaps this information will be included in the biodiversity/habitat study when it is available for you.

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

This category is becoming more and more important and the available marks are now increased to 50 to highlight the need for communities to address the issues involved in tackling the growing waste mountain that is creating problems of pollution, unwanted land use, and the use of dwindling resources. We note the recycling area at Tesco's and it is good that there is CCTV coverage there to prevent illegal dumping. We are pleased to note that all organic waste is recycled via shredding and mulching. The introduction of separate waste bins to households is a major step in sustainability. We note the success of the scrap Saturday project and congratulations to teachers and pupils in schools for their success in achieving Green Flags. We noted the good intentions expressed by signs at St. Conleth's and St. Mary's Schools with "Walk on Wednesday" and "Feet First Friday". We note your interest in developing more projects under this heading and therefore make the following suggestions for other measures that your town can take in regard to sustainability. Contact your waste contractors and try to find out what is being thrown away and armed with this information you can start to think about how waste can be reduced. Examine the waste pyramid and note the recycling is only the fourth most preferred option after avoidance, reducing and re-using. One third of our waste is organic in nature, such as grass clippings. You can avoid collecting mown grass by more frequent cutting and using mulching mowers which shred the clippings and facilitate faster decomposition. In regard to water usage, self-watering hanging baskets are a help in reducing the amount of water used and also the task of watering. Other waste minimisation projects might include working with retailers to cut down on packaging, reminding people to re-use shopping bags, discouraging junk mail, encouraging the re-use of water bottles and coffee mugs at school and at work. In response to an over use of chemicals for weed control, many useful products of the past are no longer available and therefore communities are encouraged to use other means such as hoeing to maintain weeds. In some cases, allowing wildflowers to develop is an acceptable alternative. These activities will highlight the fact that you are focussing on this category and when you develop more projects in the future your marks will increase.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

In general, Newbridge is very impressive in regard to tidiness and litter control. We note your work in cleaning St. Conleth's Bridge which looked very well. Your management of illegal advertising is working well as is graffiti control; some graffiti and weeds were noted along Canning Place. The voluntary litter patrols are effective as very little litter was evident during our visit and we note the major clean-up events over five weekends. Most of the grave in the cemetery are maintained, the railings need painting, there are weeds growing outside the wall and some litter noted there also. A small amount of litter was seen on the Naas Road. A dead tree on the boundary of St. Conleth's School near the pedestrian crossing to the church should be removed. The water tower is an unattractive feature that dominates the area. We have already mentioned the use of climbing plants such as ivy but have you considered using it for an art display. Some sites of poor quality can be seen, including the site to the rear of

Newbridge Silverware and across from it, the concrete block wall would benefit from softening with climbing plants such as ivy. On Morrinstown Biller Road, some weeds at the wall base were noted. The sign for Ballymany Park (opposite the Keadeen Hotel entrance) is dirty. A small point, some weeds are appearing beneath the plant containers because the areas are not trafficked.

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

Your links with residential groups is proving successful and we note your lobbying for improved signage. Connell Drive estate had very good trees and grass. The walls were well painted and the hedges in the gardens added to the softening impact of the houses which are in good condition. Baroda Court and Wellesley Manor estates looked well and the copper beech hedge at the latter estate is unusual. The houses in Canning Place looked well with lots of colour in the gardens and we admired the railing on the Liffey side of the road. College Park and St. Dominick's Park were visited. The beds were weed free but some kerbside weeds were noted. A dead tree in a roadside margin nearby should be removed. There is scope for new trees to be planted in this estate where we noted the houses are in good condition. The Grange estate was fine and we noted the steel pillars at the Priory estate and the ornamental directional poles. Supporting stakes on some trees should be removed before they cause damage to the stems. College Farm estate had fine entrance piers and there is scope for more trees inside the entrance where perhaps the original planting may have died. The terrace of brick houses on Standhouse Road is a nice feature that are well maintained apart some weeds on the chimneys. Opposite these, the private houses were well screened. Other estates visited and found to be looking well were Kilbelin, Liffey Hall, Watercres Manor, Cedarwood Park, Highfield; some of these would benefit from having supporting stakes removed from established trees before they cause damage to the stems. Oak Lodge B&B looked welcoming.

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

We admired the laurel and beech hedges on our approach from Naas. The grass was well mown and the mature trees added enhancement. The Tourist Route and the Welcome signs were both clean. The roundabout at the end of Great Connell Road had some weeds and litter. The Buckley's Cross roundabout looked well – the promised sculpture is not yet in place and can be adjudged next year. New Street Bridge was admired and we noted the impact of the power washing done by your committee. There are many road surfaces in Newbridge that are quite poor, some as a result of temporary fill back from service installations, an examples being Station Road. The red banners for the Irish Derby added a splash of colour to the streetscape. The roundabout at Ballymany Crossroads was well done.