

# Tidy Towns Competition 2015

## Adjudication Report

Centre: **Newcastle** Ref: **1037**  
County: **Wicklow** Mark: **275**  
Category: **B** Date(s): **04/07/2015**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2014	Mark Awarded 2015
Community Involvement & Planning	60	33	33
Built Environment and Streetscape	50	33	33
Landscaping and Open Spaces	50	36	37
Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities	50	30	31
Sustainable Waste and Resource Management	50	10	11
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	57	57
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	36	36
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	37	37
<b>TOTAL MARK</b>	<b>450</b>	<b>272</b>	<b>275</b>

### Community Involvement & Planning / Rannpháirtíocht an Phobail & Pleanáil:

The adjudicator would like to welcome Newcastle to the 2015 National Tidy Towns Competition. Thank you for your comprehensively completed entry form. The laminated map was a great help to the adjudicator especially as you clearly highlight points of interest and works to be considered as part of this year's submission. You have a healthy sized Tidy Towns committee given the size of your village, with 3 active members but do receive assistance from other agencies, so well done in this. You seem to also enjoy a good level of voluntary support at peak time especially from the local school children turning out in great numbers for your beach clean-up. You seem to have devised a very democratic process to gain the input of as many residents as possible into your work, both with online surveying and calling door to door to gain residents views of what they would like to see being done in Newcastle. Well done on this approach and we are sure this inclusive strategy is why you say you have a very good level of involvement from many members of the community. Keep up this approach and good luck with all your planned works.

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

This was the adjudicator's first visit to your village and we were impressed at the range of buildings present and the standard of their upkeep. Although outside of the core village the Parish Church and school are lovely elements in the village. Remove the old empty pole by the lovely stone boundary wall to the church near the entrance but the historic ironwork at the church was beautifully maintained and presented. Perhaps talk to your area engineer about improving the standard of the road surface here. The historic roadside pumps set in beds of roses were admired and are a lovely rural relic of the past use of our streets and one of their important historic functions. Once again the Castle Inn was well presented but the planters to the property for sale opposite here needed attention while the premises were being sold. The boundary to the GAA grounds was very colourful and well maintained. Could parking to the railway crossing and the lovely old railway building be regularised somehow to improve the setting of the entrance to your beach? Perhaps a more formal car park could be installed in the land adjoining here to cater for both beach goers and bird enthusiasts visiting the nearby bird reserve.

### Landscaping and Open Spaces / Tírdhreachú agus Spásanna Oscailte:

The planting at the core of the village around the pump and at the oak blossom were looking very pretty. Generally the planted beds were very kept well. Have you considered replacing some of your annual planting in the village with herbaceous perennials? The use of herbaceous perennials is to be encouraged as they provide a more interesting and subtle colour to a rural area and should require less maintenance. For example the red geraniums by the bank at Hunters Leap could be replaced by shade tolerant perennials which would thrive in the shady conditions under the tree canopies here. Could the roadside grass strip on the approach to the ruin at the base of

the very dominant retaining wall be planted with climbers to help soften the impact of the stone wall especially where the concrete is showing. Thinking this way is a more sustainable approach to landscaping. The grounds within the park were looking well with the wider paths to allow access for all and how nice to see the recent tree planting of birch and ash to the verge here in consultation with Crann. Check tree ties and stakes on trees planted over the last few years in the village. Ties should be loosened or removed as a tree grows, as a scar from a tight or rubbing tree tie leaves a tree susceptible to disease. Ties can usually be removed after 2-3 years or once a tree is stable.

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

We hope your talks with the school children have been successful in advance habitat awareness in the younger generations. In addition to your biodiversity area consider the habitat value of all the planting you carry out in the village. Remember many bedding plants and annuals are not rich in pollen or nectar and provide little support to our insects and pollinators. Given your rural location there are many hedgerows adjoining your roads and in the park which you actively maintain. The fuchsia filled hedges on the Sea Road were especially lovely. Well-managed hedgerows can provide good food sources, safe places to nest, and linking corridors between different habitats. They are a vital resource for maintaining pollinator populations, particularly within intensively managed farmland. Road verges can also provide a refuge for wildflowers and if managed appropriately can be an important wildlife corridor. Do consider doing a simple wildlife survey of the village to help you progress in this category.

### **Sustainable Waste and Resource Management / Bainistiú Acmhainní agus Dramhaíola Inbhuanaithe:**

We hope your emphasis on water conservation and encouraging the installation of water butts among residents has been successful and consider leading by example by installing them to all community buildings as well. We hope the Giro was a success for you. Do you know if many children bike to school? Do you know if many residents or businesses took part in the Earth Hour or cycle week? All these initiatives should be encouraged and noted for next year's application to help you gain marks in this category.

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

There was relatively little old litter noticed in the village core on adjudication day so well done in upholding standards in this category and the fact that you need less skips/disposal facilities are a concrete way to assess your success in tackling this category. Some of the bins, for example at the Oak Blossom name stone, were oddly placed and could be considered to clutter up the spot. A litter survey is a useful way of assessing bin usage which can then inform how often bins need to be emptied and indeed if they are required at all. While the bin at the bus stop was full. Ensure the Sea Road is covered by your regular litter sweeps as some recent litter, no doubt thrown from cars, drinks bottles etc, were noted here. Could perhaps the school be approached to help set up a junior litter patrol in conjunction with the Tidy Towns? Some weed growth to the base of the boundary wall at the GAA grounds should be removed. We wondered if the old but very neatly painted low concrete post and rail fence by the Foróige stone is necessary as its removal would open this area up and reduce the clutter here along this lovely landscaped strip. Consider if it still has a valid function.

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

The residential properties in the village were presented to a good standard so well done to all your residents. The boundary walls and mature gardens of the older properties on the main street add real character to the village and the rose covered boundary wall to the older Tiglin House creates a lovely welcome to the village from the south. Open spaces and garden to Hunters Leap were also well maintained and worth a mention. Ensure weed growth to the top of the entrance pillars at Castle Manor are removed before they damage the brickwork here. The extensive beech hedges at Racefield must be a job to keep trimmed but add so much to the character of the estate. Remove a dead tree to the green here.

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

From the south, the approach to the village past the tree lined curved lawn area to the front of the Watchtower is a very elegant vista. We wish you well in your discussions with the owners here to provide a walkway as there are no footpaths to the road at this point. Your emphasis on improving pedestrian circulation in the village is noted with your link path from Racefield of great benefit to residents I'm sure. Some finger signs in the village needed attention with the sign for the GAA grounds being partly hidden by the surrounding hedge growth and we note your discussion to replace other signs in the village.

### **Concluding Remarks:**

Newcastle has a lovely rural charm and we look forward to seeing some of your planned projects materialise in future year's submissions to gain you marks. We are so glad to hear that the villages' involvement in the competition has contributed in such a positive way to community spirit. All involved with this year's entry are warmly thanked and congratulated for their efforts and we look forward to seeing your progress in 2016 and beyond.