

Tidy Towns Competition 2022

Adjudication Report

Centre: Newcastle Lyons - An Caisleán Nua	Ref: 817
County: Dublin	Mark: 310
Category: D	Date(s): 02/07/2022

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2021	Mark Awarded 2022
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	80	50	51
Streetscape & Public Places	80	41	44
Green Spaces and Landscaping	80	39	41
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	55	22	23
Sustainability – Doing more with less	55	18	20
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	53	54
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	55	40	40
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	55	36	37
TOTAL MARK	550	299	310

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

Fáilte chuig Comórtas Na mBailte Slachtmhara Super Valu don bhliain 2022. Táimid buíoch daoibh as ucht na hiontrála a chur chugainn, agus guimíd gach rath ar bhúr gcuid oibre amach anseo.

You are a sub-group of ReNewcastle Community Group, and you have a strong committee of 14 members. You have a great network of contacts, groups, local sports groups, schools, and businesses that support you – this is testament to your hard work. Even the local singing group, RAMS in Rhythm, has raised funds towards your cause. It was evident that everyone enjoyed this event judging by the photos and video of this on your Facebook pages. Everyone involved is working towards the same aim – to enhance the area where they live and work for the benefit of all.

Whilst your long-term plan is a little out of date now – it still allows you to focus and measure your work, and to be fair not a lot of work was advanced in 2020 and 2021 across any TidyTowns group in Ireland! You had workshops to develop your original plan and many proposed items in that plan would still be valid. We were delighted to read that you have now launched your Heritage Trail. Newcastle residents are lucky to have many heritage features and properties in the community. We enjoyed learning about your history and seeing pictures of what the town looked like in years gone by.

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

The Heritage Trail took a lot of work to gather information, create signs, get permission to position the signs, get quotes etc. So well done to the Trail Committee. We were pleased to see QR codes in place to allow us to view the trail on-line also. With a rapidly growing village, it is great to have these buildings highlighted for all to appreciate.

The street furniture was very well maintained and particularly the old water pumps which looked lovely painted maroon and gold. All the utility boxes in Newcastle have been painted with wildlife images that help the village to stand out some more.

The boundary wall of the shopping centre looked really nice. It has obviously been freshly painted and planters here really enhance this area. It is much improved since your adjudicator was last in Newcastle. Since then we have seen new businesses also and their signage and landscaping looked well such as at Newcastle Dental Practice. We were very impressed with your outreach works with other new businesses so that signage toned in with existing signage and building design. A good example of this is 'Price Buster'.

The new school looked well and has many integrated design features and mechanisms to save energy and cleverly uses solar gain in its design. The wildlife areas and outdoor classrooms encourage closer links with wildlife. We were pleased to read of your close links with the school community.

It was exciting to see the new SuperValu opening which should offer opportunities for new residents to get involved with some of your Tidy Town's activities. SuperValu normally has a community notice board to support local groups such as Tidy Towns.

Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:

You are proud of your work for this category of the competition. And so you should be. You have taken advice from local gardens, and the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan to make pockets of attractive planting, that also benefits our bees.

Entrances to estates had stone-edged beds full of flowers suitable for pollinators which is great to see. The planted fruit and herb garden was nicely positioned by the busy pavement. You put a lot of effort here and the gooseberry bushes were full of fruit during adjudication. Your students made some lovely signs here - perhaps it's worth them making another sign offering all to 'Help Yourself', we certainly did!

Marks for your contribution towards sustainability as you bring your green waste to Tay Lane composting centre and use compost from here in your landscaping schemes. Some was used at the area outside St Finian's church which looked lovely with its bright colourful picnic table, the old plough, and the lovely mature horse-chestnut trees. This is a lovely area and you've cleverly used pieces of older fallen trees to help mark the boundary edges here.

The planting at the Market Square entrance looked lovely. It consisted of appropriate and attractive perennials good for wildlife that looked well too. Elsewhere we have the flowers at the trough at the Community Centre, at the Church of Ireland, and planters by the Shopping Centre.

Tree planting around Newcastle has continued and this is to be applauded. We would recommend you assign a local to each group of trees with 'fostering' responsibilities.

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

One of the areas where you hope to do more work relates to your burgage hedges. These hedges are still in place around parts of Newcastle forming the boundary of burgages - narrow plots of land created by the Norman Land lords in Medieval times. Workers could grow produce in their individual plots. If you look at aerial images of Newcastle, you can still see these in some places locally. You hope to do a lot of research to determine the species and variety of hedging plants used, and the correct way to advance this project, and to plant up the gaps in existing hedge lines. It is important to get the correct advice on this and you have plans to get advice from the Council's Heritage Officer and others. Again you have reached out and have worked with construction companies who have been sensitive to the existing hedges and worked around them - e.g. Cairns Homes Builders.

One nice idea for the school to consider is to collect chestnuts and acorns from the local trees and germinate these in pots. They can then grow them on as saplings, for eventual planting out in the community. Or maybe they can collect fruit & seeds from existing hedges and help in your burgage project?

You have discovered bats in the Castle Church estate. These amazing, protected mammals do us a great service as each bat can eat up to 3000 midges in a night. Why not organise a bat walk here in the Summer? Or purchase a cheap bat detector for the community to borrow and share to be able to convert their high-pitch sonar calls to a sound that we can hear.

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

You have included examples of a range of activities that you are promoting to help Newcastle be more sustainable. Peamount FC and St Finian's GAA both organise a system to share out gear, including shoes, that other members have outgrown (what a great idea!).

Energy use is a consideration here and we noted the solar panels on the school, and that your outdoor lights (e.g. Christmas) are low energy. Is there any interest in retrofit schemes in the community - perhaps you could host a workshop on this in association with SEAI? With soaring transport costs it would be important to review the bus services to the village and promote safe cycling. Cycling proficiency lessons with the local Sports & Recreation Partnership could be one way to advance this.

Where does the mobile library park? Another idea is to run a joint promotion event to encourage new residents to join the library.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

Overall, you have done well in this category and on adjudication day the village of Newcastle looked well.

Your volunteers regularly pick litter and keep on top of any littering issued. You have worked to clear weeds, raise awareness where there are problems of dog waste in specific areas, and quickly contact the Council if any fly-tipping is noted. Volunteers hand-weeded along the kerbs on Athgoe Road maintaining this area without the excessive use of chemicals. Great pictures of this provided.

In some places, there were pockets of debris (leaves, tissues, cigarette butts) by lampposts where possible the road sweeper could not access. They might be difficult to pick up with a litter picker – they would need a pan and brush. One suggestion is to link up with the road sweeper to have this debris pushed onto the road on the day when sweeping happens.

A number of premises have Christmas lights permanently erected – this is not encouraged.

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

Once published, the data from census night will show if you still are a 'd' population category for this competition (2500 – 5000) as there are a lot more homes and building ongoing since our last visit. You continue to work well with the residents across Newcastle.

In certain cases Newcastle Tidy Towns volunteers have planted shrubs at the entrance of estates on the behalf of the Management companies (such as The Manor, Aylmer Heath, and Market Square) to ensure consistency throughout the village. This has worked well, and we hope you were reimbursed by the relevant companies involved!

The playground adjacent to the herb garden had been planted up really nicely with three arches allowing easy access into the new estates. This matches the arches in the roundabout here also. There's no obvious name to the estate or the road that you turn up here. It might be worth having discussions with the Council about the cycling lanes here as they merge with the pavement. Can signs be painted on the pavement to indicate that it's a shared space for cyclists and pedestrians?

Alma Road is a lovely tree-lined road with homes nicely presented and with clean boundary walls. Where one or two trees have been removed, nice pockets of perennials have been planted to replace them. Sadly, a lot of the trees have been planted underneath the electricity wires which has resulted in the crown being cut back, distorting their shape.

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

Newcastle is applauded for its use of Irish in its signs which was noted on the welcome and the leaving signs and at the names of estates. This, and the strong use of bee-friendly attractive flowers is commended. Newcastle maintains a village feel despite being so near to Dublin. It's nice to be able to see so many open spaces and green areas as you navigate through the village.

Arriving from Greenogue, the roundabout is packed with attractive shrubs, plants and three arches. This makes a good impression as you arrive at this side of the village.

The derelict burnt premises at the corner as you arrive at the west of Newcastle was still there and makes for a poor first impression. We also feel it gives a wrong impression as Newcastle is such an attractive village. This was sad and disappointing to see, especially as we know you've been campaigning for action on this site for some years. But we were delighted to read in your entry form that the site has been purchased for re-development – hoorah!

At the junction of the R120 and R405 pedestrians have to walk on the grass to cross the road. Perhaps the council can assist in extending the pavement, or simply having some steppingstones in the grass to facilitate ease of crossing here?

Concluding Remarks:

Newcastle village is expanding rapidly with many new housing estates and yet more coming on stream and you are working to include and involve residents. This is vital to maintain the high presentation and strong community spirit of our village. Continue to advertise events with start and end times, continue to offer cakes and buns to your volunteers, and continue to praise and support them as needed.

Your entry form was full of praise and thanks to the businesses, community and sports groups and volunteers and we loved reading this. This was one of the most positive entry forms we have read!