

Tidy Towns Competition 2017

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Newtownmountkennedy** Ref: **515**
County: **Wicklow** Mark: **278**
Category: **C** Date(s): **28/06/2017**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2016	Mark Awarded 2017
Community Involvement & Planning	60	40	42
Built Environment and Streetscape	50	31	33
Landscaping and Open Spaces	50	35	37
Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities	50	32	33
Sustainable Waste and Resource Management	50	11	14
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	53	54
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	32	32
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	32	33
TOTAL MARK	450	266	278

Community Involvement & Planning / Rannpháirtíocht an Phobail & Pleanáil:

You are very welcome to the SuperValu Tidy Towns Competition 2017. Well done for all the work undertaken by Newtownmountkennedy and District Tidy Towns Association over the last year, as set out in your very comprehensive Application Form. The hand-drawn colourful map enclosed with your application was excellent and very artistic. Congratulations are due to Annick Bishop for preparing this. The map was very clear and with the numbered key, it made it easy to find the various sites of interest and assisted greatly in the adjudication of your Town. It is noted that your Committee has a total of 10 Members who meet monthly with a further 20-25 who volunteer on an ongoing basis for various works. That you have been able to foster links and engagement with a range of different groups and agencies to further your aims is very impressive and it is noted that a further 60 people are involved in contacts and collaboration of this nature with your Committee. The setting up of a Community Forum for Newtownmountkennedy is a very welcome development and is sure to provide a mechanism for Community Groups to come together and initiate/progress much needed projects. The range of events organised and held in Newtownmountkennedy each year as evidenced by the many photos in your submission, is quite amazing and does indicate a very active Tidy Towns Committee and vibrant community working together for the betterment of the Town as a whole. Your efforts in lobbying to secure funding for the completion of specific projects are highly commended with particular reference to the GAA footpath and Kilmurray Church Restoration works. The Tidy Towns Calendar is a particularly good idea for fund-raising and spreading the word about Tidy Towns and the methodology you have used here would surely be of interest to other Tidy Towns Groups across the country. Your engagement with Statutory Bodies such as Coillte, Wicklow County Council, PPN, Council Members, County Wicklow Partnership etc. has to date been successful and we wish you well with your application for Greenway Funding to the value of €150,000. The three strands defining your efforts to further develop the community in Newtownmountkennedy i.e. maximising public participation, social inclusion and engagement with Heritage provides an important over-arching framework for your activities and will guide your Committee for the future to enable you to make great strides in progressing further in the Competition.

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

The 'Hanging Baskets and Pots' premises provided an impressive floral display on the approach to the village centre. The frontage of the Curiosity Shop caught the eye although a few too many posters blocked the window display here. The Fishers, Anne Gregory Design, the Post Office premises and the Doctor's Surgery were greatly admired. The red oak and eucalyptus trees at the Doctor's Surgery property were stately specimens. The herbaceous planting scheme and the seat facing the road at the entrance to the village created an excellent feature here. The triangular shaped traffic island with stone faced surround, surfaced in grass is also a very attractive feature. Perhaps a central herbaceous planting scheme with grass margin would be appropriate here to enhance the area and reduce grass maintenance? The planting beds along the Main Street under the birch trees caught the

eye. The stone walls located opposite the Parkview Hotel and behind the bus stop are important features along the street. The Heritage Sign located on the Main Street provided great information on local places of interest in the town and the surrounding area for the visitor. The front of the sign, however, was a little dirty and was in need of a good clean on the day of adjudication. The colourful floral displays at Saint Joseph's Church and on the adjoining Mountkennedy Inn were delightful. The free 'Wee Library' at the entrance to the Doctor's Surgery was enthralling - such a great idea and so well put together. The Captain Robert Monteith monument was noted positively. The entrance and perimeter wall to Saint Matthew's Church along Church Road were greatly admired. Consider the possibility of providing some screening along the existing concrete retaining wall near the road junction at the School, as this wall significantly detracts from the overall appearance of the area. Also consider removing the rocks located at the Kilcoole Road junction as these detract from the appearance of the grass margin here. Killmurray Cemetery and Church were visited and the restoration works currently in progress were noted with great interest. Many wonderful historic Castle and Church restoration schemes have been completed around the Country under the Fás Youth Training Programme and perhaps a similar Scheme could be considered for Killmurray Church. The Holy water fonts set into the walls of the building were particularly striking. We wish you well with the continuation of your restoration works here. One also wondered what the current status is of the charming thatched cottage located adjacent to the Killmurray Cemetery site? You have been engaged in a wide variety of Tidy Towns actions under this category this year and the presentation of the Town on the day of adjudication was a credit to all concerned.

Landscaping and Open Spaces / Tírdhreachú agus Spásanna Oscailte:

Your new approach to the planning of maintenance operations by letting people who live in a particular area to look after their immediate area is clearly paying dividends. There are a significant number of locations in Newtownmountkennedy requiring ongoing and regular maintenance in terms of grass cutting, litter control and planting maintenance and this probably works best with small teams dealing with specific work tasks working to an overall plan. It is noted that your planting schemes are gradually being changed to permanent perennial herbaceous plantings- this is a good development as it cuts down on watering and maintenance costs and is also pollinator friendly. Your hanging baskets and flower boxes on the Main Street have been reduced to a total of 60 - despite this the positive impact of the floral displays at key locations on the Main Street is significant, as is the impact of the permanent plantings. It is noted that you have removed some shrubbery from the side of a roundabout to facilitate the development of a Greenway in conjunction with the Newtown 2050 Group. The start of the Greenway walk (referenced Number 2 on the map) was visited. This is a fantastic amenity with a well-constructed path meandering through dense woodland, skirting a very scenic riverside habitat. Unfortunately, time constraints prevented more exploration. It might be a good idea to provide a short section of footpath here, to link the steps at the entrance to the Greenway to the concrete footpath situated along the road. The Town Park between Dunnes Stores and the Parkview Hotel was visited. This is a very well presented and restful open space with magnificent trees, water feature, stream, seats etc. and is a great recreational asset for the local Community. The standard of maintenance here was excellent.

Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities / Fíadhúlra, Gnáthóga agus Taitneamhachtaí Nádurtha:

It is noted that 15 parents helped the Tidy Towns group create a school garden to encourage Biodiversity at the Junior National School – the enclosed photos really emphasise the significant improvement carried out here and well done to all concerned. It is great that you are creating awareness amongst local children of nature and biodiversity through a series of ten talks delivered under the 'heritage in schools scheme' – many thanks to Grace Garde (Tidy Towns Member) for this. Forests are wonderful and interesting habitats for children to study nature and you have arranged a number of walks for both senior and junior schools to nearby woods with a total of 25 hours officially dedicated to understanding wildlife, habitats and amenities. The Season Park Farm Allotments Event and annual barbecue and talk provided a useful opportunity to create awareness amongst the community of 'grow your own' in practice and how the food we eat is best grown, stored and cooked. The adult foraging talk in the little wood and mighty Oak with Laurent Herbont also created knowledge and awareness of the wide range of wild plants around us, particularly in Woods, which are edible and can be used for culinary purposes.

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

You have dealt with a wide range of issues under this category and grouped them under headings such as Landscaping, Reuse and Repair, Killmurray Church, Men's Shed, Second Hand Shops, Food Production and Education, Transport and Traffic, Schools, Energy Efficiency and Wee Library. This is an excellent way to organise and plan the development of your Community and achieve further progress in the competition under this category. You have achieved a great deal under the various sub-headings and your Committee and wider Community are to be congratulated for your achievements here. For next year you could undertake further initiatives under this category such as encouraging local people to engage in further sustainable waste, water, energy and transport actions e.g. car-pooling and park and ride initiatives, using low carbon vehicles, e-car charge point(s) in the village, extending cycle parking facilities in the village, the development of greenways and cycle routes in the area, encouraging the development of small solar farms on appropriate sites, the greater use of solar panels on roofs, heat exchange units to reduce energy consumption by households/businesses, greater use of water butts for watering gardens and village plantings, organising stop food waste seminars etc. The Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland website has good information in relation to the development of Better Energy Communities. You could also speak to the Environmental Officer at the Council on possibly participating in the European Week for Waste Reduction which takes place in November each year. Visit www.ewwr.eu for more information. www.stopfoodwaste.ie is a website that you may also find helpful. The Green Home Programme may also be of interest to your Group (www.greenhome.ie). Grant funding may also be available to provide energy efficiency upgrades for community and commercial facilities.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

Your adjudicator is happy to report that no litter was noted in the village on the day of adjudication and the village was generally found to be neat and tidy. Litter control in Newtownmountkennedy is to a very good standard and you have 4 litter bins in village which are emptied regularly. You avail of the services of 3 Tús workers who maintain the village and who deal with litter on Mondays. Great thanks are due to the volunteer who maintains the children's playground and to the 5th and 6th classes who assist occasionally with litter picks. Your annual Spring Clean is very successful with over 40 volunteers participating this year, including the Junior tidy towns group. In relation to the general tidiness of buildings you place emphasis on improving the appearance of derelict buildings by painting exteriors etc. and you also make great efforts to enhance Festive events by erecting bunting, lights etc.

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

It is noted that you organise a 'Best Estates Competition' each year– this is a great way to improve the standard of housing estate presentation generally and sense of pride amongst local residents within individual estates. Mountain View Drive was visited and the overall presentation of the estate was good although some weed control and improvement could be carried out at the estate entrance. Perhaps consider removing the boulders along the edge of the open space near the cul-de-sac- these are difficult to maintain and are unsightly. Season Park was visited and the overall standard of maintenance and presentation of the estate impressed. It was good to see contractors working on upgrading the road surfaces in the estate on the day of adjudication. Perhaps some hedge planting could be considered along the wall facing the open space.

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

It would appear that works and are not yet completed on the Texaco garage so it is presumed that the presentation of this site will improve in the near future. Consider planting a hedge along the concrete post and rail fence near the roundabout. The natural vegetation and the overall standard of maintenance along the Dublin approach to Newtown Mount Kennedy was admired. The road surfaces and markings on the Dublin approach to Newtown are to a good standard. The entrance to the Coillte headquarters was impressive. The Newtown Mount Kennedy name sign on the approach to the village was damaged and quite dirty. The roadside margins were damaged in this area and perhaps some roadside kerbing is required to prevent vehicle incursions. The Chevron traffic sign near the Greenway walk entrance was damaged and could be replaced. The planting bed at the Newtownmountkennedy sign, near the Mount Kennedy 400 Woodland entrance was admired. The Echiums here were particularly striking. The planting and grassed areas on the roundabout at the Dublin approach to Newtownmountkennedy were well maintained and greatly admired. It is noted that with regard to the maintenance of roundabouts, agreement has been reached with the NRA and Wicklow County Council and that grass cutting is carried out on an occasional basis by the Tidy Towns Committee.

Maintenance of hedges and verges and grass verges along approach roads is also undertaken by Tidy Towns.

Concluding Remarks:

Newtownmountkennedy and District Tidy Towns Association has made great strides in the Competition this year and the comments made in last year's report have been responded to positively. It was a great pleasure to visit your lovely Town and note all the wonderful work undertaken and plans in place for the future development of your Community. There were many highlights of the visit including Kilmurray Restoration Site, Wee Library, Greenway and planting on Main Street and the Committee can be justly proud of all your achievements this year.