

Tidy Towns Competition 2018

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Wexford** Ref: **458**
County: **Wexford** Mark: **314**
Category: **G** Date(s): **07/07/2018**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2017	Mark Awarded 2018
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	60	51	51
Streetscape & Public Places	50	45	46
Green Spaces and Landscaping	50	44	44
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	50	31	31
Sustainability – Doing more with less	50	16	18
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	46	47
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	37	37
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	39	40
TOTAL MARK	450	309	314

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

Cuireann an moltóir seo fáilte roimh Loch Garman chuig Comórtas na mBailte Slachtmhara SuperValu 2018 agus chuig Ceiliúradh 60 Bliain an Chomórtais. Thank you for your submission which again was a large document which can make it difficult for the adjudicator on the day to glean the highlights of written descriptions of works done. Large submission can make it harder for us to identify key projects or works to be considered for additional marks. For example comments on the gas pipeline and broadband (noted in the residential category) are only relevant as they relate to current projects to be considered this year. However your maps were particularly useful to this adjudicator, divided as they were into a walking route in the town core and a driving route in your outer locations. This was a great idea and made visiting all your sites and projects much more logical. Very easy to follow on the ground and really most useful. You have an active committee of 13 with an interesting sub group structure to focus actions on particular issues of importance to your community. This approach seems to be working for you. Well done in harnessing the support of local associations and especially the local media in your regular press releases. Working with a variety of organisation has been especially fruitful at the Rocks, and we note this is a model of participation and cooperation you hope to build on in other areas. We are glad to hear that participating in the competition has helped build links and encourage participation in the community and helps develop a sense of pride in your locality and promote your residents to, as you say, 'own their place'. Continued good luck with your use of social media and your facebook page has had a significant increase in 'friends' this year. Your use of social media and technology will again help you advance your connections with the younger generation and those less likely to attend your meetings, but who may wish for an avenue to get their views, on the future of Wexford, aired. This will aid your 'activating volunteers' group no doubt in their work. A 62% increase in your available volunteers in two years is a very impressive statistic for any town and is one you should be proud of. Good luck in reaching your volunteer goals for 2020. Thank you to all of those who give up their valuable time to care for their home town, this really is the spirit of Tidy Towns.

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

This was the adjudicator's first visit to Wexford for a number of years and we were pleasantly surprised at the bustling town we found. The long main street is a delight and so busy and lively on adjudication day. A number of premises especially stood out on adjudication day. We especially noted premises such as the Premier fish and chip shop and Frock and the eye-catchingly blue and yellow bike shop at Selskar where the whole of the building was painted rather than just the commercial ground floor premises. The lively frontage of the Sky and the Ground was admired and the owners have also treated the access lane here which makes such a difference to its appearance. Well done. Ensure owners in the town look to upper floors to remove or tidy up old wiring, remove old flagpoles, hanging basket brackets and old signs. The simple Wexford palette of streetscape materials used on the Main Street based on a sturdy stone kerb and quality paving was admired. Try to ensure all future streetscape works

stick to this simple palette no matter how small the intervention. The Obelisk at Newtown Road is a lovely landmark in the town but remove some buddleia sprouting near the top of the monument here before it causes damage. It is great to see new civic buildings in the town with the impressive Court Complex and your new Garda station. Are there any plans in place for the reuse of the old art deco garda station and façade with the lovely historic lettering to the frontage of the old boots shop? Ensure these built gems are maintained until a new use can be found for them. Weed growth was beginning to be higher than the boundary wall at the Garda station, ensure the planted bed here is maintained to improve its frontage in the short to medium term. We loved the fact that the old fire station on Davitt Road is now a boxing club. Your new Library was visited and fits nicely into the historic streets here. The Wexford Arts centre nearby was admired although the red front door here is a little tired looking. The old white and blue Garda station at the end of the main street is a very prominent building and it looks as if building works are happening here, hopefully this will find a new use as it is such a focal point at the end of the North Main Street. Your new school at Colaiste Eamon Ris on Green Street was visited and is a good addition to the streetscape here but the old blue access gate at Thomas Street needs to be painted to match the overall smart presentation of the school and grounds. The Bullring Mall hadn't yet opened as an artistic space on the day of the visit. We hope to see progress on St Patrick's graveyard for next year's visit.

Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:

Your Wexford in Bloom team have been very busy with many lovely examples of seasonal displays seen around the town. The wide path to Johns Gate Street would also benefit from some planters to enliven this walk way to your rejuvenated Redmond Graveyard. The 1916 memorial with the historic backdrop was visited and the effort put in to maintaining it is recognised as planting here looked lovely in the neat gravel beds. The green at the Faythe was visited and the square planters here were beautifully kept although the lime green and blue colour scheme jarred a little with the restrained planting. Street trees in the town area maturing nicely and as you are aware trees in towns make a significant contribution to people's health and quality of life. In a number of locations keep an eye on expanding trunks as they grow to ensure the paving around them is removed as the trunks expand to prevent damage. The paving at the base of the trees at the rear Bank of Ireland car park off Common Quay Street are an example. Consider removing the paving here as it is lifting and replace with planting or a hedge as this would also improve this important pedestrian link from the car park to the lovely bull ring market. We hope to see progress on Redmond Park over the coming years as plans here are realised. The lovely set piece of the planters and window box to the front of St Iberius Church were a lovely touch and were being dead headed to prolong flowering as we strolled past. The local park at St Brendan's Road was very busy on adjudication day with its distinctive blue mural at the gate to the Faythe entrance.

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

We would recommend you review and edit somewhat the presentation of this section for next year's submission as it was difficult for this adjudicator to see which projects were to be considered in this year's submission to gain marks. The focus on community gardens is good to see but how does this relate to biodiversity? Are native fruit or vegetable variety of plants used. Do you use chemical weed and pest control or more environmentally friendly options to prevent damage to wildlife? Do you focus on native tree planting? Do you have a town biodiversity plan or strategy? Maybe one of your subcommittee could focus on this category for next year. We note you plan to re-launch your bee friendly programme and we hope this is a success for you. List you works on this project to be included for consideration for marks in this category for next year's competition. Across from Colaiste Eamon Ris at Bride Place the triangular grass area here seems a perfect spot to have a pollination planting area to improve the value of this barren grass areas for our pollinators. Some centres have installed small show wildflower meadows in locations such as this, which can look spectacular during the summer months and costs no more than a few hours toil in soil preparation and a handful of native seeds.

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

Your schools have been very successful in the green schools programme with an amazing 100% participation by your primary schools. The efforts you have made to use more sustainable self-watering hanging baskets for your floral display by your Wexford in Bloom team is commended given the dry summer. How many groups took up your offer of water butts as a result of your campaign this past spring?. As we mentioned earlier in the report as is seen in many other centres, you have some empty premises in the town and unoccupied properties along the Main Street. The seasonal strawberry and new potato stands are a real feature of the Wexford roadsides during the summer months and are a great way to sell locally grown Wexford produce. Would it be possible to have a summer pop up shop in one of the empty shops on the main street to help promote this local produce to those residents and visitors who do not regularly travel by car? Well done to all involved in the conscious cup campaign. Refill.ie is another initiative you could let your shops be aware of. Congratulations to Mangans Fish and Chip at The Faythe for taking part in this new initiative. Ask pubs to move from plastic straws to paper straws? A simple move that can have a big impact on the amount of plastic that ends up in our oceans and an issue particularly relevant to our coastal towns.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhairacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

The work you do to focus on particular issues in this category is recognised with your participation in the chewing gum initiative 'bin it', the 'Mutt Mitt' dispensers were noted around the town and the 'butt boxes'. The car parking areas to the magnificent twin spires of the Church of the Assumption and The Church of the Immaculate Conception were clean even though very well used. It's a pity that there isn't even a small area of public realm or simple lawn to the margins of these significant buildings to improve their immediate setting as seen from the street. On a very busy and very warm summers weekend the bins in the main street were certainly under pressure with drinks receptacles and

ice cream wrappers. You may need to review your collection schedule during busy times. During an evening stroll down a much quieter Main Street the bins were full to overflowing from a full days use and should really have been emptied before they got overfull. The warm summers evening also meant they were starting to smell and the effect wasn't particular pleasant with litter beginning to spill out in to the street? The Tidy Towns cigarette butt stickers were noted to the lid of the bins here. We hope that the scout troop will adopt an area too for next year. How did the Wexford Presentation School do in their plastic free month challenge?

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

We note in your submission that you have interactions with over 50 residents association in the town which is a very impressive way to spread word of your aims and works. The concept of distributing 'rescued' plants is a new one for this adjudicator and we hope they are settling in well at Corish Park and the other recipient sites. Here and in other estates roads and open spaces remove all tree ties to established trees before they rub and damage the tree trunks. You seem to have successfully harnessed the support of residents of housing estates. How about Wexfords apartment dwellers? The namestone and communal open space to The Gallops are maturing nicely for example. Could you consider starting a pilot herb garden project in one of the towns apartment's communal areas? Sage, Rosemary and Chives could be planted to provide free herbs for apartment dwellers with no access to ground level outside space. Build on the success of the work done at the Kennedy Park Garden and to the rooftop garden to county hall. Have you considered the concept of local estate agents giving information on the tidy towns to new residents in their welcome pack, a great way to harness new volunteers and create an opening for new residents to contribute to the community? This is especially relevant with the upturn in the economy and housing areas such as that at Slippery Green beginning to be developed.

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

Your new gateway signage was good to see. Remember that as well as announcing your town gateway signs are also an important traffic calming measure as it tells the driver to take care and slow down as they are entering a built up area. Your new sign on the Gorey approach was by the 50 pkh sign well into the town area. Gateway signage should really be placed at the 60kph sign further out this road, at the margins of the town, to slow traffic down. If new signs are being introduced try to ensure any redundant signs are removed. Also be aware that signage at the train station and bus stops are critical as a first point of information for visitors to the town. The sign at the train station was faded and hard to read and slightly out of sight when you exit the station. This needs to be updated and maybe repositioned. There is no bike parking here which did not tie in to your sustainable transport aspirations. A number of bikes were chained to poles here. Some bus stops around the town are looking faded with some signs missing altogether. Contact Bus Éireann to arrange repairs. The audit and proposed removal of redundant signage is good to see to reduce streetscape clutter. The Murals at the Welcome wall make a lovely impression on the approach to the town from Wexford Bridge. The art work in the Fettits Lane, especially on the ceiling here, was admired and well done for all of the work done by the students and staff of the Wexford Collage of Art.

Concluding Remarks:

As a returning visitor I was once again impressed with the presentation of your town and the work the committee has carried out. We thank all of the numerous stakeholders involved in the works which make up this year's submission and continued good luck for all your planned work in 2019.