

# Tidy Towns Competition 2010

## Adjudication Report

Centre: **Wexford** Ref: **458**  
County: **Wexford** Mark: **263**  
Category: **G** Date(s): **03/07/2010**

	<b>Maximum Mark</b>	<b>Mark Awarded 2009</b>	<b>Mark Awarded 2010</b>
Overall Development Approach	50	38	39
The Built Environment	50	34	38
Landscaping	50	36	38
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	25	25
Litter Control	50	28	24
Waste Minimisation	20	9	9
Tidiness	30	18	15
Residential Areas	40	31	32
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	33	35
General Impression	10	8	8
<b>TOTAL MARK</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>260</b>	<b>263</b>

### Overall Development Approach:

Welcome Wexford to the TidyTowns competition for 2010. We also received your very attractive Development Plan for the town. Wexford is a very fine and interesting County Town, and we are very happy that you realise its resources and potential, and are approaching your future through good planning. We note that you now have 15 members on your committee. We think that this is still quite a small number for a large town. We note also that you are trying to have extra members on the committee which you feel requires be broadened or widened. We are delighted that you have managed to get approximately 50 to 60 volunteers based on that great Wexford Opera Volunteer system for specific tasks. We note also that you are providing extra volunteers for litter cleaning. Volunteers were organised in groups for litter picking. You are actually trying to reorganise the litter programme, which is part of the submission, and this is actually demonstrated by photographs of what was very hard work for you. We note that you have community groups working in their own area. You will see from our report that it may be a good idea to have a "business group" as well - who would be responsible for the town centre. You have prioritised Litter Control because it is included as a major Appendix (1) in your submission. You seem to understand the scale of the problem facing you, and unfortunately you are correct in this, as you will read under "Litter Control" and "General Impression". We also see that a Community Warden has been engaged to carry out a Report on Tidiness and signage. Perhaps you can gain new members from your newer residents? Your commitment over the years has resulted in an increase in marks. You appear to have a well motivated committee. We note also that you have actually re-established your aims following last year's TidyTowns competition. You do not actually tell us how often you meet as a committee.

You have a wide number of agencies and bodies who support your work. We are sure that this is because they realise the difference that you are making to the town and its environs. We are glad that so many of your schools have achieved Green Flag status and that others are awaiting the results of their application. You do not actually list your sponsors on your application form - apart from mentioning "Advance Cleaners" under "Roads Streets and Back Areas". Well done on using media communication channels, email, text,

local contacts, database and Facebook. The colourful band of volunteers looked happy on the thumbnail sized photograph we viewed on the Facebook reference page. Unfortunately, we were not present for any of your festivals - despite the fact that they are many - but we are sure that they are run with the same enthusiasm as you run your TidyTowns programme. Your Wexford Opera Festival is the most famous, and it could not happen without the wide community assistance which the people of the town provide annually, and which successful model you are now following. You have a good spirit of optimism which is well founded. Wexford is a place of great character and personality and has all the assets and resources that you need to progress. You are working hard and you are broadening your horizons. Thank you for your "Rolling Development Plan" which you explain is under review. We will look forward to your new three or five year Plan in 2011. It would be helpful if a map or maps were provided in future with your TidyTowns Plan, which would be specifically drawn up to show each element of the programme proposed. Colour coding could be utilised. You should also update the plan each year to show what has been attained and what has not. Such a plan need not be prepared professionally. However, you should try to get the views of the community at large when preparing the plan and take into account other plans for the area such as Town Plan/ County Development Plans / County Heritage Plans/Agenda 21 Plans etc. prepared by the local authorities under the Planning and Development Act 2000. Please refer to the TidyTowns' Handbook for advice in this area. Thank you for your clear town map with the inset of approach roads. This was helpful. We would suggest that you supply a map which extends beyond the boundaries shown and one that includes named housing areas. Thank you too for all the supporting documentation.

### **The Built Environment:**

Wexford is an area of immense interest and potential - including contrasts between the old and new town. The Medieval town with its walls provides an attractive collection of streetscapes with lots of interesting "nooks and crannies". Even though the streets are extremely narrow the Main Street and its immediate areas are extremely bright and luminous with great colour and brightness. However there is a certain amount of ugliness in the presentation of alleyways off the Main Street, and in particular the alleyways connecting the Main Street area with the Quays. Some alleyways leading upwards from the Main Street areas and sometimes gated have much potential to look well also, and appear to be forgotten. We read the list of projects for this year (some were submitted in your 2009 application also so they are actually not all this year's projects) with astonishment as it bodes well for the town that you now have a Town Walls Master Plan, Architectural Conservation Areas, Protected Structures and all other ongoing work such as the new County Library. We would like to hear more about the lighting project for the Opera House, and how it addresses issues such as light pollution. We are glad that Wexford Borough Council is working on the issue of dereliction. The Heritage Council's input into both the Town Walls Report/Plan and the Monument Report is welcomed. The extensive programme of public building over the last few years has added greatly to the wealth of your built environment, and we look forward to hearing about further progress on the two outstanding projects. (The Courthouse and Garda Station) The Potato Market on the seaward side was generally attractive. However there is a dome shaped building which needs completion facing the area behind the Potato Market. The Board Walk also looked well on adjudication day. There is also a very well presented building, Green Acres of very good quality in the Main Street with a fine modern extension onto Selskar Street Square. All churches are of a high standard generally The Church of Ireland has some distracting signage on the gates, which unfortunately appears to have been necessitated by inconsiderate parking. The railings around Rowe St. Church were much admired. The Friends Meeting House appears to have had its original windows removed at some stage. However, it looked neat and the simple pink rose bushes looked well in its front curtilage. Heritage Route Sign No.5 was located outside this building. Close by was Stop No. 3 - St. Patrick's Church. The site itself was padlocked. The Arts Centre looked well and the new Wexford County Library will be another modern insertion in an appropriate modern idiom. Work is ongoing, and we look forward to seeing its completion. The poster image looked dramatic and its central location will add further vibrancy to the area which already has so much of a cultural atmosphere. The stepped terrace of three storey red brick houses opposite Rowe St. Church was particularly admired. High Street's Opera House reinvention was much admired with a mix of reproduction of a streetscape and a dramatically modern insertion. The attractiveness of the juxtaposition of the close networking of streets, little corners and small squares in this area of the town is heightened by the topography of the area. A delightful original square headed door case, with bright blue door and unusual glazing detail, opposite the Wesleyan church, looked very charming. The bright newer stepped houses at John's Gate Street were admired and in particular the nice display of pink roses between nos. 4 and 5. Some lovely artisan terraces were also admired, and door cases such as those at St. Enda's Terrace are lovely vernacular urban features. More formal terraces like Auburn, Glens, and Richmond Terraces are also very much part of the Wexford built environment. Delightful views towards the Friary church from the narrow intimate street connecting High Street and Upper John Street was one of those lovely "surprises" that Wexford is full of! The reuse of an older building as Colman Doyle's Hardware is ensuring the conservation of an inner town building. On the Main St. his "Fine Furniture" building was also admired. An Spéir agus an Talamh building looked very bright and cheerful, but a clutter of signage, baskets, wiring, fascia weeds, and external lighting took away a little from its general attractiveness. Penney's signage is discreet, and the façade (old) looks well. Barkers is a nice old shop. The schools where visited were generally well appointed and well presented. The Railway Station also was of a high standard and the railway line was visually improved by the removal of protective guarding along the Quayside. St. Michael's Hall is a fine modern building. The school opposite has

a good stone wall. Tesco's nearby was very attractive, but had a small amount of graffiti. The Bank of Ireland had a good "Fáilte" sign. Supervalu near the Quays was excellent. Well done also on the provision of the Historic Trail in the town centre, which signage was added this year. We are particularly glad that this is bilingual. We also visited the fine new Leisure Centre on the Ferrybank side of the river which also had an attractive playground. The bridge has paving on both sides and the railings were in need of painting. The banners are a little weak, and the crest looks more like a flower in the distance. The banners on the Quay area are much stronger. The Custom House Quay is full of character and is almost an icon of Wexford. Wexford Borough Council Office was admired although the poles and wirescape in front of the building detract from it. Wexford Chamber of Commerce is a fine building, but could do with renewal particularly in relation to the slated elevation. There is also a fine Georgian building (architect's office) located on the Quay. The Bullring and Pikeman statue were looking very well and this area was litter free with nicely maturing native trees. Well done on the actual restoration of the two monuments in the town. Thank you for sending us the background information. The Cape Bar was admired. White's Hotel looked well, it being of modern construction and a good contrast to the old Town Walls. We also note that you sent a copy of the Town Plan which included the Conservation Areas of the town and the List of Protected Structures. Good warehousing was admired close to a multi storey car park at the Talbot Hotel end of the Quay. The Faythe area is a lovely old traditional part of Wexford town with its own character and community which it has retained.

### **Landscaping:**

The newly landscaped area at the Ferrrybank Leisure Centre was looking well and there were nice views out to sea from the car parking area on adjudication day, with a great number of yachts sailing on the sea – a lovely pretty site. There are also views across to the town and to the bridge from this gently elevated site. The "Hope" mosaic was colourful. The existing mature tree hedging was complemented by the grass lawns and formal floral bed planting. Well done also on The Crescent Quay landscaping and the Selskar Walkway. The town centre is hard landscaped in the Main Streets area with good quality materials. There is formal and appropriate landscaping at Tesco's with a good piece of sculpture with Wexford associations of the famous Pierce Farm Machinery Manufacturers. Roundabout plantings on the periphery and indeed in the town – such as at Corish Roundabout were much admired. The Green area beside Corish Roundabout looked very attractive with its cheerful flower beds. The Green at The Faythe is attractively landscaped and its mature trees were admired. The hanging baskets give colour. Planting at and near the Whitford Hotel and connecting downhill into the town and laterally into new commercial and housing areas is effective. The park area between Batt Street and Tuskar View estate was well trimmed and was being enjoyed on adjudication day.

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

Well done on your efforts to organise a community clean-up of the particularly sensitive ecological areas. Congratulations on your committee's involvement with Kennedy Park School and the surrounding community in the area to promote environmental awareness. The "Fun Days" in the Library are an excellent idea. We await with interest the report from Ms. Betty Hickey on the ecology of the area. The new park at Carcur with its reed swamp and wilderness area etc. is an excellent idea. There is a pleasant boating area near Gulbar Road although the sea wall needs repair. Lovely views out to sea are available here. You are considering possibilities afforded by for instance - old graveyard habitats. Continue to liaise with the Naturalists' Field Club. Could a Community Orchard project be included in your plan? Or could the schools develop a wildflower seeding project or a Birdwatch Ireland participatory project? The proposed Sli na Slainte along the Quayside is a good idea but you do not explain how this will be set out to relate to the natural environment of the area. We assume that you will consider the estuarine biosphere in its research and planning. Well done to the Library for coming to your assistance with appropriate lectures. We look forward to hearing about these next year. We are sorry to hear that your attempt to involve a school in a tree survey is proving to be difficult. Perhaps another school might be interested. You might consider engaging with the County Heritage Officer in exploring ways in which to further your knowledge and interpretation in this category. You will be well advised by the Heritage Section of Wexford County Council. Some County Councils also engage Biodiversity Officers who can likewise guide you in progressing your local knowledge in this area. Set up a contact between the Town Gardener/Parks Superintendent if such exists in the town, and the Heritage Officer if possible, as this will help each in their endeavours. Do you have a young person studying Environmental Science in a 3rd level institution from the town who might require a thesis topic? The provision of a wildlife survey and management plan contributes to the marks in this section. Remember to endeavour to do this for 2011! Findings can subsequently be made public on information panels. This more detailed information would add to the enjoyment of your town for local and visitors alike, and would serve good educational purposes. In relation to this please be sure to put design research into the proposed notice boards themselves. With such a good record architecturally in the town, be consistent in having such new street furniture designed in an innovative and appropriate fashion. And you should also ensure that the Irish names for all species are included. Remember too that with street furniture, black is the most difficult colour for the visually impaired to see.

### **Litter Control:**

It is an unfortunate fact - but the abiding main impression made on this adjudicator on adjudication day was the litter in the Main Streets and in many of the alleyways leading up to the streets from the Quays. It is difficult to be critical as we know that you have been trying so hard in this regard. However we must be truthful and in doing so hopefully be helpful. To say that litter was to be seen everywhere and at every step, in recessed doors, and street gratings in the Main Street area is not an exaggeration. It was a Saturday afternoon and the town was full of the normal Saturday shoppers and visitors - tour groups included. We do not know what sort of surveillance or litter pick-up is available on Saturdays - but a Saturday plan of action for this area is extremely badly needed. We hope that on the other days of the week that this is not the scene in the lovely characterful Main Street areas. Two of the alleyways leading to the Quay were so littered and dirty that it was almost repulsive to walk through them. By comparison, all the other streets leading upwards from the Main Street areas were generally - if not totally - litter free. Therefore we are convinced that it is your Saturday afternoon regulars and not yourselves, the local residents in the town centre, that are to blame. It was the most seriously littered main street area that this adjudicator has had to adjudicate upon in recent years. Again, by comparison the Quay area and in particular the boardwalk, was very litter free, so well done on this - that is apart from the stone jetty area visible from the Tourist Office (at a distance, which had a rusty barrel and a lot of cardboard paper in an open area). We note that your list of clean-up areas does not include the town centre although you do include the Quays. Outside of the Main Street areas, butts of cigarettes, loose paving, broken grating and faulty drainpipes were noted in Mallin Street at one location. There was litter off St. John's road at Spafield Close by the nice stone wall at the end of the road. Could you enlist the help of the Environment Section of your local authority and ask the Environmental Education Officer to help you to progress in a difficult category for you? Obviously your town engineer and Environment Section are helpful in their involvement, but the hard work at local level is of paramount importance also. We feel that this will be a challenge and we hope you will succeed in getting people to realise the harm they are doing. Thank you for including the locations of the various Bring Banks on your TidyTowns Map. The Bring Banks which were looked at were very generally fairly well presented. However, the Bring Bank at the Corish Roundabout had some boxes and paper and full black sacks thrown around it on the ground. Its setting is attractive with nice trees and shrubs but it needs to be kept in a like manner.

#### **Waste Minimisation:**

Whereas Green School involvement is good and so is composting, and recycling efforts are applauded, it is very important to remember that Waste Minimisation is not just about recycling. It involves the prevention of waste accumulation in the first case. It is really what it says - to minimise on waste production before we, as a community, private or public create it in the first case. You are encouraged to refer to the Race Against Waste booklet available from the TidyTowns Unit of the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government. Consider organising or attending a Waste Minimisation Workshop with your local authority. You could increase your marks considerably in this section. Perhaps you might prepare a flyer/newsletter on this subject? As a local community you could look at some innovative and simple ideas to start with.

#### **Tidiness:**

The vacant premises on the Main Street which had been vacated by Dunnes Stores looked quite neglected and run-down, and also had many notices in the windows which were arranged untidily or falling down. Corrys premises at Numbers 13 and 15 Main St. has lovely gilt lettering name signage which is traditional and rare. However the decrepit state of the first and second floor elevations detracts. An alleyway near here, (leading to the Quay) on the opposite side of the road was full of graffiti at the Main Street end of the alleyway. Ugly drainpipes, large refuse containers and litter completed the picture. This looked particularly poor. The Commarket Centre had a window-full of notices and a torn notice on its external wall, which all looked untidy. Silvermine has attractive sash windows. The Allen Street corner building on Main Street had staining from the Allen Street sign. There was a lot of signage on 3G mobile premises. A lot of property is vacant or to rent which is a sign of the times, and leads to neglect between lettings or sales. The Mechanic's Institute is a fine building (apart from its inappropriate uPVC window insertions,) but a lot of external cabling and lighting detracts hugely from the double arched front elevation. Segments of the Wesleyan Church circular gable eight segment window were broken in places. An arched doorway in High Street with a blue painted door needs repainting as does a similar arched doorway (with an older more original gate, cream in colour). The walls of the latter property also need repainting, as do the base of the walls of the property adjacent. A truly bad example of the contrast of good and bad was to be seen beside the Wexford Borough Council's Opera House 2008 circular commemorative plaque at the end of High Street at Peter's Square side - this in the form of a twisted, rusting, bent road sign right beside the plaque. This plaque and sign are highly visible on the wall facing Peter Square and one of the Heritage Trail stops. On the other side of this "car park" square a gable looked as though a large poster had just been torn down from its wall. The car parking sign was not pristine. Other very poor road signs and poles were noted in this general area detracting from their tidy surrounds. The streets and properties in this area are neat and tidy in themselves and street furniture should reflect this. Dun Mhuire Theatre in Main street South had graffiti painted on its entrance, and generally its street level entrance looked in need of a repaint. A very narrow dark and dreary alleyway, with a projecting car park sign and lots of weeds was noted at this point leading to the Quay. It was littered with broken glass. In another nearby alleyway leading to a main modern multi-storeyed car park, a triangular piece of waste ground had broken

glass, an abandoned buggy, and lots of litter - and all this beside an ugly raw security fence. A business premises has been vacated at the Potato Market and the fenestration in the office front has been broken. Looking South Eastwards along Main Street South just beyond this point a "forest" of overhead wiring meets the eye with attendant poles and heavy cabling. We look forward to your proposals coming to pass for its removal. A lot of the very fine natural stone paving in the Main Street areas is looking very unkempt, as a result of drinks spills, gum, and general grime. The drinks spills were particularly noticeable in the litter bin areas, but were evident in all areas. A broken gutter was noted which in turn will lead to more pavement staining. There is a "blackspot" area near the Bridge and right beside the public car park which abuts the Bridge. This entire area which leads down to a disused Harbour area is frightfully unkempt and untidy, and it faces directly across to the town. It has the potential to be pretty, but even if it were cleared of the amount of dumped materials and rubbish and tidied up to a basic standard this would improve matters. Inter alia the following rubbish was noted: - old carpets, pallets, paper, plastic boxes, machinery, scrap metal, and the noxious weed "ragwort" - and all this right beside the harbour. The public car park area adjacent to the bridge here had weeds around the perimeter, and also some litter and some broken glass. The sign with a map was very rusty. If a visitor chose to stop and wander here en route to the town they would form a very poor opinion of Wexford which would be quite erroneous. The North End United Football Club needs its walls attended to and weeds removed. Another wall along this stretch of road is also in need of painting. (Private house). The railings at the National Learning Centre Network building at the Faythe area require painting and detract from the lovely Green. The vacant site opposite Fisher's Row looks very poor approaching the Talbot Hotel (beside McMahons). Senator Windows' site is nicely landscaped but needs planting at its security fencing to soften the effect of the fencing. With regard to weed spraying - the old fashioned hoeing method is better for the environment. Can you get volunteers involved? Talk to the County Heritage Officer about alternative methods. The overall tidiness of the Boardwalk area is to be commended. However the actual Tourist Office sits amid a clutter of objects including the public toilet and signage.

### **Residential Areas:**

Wexford has a large stock of individual older houses with lovely gardens which are well maintained. It also has a stock of very good terraced housing. These are almost universally well maintained. Landscaping throughout the older and most newer estates was of a good standard with only a few exceptions. General maintenance of open spaces, roads and footpaths is also usually encouraging. We look forward to an inventory and mapping of the estates and further development of the residents' associations.

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

Approach roads are generally well maintained and very well landscaped. Road surfaces are generally good and are clearly marked. Obviously your local engineering office is assisting you in this regard. One problem on main approaches is the surplus of signage - both official signage, and also (presumably unauthorised) commercial signage. Can the official signage be rationalised into one large "catch all" sign - preferably using internationally recognised symbols? The Gorey Road approach is via Ferrybank. The Hertz premises at the speed limit sign is neat and tidy. The footpath is good and weed-free. The Discount Warehouse (on the right as one approaches) has a lot of signage and its rear curtilage requires screening. The Kingdom Hall is nicely landscaped. There are lovely views of the famous spires of Wexford to be had along this approach. The general area abutting the estuary/river looks unkempt and wall edges need weeding. There is some bent signage on this approach road. The Opel garage could do with screening/planting as it looked bare, but it was clean. There is a very rough area opposite Ely House, with a very strategically set of broken gate pillars. The Castletown Cemetery Road off the Gorey Road is a delightful estuarine country suburban road. The footpaths were very clean except at the junction with the Gorey Road where some weeding was necessary. A letterbox also needs painting. A redundant school sign facing the road and located in the estuary appears to be out-of-place! The car parking area opposite the Riverside Hotel at the Ferrybank side of the river requires weeding and tidying. It is at a very strategic entry point to the town. The New Ross approach is excellent all the way into town with the exception of a derelict Texaco petrol station on the right hand site (approaching the town). The new Texaco station looked well. The Hospital was well presented with its nice new wall. However, some screening inside the wall would soften the general appearance and add to this approach. The New Ross and Duncannon roundabouts were very well mown with lovely displays of red and yellow flowers. The link between these two roads needs the completion of trimming - although it was very well trimmed in places. The Dublin approach is neat and tidy, and is very attractive in the Ferrycarrig area. Again planting was admired. The Rosslare approach is also attractive and green and was well trimmed on adjudication day. The Kiltaly Road is quite rural with a nice terrace of large houses and a neat garage. The Quay resurfacing is welcomed. We look forward to Main Street resurfacing work continuing with the eventual removal of all overhead wires.

### **General Impression:**

Wexford is a very fine town with tremendous potential. However, like many larger towns it has a set of problems which mostly have to do with convincing a minority element that environmental improvement contributes to every aspect of a town's quality of life - be that health, business, recreation, education, and the happiness of the population ultimately - and furthermore this is everybody's responsibility. We see your

biggest challenge in being in the Litter and Tidiness areas, and we know that this is no surprise to you. We are both amazed and somewhat shocked at the details of the amount of rubbish which you picked up during the year. You have achieved a lot. We suggest that in relation to the two categories mentioned that you concentrate your efforts on the town centre - whilst not neglecting your other problem areas. We are sure that you will rise to the occasion, as you have done before, and make plans to go forward with full community support. We wish you every success!