

Tidy Towns Competition 2021

Adjudication Report

Centre: Newcastle - An Caislean Nua	Ref: 1037
County: Wicklow	Mark: 319
Category: B	Date(s): 05/09/2021

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2021
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	60	44
Streetscape & Public Places	60	39
Green Spaces and Landscaping	60	39
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	50	37
Sustainability – Doing more with less	50	21
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	63
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	38
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	38
TOTAL MARK	470	319

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

Fáilte Chuig Comórtas na mBailte Slachtmhara Super Valu 2021. Táimid buíoch daoibh as ucht na hiontrála a chur chugainn. Go raibh maith agaibh as ucht bhur dtacaíocht le linn na paindéime. Lean leis an dea-obair. Welcome to the 2021 SuperValu TidyTowns competition. Thank you for your entry and for your commitment to your place in these difficult times. Keep up the great work. Well done on a large number of volunteers and a long list of supporters – both demonstrating your position at the heart of your local community. You have lots of different methods of communication locally ensuring that you reach all members of your local community – not just the tech-savvy ones! Good to hear of your art competition run in the local school, a great idea. Is your local school taking part in An Taisce's Green Schools scheme? Have you thought about setting up a Junior TidyTowns group? Are there any local TY students that might want to help out? Thank you for your clear & concise accompanying map. Your Village Design Statement and 3 Year Plan are very helpful documents as noted in your 2019 adjudication. It also mentions a 'Village Health Check' was planned – is this a planned future action? Great to hear that you are reaching out to groups further afield in Kilcoole and Newtownmountkennedy – you have so much in common and can achieve far more by working together.

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

Your newly completed Heritage Trail must have meant so much to all Newcastle residents during the lockdowns! The newly installed 'kissing gate' looks beautiful – well done on this project. You mention planting 100kg of spring bulbs last autumn. They must have made a very impressive show in spring 2021 but unfortunately you have not provided any photographs nor listed the bulb species planted – perhaps you followed the bulb advice in your 2019 adjudication report? Please make sure to include a photograph for next year's adjudicator. Your future plans for developing up to 100km of local walking trails will make a wonderful community asset that will surely take several years of work but something to be very much looked forward to. Such trails were really found to be so invaluable to local communities over the past difficult 18 months. You make mention of several projects which you maintain but unfortunately you haven't included photographs which would have been very helpful for this year's desk-bound adjudication!

Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:

Your newly revitalised flower bed in the village centre looks beautiful in your photograph. It must have put on a lovely show this summer. You mention that Newcastle is due to get a Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) shortly so you will no doubt get great advice for planting around the village therein. The wildflowers in your bed are mostly annuals so subsequent years will not see the same show. If you are looking for a relatively labour-free flower bed then bulbs

and herbaceous and shrubby perennials are your best bet in a prominent flower bed which essentially is a small garden – such as this. As mentioned in your 2019 adjudication please look at the Pollinator Planting Code at www.pollinators.ie as it has an extensive list of plants for every situation and crucially all are pollinator-friendly. Plant small plants close together and they'll fill the bed quickly leaving little room for weeds and the great thing about perennials is that you can split them in subsequent years and get free plants for other beds around the village! Your native woodland at Racefield is looking absolutely terrific – well done – all your tender loving care over the past few years is paying off. Again here you mention several maintained projects but no photos to allow some adjudication in relation to planting schemes and tree and hedge cutting around The Castle Inn and Racefield. Hopefully your 2022 adjudicator will get to visit Newcastle and admire your work. Your plans to screen your Community Centre might make a good action for your BAP?

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

You have an upcoming BAP so you will have the opportunity to avail of the service of a professional ecologist to gain great help and advice in relation to enhancing Newcastle's biodiversity. The website for the All Ireland Pollinator Plan at www.pollinators.ie is the best and most helpful website for community groups. There is a huge wealth of advice that derives from the latest scientific best practice and it's freely available to all so make the most of it! As your BAP will no doubt explain, sowing wildflower seeds outside of a garden situation is problematic as recent Teagasc research has found invasive agricultural weeds in several brands of wildflower seed packets. Also the vast majority of wildflower seeds for sale in Ireland do not originate in and are not native to Ireland. The very best way is to gather your community and make an event out of seed collecting and saving from your own locality's wildflowers – no doubt your new walking trail hosts many lovely specimens. These species are the best and most ideal for your local area. Honeybees are wonderful pollinators but they are managed by beekeepers and are not under threat unlike our 98 wild bee species which we do need to do our utmost to protect – hence the need for pollinator-friendly actions. Another excellent free guide is 'Gardening for Biodiversity' which is available to download from Wicklow County Council's website – it is filled with terrific biodiversity-enhancing ideas for TidyTown groups, school children and private gardens. Lovely to hear of your collaborations with your talented local Men's shed groups. New research highlights how big is not better when it comes to bug hotels – lots of small models are best as well as making sure to keep a few banks of open soil clear around the village to provide solitary bee nesting habitats. Lucky Newcastle, you have a wonderful collection of local trees both woodlands and individuals. You clearly appreciate them and this is wonderful to hear about. Hopefully now as our new normality begins, community heritage events can begin again and you have lots of opportunities between your trees and birds and varied local habitats from coastal through to woodland.

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

Well done on your very productive new raised vegetable beds at your Community Centre as evidenced on your facebook page! You are well clued-in at Newcastle in relation to sustainable actions and re-using materials between plastic bottle mini greenhouses and egg box, toilet roll and jam jar re-using. This is the first year that the U.N. Sustainable Development Goals have been an integral part of the TidyTown competition. Have a look at their website and make sure to have a look at some of the helpful articles in the monthly TidyTown Unit newsletters about how many of your actions are already fulfilling some of the SDGs. Also make sure to look at the newly updated TidyTown Handbook on our website which lots of ideas and advice for each of the competition categories and the Sustainability section also has a great list of helpful websites to consult. We look forward to hearing about your Repair Café – a wonderful idea that will hopefully catch on all over the country. Our Country Markets have long been stalwarts of recycling and re-using. It's great to hear how you partner up with your local branch in Newcastle – especially the tea and cake part!

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

Well done on your maintenance work in this category. You have a whole beach to look after which is no small feat and no doubt many are very thankful for your work here as well as up on your village streets.

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

You mention several new and maintenance projects for this category but with no photos provided unfortunately it's not possible to properly adjudicate on them. Keeping up communication with the residents of Newcastle both those of the housing estates and individual houses – it sounds like you're doing very well on that front already.

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

Newcastle is blessed with approach roads of beautiful rural character on all sides featuring many handsome mature trees and hedgerows as well as the all-important pollinator habitat of grass verges. As no doubt will be explained in your BAP, grasses themselves are important for pollinator species too – several are the food plant for butterflies as well as the grassy bases of hedges and walls being the nesting habitats for many bumblebees so letting these grass areas grow long is brilliant for biodiversity.

Concluding Remarks:

Well done on all your work in Newcastle and with many plans for the future, we look forward to Newcastle's TidyTown competition entries over the coming years.

