

Tidy Towns Competition 2016

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Newcastle** Ref: **1037**
County: **Wicklow** Mark: **287**
Category: **B** Date(s): **08/07/2016**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2015	Mark Awarded 2016
Community Involvement & Planning	60	33	36
Built Environment and Streetscape	50	33	34
Landscaping and Open Spaces	50	37	37
Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities	50	31	33
Sustainable Waste and Resource Management	50	11	16
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	57	58
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	36	36
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	37	37
TOTAL MARK	450	275	287

Community Involvement & Planning / Rannpháirtíocht an Phobail & Pleanáil:

Newcastle Residents' Association is very welcome to the SuperValu Tidy Towns Competition 2016. Thank you for your comprehensive application form and nicely laminated A3 map which was useful on our adjudication visit. Your application is strong under this category heading and you are making the right strides to get you where you would like to go. You convey a real sense of enthusiasm and willingness to further develop your village. Your approach to community consultation and engagement is to be praised, taking the time to make door to door enquires with a large number of householders is a way of personally connecting with the residents and making them aware of the work you are doing. Piggy backing on the interconnections between various organisations is another great method of getting greater community buy-in. You are communicating really effectively and hopefully capturing a wide audience with your various methods and means. From what you have set out in your application your adjudicator feels you are realising the benefits of good communications. We note that you have a 3-year plan which runs out this year. We hope you can develop another 3-year plan (2017 – 2020) building upon your current plan, and in consultation with the various community groups and local stakeholders. You have been justly rewarded for a great effort in this category over the past 12 months – well done!

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

Newcastle Church of Ireland is a well maintained church occupying an elevated setting a little outside the village core. The neighbouring Parish Hall is presented to an excellent standard. We would have been interested to learn more about the Royal Castle. The Castle Inn and Kings Quarters Restaurant are both presented to a high standard. The Top filling station has a tidy forecourt. There is a commercial premise up for letting that is very neat and tidy. The GAA grounds are well presented and maintained. We really admired the station house down at the train line which is a delightfully presented residential property now but still an important part of the built environment in the village. There are also a number of cottages which add interest to the streetscape. The Community Centre is looking a little drab, this is partly related to its design and choice of building materials. While we generally no longer promote additional planters and hanging baskets, perhaps that could be all that is required to lift the building and make it more pleasing from the roadside. We like how you are promoting your rich local heritage; your guided walk in association with the various local clergy is not only a great educational event but also a social one where the community can come together and appreciate what you have on your door-step. We visited the restoration of the spring well and the Packhorse Bridge and noted the works completed.

Landscaping and Open Spaces / Tírdhreachú agus Spásanna Oscailte:

Landscaping around Watchtower House is good. Bedding plants on Church Lane were admired. Mature tree cover in the village is good and we are pleased to note your appreciation of a good tree! We couldn't miss the Giant

Redwood near the entrance to Oaklawn House. Consider power-hosing the tarmac area near the Foroige seat and landscaped bed here.

Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities / Fíadhúlra, Gnáthóga agus Taitneamhachtaí Nádurtha:

The County Council were working on the river bank near Hunters Leap installing gabion baskets to discourage riverbank erosion on the day we visited. We noted quite a lot of burnt grass around the Holy Spirit Oratory. We advocate for more environmentally friendly methods of weed control. Consider building composters here also, this would be a more sustainable solution to grass cutting disposal rather than leaving it in large rather unsightly heaps. Your newsletter appears to be regularly full of interesting topics. The inclusion of information on rare visitors, such as the Glossy Ibis, to your local BirdWatch Ireland nature reserve on Sea Road is a great example of how you are raising an understanding and awareness of this wonderful amenity. We wish you well with the development of your walkway and hope the access issues are resolved.

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

You have been busy in this category this year and have included some excellent projects. Setting up a car sharing group online is a great idea, getting people to change their habits and car share is now the task at hand. We look forward to keeping an eye on how this progresses for you over the next few years. You have a number of great initiatives ongoing such as the water butt project, 'Think Global, Buy Local' and associated promotion of your local Country Market and also the food waste competition during waste reduction week. Your garden gate initiative is also delightfully generous of those avid gardeners. All these merit an increase in marks this year. A little slap on the wrist - in keeping with the category - perhaps you could print your application double-side next year if you have the facilities to do so!

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

Bollards are leaning near the entrance to Sea Road. The school children are playing their part in TidyTowns participating in the annual beach clean and participating in your anti-litter awareness poster competition. Litter control was good on adjudication day however we noted a few pieces of fresh litter along the grass verge past the community centre heading towards the Top etc. This was most likely from a passing car, the scourge for many towns and villages adjudicated in Wicklow this year. There was a significant number of dog walkers along the Sea Road and at the beach therefore continue to encourage owners to clean up dog fouling.

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

We admired the lovely cottage across from the village pump. In Castle Manor houses and gardens are maintained and presented to a high standard; although a large vegetated bank along the roadway within the estate was burnt brown with weed killer. Personally, this adjudicator would rather look at the weeds. We visited a number of estates in the village including Race Field, Sea Court, and Hunters Leap and noted that many if not all of the houses and gardens were well presented. The use of bi-lingual signage on estate name signs is not common in Newcastle – it's nice to retain a culpa focail where possible.

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

Roadways are to a good standard in and around the village. The approach roads are well maintained and presented especially from Kilcoole approach. The Bridge near the Castle Inn is a nice feature in the village streetscape. The new footpath near the COI was noted, as was the pathway that runs along the playground connecting the estates to the village centre. Continue to lobby the Council to make pedestrian improvements to the school. Walkers were out in force along the Sea Road – have you developed the possibility of establishing a walkway from the village to the nature reserve and sea front area.

Concluding Remarks:

Your adjudicator enjoyed her first time visit to Newcastle. Newcastle village can progress much further in this competition with the continued efforts from the core team supported by the wider community. With free cake and coffee for TidyTowns volunteers at the Country Market – who wouldn't want to lend a hand! Well done on a successful year and we wish you well with your future endeavours.