

Tidy Towns Competition 2019

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Newtowncashel - Baile Nua an Chaisil** Ref: **485**
County: **Longford** Mark: **332**
Category: **A** Date(s): **22/06/2019**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2018	Mark Awarded 2019
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	60	48	48
Streetscape & Public Places	60	42	43
Green Spaces and Landscaping	60	46	46
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	50	35	35
Sustainability – Doing more with less	50	17	20
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	62	64
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	32	33
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	43	43
TOTAL MARK	470	325	332

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

Cuireann an moltóir seo fáilte roimh Newtowncashel - Baile Nua an Chaisil páirt a ghlacadh i gComórtas Náisiunta Supervalu na mBailte Slachtmhara 2019. We note that over your long history in the competition you have been working hard as a group looking after your local environment for the benefit of your community. Your village plan included in the submission gave a great overview of your plans and projects. The images included in the plan of your various community activities really gave a flavour of the events you initiate and support over the full year of the competition. The application was well prepared but take care to ensure all projects are listed in the most relevant category to avoid duplication. The village 3 d map was most eye-catching and really set the tone for the visit. Maybe colour code the new projects on your map for next year for ease of reference for the adjudicator on site. You have a healthy number of members on your committee given the size of the village. Your pool of volunteers are also a great help in addressing your activities. You liaise with a good range of local and national bodies and organisations and seem to gain a great deal of support for your work. Well done in this. You communicate effectively with your community through your Facebook page as well as word of mouth. As your village is spread across a wide area, there may be challenges in achieving your aims. But no matter how small a project may seem on the ground, they all add up to promote a sense of pride in the community enjoyed by both residents and visitors.

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

This was the adjudicator's first visit to your lovely village. Your village has a lovely mix of new and old and in spite of having a long linear pattern has a real sense of place and community. As you say the issues of vacant premises is becoming of lesser concern as the economy thrives and how great to see new families taking over older properties. However it is a pity that the prominent shop and post office are not now occupied. However to your credit it was well presented given that it is now vacant and the window boxes enlivened the frontage here. Your work to the pub forecourt was noted and as you say the area looked pristine on adjudication day. Once again the 'Hill' hall was very well presented and well used by the community on adjudication day. The church and its grounds were immaculate with a lovely feature copper beech framing the lovely church clock tower which was showing good time. The blue and white notice board was empty opposite the gate here and in a precarious position for pedestrians to stop and read. Can it be removed if no longer used or relocated? The new peacock sculpture was admired and is a great gateway feature for the village with the planted beds slowly filling out. It is very well sited and stands out against the evergreen hedge backdrop.

Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:

The quarry park is such a beautiful site and immaculately maintained. The trail up over the rock face passing the

many incidental sculptures was really enjoyed by the adjudicator. Likewise the playground was well looked after and well used. A more varied mowing regime or additional boundary planting could be employed here to build on the butterfly theme perhaps. It's a pity the two sites cannot be connected in a physical sense with a more formal connection between the two entrances. The blue picnic tables were well sited. We felt some of the crowns to the trees to the boundary of the quarry could be lifted somewhat while still retaining the quarries secretive feel. This can be a next step in your proactive tree management in the village following on from the crown reduction done this year to the poplar trees by the playground. Congratulations on the recent acquisition on the site for your fountain and reflective space at the core of the village. Works had commenced on the area on adjudication day and we look forward to seeing this space completed for next year's visit. Incidental planted beds add colour to the village and the pink geraniums at the raised wall planter by the bring bank and the bank of purple geraniums at the quarry sign were lovely examples of using perennials for summer colour.

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

The purpose of this category is to help communities promote and understand why their habitats are important and helping local residents value them. The Wild flowers of Ballyreevagh Quarry notice board was a very interesting display and well presented at the Quarry. To further promote this topic in the community have you considered getting an expert from Birdwatch Ireland or Bat Ireland to lead a nature walk in the town? These can be a low impact way of getting local people involved and aware of the wildlife present in the surrounding landscape. Do you take part in national tree week? Another nationally promoted event which you could use to promote any tree planting works done to link with the participation of local farmers in the Glas Scheme. Be mindful of where. . The use of nectar rich perennials in your seasonal displays were admired. Be sure to log this scheme on to the All Ireland Pollinator Plan online mapping system, Actions for Pollinators. This helps the plan authors track the build-up of food and shelter in our landscape through the success of local projects.

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

We are pleased to see that your committee have decided time and effort to progressing this category. The bag upcycling initiative is an interesting one to progress. Has the new traffic management plan at the school made the environs safer to encourage children to bike or walk to school? The school energy survey may make more parents and children use lower impact was of getting to school in the future. How great to hear that you propagate your own flowers from local plants and seeds and that you have a committee member dedicated to this task.

For further advice on this category we would encourage you to consult the Tidy Towns handbook and also to visit <http://localprevention.ie/tidy-towns/> . The Local Prevention website have added a specific 'Tidy Towns' page to their website so you can see what waste prevention projects have been done by other similar groups around the country in villages such as yours. There are various case studies to learn from with practical tips, advice, free downloads of brochures etc. this is a great resource to gain advice on how to address this category. Other simple ways to advance in this category is to encourage your community's participation in for example earth day or cycle week, nationally promoted programmes that Newtowncashel could take part in. These can be simple and effective ways to get the message across and will gain you points in this category for next year. You have a focus on rural transport and good luck with progressing your ideas here. Are bike stands proposed for the new landscape area at the core of the village to complement your new cycle route signage?

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

The standard here was high with scant litter evident in the village core or quarry park area so well done to all involved. Bins at the Hill hall and the quarry were clean and empty. The 2 urban style concrete bins at the community hall were we felt a little much. Are they both required? Could one be removed to reduce the clutter around the building and encourage residents to take their litter home and hopefully recycle where possible? Your Dawn Litter patrol seems to be a success for you and we wish to thank all those who give of their time to take part. Some dog poo was seen at the Quarry which is an issue in so many centres. The bring bank was well presented. The vacant red roofed building on the approach from the south could benefit from a power wash to its facade as it is a prominent building when approaching the village.

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

Given the spread out rural nature of your community, individual properties seen were presented to a good standard so well done to all your residents. As many of your residents have long road frontages it can be difficult to keep boundary walls and hedges well maintained so we appreciate the efforts of all residents.. Encourage residents to plant up gardens, as gardens areas are a really important wildlife resource and an important source of food and nectar and can be an important habitat even in the rural landscape. As a project for this category for next year, we would encourage you to spread the link to the All Ireland Pollination Plan Guide to actions for gardens to aid pollinators available at www.biodiversityireland.ie/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/Gardens_actions-to-help-pollinators-July-2016.pdf.

This could be done through your groups facebook page. We note that a number of older premises are being newly occupied which will add new residents to the village. We hope you can add to your pool of volunteers with these new residents. Joining tidy towns is a great way to encourage newcomers to take an active role in the upkeep and environment of their village town and helps them create new linkages and friendships through volunteering and adding to the skill sets available to the committee.

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

One of this visitors first impressions were of the lovely stone walls that line your roadsides. The heritage of stone

work and quarrying in the village then became evident after a visit to the Quarry Park where the depth of history and heritage your village has with stone was presented. The little engraved plaques also were of great interest when walking around the village, highlighting important moments and people in the community's past. A lovely tradition. (Beties plaque was nice and clean but the Oak Tree however could not be located. Is it still alive?) A lovely old iron gate was and stone style was noted by the bring centre, an important part of our rural roadside heritage, to be treasured. Your works to improve the path network in the village is applauded and hopefully will encourage more walking in the village.

Concluding Remarks:

Newtowncashel, spread out as you are along pleasant county roads, has its own rural charm and as you say in your submission, has experienced a period of change and hopefully growth, over the last number of years. We hope your involvement with the Tidy Towns will help you achieve all your aims and help the village grow and prosper. All involved with this year's entry are warmly thanked and congratulated for their efforts and wished well in 2020. We very much look forward to our return visit for next year's adjudication.