

# Tidy Towns Competition 2023

## Adjudication Report

Centre: **Newtowncashel - Baile Nua an Chaisil** Ref: **485**  
County: **Longford** Mark: **361**  
Category: **B** Date(s): **27/06/2023**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2022	Mark Awarded 2023
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	80	50	51
Streetscape & Public Places	80	47	49
Green Spaces and Landscaping	80	48	50
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	55	36	37
Sustainability – Doing more with less	55	23	24
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	66	67
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	55	36	37
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	55	45	46
<b>TOTAL MARK</b>	<b>550</b>	<b>351</b>	<b>361</b>

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

Fáilte chuig Comórtas Na mBailte Slachtmhara Super Valu don bhliain 2023. Táimid buíoch daoibh as ucht na hiontrála a chur chugainn, agus guimíd gach rath ar bhúr gcuid oibre amach anseo. Adh Mór! Many thanks for your entry for this year's competition. I noted that Newtowncashel was the national Tidy Towns winner in 1980 and you rightly seem to take great pride in your village. The Tidy Towns committee seems to be very active and it's great to see you keep in contact with everyone through a wide range of methods. The monthly meetings, regular tidy ups and good connection to the local national school, Longford County Council, agencies and businesses, serve you well, as Newtowncashel is well maintained and pleasant to visit. The Quarry Park is certainly one of the village's highlights and it is good to see its popularity continues and that you are making improvements. Your application was well put together, although a little long. The first part was succinct, though the additional pdf, while lovely, made me unsure when certain projects were completed or events took place. It is worth making clear the dates in future. Overall though, well done on your ongoing efforts to enhance your village and for keeping the community spirit alive.

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

There is no doubt your village lies in a very scenic part of Co. Longford. The streetscape is pleasant, with several historical buildings and features such as old walls and gates. The remaining pub, community hall ('The Hill'), sports club and church are well presented, and it is refreshing to see some buildings being restored by private owners. It is such a pity to see local shops closing across the country, which has unfortunately happened in Newtowncashel too. The shop is in a prominent location in the village, and as with all unused buildings, it can begin to look tired. Hopefully in time there will be a new lease of life for this building. The blue chain link fencing and lampposts were particularly striking and were a nice change from the usual black! The fountain area is a super recent addition to the streetscape and I'm sure it looks wonderful at night with the new solar lighting. The new seating around the village enhances the area too. The playground is kept very tidy, although a bit of weeding might be required near the entrance. The Thomas Ashe house/old Sinn Féin hall is a real gem to have in terms of local history. I needed to look closer to realise the building's importance and while there are some lovely flowers growing outside it, they may need pruning at some point. I enjoyed the various sculptures and quotes dotted around the village. The little 'Shut the Gate' sign on the old gate entering the GAA Club is charming and it would be lovely to see this restored.

### Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:

The Quarry Park is certainly the jewel in your crown in this category! It is very unique and effectively combines history, art and nature. I note that you have plans to make the park safer for locals and visitors and saw the grid you have added to the pond. While it is important to leave the park somewhat 'wild', I understand the need for making it

safer in certain areas, e.g. the stone steps. I saw there is an area to the rear of the park where garden waste, etc has been disposed of. This can look untidy can lead to the spread of unwanted 'escapees', so just be mindful of this. Otherwise though, I was enchanted by this spot. I was struck by the Peacock statue and flowerbed on the entrance from Lanesborough – I thought it was really creative, colourful and well maintained. The church grounds and many of the gardens are beautifully kept – in fact I thought one of the gardens was a public park and I was tempted to enter and look around!

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

Newtowncashel is in a great location, surrounded by Lough Ree (an SAC) and bogland, which are both such important habitats for biodiversity. I am happy to hear some of your members are involved with conserving the lakeshore and boglands along with Longford Co Co. I noted planters at the fountain and some planting at the signs. While some are quite attractive, I felt there could be more emphasis on pollinator-friendly flowers and shrubs – perhaps something to consider. I did note the importance of the Quarry Park for nature in terms of native trees and rockface ferns and lichen, etc. I noted a little strip of grass between the Quarry Park and playground full of wildflower species, including wild Orchids! Perhaps a 'low-mow' regime in and around the quarry might reveal more surprises. It is worth looking at [pollinators.ie](https://pollinators.ie) for lots of ideas in regard to simple steps that can be taken to support pollinators further.

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

Well done on getting the solar lighting installed at the fountain, which is both less costly and better for the environment! Good to hear you are harvesting rainwater also – I believe I saw a water tank at the Thomas Ashe house? The clothes recycling campaign by the school is an excellent project. For more inspiration on how you can make your area more sustainable, check out <https://irelandsgd.geohive.ie/> Information on the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is available here, in respect to Ireland specifically. It may provide ideas in areas such as waste, energy, water, biodiversity and community. Other useful websites are [mywaste.ie](https://mywaste.ie), [epa.ie](https://epa.ie) and [seai.ie](https://seai.ie).

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

Newtowncashel was generally very tidy and litter-free on my visit. Your hard work in this category has paid off. It is good to know you refrain from using weedkiller. Some small areas here and there may need to be 'scuffed', e.g. at the clothes bank. I also saw two bags of clothes left at the clothes bank. Perhaps it was full but it was hard to tell. The bottle bank at 'The Hill' was well maintained, however. I noted the compost area to the rear of Quarry Park and mentioned it under 'Green Spaces and Landscaping'. Perhaps a more formal compost area would be more suitable here, which might also provide good quality compost to use in the village in future?

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

Newtowncashel has suffered from depopulation and the closure of businesses like many towns around rural Ireland, unfortunately. Despite this, you have held on and managed to maintain your buildings as best you can and some, like the Garda station, have been restored and renovated into beautiful homes. There are no housing estates in and around the village, but the houses within and on the outskirts are tidy and well presented, with some lovely flower displays.

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

The approach roads are well maintained into Newtowncashel. As mentioned above, I liked the Peacock sculpture and flowerbed on the approach from Lanesborough. Signs were clean, although one or two of the 'Newtowncashel' signs are now faded, making them less legible. Your application suggests you are aware of this and hopefully they can be replaced in the future. Flowers and shrubs at a couple of the signs, e.g. the Longford Tourism sign and a welcome sign, may need some a little attention, but overall they look well. It is clear you put in a lot of effort to keep streets clean and it is always good to leave strips of long vegetation for wildlife along the roadsides, as your entry suggests.

### **Concluding Remarks:**

Newtowncashel is a pretty little village with some interesting heritage features and buildings. The Quarry Park is a real asset and a credit to the Tidy Towns committee - for both creating and maintaining it. There is a lot of potential to enhance some aspects of the village, but it is clear why you have won in the past. I acknowledge it is difficult to keep up momentum when local shops and pubs have closed down and people have moved on. However, there are signs of recent revival with some new inhabitants and successful renovations. I applaud your hard work and wish you the best of luck with all current and future endeavours!