

Tidy Towns Competition 2017

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Wexford** Ref: **458**
County: **Wexford** Mark: **309**
Category: **G** Date(s): **15/07/2017**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2016	Mark Awarded 2017
Community Involvement & Planning	60	51	51
Built Environment and Streetscape	50	43	45
Landscaping and Open Spaces	50	43	44
Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities	50	30	31
Sustainable Waste and Resource Management	50	14	16
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	43	46
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	36	37
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	38	39
TOTAL MARK	450	298	309

Community Involvement & Planning / Rannpháirtíocht an Phobail & Pleanáil:

Wexford TidyTowns is very welcome to the SuperValu TidyTowns competition 2017. Thank you for your entry and supporting documentation. You have 13 members on your committee, and one has to admit that given the size of your town one would have expected that you would have perhaps higher numbers sitting on your committee. However, you do tell us that you have various sub-committees and sub-groups for Wexford TidyTowns so you appear to be well organised and dedicated to the task in hand. Due to your success in the competition last year you embarked upon amending your three year plan – well done on taking such action. We hope that your new plan has helped you re-focus and aim high! You are fortunate that you enjoy a strong level of support from other volunteers who assist you with your projects. Your estimates are: 45 volunteers; 27 various groups and bodies; and over 50 residents associations. Indeed we recognise that working with these large numbers takes considerable planning and coordination. You realise that key to success for a centre of your size is: strength in numbers. We wish you well as you make a concerted effort to increase your core group of volunteers. You are communicating well with your stakeholders using various mediums. To progress further in this category we would urge you to work towards the establishment of a junior committee or increased involvement with the young adults in the town. As you recognise, securing a youth representative would be a good place to start. Schools in Wexford are already heavily bought into the TidyTowns ethos and support your work. The community of Wexford is benefiting immensely from the TidyTowns efforts and we thank all involved for the effort over this past year. While we enjoyed reading your submission, it is quite weighty and we would recommend that you review the volume of information being submitted. You have a lot of detailed text under the category headings. We would recommend you try and keep it a little more concise. Just another small point to bear in mind when preparing your application, you have lots of projects and things of interest to an adjudicator therefore it would be of great assistance if you could ensure projects are going under the correct competition category headings on your application. For example, reference to doggie bag/dispenser units are mentioned in the built environment category and should be under Tidiness and Litter. Furthermore, there is a great map of the town on an Information Board along the Quay perhaps you could include a copy of that next year, if possible.

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

You are fortunate to have a wealth of architectural heritage in your town. A quick search on the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage Building Survey tells of a total of 635 entries into their database! We saw a number of these during our visit including Selskar Abbey, Wexford County Buildings, Wexford Arts Centre and the Wesleyan Methodist Church which featured in your work programme this year. The various ecclesiastical buildings come to the fore in this category, which include the impressive Church of the Immaculate Conception on Rowe Street and the Church of The Assumption on Bridge Street. Their twin spires stand out from various vistas and are seen from miles around. Businesses in Wexford deserve praise – they are upping their game in terms of their visual

appearance and we are pleased to report that you adjudicator photographed lots of well presented shop-front and business, in order to show other centres the importance of presentation. Although it can be risky for adjudicators to single out a few premises due to fear of missing out some equally well deserved ones, we have taken a note of the following: Ritchie Doyle's Butchers, Cistin Eile, Premier Fish and Chips, Hayes, Colman Doyle's, Simon Lambert & Sons, Greenacres, The Yard, and Hynes Jewellers (although my fellow adjudicators may beg to differ due to the window covering) These have been selected for a variety of reasons be it upkeep and presentation be it of a traditional shop front, excellent paint choice and colour co-ordination, use of the Irish language, tidiness, etc. Upon writing this list your adjudicator is now sure that there are others not included but regardless the business community are congratulated for playing their part this year. We also liked the brightly coloured bar called The Sky and the Ground, however part of this building would benefit from a fresh coat of paint and we were unsure about the colour combinations used. Some shop fronts are getting a little over cluttered and should scale back in terms of wares and tares on show and/or provision of canopies and shelters etc. The entrance to Hore's Stores was admired with the attractive addition of the clock on the wall. We enjoyed a stroll around the various stalls in the Bull Ring, this is a prime area in the town which you have taken in hand and presented so well. There are a number of buildings that require a paint upgrade. A number of local authorities are working in conjunction with Tidy Towns committees running Shop Front Schemes, which provide funding to businesses as part of a Towns and Village Renewal Scheme. This is in a bid to enhance the streetscape in the local area. Is there potential for a scheme such as this in Wexford? We noted a number of buildings which would benefit from such as scheme including (but not limited to) the building housing SaRia boutique on North Main Street, a yellow car servicing building near the train station, Poochy Paws along the Quay. There are gables of properties on West Gate Street that stand out as also requiring painting. At Dunnes Stores, we liked how the tiles portraying the historic town of Wexford and images of Wexford, details like this add interest. The Redmond Square area looks well. The upper floor of the large business block in this vicinity, housing Dragons Heen and other premises, could be better presented - the mis-mash of colours and signage is somewhat jarring. We visited the area containing the Faythe Harriers, Sarsfield GAA, Wexford Wanderer's RFC playing pitches and grounds. These are superb facilities. The County Hall, Department Building and the library are also developed and presented to an extremely high standard and set the bar for public buildings in the region. The hard landscaped area at Selskar Square is working well, particularly with the provision of outdoor seating by adjoining premises. Many people were sitting out in the sun enjoying lunch when we passed by. You have been doing a good deal of work at St Peter's Square and we thought it looked well with the bandstand enhanced with hanging baskets when we walked past. Congratulations on recently achieving international accreditation of the Purple Flag Initiative for Excellence in the Evening and Night-time Economy. We had the pleasure of walking your pedestrian streets and quay in the evening of our adjudication visit and are pleased to report that we found your town welcoming and safe. We liked that a number of shops, such as Barkers, had attractive window displays on show after hours, rather than the drab roller shutter doors. The vibe was good with many tourists mingling about and enjoying the restaurants and bars.

Landscaping and Open Spaces / Tírdhreachú agus Spásanna Oscailte:

There are a number of pocket parks in and around the town. The Faythe area is one such area which is enhanced with mature trees. The Abbey Street Green and area around the 1916 seating is another delightful green space just off the main thoroughfare. Redmond Park, as you recognise, is an important open space in the town. When we visited, lots of families were enjoying the children's play area. We noted the new memorial to Major Redmond here recently erected on 11th June 2017. We admired a number of planters in and around the town that used to be animal drinking fountains provided by the Metropolitan Drinking Fountain and Cattle Trough Association. These artefacts originated in the early 1900's and are certainly worth the care and attention that you currently afford them. The landscaped areas both sides of 1798 street were a joy to visit and you are certainly enhancing the biodiversity of this area with your choice of planting and careful balance of maintenance and wildness. Trees along the Quayside Walk add interest – are there one or two needing replacement? We also visited the Republican Garden of Remembrance, here we noted an upturned bench.

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

Key to this category is an understanding of the habitats in your area and first off, you mention the Wexford Harbour and Slobs SPA displaying your knowledge. This SPA, on your doorstep, is one of the most important ornithological sites in the country. The area along Kaats Strand affords wonderful views across the Slaney Estuary towards the town. We enjoyed spending some time watching the wading birds on the mudflats here. We visited Hillstreet Community Garden area – congratulation to those bodies and individuals who brought this project to fruition. Many people were passing by on route to the park and we witnessed a number of families who were stopping to take a look. This area is a great advertisement for the benefits of growing your own. We wish you well with this project and hope that this is only the start of more such initiatives. You are aware of the invasive species in your area and are working with the Council on their eradication. Well done Joe, your volunteer who has written the first of a series of leaflets on Wildlife in Wexford. Thank you for including details while you are awaiting the final product. You have some other worthy initiatives that you work on including lobbying for increased swift boxes, tree-planting. You mention working on pollinator actions during 2014 and 2015; a revival would be welcomed and ongoing consideration to pollinator friendly planting. Aspects of your application relies on work conducted by various other bodies and agencies, such as the County Council's rooftop garden, while there is nothing wrong with this per se, to do well adjudicators like to hear about the involvement of the Tidy Towns in these projects. Next year, we would like to see how your Tidy Towns group is working with other bodies to promote and raise awareness of your local flora and fauna and involving more of the community and residents.

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

There are many great recycling and sustainable waste management actions taking place in Wexford. Be it Wexford County Council, the EPA, and the Local Enterprise Board driving green business initiatives through the GreenSave Project and the Green Business Conference or individual businesses playing their part with the likes of Woodies and Aldi providing Wexford TidyTowns with plants destined for landfill or the coffee stall owner switching from plastic to compostable cups. We know you have also been involved in the Greening Communities Programme a few years ago and we wonder how this project has progressed since. On approach, signage tells the visitor that you are a Fair Trade town. We understand you have been a Fair Trade town for over ten years. Your adjudicator would be interested to know how has evolved over this period and what the current scale of activities are in relation to this. Participation in the fair-trade movement assists in trying to achieve the Global Sustainable Development Goals which is relevant to this category of the competition. A few e-charging points were noted. The Government is currently promoting the use of electric vehicles to reduce the State's carbon emissions from transport and to reduce air pollution. Perhaps your group would be interested in lobbying for additional charging points in your town to encourage residents to consider environmentally-friendly vehicles. In terms of moving forward, your adjudicator would like some details on how you as Wexford TidyTowns are involved in some of these projects and how your group may be helping others to drive sustainable waste and resources management forward in your locality. That said, achievements are still worthy, be it in an individual basis or as a combined effort. Many small actions can add up to achieve big results!

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

In terms of litter you fared quite well. We are pleased to report that all the streets we traversed, in the main, were litter free and we did spend a considerable amount of time adjudicating! However, we picked up on few spots that you can keep an eye on. We walked along your historic walls from the vicinity of Selskar Gate and Westgate Heritage Centre to Georges Street. We noted beer bottles and disposable coffee cups along this path and a carrier bag of rubbish and some soft drinks cans in a corner at the walls. You have been tackling the scourge of cigarette butts. We noted a significant amount around the tree at the 1916 garden. Have you heard of the cigarette butt ballot box? It is being implemented in a number of cities in the UK to great effect. Your adjudicator could see this novel approach working for you. Weeds are an issue in places including on the footpath along Priory Hall on the Spawell Road. On West Gate Street we noted weeds growing out of the first-storey windows of a property. In the car park near the entrance to Redmond Park the weeds on the paving detracted here from bright and well presented Chamber of Commerce building. We noted dumping at boulders outside an old building in the vicinity of the HSE Farnogue Residential Healthcare Unit. In terms of dog fouling we noted signage around the town. Early on during our adjudication visit, we witnessed a young fellow walking his dog along the road near Wexford Boat Club who was being responsible and cleaning up after his dog. Your multifaceted approach to tackling dog fouling would appear to be working well as it wasn't an issue during our visit. We noted that the Bring Banks have been relocated to the green area due to the ongoing building of a new Court House at the site of the old municipal buildings. Upon inspection, they were clean and tidy. Are there any plans for the undergrounding of overhead cables in South Main Street. The letter 'P' is missing from the Opera House signage! In summary, your work this year has improved the overall tidiness of the town and you have been rewarded by an increase in marks. Please keep up the momentum.

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

The residents are to be commended on the work that have completed in conjunction with the TidyTowns committee for this year in developing and enhancing the entrances to estates. We visited a large number of housing areas during our adjudication including Priory Hall, Campara Close, Heatherfield, The Estuary. Standfield Manor is well presented, however the stoned area at the entrance gates that would benefit from weeding. Is there potential to convert this area to grass? Homes and gardens in Rose Park estate appear well presented and we like the planting around the name stone and along the wall at the entrance here. Planting could help inject colour at Walnut Grove. A high standard of landscaping was noted at Fisheries Row. Cromwells Fort Drive and Cromwell's Court are both tidy and well presented estates; the stone archways add interest here. The Carcur Cottages near the Boat Club are a delightful addition to the streetscape here.

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

Advertising signs along approaches portrays a cluttered look in places and should be kept in check. On the R769 approach after the New Ross roundabout there are various advertising signs telling of summer camps and the like. Also on this approach the surfacing was noted to be a bit rough from the roundabout to the General Hospital, after this there is a marked improvement. On the Rosslare approach the roundabout is impactful and the cycle path along this route is noted positively. Employees working in the business parks on this side of town should be able to make good use of this route. Further promotion of sustainable travel initiatives should be considered. Weeding is required at the Fr. Harry Sinnott Roundabout. Hoarding surrounding a site for sale in this vicinity is rather worse for wear – could this be a potential location for art project? We thought that Bulger's Bar enhanced the alleyway to TK Maxx adding colour from their planters and baskets. Road improvements at the Pier were noted. Road works were ongoing at Parnell Street. A number of pedestrian crossing markings are faded. There is an untidy entranceway at the Barrach Street/Parnell Street junction. The Loreto School occupies a prominent site along the Spawell Road, it is nearing time for a fresh coat of paint. We learned from your application that a new purpose built school is under construction and the pupils will transfer to the new location shortly. We wonder if there are any plans for the old school?

Concluding Remarks:

It has been some time since you adjudicator was in Wexford and on that occasion it was as a visitor and not an

adjudicator! We are pleased to confirm a marked improvement since our last visit, particularly along North and South Main Street. The participation of local businesses has greatly assisted in improving the quality of the main shopping areas. The ethos of TidyTowns is really gaining traction in Wexford. While you have still some competition areas to improve upon, your endeavours are applauded. You have secured another healthy points rise this year reflecting the strength of your on-going partnerships and engagement with businesses, community groups and residents of the town. We have every confidence that by working together Wexford can compete against the cream of the crop in this population category. We wish you well as you push to progress further in the competition.