

Tidy Towns Competition 2015

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Newcastle West** Ref: **465**
County: **Limerick** Mark: **294**
Category: **E** Date(s): **13/06/2015**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2014	Mark Awarded 2015
Community Involvement & Planning	60	43	44
Built Environment and Streetscape	50	41	42
Landscaping and Open Spaces	50	44	44
Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities	50	34	34
Sustainable Waste and Resource Management	50	11	11
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	45	45
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	33	33
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	40	41
TOTAL MARK	450	291	294

Community Involvement & Planning / Rannpháirtíocht an Phobail & Pleanáil:

Welcome Newcastle West Tidy Towns to the 2015 Supervalu Tidy Towns Competition. Your entry is very much appreciated. Thank you for your entry form, 2 maps, 3 year plan 2015 – 2017, photos, press cuttings, copy of emails and letter. Your entry form, including the pages of photos, press cuttings, email and letter, amounts to 20 pages which the adjudicator has numbered. The 2 maps and 3 year plan are separate. A number of your projects have not yet been completed, or have not started, during this Tidy Towns period, and so cannot be adjudicated. Please ensure that they are included in next year's entry form. You have a committee of 16 plus others working on specific projects. We note that at your last AGM additional officers were elected and a programme was put in place to revitalise the organisation. Meetings are held as required. You have a substantial number of support bodies and agencies which is a testament to the esteem in which Newcastle West Tidy Towns is held. Channels of communication range from newspapers to Facebook. You have regular contact with your schools to your mutual benefit. Newcastle West Tidy Towns has taken part in the Tidy Towns competition since it started and are veterans of the competition. The value of the Tidy Towns to your community is well set out in your entry form.

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

The Castle Demesne is a superb amenity and recreational area that would be the envy of any town or city. To its many attractions and facilities has recently been added a Garden of Reflection which is located beside the GAA ground. It has grassed areas, flower beds, trees, paths, etc. which incorporate aspects of bio-diversity, wildlife amenity and the use of salvaged and recycled material. This is and will continue to be a community effort involving Tidy Towns, Solas, TUS, Gateway, Brothers of Charity Service Users, Milford Care Centre and individual benefactors. Also in the Castle Demesne is a teenage play area for skateboarding. It also has a zip line. Number 6 will be adjudicated on completion, number 7 is a work in progress and number 8 is at the proposal stage. Riverside enhancements seen. The Newcastle West Tidy Towns notice about rubbish in the river noted. Number 10 is at the planning stage. Reidy's Cycle Shop looks well with its traditional shop front. Newcastle West is very fortunate to have so many traditional shop fronts left. The Nash property detracts hugely from the square. Your letter to the owner is noted. The planning application notice on behalf of Aldi is dated August 2013. Your entry form tells us that the construction of the new Aldi store is to be complete by the end of this year.

The former Courtenay Lodge Hotel is an eyesore at a principal entry point into the town. Sold sign noted. Hopefully the new owner will move as quickly as the planning process allows to remove this major eyesore. Planning application dated April last. It is good to see Irish in use. The barber "Charles" has Irish on his shop front on Church Street. Opposite side of the street Mac Mathuna has "Iasc Ur". The square has fine buildings – Bank of Ireland and AIB. Another side has well presented 3 storey retail premises. The Desmond Complex is superb. Well done OPW. Market Place looks well. Public toilet clean. The Garda Station is very well presented. Nicely landscaped with well kept grassed area, flower beds and a variety of trees and shrubs. Deel Wholesale Co Ltd is at a key junction and

creates a very poor impression. Revenue has an interesting building on stilts so it is above the clamouring taxpayers. The absence of its name on the building indicates that it must be a government building that does not want to draw attention to itself. Gaelscoil O Doghair is very colourful, as are its murals. Neat landscaping. Children could not but be happy in such an attractive place.

Landscaping and Open Spaces / Tírdhreachú agus Spásanna Oscailte:

The provision of 5 planters at the hotel site would ameliorate its visual impact. Noted that you are cutting back on hanging baskets until water harvesting is fully in place. The Churchtown Grotto is very well presented with extensive use of shrubs and attractive stone walls. Area neat and tidy. Refurbishing of the old water pump noted. Along the riverbank at the Desmond complex there are good, clean seats, neatly cut grass and mature trees. Just the place for a tranquil interlude. Visitor information boards clean.

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

Noted that wild flower planting will be carried out in the Castle Demesne. Please include 16b in your entry form next year. It can be adjudicated then if the project has been completed. The Great Southern Trail Greenway is an excellent amenity and it was being well used on adjudication day. Good signage. Well maintained. Projects 19 and 20 should be included in next year's entry form. The Limericks Buzzing bee project is a good initiative and, thankfully, a number of Tidy Towns groups are working with their schools on this survey. Well done on installing bird boxes. In due course we and Bird Watch Ireland would be interested to learn how many are being used and by which species. The Heritage Council's web site is useful – www.heritagecouncil.ie. It allows users to download free their publication "Conserving wildlife in towns and villages".

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

Mulching, recycling and water harvesting are good initiatives. So, too, are attending workshops, seminars, etc. on sustainable waste and resource management. However, Tidy Towns groups are expected to play a leadership role in promoting the principles and practices of eliminating waste and managing resources to their community. The preamble to this category in the entry form asks Tidy Towns groups to describe activities on how they manage waste and promote efficient use of resources. It asks for evidence of practical steps taken and to provide samples of awareness campaigns, etc. In your entry form at number 28 you have the word "education" but there is no text after it. Some Tidy Towns groups find this category challenging so marks were increased last year to stimulate more projects. A useful web site is www.localprevention.ie/tidy-towns. It has examples of projects in this category that have won points for Tidy Towns groups. The Tidy Towns handbook also has advice and tips. The Limerick City and County Council seminar for Tidy Towns groups was focussed on helping groups to understand this category better so that they could undertake projects that would meet the criteria and so score more marks.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

Well done Newcastle West Tidy Towns for participating in the first Team Limerick Clean Up. It was a great success throughout the county. Next year it will be interesting for you to compare this years outcome – 150+ bags of rubbish with next year's total to see if the problem is increasing/decreasing. Noted that your litter patrols are to increase and dog fouling is in decline. Well done on the Arra River clean up and the erection of an anti-litter sign. Letter to councillors about compulsory rubbish collection from houses noted. Unfortunately this adjudicator found lots of material on adjudication day for this category. At the Ballygowan sign for Newcastle West on the Limerick to Tralee Road the grass verge has been newly cut revealing lots of litter, mainly paper and plastic. The town suffers from a profusion of signs – traffic, directional, auctioneers, events, etc. There does not appear to be any effective control of signage. Weeds are also a problem. For example, Castle Demesne – almost all kerbs were weedy. The tennis courts looked well but need weed control. The children's play area and Captain Rock sign had graffiti. A fenced, gated area at the GAA wall near the Garden of Reflection had lots of litter – cans, plastic bottles, sweet wrappers, cigarette butts, graffiti and weeds. A wall sign was vandalised (burned). Clearly an area for anti-social activity. President Mary McAleese planted a tree during National Tree Week on 26th February 1999. The commemorative stone needs to be cleaned. So, too, do the name stones outside the library and the fire station. Both are not legible. The second "l" in Leabharlann is missing on the front of the building. Tesco bottle bank clean and tidy. The bottle bank and car park at the community centre were clean and tidy. The spectator stand at the Coursing Club is very weedy.

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

This is not the sort of competition where we try to seek out the "best" residential area or the "best" residence. To try to do so would be invidious. Beside the courthouse the Holly Tree cottage stood out. Also on Bishop Street the railway cottages look well. Opposite the Grotto a terrace of single and 2 storey terraced houses which are, generally, well presented. Grassed areas reasonably kept. Young trees. Weed control needed. Near Reilig na mBocht an unnamed residential area had a clean up underway. Modern art sculpture is a centre piece. Opposite Courtenay School are fine examples of Newcastle West residences.

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

On the approach from Limerick the first town name sign is a blue and white Welcome to Newcastle West advertising Ballygowan water. The next is an attractive sign in Irish "Failte go Caishean Nua" in old Irish letters. That is followed by a standard green and white bi-lingual town sign. A large brown and white sign followed pointing in the direction of Castle Demesne. Between all of these were event signs, speed limit signs, traffic signs, etc. numbering over 20

before reaching the Courtenay Lodge Hotel. As mentioned earlier there seems to be no control over signs in Newcastle West. Approach roads are important in helping to create the first impression of a town or village. This was not a good first impression. By contrast the approach from Tralee is a fine straight road with well kept verges and no litter evident. There are lots of mature trees and impressive residences. Road surfaces/markings/signage good. Very good first impression of Newcastle West.

Concluding Remarks:

Again, thank you for your entry in the 2015 Supervalu Tidy Towns Competition. Your entry is important to us. We look forward to receiving your entry in the 2016 Supervalu Tidy Towns Competition in due course. Thank you in anticipation of it.