

# Tidy Towns Competition 2023

## Adjudication Report

Centre: **Newcastle West - Caisleán Nua Thiar** Ref: **465**  
County: **Limerick** Mark: **345**  
Category: **E** Date(s): **07/06/2023**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2022	Mark Awarded 2023
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	80	51	52
Streetscape & Public Places	80	47	47
Green Spaces and Landscaping	80	46	48
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	55	40	40
Sustainability – Doing more with less	55	19	21
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	54	56
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	55	37	38
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	55	42	43
<b>TOTAL MARK</b>	<b>550</b>	<b>336</b>	<b>345</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.

Thank you for the completed entry form and the excellent map of the town of Newcastle West and other supplementary material that included 5 year plan 2022 /27 and the Ballygowan Pollinator Plan.

All much appreciated particularly the map as NCW is a rather large town and it was invaluable to have a good and concise map and thank you for giving advice on how to traverse the town.

Tidy Towns has integrated the Sustainable Development Goals into the competition and it's noteworthy that you as a committee have referenced them in different categories in your entry submission.

Well done on that score.

The entry form is comprehensive and quite a lot of the content could not be addressed fully in a 3 page document covering 8 categories.

Feel assured that it all has been examined and the adjudication has been done fairly and objectively.

Newcastlewest has expanded very much over the last decade and as a Committee you have a large urban area to cover.

The committee of 8 and a volunteer force of 35 is just about sufficient to carry out Tidy Towns duties.

It is good to note that many of your most committed volunteers are new residents and that people on the CE Scheme give of their own time to help you with the practical work.

Well done on engaging with the local GAA Club members to work together on biodiversity and sustainability matters.

You have a strong relationship with Limerick City & County Council and that's only to be expected as NCW is the main town.

The adjudicator noted some of the actions agreed are part of the new 5 year plan.

Excellent support is also forthcoming from local businesses, other agencies and most importantly the wider local community.

The communications methods include local newsletters, notes in the local papers and of course various forms of social media.

The relationship you have with the schools both post primary and primary is very strong given by the list of projects that you have included.

The new project The Community Garden was visited by the adjudicator and work was ongoing on the day in question.

The generosity of the land owner has been acknowledged by the Committee it's a very generous action to give an acre for a nominal rent for such a worthy project.

Thank you for your endorsement of the competition and what it has meant to the town.

The work you are doing in this category to drive the Tidy Towns to greater success and to promote the town in a positive way is deserving of an additional mark.  
Well done also on achieving bronze medal status.

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

The practical reactions to last year's adjudication comments that you have highlighted in detail have been noted. This adjudicator takes on board your explanations on the Parklets in the town centre and is satisfied that they serve the needs of the community by providing a meeting place for all the town's citizens to meet and socialise. No further explanation needed.

There was an extensive comment in last year's report on the Lime Trees being sited in square pits and you have addressed that issue by engaging with the County Architect and an agreement has been reached to have them removed.

At this juncture the adjudicator would like to commend the author of your submission for highlighting the relevant SDGs.

The other main projects that you have highlighted have been visited and noted by the adjudicator during the adjudication walkabout which was at times a bit arduous given the size of the town.

Courtenay Boys National School has undergone a major transformation.

The Market Yard improvements are needed and agreement with the owner to fund some of these improvements is a welcomed.

This is a good example of public body, community organisation, private owner cooperation.

Well done to all involved.

The Limerick Greenway will benefit many towns and villages along the route from its start point in Rathkeale on down to Listowel.

The Greenaway Information panel inclusive of route map was noted at Desmond Castle entrance.

Newcastlewest Primary Care centre on Station Road is a fine facility that caters for the greater West Limerick

You are wished well with the proposed mural at the Desmond Complex.

The following are some personal observations that the adjudicator made, in line with the category guidelines, during the walkabout

The Desmond Castle is undergoing major development and upgrade to cater for visitors as it is the main tourist attraction in the Town.

Some road markings in the centre of the Town were faded and need to be re stenciled

The Square looked very well on the evening in question with footpaths clean, bollards re painted and street lighting stanchions in very good condition.

Most side lanes in and around the main core of the town were clean and relatively weed free.

There were a number of unoccupied buildings that were in poor condition observed around the town core and its side streets but for the size of the town the problem wasn't that dramatic.

The committee is aware of the situation but a voluntary body can do very little except highlight and engage with owners where possible.

It is sad to see a large premises and former well known pharmacy synonymous with Newcastlewest vacant even though it is used by Tidy Towns to promote activities.

The following are a number of public and commercial premises that appealed to the adjudicator.

The RC Church is a well maintained building with expansive grounds, Courtenay NS has already been mentioned, Desmond College with a banner of one of its famous teachers to the forefront.

AIB Bank and the Offices of Richard Nash are impressive old buildings with interesting histories.

The War of Independence Memorial which was unveiled in 1955 by Séan T O Ceallaigh, is an impressive historical feature in the Town

The Ballintemple Inn, MacMathuna lovely shop front as Gaeilge, Scanlans Menswear, The Centra Bar, Castle Motors on the outskirts, Clearys The Drapers Bar,

Credit is due also to the multiples Tesco, Aldi and Lidl for the manner in which their premises and parking areas are managed.

An additional mark is warranted.

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

This is a category that Newcastlewest has done well in over the last number of years and this year is a continuation of that trend.

There is quite a substantial amount of information contained in this category and the adjudicator will reflect as best as possible based on his observations.

Some detailed comments on the siting of trees were made in last year's report and the committee has responded well to these and has engaged with the County Architect and the local Area Engineer to examine the situation.

Actions have been taken about the comments on the work that you had done in the Peoples Park between 2021 and 2022.

A lot of the input in the submission relates to ongoing maintenance works that have been undertaken over the last year and it's so important to look after the basics continuously.

Credit is very much due to the volunteer core and indeed the CE scheme workers that carry out this work as there are so many communal areas to cover in the town.

The exceptional Community Garden and the Sensory Space at the Library are the new projects that you have undertaken.

The former has already been mentioned in a previous category and the new sensory space is one of tranquility and calm.

The revitalization of the junction at Assumpta Park and Sheehans Road is badly needed and will make the area

more appealing when completed

Good luck with your negotiations with EIR.

The adjudicator eventually found the Wildflower Meadow and it is a fairly large area that needs very little maintenance.

There were many examples of individual shrub beds that were populated by perennials and shrubs at different points in the town and on the outskirts.

A few of these were a little overpopulated such as the one outside the Further Education and Training Centres, these need thinning out or replanting completely.

One must not forget the many fine individual front gardens that were observed during the adjudication process.

Whilst it's good to see a move towards sustainable all-year-round planting, a little colour is pleasant to view especially on a fine summer day.

Many businesses in Newcastle West had window boxes, hanging baskets, and tubs all with a mix of annuals and perennials.

Overall the standard was very good and merits an increase in marks.

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

The key components of this category are knowledge of local species and habitats, knowledge of local designated areas (SACs, SPAs, NHAs), and the preservation and maintenance of important wildlife areas in one's locality.

It is also important to be aware of the Law and Biodiversity before embarking on any mini projects.

Lots of pertinent information is available in the nature and biodiversity section in your locality section of the excellent Tidy Towns Handbook.

Good work is being done in the area of wildlife preservation and promotion in an overall context and you as a committee are versed in the requirements needed under the above headings.

The projects, and there are many, that you have listed are varied and more importantly are practical.

You have an excellent partner in Ballygowan a local company but a worldwide brand and you are wished well in the implementation of the Biodiversity Plan.

The Community Garden has already been commented on in other previous sections but just as a matter of interest will an allotment scheme be part of its plans ?

When the adjudicator has some additional time he will access Geoff Hunts Biodiversity Study and read it in detail.

You are blessed that you have a person with such knowledge in your midst.

The adjudicator assumes that the committee has a strong involvement with the local schools in many of the projects that you have submitted.

For further information on Bio-Diversity matters link through to [www.biodiversityireland.ie](http://www.biodiversityireland.ie) where one can access

updates on the National Pollinator Plan and information on pollinator-friendly planting codes [www.pollinators.ie](http://www.pollinators.ie)

The Green Communities Project under the auspices of An Taisce is a source that can be tapped into for idea generation as well.

The National Parks and Wildlife Service [www.npws.ie](http://www.npws.ie) is another source of exceptional information on biodiversity matters.

Overall the standard was very good.

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

This category has been evolving in keeping with current EU and government policy as well as 'best practice' guidelines. It encapsulates how we try to minimize our use of all resources within the community so that we reduce our environmental impact.

You have listed several measures that you are involved with in the entry form.

Some are very particular to Newcastlewest and others have been replicated around the country.

The Ballygowan initiative has probably access to a million €+ budget to undertake the renewable energy project as outlined in your entry but credit to the management for embarking on this course of action.

Great to see that committee is involved in contributing towards Fairtrade Town Status for Newcastlewest.

Collaboration is the key and the involvement of Scoil Mhuire pupils is to be welcomed.

For next year's entry maybe the committee might give a short update on how progress has gone in the year.

Well done on co-hosting Revamp Tramp Workshop, during Lifelong Learning Festival week.

Sustainable gardening and Grow It Yourself is the way to go as fruit and veg product is in a dire situation in the country and communities need to look at opportunities to counteract this.

Gen Z Blue Challenge is an interesting concept and will only gain more positive notoriety in the years ahead.

Well done to the local woman now domiciled in the West of Ireland who came up with the idea.

Your input on Transport is similar to other centres around the country.

To get more out of this sector in terms of creating even greater awareness of all things that contribute to a more sustainable environment consult the following.

[www.localprevention.ie](http://www.localprevention.ie), [www.greenhomes.ie](http://www.greenhomes.ie) and [www.sustainableprocessing.ie](http://www.sustainableprocessing.ie) and Grow It Yourself at [www.giy.ie](http://www.giy.ie)

As mentioned previously the Tidy Towns Handbook is an excellent source of information under all categories.

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

The adjudicator traversed the most of the inner part and the extremities of the town by foot and the standard litter control was acceptable.

Well done on your success in the Going For Gold Competition

There were a few litter spots in the core of the town where people congregate to socialise and that particular

evening a funfair was in full swing and some litter was seen around that particular area despite having receptacles within easy distant of the event.

The river bed at the footbridge had a trolley and some other rubbish dumped into it, Newcastlewest is a large town of circa 7k residents and it can be hard to manage litter control and dog fouling but you have a good programme in place counteract these problems  
 Many volunteers through various groupings are involved in regular litter picks as well as the local authority but there are people in every town or village that don't seem to have a pride of place mentality.  
 Well done to the local residents associations who work hard to keep their respective residential areas tidy.  
 On the evening in question the residents of Hawthorn Drive were out in force cleaning kerbsides and strimming over grown edges of communal areas.  
 Well done to them.  
 I wouldn't worry too much about bunting and flags being too prevalent over the last few years there were very welcome all over the county.  
 They can be tidied up next year !!  
 In the view of this adjudicator there is a need for additional waste bins in some side streets and at the extremities of the town despite the fact that 17 existing ones have been cleaned and re painted.  
 You are wished well with your new Weedex machine – an expensive purchase so hope that you obtained some sponsorship.  
 Dog fouling wasn't that problematic but the adjudicator felt that some more mutt bins might be sited in the extremities of the town.  
 Dereliction and unoccupied buildings were addressed in a previous category.  
 Temporary and unauthorized signage on approach roads is a pet hate with this adjudicator and there were a few examples on the way in to Newcastlewest from both sides of the N21  
 General tidiness was acceptable and there was little evidence of clutter in the main areas.  
 An additional 2 marks have been awarded for your efforts in this category.

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

As you state Newcastle West has in excess of 40 housing estates within the town centre and on the edge of the town.  
 The adjudicator took time to visit a good portion of both new and old established ones and the positive comment on the work of the residents of Hawthorn Drive was already mentioned under the previous section.  
 The adjudicator didn't realise that there were more developments planned until he read this section of your entry form and it looks like too many in this adjudicator's humble opinion.  
 St Mary's Town Houses on St Marys Road on the Limerick end of the N21 were well presented and give a good impression as one enters the town.  
 Assumpta Park is a large old established housing development and homesteads were very well maintained.  
 Connolly Avenue is another older estate where properties were well maintained and boundary walls painted or dashed.  
 Woodfield Grove and Gardens, Kicolman Drive, Oakpark, Daar Wood Crescent, Castlevue, Cluain Arra and Liosán Cour of Sheahans Road, and some others were visited and in general, all these estates were well presented with communal areas tidy.  
 An additional mark is awarded.

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

The entrance into the town from the Limerick end of the N 21 was enhanced by some lovely entry signs with flower arrangements, well-maintained edges by good practice, and some fine homesteads.  
 The road surface was good and traffic calming measures on a very busy road were acceptable.  
 The Tidy Towns Bronze medal panel was also noted but the year of award was not stated.  
 The entrance from the other end of the N21 was as equally as impressive tree-lined and well-maintained verges, Castle Motors have a very fine facility at the edge of the town and as one enters some very fine detached single and two-story homesteads were admired.  
 The entrance from the junctions of the R520 and 522 was also very acceptable as was the one from Ardagh on the R521.  
 Roundabouts, particularly the Old Pike Roundabout, were very well maintained and not overdone in terms of rewilding.  
 Inner roads were fine with signs visible and roads surfaces, bar a few, in good condition.

### **Concluding Remarks:**

The expansion of Newcastlewest over the last decade has been pretty dramatic with now over 40 housing developments and more planned.  
 The town has many attractions and of course it's the number one county town in Limerick.  
 The adjudicator would be reasonably familiar with Newcastlewest but it was nice to come back and see additional improvements that have taken place over the last five years.  
 Well done to the committee for responding positively to the advice from last's years adjudicator.  
 You are wished well in the future.