

Tidy Towns Competition 2006

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Wexford** Ref: **458**
County: **Wexford** Mark: **241**
Category: **F** Date(s): **08/06/2006**
08/08/2006

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2006
Overall Development Approach	50	34
The Built Environment	50	30
Landscaping	50	33
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	23
Litter Control	50	28
Waste Minimisation	20	7
Tidiness	30	18
Residential Areas	40	29
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	32
General Impression	10	7
TOTAL MARK	400	241

Overall Development Approach:

Wexford Town is welcome to the 2006 National Tidy Towns Competition. Thank you for your submission with support material which facilitated adjudication, the before and after photographs of derelict sites and their redevelopment are informative. The new Tidy Towns Committee appear to have been successful in heightening awareness of the competition and the importance to the town of participation. The 'partnership' approach which the committee have employed to achieve the objectives outlined in the Tidy Towns Development Plan is appropriate, well done for projects accomplished for this years competition and congratulations on the publication of both the Heritage Trail brochure and the Wild Life and Habitat brochure both of which are bi-lingual. Wexford town has been considered for many awards in this years competition.

The Built Environment:

A large number of properties have been considered for awards this year the majority of which are shop-fronts and many of which still retain their traditional architectural features. A number of new developments have been considered for the Architectural Award including Whites Hotel and the Greentree Development premises. Your proactive approach in the elimination of dereliction within the town is an example which other communities might fruitfully follow. Congratulations on the regeneration of part of the town centre in the main shopping precinct particularly in respect of the ducting of overhead service cables and the refurbishment of footpaths, hopefully this treatment will be extended throughout the town centre to complement the refurbishment of the quayside for amenity. The high-lighting of the towns heritage sites and high profile buildings is an excellent initiative.

Landscaping:

The quay-side development with its many fine amenities and features is an example of hard landscaping at its best and was being enjoyed by many on the day of our visit, the adjudicator was especially impressed with the stands of dog fouling bags (notwithstanding the fact that these were empty). Your ground planting programme is impressive and is perhaps the most valuable aspect of your landscaping as it is the most permanent and has the potential to provide heritage amenity for future generations in addition to facilitating a greater diversity of wild-life habitats. The help of residents associations with the planting out of 20 large pots is acknowledged.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

Wexford Town has been considered for an award for the development of Redmond Park for Wild-Life & Habitat amenity together with the quay-side for the Waterside Award. Redmond Parks 'Tree Trail' with its tri-lingual signage (Irish, English and Latin) is unique to this adjudicator and the 70+ groups that participated in the Wild-Life competition (including schools) together with the development of a greater diversity of wild-life habitats and the newly developed 'Walk in the Park' route is truly impressive and deserving of recognition and appreciation. Your finger-post signage for areas of natural beauty will facilitate ease of access for non-residents to your lovely town.

Litter Control:

Litter control was less good than it might have been on adjudication day given the details of your excellent litter management strategy and your track record in the IBAL survey. A number of litter bins were overflowing at the time of our visit along the Main Street and quite an amount of litter was in evidence. Litter control became stronger as one moved away from the main shopping precinct. Your litter monitoring system is impressive and Whelan Clean is to be commended for taking responsibility for the cleanliness of a designated area, it is this type of co-operation that is essential for success in the Tidy Towns Competition.

Waste Minimisation:

Your waste minimisation plan to be operational by September 2006 with its stated objective to reduce the amount of waste generated by each sector of the community is the type of initiative necessary to perform well under this heading in the competition. We are interested to know the outcome of the waste audit questionnaire to be administered to the business community. We note from your submission the location of recycling points and that all waste is segregated for recycling. The circulation of flyers to the local caravan park regarding waste minimisation is noted and commended.

Tidiness:

Of particular merit under this heading is your register of derelict buildings and sites and the associated costing in time and money for their redevelopment together with the monitoring system which you operate to check on their status, no doubt the shabby appearance of some buildings within the town centre will be addressed within a (relatively) short period of time. Well done on work accomplished to date on the removal of graffiti and fly-posting and the control of unsightly weed growth along kerbs and the base of walls.

Residential Areas:

Well done on the landscaping and cleaning of Inisfail Court and the work accomplished for Tower Court together with the replanting of residential developments for the elderly. Your register of all residents associations must be useful for networking and your facilitation of various competitions for residential developments is encouraging.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

Hopefully the implementation of the new traffic management plan will have long term tangible benefits for the overall ambience of the town centre. The survey of all pedestrian crossings to facilitate inclusive access is an excellent initiative as is your consultation with Wexford County Council on the quality of road surfaces and roundabouts.

General Impression:

Wexford Town is experiencing a transitional period with some of the best designs and concepts of the 21st century in evidence whilst at the same time so much of the town dates back to the 18th and 19th centuries. The Tidy Towns committee appears to be managing growth and development effectively within the town and at the same time preserving its heritage.

Second Round Adjudication:

Taking an overall view of Wexford in the early 21st century, and recalling the town's appearance half a century ago, what immediately springs to the attention is how well old buildings, especially warehouses and mills, have been reinstated for residential and other use, yet how much still remains to be done - the gap near the Talbot Hotel, for example; how the amazingly lengthy Main Street is now a busy and pedestrian-friendly shopping precinct in contrast to the rather shabby thoroughfare that this adjudicator recalls in the past; how so many architecturally impressive new buildings have appeared, yet how much of the town is still marred by over-enthusiastic mass-produced signage and advertising. There have been huge advances, but a considerable amount of stasis. The Faythe is a good example. Here a warehouse has been splendidly restored and attractive planting and floral displays created in the street; but the unsightly poles and wires reduce this interesting space to a condition of untidiness that it does not deserve. Approaching the town from Curraclloe (in mid August 2006) the exciting skyline and elegant bridge impress, as always; but on descending to the quay the view deteriorates and one is confronted by an anonymous clutter of business premises where the former neo-classical court-house used to stand and then one is caught in traffic that is as ill-controlled as anywhere in the country. The approach from Rosslare is by means of a fine broad suburban road but it is difficult to imagine that what one then enters is a promised Heritage Town. Arriving from New Ross, there are splendid floral displays at the main intersection and the broad road sweeps by the fine hospital; then one stops in traffic with plenty of time to view the clutter of the John Street wirescape, to consider the overflowing skips at Spar and then the grubby corner site opposite Remax, while waiting on the Quay for five changes of green lights. (It is extraordinary that the Local Authority permits parking in the space between the street and the railway line!) Abandoning the car, a walk is rewarding, for the pleasantly maintained neighbourhoods of Main Street, Rowe Street, the delightful St Peter's Square, Selskar and Spawell restore confidence in the true nature of a Heritage Town. It is heartening to read the Tidy Towns Committee's Development Plan, from which it is clear that the intention is to leave no stone unturned (so to speak) to create a townscape worthy of Wexford's history and in which the citizens can grow and flourish with the amenities appropriate to a modern county capital. Every good wish is offered for your enterprise.