

# Tidy Towns Competition 2024

## Adjudication Report

Centre: **Newtowncashel - Baile Nua an Chaisil** Ref: **485**  
County: **Longford** Mark: **371**  
Category: **A** Date(s): **15/06/2024**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2023	Mark Awarded 2024
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	80	51	52
Streetscape & Public Places	80	49	51
Green Spaces and Landscaping	80	50	52
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	55	37	38
Sustainability – Doing more with less	55	24	25
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	67	68
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	55	37	38
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	55	46	47
<b>TOTAL MARK</b>	<b>550</b>	<b>361</b>	<b>371</b>

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

Fáilte chuig Comórtas Na mBailte Slachtmhara SuperValu don bhliain 2024. Táimid buíoch daoibh as ucht na hiontrála a chur chugainn, agus guimíd gach rath ar bhúr gcuid oibre amach anseo. Adh Mór...."

Thank you for extending a lovely welcome to your adjudicators. We received your detailed entry form which included a lovely artistic map and photographs including some great aerial images of Newtowncashel.

Like many committees, since Covid the number of our volunteers have dropped dramatically. People are very reluctant to sit on committees. For all events advertise an end time, or offer cake at the end. If possible, have a volunteer for a short time to publicise your activities. Maybe have a suggestion box that someone sets up on-line that can be shared across the community.

The suggestions could help form a long-term plan. Keep the plan simple and achievable and include time-limited actions that can be easily shared between others. For example, maybe a walking or cycling trail through the village could be drafted and made available on your website based on some of the lovely existing information that is collated there already?

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

The Church of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin was beautifully presented with many mature trees, particularly a notable copper beech at the entrance. The nice array of window boxes and hanging baskets enhanced this nicely maintained Community Hall with its lovely wooden porch. The raised stone flower bed here looked well. Useful information was displayed here about local services available. Is there a defibrillator around here? The gutters will need clearing at some stage but no doubt you will have this completed that chore before you read this!! The aptly named 'The Local' had nice outdoor seating.

We were impressed that the GAA facilities with a covered stand for spectators. The grounds were nicely managed, and it was good to see the edges have been allowed to grow a little longer and not so tightly mown to benefit biodiversity. It is assumed they have followed some of the recommendations in the All-Ireland Pollinator Guide for Sport Clubs – this is a great resource. <https://pollinators.ie/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/Sports-Clubs-Pollinator-Guidelines-2022-WEB.pdf> The car park at the GAA is nicely softened with the provision of a landscaped bed separating and breaking up the large expanse of tarmac.

Some lovely traditional wrought iron gates throughout Newtowncashel add to the heritage of the area.

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

It was your adjudicator's first time to visit the Round Hill of the Caldwell, otherwise known as Newtowncashel. The views from the recently refurbished viewpoint were really lovely. Have you thought of erecting a sign indicating what we could see in the distance? The continuity of blue colour is carried through throughout the village which helps provide a sense of place.

Well done on your hard work creating the peacock which makes for a striking focal point in its landscaped bed. Take care that plants don't obscure the sign stating you were a National Tidy Towns winner here. This was an attractive landscaped bed which makes for a nice welcome driving into the village.

It was absolutely wonderful and a major surprise to enter the quarry park to see the transformation of this area that you now own and manage. The sculptures were amazing – why have we not heard about these before, or do you want to keep it a secret? The playground was lovely also - how lucky are the local residents to have this amenity. We were surprised at the tone of the signage at the entrance to the playground with the word 'no' use seven times and the word welcome was absent. It is recommended that Longford County Council are encouraged to provide more welcoming, replacement signs to their playgrounds.

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

The wildlife mural at the school looked well and the landscaping and the raised beds outside the school help create a strong sense of place. Maybe some more native trees should be planted to the existing ones already here? Elsewhere some of the conifers planted in containers or raised beds could be replaced with some pollinator friendly perennials?

It was great to see the listing of flowers that grow in the quarry. Maybe share this on-line on your website also? If you have people interested in wildflowers in the community, have they considered maybe leading an informal talk about flowers around the village and discussing how to take slips and cuttings? Or perhaps one volunteer could be encouraged to lead a walk talking about the wetland birds that depend on Lough Ree which you point out is so important it is designated as of European Importance for the wildlife and biodiversity here.

There appeared to be some use of herbicide on the lane heading up from the playground, but elsewhere it's a beautiful village with many wonderful mature trees - you have looked after these well.

Do you use your own home-made compost in your landscaping? Or maybe offer it to some keen local gardeners? This might help with the capacity issues here. How lovely to hear of the wildlife that you have in the community – again you could encourage friends and neighbours to share images and photos such as offering a spot prize to the person who sees the first swallow in Spring.

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

It was great to see the Green Flag flying proudly at the school to well done to all for the hard work over several years to achieve this.

The new solar powered wireless streetlights were admired, as were the benches made out of recycled materials. Is there a local bus for the area? With new families moving into renovated properties, do many walk or cycle to school. You have good continuity of pavement to support this. Best of luck to the school with its new astro-turf pitch.

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

Well done on your litter-picking efforts as Newtowncashel looked very litter-free during adjudication.

The blue notice board opposite the entrance to the church needs to be repaired. It is also suggested that it is relocated to an area where it can be easily, and safely read, such as the new viewing area. It was nice to see the memorial stone built into the wall at the public viewing area commemorating the work of all your volunteers which we suspect is nearly everybody in the community!

The bottle banks were clean and tidy, and we had not seen these narrower versions before which sit very neatly in the corner here. There's a wooden field gate near the clothes banks at the bottom of the GAA car park that needs some minor repairs.

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

It was great to see refurbishments ongoing creating more homes in Newtowncashel. The former garda station, now a home, is aptly named 'The Barracks'.. There were two more lovely homes beside the old Health Centre - one modern and one older that presented well. The name "J Hopkins" was over the door of another lovely, refurbished home on the approach road into Newtowncashel.

Have many homes availed of some of the energy grants that are available? Perhaps some information could be shared about this if there is an interest.

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

Please take care with the montbretia (Croscosmia) planted along the roadside as this is considered as an invasive plant by Transport Infrastructure Ireland due to its ability to spread easily and cause damage to roads. Maybe check with your Area Engineer about this. There was a road-side safety barrier on the route to the playground and quarry park with a lot of hard core/rubble behind it– maybe this could be a place to plant a pollinator-friendly flower mix as they can grow well on low-nutrient, stoney areas.

The road-side name sign near the school road saying you were a National TidyTown winner proved difficult to read and you should have this re-done as it is a great achievement.

**Concluding Remarks:**

It was very enjoyable to explore Newtowncashel. You have a great community spirit that is working together to enhance the area. Well done on your hard work over the last 12 months, and indeed the last 47 years.