

Tidy Towns Competition 2013

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Newport** Ref: **567**
County: **Mayo** Mark: **263**
Category: **B** Date(s): **05/07/2013**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2012	Mark Awarded 2013
Overall Development Approach	50	38	39
The Built Environment	50	36	38
Landscaping	50	33	34
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	29	30
Litter Control	50	31	32
Sustainable Waste And Resource Management	20	11	12
Tidiness	30	17	18
Residential Areas	40	22	22
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	30	31
General Impression	10	7	7
TOTAL MARK	400	254	263

Overall Development Approach:

Welcome Newport to the 2013 tidy towns competition. It is pleasing to see that your committee of eight have such a large team of volunteers (an impressive 20 regulars!) and that you work closely with 2 local youth clubs. Well done also on establishing good links with statutory agencies and other bodies including the Rural Social Scheme, Tus, Mayo County Council, the National Roads Authority, the Marine Institute and An Taisce. Your links with other interest groups and other voluntary bodies is no less impressive with relationships noted with the Newport Development Company, Newport Community Futures, the Mayo County Community Forum and Mens Shed. It is great to see that your communication strategy was informed directly by your experience of preparing the Newport Community Action Plan and that it includes using all mediums (including the internet) that are available to you. It is pleasing to see that the feedback on your Facebook page is very positive and that your efforts are very much appreciated locally. The Community Action Plan is an excellent document that was prepared with extensive community participation and we applaud your efforts for sticking closely to it. Completing projects that are identified in the community action plan, is also a powerful way of demonstrating that the tidy towns movement is all about improving your town and making a better places to live, work and raise families. It is great to see that you have closely involved the schools in your work and that you've engaged in a number of joint projects. This is an excellent way of introducing young people to the benefits of community participation and of raising environmental awareness. Thank you for your comprehensive entry form and map, both of which were presented to a good standard. The map could be improved by including key landmarks and the names of the residential estates. While your three to five-year tidy towns action plan was noted, it is recommended that it should take the form of a table which identifies projects under each of the tidy towns categories and include suggested start and finish dates as well as potential project partners. This tidy towns action plan should also be informed closely by the community action plan.

The Built Environment:

While it is disappointing to see that dereliction continues to present problems for Newport, it is pleasing to see that good progress is being made on a number of properties such as the former woollen Mills, Taste Buds and Cusacks corner. The project to provide a social space in Cusacks corner sounds very exciting and we look forward to seeing this project completed in the near future. Well done to all local business owners for their efforts in improving the presentation of their premises. The lovely terrace of buildings on Meddicott Street was admired and a number of very well turned out properties could be seen including Grainne Uaile (with its lovely hanging

baskets and window boxes), the Post Office and the Black Oak Inn. The standard of presentation of commercial premises on Main Street is equally impressive with the Seven Arches Bar, Keane Meats, Hotel Newport, Dominic Kellys and Walshes Bridge Inn to be commended. The mural opposite Kellys was also admired and we loved the modern design of the physiotherapy clinic. We were also very pleased to see that new bike racks have been provided in the village centre. The new tourist office looks fantastic and we are delighted to see that the old tourist office is now in productive use by the Greenway artists (an excellent initiative). The committee are commended on the large amount of painting that you have undertaken for 2013 and this has made a very positive difference to the appearance of the town centre. It is great to see that the extension the national school is now completed after a long wait and this modern building (and its contemporary finishes) provides a lovely contrast to the historical buildings and structures of the town such as the old mill building and the viaduct.

Landscaping:

The committee has certainly worked hard on landscaping projects for 2013, all of which were observed during adjudication. The landscaping work undertaken on the Westport approach road was admired and we are looking forward to seeing this develop in the years ahead. It is great to see that the dead trees have been replaced and this will help to ensure that the Main Street of the town remains tree-lined in the future. We note that the landscaped boats at Melcombe, Quay road and at the waterfall area on the Castlebar road have all been painted and replanted and you'll be pleased to know that they looked lovely on adjudication day, providing interest and colour on the key approaches to Newport. Well done also on the provision of planters in various locations around the town as they appeared bright and colourful on adjudication day. However, please remember that the planters may require significant amounts of maintenance (and water) in future years and permanent beds should be considered as an alternative where possible. The landscaped bed of roses on the Castlebar road was in full bloom during adjudication and the seating area close to the viaduct forms a lovely public space. The 3D floral mural wall at the garden centre on the Castlebar Road is also a lovely idea. It is further noted that more exciting projects are planned under this category and they include; the Greenway Activity Park, redesigning Canon Killeen Park and community allotments.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

Your application form indicates that an extensive number of projects were also undertaken under this category. The marine wildlife signage for Melcombe Quay (donated by the Marine Institute) is a great initiative and while it was not observed during adjudication (could its location be marked on the map for 2014?), this is an excellent way of raising awareness of the importance of the coastline as a habitat. The butterfly garden was admired and this is an excellent use of a somewhat incidental space. However, it is considered that it could be improved by including planting that is favoured by butterflies such as Buddleia. We were also pleased to see that a new bug hotel is located at the school and that new Greenway signage has been provided at the Mulranny road. Well done also on working with the School on 'greenwave projects' to explore the theme of biodiversity in Newport. Does this include a nature trail or coastal walk? Perhaps this could be considered? We also know from your entry form that the net lake project is planned and this joint initiative with the school and the Marine Institute sounds like a very exciting project and we look forward to hearing further details in 2014.

Litter Control:

Well done on your performance in the 2012 Mayo litter action league and it is not surprising to hear that you scored extremely highly as there was virtually no litter to be seen in Newport on adjudication day. We are pleased to see that you continue to organise cleanups with local volunteers and that litter picks are undertaken on a weekly basis. Your efforts to raise awareness of the problems of dog fouling are commended and we loved your original signage drawing attention to this issue.

Sustainable Waste And Resource Management:

The focus of this category is on waste minimisation and elimination and tidy towns groups are encouraged to think of innovative ways to raise awareness of the need to reduce and eliminate waste in their communities as well as undertaking actions that achieves this. Your application form indicates that the committee is moving in the right direction with a number of excellent projects undertaken in 2013. Well done on attending the master composter program and we would urge you to consider organising a similar program in Newport which members of the community can attend. We were also delighted to see that the committee are minimising waste through the development of an organic vegetable garden at the school, working with the RSS to provide a polytunnel (presumably to grow plants for your landscaping schemes) and using recycled materials in your mural. We note that Mayo County Council is taking your green waste for composting. Perhaps it would be better to undertake your own composting as the compost can be put to good use in your landscaping schemes? We would also like to hear about what water you use for your planters? Is this harvested rainwater? We note the proposed projects listed under this category in your entry form and we recommend that the projects that achieve waste minimisation rather than recycling should be prioritised.

Tidiness:

It is great to see that all old signs and sign poles had been removed and that all road signage on approach roads has been improved. We note from your entry form that the old derelict phone box has been moved and seating put in its place while the tree bases on Main Street have been cleaned and refilled gravel and that improvements have taken place outside the apartment block and at Acres Grove. You are commended on these projects and a number of other small improvements are suggested. The apartment block on Melcombe looks quite nice but the

wooden planters at the front of the building will need paint or treatment for 2014. The quayside wall at this location is also quite weedy and we wondered if there is a maintenance regime in place for the quayside? The red gates of the playground will need to be painted for 2014 and the seating benches in Canon Killeen Park opposite will also require a fresh coat of paint for next year. The boundaries of the park were also a little untidy looking. (I.e. long grass amongst the hedges and trees) and the wooden boundary fence of the Park could also be improved. The setting of the Park is first class as it takes full advantage of excellent views of the bay, the viaduct and the town. The Quay road suffered in some sections from weed at the roadside and some very untidy old boats could be seen. Are there plans to remove these? The car park close to the junction of Quay Road and Main Street was also untidy looking due to poor boundary treatment, rough surfacing and weeds.

Residential Areas:

We were delighted to read that a new Residents Association has been formed for Acres Grove and that the tidy towns committee are making equipment available to local residents for use in their areas. It is also noted that Mayo County Council have agreed a timetable for grass management and maintenance and are working on the Oak Park estate. The appearance of residential areas in Newport was generally mixed with some areas like Croabh Ban (as identified by the adjudicator in 2012) in need of improvement while others, such as Rosmore, looked very well.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

The Westport approach to Newport is impressive with well maintained verges and semi mature trees on display. The Mulranny approach road also looked well and the new signage denoting the greenway was observed. The approach to the town on the Castlebar Road reaches a high standard with its lovely views of the Viaduct, the Newport River and the attractive planting. The Quay road could be improved however, with some sections (such as the section coming past Bay View Drive) appearing weedy and untidy looking.

General Impression:

The committee are commended on undertaking a number of excellent projects in Newport in 2013 that have significantly improved the appearance and amenities of the town. Keep up the good work and we look forward to returning in 2014.