

Tidy Towns Competition 2019

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Newtowngore - An Dúcharraig** Ref: **436**
County: **Leitrim** Mark: **276**
Category: **A** Date(s): **21/06/2019**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2018	Mark Awarded 2019
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	60	42	43
Streetscape & Public Places	60	36	37
Green Spaces and Landscaping	60	34	35
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	50	20	21
Sustainability – Doing more with less	50	16	18
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	56	59
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	31	32
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	30	31
TOTAL MARK	470	265	276

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

Cuireann an moltoir seo faite roimh Newtowngore (An Ducharraig) chuig Comortas na mBailte Slachtmhara Super Valu 2019.

Thank you for your very informative and engaging entry form which was written in a story narrative format that proved easy to relate to but still informed us of all your activities under the relevant categories.

The 5 year action plan which came into being in 2016 has been critical to the development of the village over the last three/four years and the adjudicator was able to measure what has been achieved in that period by seeing what was on the ground.

Thank you also for the excellent map which was more than useful for the purposes of adjudication.

It was the adjudicator's first visit to the village and he was most impressed with the manner in which you as a committee engage with the local community.

The committee of eight is certainly sufficient in numbers to administer the work load of Tidy Towns in the village. Coming from different backgrounds the members bring different skills sets to your committee which of course is a key to getting work done under the different categories.

No doubt you receive practical support from other local organisations when in need of it.

It is always good to report the interactions between local schools and Tidy Towns committees and you have a strong bond with the local National School.

Yes indeed you are very correct in stating that the work of the Tidy Towns Committee is vital in educating children in the importance of fostering a good community spirit.

The support of the local authority and other relevant agencies such as the Leitrim Development Company has been important to your work as a committee and you have acknowledge this fact under different category headings. Thank you for your endorsement of the competition and its importance to the community of Newtowngore.

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

Some very positive developments have happened in the village over the last year in this category and these have been outlined in detail.

The completion of work at the pedestrian crossing near the very well presented Gorbys Inn has enhanced this area of the village no end.

The adjudicator was very impressed with the quality of the road surfaces and the new footpath network which extends outside the village.

Road markings were clear and visible.

The skyline was as free of untidy telephone wires criss crossing the street and it's amazing how this changes the look of a village or town.

Hopefully the remaining body of work related to the laying of cables underground will be completed within the designated time.

The adjudicator likes your comment on the centre of the village during the installation of broadband cables last year. Good to report that on the day of the adjudication all looked well and tidy.

Gorbys Inn is a well appointed establishment that is maintained very well and has ample well surfaced car parking for its patrons and one would deduce that it is also used as an unofficial village car park for locals and visitors alike. Richardson's Today's Local Shop was well presented and carries an extensive range of goods that cater for the needs of the local population.

Sorry to note that the post office closed down earlier in the year after over sixty years service to the local community, but the adjudicator did note that a few small enterprises had set up in the premises.

Nothing can replace an association that the post office had with generations of local families.

Where do local people avail of post office services now?

Some cleaning up work was been undertaking in the grounds of the historic Church of Ireland Hall on adjudication day.

The Church of Ireland and grounds on the road to Killeshandra were visited by the adjudicator and were noted as being well presented.

The eyesore that you refer to in your submission was noted and hopefully this will be sorted if and when it is taken over by new owners.

Comment on the wildflower garden associated with this area will be commented on in the relevant section.

Lunnays Tractors is also a well run and busy establishment and part of the commercial history of the village.

Some very fine village houses were observed during the walkabout all contributing to the general look of what is a very appealing rural village.

An increase in marks for work undertaken in this category in the last year is merited.

Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:

One takes into account your comment on the fact that you do not have much ground set aside for the public but you are not alone in this as many similar sized villages are in the same position.

You have done very well with what you have available to you.

The Cross Community Peace Garden started last September was visited by the adjudicator who was very impressed with its simplicity and the message it conveys to both local people and those who visit your village.

The plaque was installed prior to the adjudication and it recognises the fact that it was supported under the Special EU Programmes Body.

Some very attractive planter boxes were observed during the walkabout most notably at the boundary wall of the Church near the directional signposts and also at the Shannon Erne Waterway Trail sign.

The Communal Herb Garden which is for use by all locals was also admired.

There were some very nice shrub beds further out the Carrigallen Road

The adjudicator was rather confused by the fact that the Flower Meadow is not open to the public as it is owned by a Bank presumably as a result of some issue between the owner and the said financial establishment.

Was this area once open to the public?

Overall the standard was very good as what you have in place has been maintained very well.

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

The key components of this adjudication category are a) knowledge of local species and habitats and knowledge of local designated areas and b) being able to promote the knowledge gained to the local community and the passing visitor in format that would be easily accessed such as wildlife information boards in a central location.

Good wildlife advice and communication of the importance of the local wildlife heritage to the local community is so important

Being aware of invasive and possible destructive plants such as Japanese knot weed is also essential.

It is always heartening to read of school children involvement in projects that are bio diversity related so well done to the Newtowngore National School pupils and the teachers that give them guidance for partaking the Annual National Parks and Wildlife Programme.

For further information on biodiversity matters and idea generation for future projects consult www.biodiversityireland.ie.

Biodiversity Ireland also is the main point of contact for the National Pollinator Plan and one can get information on the type of plants and flowers that best help pollination from www.pollinators.ie

It would be worthwhile also getting in touch with county wildlife ranger or equivalent to keep up to speed with what is happening county wide in matters related to bio diversity.

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

The objective in this category has moved on to some extent from of reduce reuse and recycle to one of promoting the concept of reducing the production of potential waste at source such as excessive packaging.

Doing more with less is a slogan that will be in the public domain more in the future.

Activities that describe how as a community you manage waste and promote efficient use of resources and promote awareness is the key to gaining marks in this category.

What you have included under measures in this category is very much within the objectives of the category but there certainly are more ideas that you could look at for next year's competition.

For further idea generation and to come up with some novel ideas for your community do consult the following: www.localprevention.ie for ideas would be www.greenhomes.ie and www.sustainableprocessing.ie

Also something that this adjudicator became aware of during last year's adjudication is the circular economy.

It is a bit too long to explain the concept in detail in this report, but if you access the following www.dccae.gov.ie you will get a pretty good idea of what it's all about.

The idea of what is called a linear economy of "take, make and waste" is now being seen as not sustainable and alternatives need to be found.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

On the day of adjudication the village was tidy and virtually litter free.

As mentioned in a previous category when road surfaces and footpaths are in good condition as well as the absence of unsightly overhead wires a place looks appealing and gives the impression of being very orderly. There were only a few pieces of wrapping and solitary plastic bottle to be seen in the area covered by the adjudicator.

The litter control plan that you have included as part of the submission is quite detailed and measures that are included within have no doubt helped in focussing attention of the need for everyone in the community to be singing of the same hymn sheet when it comes to litter control and keeping the village generally tidy.

But as we all know there will always be one or two non conformists and as you rightly say in the most honest fashion – Fines mean nothing to litter bugs!

The Bring Bank near the Church was well presented and maintained and to be honest on the day it was free of any "dropped bags" that have been common in other places visited this year by the adjudicator.

The "Wild Flower Garden" as it is euphemistically known as was a bit unattended to and grass cuttings were heaped up on one side.

A few boundary walls could do with a coat of paint and there was one side area that needed to be tidied up a little.

Overall the standard was very good and merits an increase in marks for the manner in which you have been able to encourage the local population to adhere to good practice.

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

Woodford Green was very well maintained and has the benefit of having the benefit of its own management committee.

Absent landlordism is pretty common in many of similar estates in villages and towns around the country and to be very honest there is very little that a voluntary committee can do except where possible engage with owners to effect change.

Beech Court seems to have made a remarkable recovery and it is good to report that units that are occupied were very well maintained to a good standard.

Well done on your engaging with the family of the deceased people who owned the two houses to get permission to tidy them up and keep them up to the same standard of presentation of the rest of the village.

Again an impressive performance in this category earns you an additional mark.

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

The entrance from Killeshandra could be enhanced a little more and some of the grass verges were over sprayed a little.

The use of chemical weed killers to be discouraged where other alternatives are available but one accepts that in certain circumstances it has its uses.

The Carrigallan Road was impressive with the unusual hedging as one entered for the outskirts.

The very well presented National School is on this road and it has ample parking area at its boundary wall.

There are two rather large unoccupied houses on the bend of the road just beyond the school towards Carrigallan.

Are they a legacy of the so called boom times as they are relatively modern in design?

The entrance from Ballinamore was also well presented and has the very fine cluster of houses Woodford Green estate as one enters after the name sign.

Well done to the personnel on the Rural Social Scheme who have done a great job in keeping these entrances up to a good standard.

Yes the adjudicator would concur with you for the need for either a speed ramp or warning lights at the National School as this road has a lot of traffic and the boundary wall of the school is quite near the roads edge.

Overall the standard was very good and merits an increase in marks.

Concluding Remarks:

It was the adjudicator's first time to traverse the historical village of Newtown Gore or to give its original Irish name An Dhucarraig and the experience was very pleasant.

You have made incremental progress in the competition to date and you are wished well for further progress in the years ahead.