

# Tidy Towns Competition 2018

## Adjudication Report

Centre: **Newbridge** Ref: **369**  
County: **Kildare** Mark: **315**  
Category: **G** Date(s): **05/07/2018**

	<b>Maximum Mark</b>	<b>Mark Awarded 2017</b>	<b>Mark Awarded 2018</b>
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	60	55	56
Streetscape & Public Places	50	39	40
Green Spaces and Landscaping	50	43	45
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	50	38	39
Sustainability – Doing more with less	50	19	20
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	44	45
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	33	34
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	35	36
<b>TOTAL MARK</b>	<b>450</b>	<b>306</b>	<b>315</b>

### **Community – Your Planning and Involvement / An Pobal - Pleanáil agus Rannpháirtíocht:**

Cuireann an moltóir seo fáilte roimh Newbridge An Droichid Nua chuig Comórtas na mBailte Slachtmhara SuperValu 2018 agus chuig Ceiliúradh 60 Bliain an Chomórtais. Newbridge Tidy Town Association is very welcome to the SuperValu Tidy Towns Competition 2018, your 35th plus year entering the competition. Thank you for your very comprehensive entry and submission prepared for this year's Competition. The map included with your submission was clear and assisted in navigating around the Town. However, it is a good idea to include the legend key on the map as this makes it easier to read on site. The cover of your submission showing photographs of works in progress during the year was admired. You have an active Committee of 10 members and an approximate number of 15 volunteers who turn out to work on various projects. A text alert system is in place and a wide range of social and print media is used to communicate your message to the general public. Monthly committee meetings are held to plan activities in advance and sub-groups are appointed for specific projects. You have established a good working relationship with a range of local Community groups and receive advice and support from many local business and other organisations. Although you do not have a formal Junior Tidy Towns group, you liaise closely with schools who are very supportive of your work through the Green Flag Programme, development of school gardens and the community module of the Gaisce Awards. It is evident that the activities of Newbridge Tidy Towns Association over the years has developed a sense of Community Pride and volunteerism and your engagement with the Local Authority has ensured the completion of key projects for the benefit of the residents of Newbridge, such as the development of the Liffey Valley Linear Park. You are now placing emphasis on improvements to the public areas and spaces in Newbridge and have prepared submissions on proposals for the Town Centre area for consideration by the Local Authority.

### **Streetscape & Public Places / Sráid-Dreach & Áiteanna Poiblí:**

Newbridge, as a bustling commercial centre in County Kildare, has a very vibrant Main Street with many fine business premises and individual shopping centres with a very good mix of older and newer properties. It is fortunate that the commercial and retail business core of the town is thriving, which gives the sense that the town is going places, attracting footfall to it's Centre where it is needed and ensuring the Town will develop in a sustainable manner in the future. It is also good to note that the NTA is preparing a Transport Plan for Newbridge and this will enable further improvements to the environment and streetscape of the Town to be undertaken. The line of residential properties at Liffey Terrace was admired. This terrace has great potential for improvement and the individual properties are worthy of great care and attention. The Garda Station was particularly attractive with its verdant frontage and floral displays - these had a very positive impact on the quality of the streetscape. The information panel near the entrance to Saint Conleth's GAA grounds is a little jaded now and needs to be refreshed. The whole area around this sign should be redesigned to make it more user friendly and appealing to the public. The Eircom telephone kiosks need to be removed as their only purpose now is providing ground level space for

Adshel advertising which detracts from this area. It is noted that future plans to remove overhead power lines from Main Street are desirable but financially prohibitive? Perhaps this could be dealt with as part of the proposed NTA Transport Plan. In the interim any future works along the Main street should include spare ducting to facilitate possible future cable undergrounding works. The 'Newbridge or Nowhere' mural was enjoyed and perhaps this has become the town motto in the last number weeks? There may already be plans in place for the upgrade and revamp of the car park at Saint Conleth's Park GAA grounds. If not, this would be desirable, as the car park is in need of some improvement. The signage, overhead barriers, and redundant poles etc. detract from the general area. Additional tree planting should be carried out as part of any future car park improvement scheme. Tree planting in traffic islands and along perimeter walls would significantly improve the appearance of this car park and the entrance to the GAA Grounds. The paved seating area at the Town Hall building and Bradbury's bakery and coffee shop provided a restful retreat along the Main Street. It is great to see such a wonderful prominent building so tastefully restored. The namestone at the Bórd na Móna entrance is somewhat discoloured and requires cleaning and freshening up. The ornamental conifers planted here are also suffering from drought and may need to be replaced. Consider providing an ericaceous or herbaceous perennial planting scheme here to improve the overall appearance of the entrance and possibly themed to reflect the current and future activities of Bórd na Móna. The post office building is rather plain and would perhaps benefit from floral displays over the canopy and judicious tree planting to be carried out on the wide pavement alongside this building. Fastigate tree varieties would be most suitable for this purpose. The entrance to the Whitewater and Courtyard Shopping Centres was greatly admired. The impressive pedestrianised urban plaza with attractive seating areas leading to the many commercial outlets and restaurants is designed to a very high standard and even provides access to the Newbridge Silverware visitor attraction located on the nearby Athgarvan Road. There was quite a lot of staining on the granite paving here and chewing gum litter is an issue, similar to many parts of Dublin City centre. A sustainable cleaning solution to this problem would be desirable and could be carried out from time to time. The Green planted wall seems no longer to be functioning as originally designed and one wonders are there any other suitable options available? The Intreo building is a good example of fine contemporary public architecture. The pedestrianised George's Street with its enclosed glass artworks was particularly admired. Perhaps this type of design approach could be considered elsewhere in the Town. The Market Square located nearby is also an attractive public space. The attractive frontage of the Eyre Powell Hotel would benefit from refurbishment and painting. The Holy Family Secondary School was visited and perhaps a line of trees planted inside the wall and railing would improve and soften the appearance of the frontage here along the road. St Conleth's Abbey is an attractive and imposing building set in beautiful sylvan surroundings is a very attractive feature at the entrance to the town. Saint Conleth's Church built in 1848 with its tall spire was admired. Noted within its grounds was St Conleth's Garden, an interesting linear contemplative space with natural stone rills and standing stones and is finished to a very high standard. It would be good to see the running water re-introduced into the little stream here, perhaps using solar power or other environmentally friendly means. The church grounds are maintained to an excellent standard.

### **Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:**

The most significant open space areas in Newbridge Town include the Liffey Valley Linear Park and the Lakeside/Dara Park parklands. Your flagship project this year under this category is the The Liffey Linear Park which has received Green Flag status. Well done to all concerned with this great achievement. The Park was visited and the standard of maintenance and presentation of this wonderful amenity was very impressive. The route of the 'Bad Lippsprunge Way' was taken and the rose beds and archways of beech were enjoyed. The mature trees adjoining the path are a magnificent feature of this area. It was good to see grass strips along the footpath's kept cut tight whilst retaining larger areas of long grass and tall vegetation away from the paths, which encourages wildlife. The 'leave no trace' approach to the management of the park is laudable and no doubt reduces the amount of litter to be removed as part of the overall operational management of the park. The adult exercise equipment area was busy on the day of adjudication. The 'Managed for Wildlife' signs are useful to inform the public as to why certain areas are left uncut. It was good to see the 'Tree of Hope' and the other recently planted trees in the Park growing well, despite the current severe drought conditions. The 'Yarn Bomb' project looks very innovative and no doubt attracts many extra visitors to the Park. It was wished to explore much further in the Park on the day but unfortunately due to time constraints it was not possible to proceed any further. The visit to the Park was really enjoyed in the good weather and it definitely deserves its Green Flag status. Dara Park and the Newbridge Family Resource Centre were visited. The Resource Centre which no doubt provides a range of important supports to the Community in Newbridge was presented to a very high standard and the building and surrounds are a credit to the staff and local community. It was good to see the new tree planting located in the Park and the lake area teeming with wildlife. The floral displays provided throughout the Town and particularly at the junction near the entrance to the Liffey Valley Linear Park and adjacent to the Liffey Bridge, added a great splash of colour at these locations and were greatly admired.

### **Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality / An Dúlra agus an Bhithéagsúlacht i do cheantar:**

Newbridge has a number of significant and unique wildlife habitats located in close proximity to the Town namely the Pollardstown Fen SAC, the Curragh Plains, Roseberry/Moulds boglands and of course the valley of the River Liffey. Coincidentally on the day of adjudication, the fisheries board were carrying out works using a large excavator operating in the middle of the river - placing boulders and decompacting gravel beds near the bridge to enhance water flow conditions and spawning opportunities for the wild brown trout which are present in the river. It is noted that you have undertaken a Swift Box project at the Patrician Secondary School Gym building and are undertaking an occupancy survey of existing nesting boxes in the Town, in conjunction with Wild Kildare. It is good to see that your survey work in relation to the breeding Mute Swans and local bat population continues in conjunction with the relevant expert groups. The photographs provided with your submission highlight the wonderful and extensive work you have carried out in relation to the many perennial and bulb plantings at various locations in the Town - well done

to all concerned with these sustainable planting projects. The Tommasinianus 'Ruby Giant' crocus planting is a good choice as this can be a wonderful show of colour in grassland in early spring.

### **Sustainability – Doing more with less / Inmharthanacht - Mórán ar an mbeagán:**

Newbridge Tidy Towns has made a concerted effort to increase activity particularly in the area of eliminating sources of waste which is an important theme under this category. New projects undertaken in the last year include the Re-Use festival at the Cottage Market, the 'Conscious Cup' campaign, Shop local campaign, Sick of Plastic Day of Action and the Go-car pilot scheme, amongst others. You have purchased mulching grass mowers for cutting long grass areas which cuts down on excessive organic waste produced. It is good to note that the Cottage Market is up and running at the renovated Town Hall, which covers the themes of shop local and GIY sustainable living. Another approach to this category for your Committee to consider next year is the whole area of reducing energy usage and water conservation. The promotion of the use of low carbon vehicles, pursuing the installation of additional electric -car charge point(s) in the Town and extending cycle lanes and cycle parking facilities in the Town could be considered. The possible development of greenways and cycle routes in the wider area could be investigated e.g along the Liffey Valley Linear Park, where this is feasible. The further promotion of available grant aid for the installation of wall and attic insulation on older building stock in the Town, the greater use of solar panels on roofs and heat exchange units to reduce energy consumption by households/businesses and in public buildings are worthwhile initiatives to consider. The greater use of water butts, storage tanks and rainfall harvesting techniques for the watering of private gardens and public floral displays during the Summer period, could be encouraged. The Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland website has good information in relation to the development of Better Energy Communities and you may have made some progress in this area already. Congratulations to St. Conleth's schools which has secured it's seventh Green Flag.

### **Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:**

The central part of Newbridge is well served with litter bins which seem to be generally well used by the public. Consequently, the level of littering noted in the Town was quite small given the level of footfall and activity present on a daily basis. The issue of sandwich board advertising clutter was noted on Charlotte Street. The overhead power lines in the town, as previously mentioned, are intrusive and detract from the streetscape. Road signage is generally presented to a good standard. Your efforts to support the local Litter Warden in trying to reduce the amount of unauthorised commercial signage in the town is recognised – this is now a problem in many towns. The 'leave no trace' approach to litter management is laudable, as prevention is always better than the cure. The concrete water tower and the rear view of the multi-storey car park at Whitewater Shopping Centre, as viewed from the Rathgarvan Road, are two prominent eyesores in this part of the town. One wonders are there any future plans for the water tower? If not in use for water storage, could this structure be demolished and replaced with a tree-like mobile phone mast to replace the existing mast attachment. A suitable well-designed steel cladding might also help to screen the badly stained facade of the car park building.

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

It is interesting to note that there are more than 100 distinct residential communities in Newbridge Town. Many estates have active Resident's Associations who organise maintenance operations and other estates are maintained directly by Kildare County Council. Obviously only a small sample of estates could be visited but these generally made a very good impression and indicated that the residents living in these estates care about the appearance and presentation of their areas. At Connell Drive it was good to see children playing football matches on green space and also that the new tree planting here was surviving well despite the severe drought. At Lakeside Park planting along the walls facing the open space would enhance this area. Watercress Manor was noted as a small size development with well-presented green area and private gardens. The estate namestone at Great Southern Estate caught the eye and this estate had well maintained green areas and high-quality finger post signage. Some of the street trees required attention here i.e. the removal of tree ties and stakes, where they appear to be no longer needed. Baroda Court was a well - maintained estate with a good planting of climbers along the walls. The fingerpost signage was admired at the Grange, and the Priory estates. The wonderfully presented cottages at Canning Place enjoy good views across the road towards the River Liffey.

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

Newbridge Tidy Towns has a significant involvement in the maintenance of a number of grassed areas on the approach roads into the town. Approach road margins, surfaces, markings, road signage etc. are generally to a high standard. The approach to the town from Naas is superb with neat and tidy margins, closely clipped hedges and tall trees on both sides of the road, located within the curtilage of the Old Connell Stud and Pfizer properties, which adjoin the road. The roundabout planting scheme at Buckley's Cross looks very well. However, the paving on the edge of the roundabout has become tarnished and a little dirty and should be cleaned or provided with an alternative surfacing. The entrance to the Pfizer Pharma Plant is excellently landscaped and enhances this approach to the Town. There is a proliferation of temporary signage on grass margins at certain locations. This can be distracting for drivers and unsightly. Perhaps a more coordinated approach in consultation with the litter warden is needed in relation to the control of this kind of signage. The Milltown/Station Road approach to the town is largely dominated by Dept. of Defense buildings and Park and Ride car parks associated with the Railway Station.

### **Concluding Remarks:**

There appears to be a number of positive improvements currently in planning for the town of Newbridge, to be implemented over the next few years. It is good that there is a very committed Tidy Towns Committee in place to

guide such developments for the benefit of all the Town's residents. You are wished well with all your future work in this area.