

Tidy Towns Competition 2016

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Newtowncashel** Ref: **485**
County: **Longford** Mark: **317**
Category: **A** Date(s): **20/06/2016**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2015	Mark Awarded 2016
Community Involvement & Planning	60	45	45
Built Environment and Streetscape	50	41	41
Landscaping and Open Spaces	50	45	45
Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities	50	34	34
Sustainable Waste and Resource Management	50	15	16
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	61	61
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	31	32
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	42	43
TOTAL MARK	450	314	317

Community Involvement & Planning / Rannpháirtíocht an Phobail & Pleanáil:

Fearann an moltóir seo na mílte fáilte roimh Baile Nua an Chaisil chuig Comórtas Náisiúnta na mBailte Slachtmhara 2016. It was a first adjudication for this adjudicator to visit Newtown Cashel and witness all the work that has been done here for many years. Of course your highest accolade arrived in 1980 when you won the overall award. Thank you for your submission which included an illustrated map, entry form and list of projects planned and on hand. We would welcome specific lists of completed works. Many of your projects listed are yet to be done and many are not started. This is off putting for an adjudicator who spends time seeking out work that has not started; eg you mention the old Sinn Féin Hall and with the year that was in it we expected to find progress on this building. We still don't know if there is any progress to report. We note you are active with 12 committee members and holding monthly meetings will ensure that work is continuous. It also ensures that you liaise closely with each other on a regular basis. We are not surprised to learn that you support children's playing projects as this is very much part of Tidy Towns. We are impressed with the long list of subscribers that assist you and no doubt you have their support for many years now. We can see at a glance that you are quite skilled now in attracting good publicity for your endeavours and we enjoyed reading your press reports. Of course your many social events further cement your activity with the local scene. We arrived immediately after your Bonfire at the rear The Local and we were impressed at how quickly you had cleaned up after the event. Happy too we were to note that no tyres or other nasty material was used and no stain left either because of the metal container in which the material was burned.

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

Your work on the church and hall is commendable and your improvements with access is acknowledged. Our visit to the school was enjoyed and we are pleased to learn that an extension is immanent, subject to planning permission. Our visit to the church of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin was much admired. As always we visited the inside of the church and were really impressed. The blue drapes we found startling and so appropriate with the name. This is a beautiful church with all the traditional features one hopes to find with buildings of such vintage. The two side altars were much admired and the bell rang out at six o'clock proclaiming time for prayer. In short a pleasant visit. We are not sure if the shop at the Post Office is open as we did not see any door open. The streetscape in Cashel is good and road signs and markings are well presented. Footpaths are well presented and the new work on the way to the Quarry is good. Our biggest disappointment emanates from our visit to the old Garda Barracks. This building is quite shabby and the building to the rear has no door and look abandoned. The surrounds disappointed us also and the signage is poor in presentation. The GAA club house was well presented.

Landscaping and Open Spaces / Tírdhreachú agus Spásanna Oscailte:

You have high score in this category and it has been one of your strong points down through the years. Indeed, you

have an abundance of landscaping projects going back over three decades. These still demand good maintenance and some now need revisiting. Sadly we are never in a position to view your early spring flowers, e.g Snowdrops, (plúiríní sneachta) daffodils, bluebells and even primroses. However, we can appreciate how attractive they were from your description. The new tree planting along the new wall at the Quarry is exemplary and pleased us immensely. The planting surrounding the village approach signs continues to highlight the entrances on each approach. We wonder when these welcome signs were erected as some are now a bit shabby and not easy to read. We are also surprised at the absence of any Irish on them, a situation that is very uncommon currently. The lovely garden near the Sinn Féin building is quite poor and needed attention. The grass here should always be well presented and the rose bed to the road is in need of attention. There is an air of neglect about this little park and we feel it was once a model for others to pursue. The attractive timber gate is not erected properly. Well done on the new planting at the Lotto sign, this is now a colourful corner and enhances this approach. Out visit to the Quarry was a treat and we arrived very soon after grass cutting. What a lovely amenity park and so full of interesting features. We like the history outlined and the stonebreaker outside is a very appropriate introduction to this park. We feel you are overdoing the plaque mounting in the village and feel it is unnecessary. Information for historical purposes is one thing, a plethora of acknowledgement signs is not necessary. There is one holly tree near the new planting that seems in trouble. Give it one more year and if it does not recover you should replace with the same species. We liked the blue seating here also. It was good to witness the new Butterfly Park in good use by children on the day. We even quizzed them on their favourite equipment and got diverse answers. The entrance here is in need of improvement and we hope this will be done for 2017. The quarry park map board needs cleaning at the entrance and also an improvement for wheel chair access would be welcome.

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

You have potential for high scoring in this category and we encourage you to liaise closely with your environmental officer and other advisers in this area of the competition. The small bird display board at the Quarry should move to a more suitable location: best to mount it in a free standing position. We are pleased with your close liaison with the LCC and the personnel associated with this category. It is a specialist category in many ways, but one that can bring great pleasure to many with even a little knowledge. Your challenge is to popularise the wildlife of the area. We are delighted to learn about the 'Toraíocht Dhiarmuid agus Ghráinne Trail' in the Quarry. You also have habitat at the small Herber Donn sculpture park. We are also a little puzzled regarding entrance as the access seems fine but we encountered a Private Property sign which is off putting.

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

Well done on the supply of water butts and we noticed with pleasure the large water tank beside The Local organised by Tidy Towns. We noticed your attendance of an open meeting with Bord na Mona on a proposed wind farm in the area. You don't tell us about your feelings of support or otherwise! Will it affect your area? You talk about undergrounding overhead cables: has this work been done recently or have you plans for completion?. We would like to know about your current action in this regard. As a committee you are well equipped to work closely with the community as you meet each month and this is an ideal winter activity to stimulate the community into action. This can be done with seminars and talks about how best to involve individuals. Sustainability is very much an individual requirement and the more we encourage the community the better will be the results.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

You have a mixed standard here and we found some problems. We already alluded to the old Garda station. The front of this building is poor in standard and we noticed bags of dumped litter beside the blue water butt. This surprised us. Also on the path fronting the building there was a display honouring the Longford men (and women we assume) of 1916. There was a black plastic bag hanging from a stone functioning as a litter bin. Lastly, the national flag was flying at this spot which was over printed with a Guinness Logo. This is very unethical use of our National flag and not in anyway appropriate. You mention in your submission that you organise two work evenings in the summer, so you must have missed this stain at the old Garda Station. We liked the composting unit at the Quarry.

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

In general housing is very well presented in Cashel and the many period and heritage house are an important part of your work requirement. Your comments regarding the purchasing of housing in your area is a welcome change from that which we have encountered in our travels to date. It augurs well for the quality of life in Cashel and we are delighted to learn that you appreciate this situation. As mentioned earlier the new Butterfly Park beside the Quarry is now a valuable addition to your facilities for children. Some excellent individual in all parts of the village and some excel in presentation.

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

Without exception approach roads to Cashel are well presented. All have well presented illustrated signage and this is quite colourful and of course effective for visitors. We feel compelled to find fault with the GAA Lotto sign. It is too big, too loud and the colouring is far from conducive to a rural village such as Newtowncashel. If you stand at this sign and look out over the GAA playing field you will see a most beautiful landscape of parkland and mature trees. This is the environment you are challenged to maintain and signage must not take from the beauty of such a spectacle. We love the many items of sculpture throughout the village. Some of your plaques are now in need of replenishment: the sign at the old school for the teacher, the sign inside the entrance gate of the national school with the hexagonal concrete bed, now neglected. We could not read the inscription here but think it relates to a

former school. Worthwhile getting it restored. The STOP sign near the Lotto sign needs painting, can this be done for next year? You need to remove the Heritage Sign on the approach to the village. We understand the Heritage Centre no longer functions. We were surprised at the omission of a Green Flag at the school, indeed, you may have one but we did not see any. Be careful listing names and places that no adjudicator would understand. Referring to Farrells's Wall means nothing to an adjudicator if it is not featured on the map.

Conclusion:

It was a delight to visit this lovely village and witness the work being done by committee and community. You have stood the test of time and your sustainability is praiseworthy. Your challenge not is to maintain your efforts and we suggest you revisit many of previous year's projects. Go n-éirí libh amach anseo.

Concluding Remarks: