

# Tidy Towns Competition 2007

## Adjudication Report

Centre: **Wexford** Ref: **458**  
County: **Wexford** Mark: **248**  
Category: **G** Date(s): **14/06/2007**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2007
Overall Development Approach	50	36
The Built Environment	50	31
Landscaping	50	35
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	24
Litter Control	50	27
Waste Minimisation	20	8
Tidiness	30	17
Residential Areas	40	30
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	33
General Impression	10	7
<b>TOTAL MARK</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>248</b>

### Overall Development Approach:

This has been a very encouraging entry both to read and to visit. The documentation shows an admirably systematic approach, covering new ground (so to speak) as well as addressing some of the points made by last year's adjudicators. The Chamber's 'Hub' scheme is innovative - as indeed are initiatives such as compiling a register of Residents' Associations with whom you are now presumably working. Thank you for enclosing so much useful and interesting documentation - such as the Ecclesiastical Heritage Trail which in fact this adjudicator followed as part of the normal route of inspections. Your map of the town centre was one of the clearest received this year; all that was lacking was (another, perhaps?) showing the position of the numerous housing developments in the suburbs and naming them. Some of the problems encountered by you, and therefore by the adjudicators as well, seem to be fairly intractable; they include areas of urban neglect and obviously have to be taken step by step when one would like to see more radical measures. This adjudicator had the good fortune to visit during the period of Wexford Festival Opera when there was a real buzz in the town.

### The Built Environment:

For the visitor, cranes immediately herald extensive building development and disclose an affluent society. The new Theatre Royal excited much comment and its completion will be eagerly looked forward to; it was good to see how the roof line and fenestration of the former small houses in High Street are to be reinstated; not so good to observe the possible domination of the elegant Wexford skyline: in 2008 we shall see! The painting and improvements to the bridge were very favourably noted - it was a pity though that the sockets for flags were not in use, especially for the Festival. Now that White's Hotel and Gormley's Fine Art are well established newcomers it should be said that while both are of welcomingly contemporary design, White's tends to overpower its immediate locality and Gormley's sits more easily into its curved site. Unfortunately the more traditional buildings nearby seem to suffer in comparison, and Murphy's is a sad relic: it is hoped that

there are plans to save it. It is also hoped that the makeover to the Bank of Ireland will result in a building more in sympathy with its location. Praise is unequivocally due to The Maltings reinstatement, and to the repair and cleaning of the Redmond monument. On the other hand, the hugely impressive warehouse near the Talbot, with its well-painted glazing bars catching the eye from afar, on closer inspection discloses almost every window to be broken! The large development site on the Quay adjacent to this looks promising and it is hoped that the result will blend with the scale and detail of the better parts of this important thoroughfare. The cement-gabled south face of the Arts Centre was in need of attention. The clean lines of the new Tesco store were admired, and also the way in which the surrounding streets have been improved to contain it, but the sign is an affront to the neighbourhood. As to the Faythe, on your suggestion to be considered as the Urban Village which it is, the green space is pleasant with its mixed deciduous trees and neat paving, but to be entered for the Urban Village Award every house - not just a few - must be maintained to optimum standard, and old poles and wires must be discarded: there is a great deal more to be achieved, but definitely real potential.

### **Landscaping:**

It is good to note in your documentation improvements 'invisible' at this time of year, such as the planting of daffodil bulbs for spring showing. Redmond Park in its sylvan setting with its well-kept playground is a pleasant retreat - a pity that on the date of adjudication the background to the Willie Redmond figure had been spoiled by graffiti. Around the town, the bedding opposite County Hall impressed, as did the charming planting of St Peter's Square. The green beside the Arts Centre was well kept, as were the neat touches of vegetation and colour at a number of locations such as John's Gate and Bride Street in the town centre and the traffic island at Wygram and the nearby green in the upper suburbs. However, the really successful and eye-catching landscaped areas were the beautifully maintained wide verges of the Wexford by-pass, and the splendid planting on the roundabouts - giving an excellent first impression of the town.

### **Wildlife and Natural Amenities:**

The 'Tree Trail' had not been seen before by this adjudicator, nor had the 'Walk in the Park' project. Both show an appreciation of how to bring the abundance of nature to the notice of the public. The semi-natural appearance of Trespan Rocks is surely the right way to maintain a park of this great size. It was exemplary to read of the Bat Project and of the way in which school children are encouraged to participate in this and other activities. The interpretative signage is an added source of interest to both young and not so young.

### **Litter Control:**

In spite of your painstaking efforts and the involvement of school and residents of suburban estates, litter control was not impressive at the time of the visit. It is, of course, a variable, and it may well be that the second adjudicator will have a better experience. (Have fines for littering been executed? - there is nothing like a few persons or businesses to be named in the press to create a better understanding of the need not to cause litter.) Litter was seen in most of the central car-parks (though not on the boardwalk and associated quayside parking). It was particularly offensive in the lanes leading to the multi-storey car-park near South Main Street.

### **Waste Minimisation:**

The entry form notes advances made under this increasingly important heading. Can you give a little more information in next year's documentation - for example, the location of the recycling facility and the bring-banks could be marked on the map - in this case we only came across some of them by chance.

### **Tidiness:**

The central streets, the quayside and most of the suburban estates, including approach roads, were tidy - and this means the greater part of the town. Unfortunately untidy locations catch the eye here and there, among them the graveyard wall at John's Gate (in need of whitewashing), the curtilage of Wexford Building Supplies, the surroundings of Cash & Carry, an ugly development site at Lr George Street, an unkempt waterside site on the left of the bridge coming from Castlebridge. The whole area from the smart Redmond Square to Charlotte Street needs real thought given to radical improvement, as indeed do the clutter of car-parking areas off the landward side of the Quay. Ugly poles and wires still affect the appearance of potentially charming streets such as John Street. It is encouraging to read that you have compiled a register of derelict buildings and that action will be taken about each in the fullness of time with the help of the Council, and very good to learn that six derelict sites have been rendered 'non-derelict'. The Tesco site is now the centre of a much improved area.

### **Residential Areas:**

So many streets of small terrace homes do not reach their full potential because many facades remain uncleaned or unpainted, for example in Trinity Street, Thomas Street and John Street. It is these streets that give real character to much of the older residential parts of the town. It was very pleasing to note a whole

terrace being renovated in St Peter's Square, for instance. The older 'modern' estates are generally well kept. Many suburban roads and new estates further out are un-named. Among the residential areas picked out for special mention were Priory Park because of its good landscaping, the smart Inisfail Court, the neighbourhood of Coolcotts, and a development of particularly imaginatively designed new homes on the corner of the Rosslare and Johnstown roads.

#### **Roads, Streets and Back Areas:**

The regeneration process in South Main Street is greatly welcomed. Much excellent road surfacing has been completed, such as at Bride Street and the neighbourhood of Mill Road has already been mentioned in relation to Tesco. The attractive ship motif on the bridge lampstandards was admired. It is worth mentioning again that many streets, including main roads, still do not have name signs.

#### **General Impression:**

The maintenance and improvement of such a large and complex town as Wexford could be daunting or could be a challenge, and this committee has taken up the challenge in a most enviable way that should be an example to others. While a number of apparently negative comments have been made above as a matter of correctness and duty, they have been made with the best of intentions, with improvements in view, and it must be emphasised that overall the impression is very positive. The Wexford Tidy Towns Committee is making a splendid contribution as watchdog to the development as well as the preservation of this interesting and historic place.