

# Tidy Towns Competition 2011

## Adjudication Report

Centre: **Wexford** Ref: **458**  
County: **Wexford** Mark: **269**  
Category: **G** Date(s): **15/06/2011**

|                                | <b>Maximum<br/>Mark</b> | <b>Mark<br/>Awarded<br/>2010</b> | <b>Mark<br/>Awarded<br/>2011</b> |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Overall Development Approach   | 50                      | 39                               | 40                               |
| The Built Environment          | 50                      | 38                               | 39                               |
| Landscaping                    | 50                      | 38                               | 38                               |
| Wildlife and Natural Amenities | 50                      | 25                               | 27                               |
| Litter Control                 | 50                      | 24                               | 24                               |
| Waste Minimisation             | 20                      | 9                                | 9                                |
| Tidiness                       | 30                      | 15                               | 16                               |
| Residential Areas              | 40                      | 32                               | 33                               |
| Roads, Streets and Back Areas  | 50                      | 35                               | 35                               |
| General Impression             | 10                      | 8                                | 8                                |
| <b>TOTAL MARK</b>              | <b>400</b>              | <b>263</b>                       | <b>269</b>                       |

### Overall Development Approach:

Wexford Town is most welcome to the 2011 TidyTowns competition! Many thanks for your detailed entry form and supplementary material which clearly displays the full depth and breath of your activities. Your map was particularly useful as for a large town such as yours it is essential that all the points of interest are clearly highlighted to the adjudicator. The list of local sponsors and associates is most impressive and this goes to the heart of what TidyTowns is all about – building community spirit! Well done but don't be complacent – you should always be looking at how you can augment these lists. It was also noted how you have managed to expand your committee and have a small army of volunteers at your disposal. This is fantastic work and really gives you the foundation so that you can join the 'A' list of TidyTowns. The wide range of communications that you use will help you in this task. Your three-year plan 2011 – 2014 was reviewed and contains an ambitious programme of works, this will be all the more achievable with your new constitution and system sub-committees that can tackle target areas. Last year's adjudication report made some stark findings regarding litter and tidiness issues. It included a series of individual recommendations on specific areas needing attention. It would be useful to address these line by line as additional points can be won by taking such constructive criticism on board.

Wexford is a gateway town to Ireland for many visitors and is therefore vital in creating a 'first impression'. Your town is steeped in history and heritage and it is wonderful to see that you are enthusiastic about sharing this. Best of luck!

### The Built Environment:

Wexford has enjoyed some significant architectural additions over the last few years and that recently opened Department of Environment, Community and Local Government, is a part of this trend. With the nearby Wexford County Council building opening shortly this area will be enjoyed by many people. The new swimming pool at Ferrybank was admired and this area affords wonderful views of the evolving Wexford

skyline. The nearby, newly opened Farm Shop was enjoyed. It is noted that you are actively managing a list of derelict sites across the town – this is vital and let's hope that we'll see more buildings like the 'Thomas Moore Tavern' coming off the list. John Barry's pub front is lovely with appropriate signage and innovative use of a milk urn. The Tourist Office is a fine introduction to the town and the surrounds were very clean and tidy. Display boards were clean and clear but the flag poles could do with a couple of flags. The John Barry statue is very well presented and street furniture here was of good quality. The Potato Market has made good use of a new building. 'The Cape Bar' looks great and uses street flowers and signage most effectively. Sharky's Fish and Chips has a lovely shop front but the public space here seems cluttered with cars. 'The Chocolate Bar' also has an inviting façade. The old Dunnes Stores has improved in appearance but vigilance here is needed. 'Barkers' shop front is beautifully done and this attention to appearance could be emulated elsewhere. Work seemed to be underway on 'Simons Place' and hopefully its completion will enhance the street corner here. Generally street furniture is of a high standard although some bins need to be replaced e.g. outside 'Downtown News' on Main St. The heritage trail signage was admired throughout the town and displays were clear and clean. 'Nonna Rosa' restaurant is very well presented with appropriate on-street signage. The nearby 'Stable Diet' is a delight! The train station looked really well although three poles (for flags?) at the entrance do not seem to serve a function. In this case they should be removed. How do you promote the use of Irish in Wexford Town?

### **Landscaping:**

The large parking area at Ferrybank before crossing the bridge needs some attention – preferably with low maintenance native trees or shrubs. Similarly at the nearby swimming pool perennial planting would be more effective than annual flowers which do not last as long and require extra resources. Throughout the Quay area there is an over use of large pots in which the flowers are too small – resulting in no effect whatsoever. Planting should be appropriate in size to the container. The use of annual flowers here is to be discouraged. As a piece of hard landscaping the Quay area is excellent. It was very well presented on adjudication day however home some issues need to be addressed: dead or poorly growing trees; and minor graffiti on flower tubs. The lime and oak trees around the 1798 statue look well but will grow very large for this location. Again, annual plants in too-big containers result in little impact from colour in this area. With some exceptions e.g 'An Spéir agus an Talamh' the Main St. lacked colour. An overarching landscaping plan for the area would be welcome.

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

You seem to have acquired a good grasp of what this heading is about. The wildlife panels are beautifully presented showing the diverse range of animals that is to be found on your doorstep. Wexford Town is blessed with a wide variety of nationally and internationally important areas for conservation including the River Slaney, the Slobbs and the Raven National Nature Reserve. Few towns can boast of such a rich amenity. Do be sure that the value of these areas is fully appreciated – see [www.npws.ie](http://www.npws.ie) – so that they can be adequately protected. The survey work of the Wexford Naturalists' Field Club is valuable and you are fortunate to have this group of committed and expert citizens at your disposal. Try to make sure that these disparate projects are drawn together. A good way to do this would be to develop a habitat map of the town and environs which can be added to as new information comes to light. Wexford County Council is currently working on a Biodiversity Action Plan and the TidyTowns committee should look at how it can get involved with this process and adopt some of its ideas. The Carcur Wildlife Park sounds like an amazing project and well done to the Borough Council for bringing this vision to reality. Do report back next year on progress.

### **Litter Control:**

Last year's adjudicator's report highlighted the poor litter situation on Saturdays along Main Street. Notwithstanding your significant achievements in the IBAL awards and in tackling cigarette butts, you should address how this specific issue has been tackled. Weekends are always problem times but this could be approached by targeting affected areas based on research. That said you clearly have a robust Litter Control programme in place and it was great to look at all the before and after photos with energetic volunteers in their high-vis vests. The Bring Bank at Ferrybank was well presented with only minor amounts of litter. There was a low level of litter around the 1798 statue and streets leading from it. This was mostly composed of small items including cigarette butts. A similarly low, but constant, level of litter was noted all along Main St. (this a mid-week afternoon). The laneway (no name) leading to Sharkey's was littered. It is not doubted that significant effort is being put into Litter Control and that progress is being made. While the issues encountered by last year's adjudicator did not present themselves, a pervasive, low level of litter was recorded. This seemed to be principally confined to Main St. and surrounding lanes. These areas should be subject to additional patrols.

### **Waste Minimisation:**

Your town has a number of recycling initiatives and this is good to see. It is also fantastic to read that the Green Flag is relentlessly enveloping all the schools in Wexford – well done to all those schools that continue to make great efforts in reducing their environmental impact. A large town such as Wexford produces a lot of

waste. Find out just how much goes to landfill. Remember that recycling is only the fourth most preferred option in the waste hierarchy – the main aim here is to avoid generating the waste to start with. Think about working with hotels to replace the thousands of small bottles of shampoo; work with retailers on reducing needless packaging; discourage junk mail; hold a 'love your mug' campaign to encourage the re-use of water bottles and coffee mugs – there is so much that can be done to save resources! Is there a brown bin collection in the town? If not why not hold home composting workshops? Use electronic media to give people ideas on how to cut down on waste at home e.g. through demonstrations on cooking with leftovers (30% of our food is thrown out!).

### **Tidiness:**

Last year's report made a number of specific recommendations under this heading. The TidyTowns committee should show that these have been addressed, including that of overhead wires, fly-posting etc. Advertising signage across from the Talbot Hotel is of a low standard and possibly a health hazard at this busy bend in the road. Vacant poles e.g. along the Quay across from Barry's Pub, should be removed while the old crash barrier here could do with a lick of paint. Old, dilapidated telephone boxes should be removed, e.g. outside Ryan's Optical. Broken finger signage here needs to be repaired. Signage along Main St. is of mixed quality – setting standards for signage quality, as some towns have done, would do much to enhance the town experience. The wirescape on Main St. towards the Talbot Hotel end detracts from the street scene here and their removal would be most welcome. The ugly, vacant pole next to the plaque commemorating the Wexford Opera House remains in place. Meanwhile the finger sign for the Opera House on Main St. is pointing in the wrong direction. Overall the town was tidy but along Main St. in particular an emphasis should be put on these issues to reveal the natural bustle and charm of this area.

### **Residential Areas:**

The Wexford in Bloom Festival is a wonderful initiative and no doubt motivates people across the town to enhance their gardens. It is great that you encourage the participation of resident's associations in the TidyTowns committee and that your volunteers are helping our senior citizens. Well done to Talbot Green residents – thus maith, leath na h'oibre! Don't forget that estates can act as a microcosm of the whole competition and can carry out projects under wildlife, landscaping, waste minimisation and tidiness.

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

Well done on removing the rust buckets from the harbour. The approach from the Gorey road looks well and the driver is greeted with a wonderful overview of the city skyline. The lack of a pedestrian crossing at the Tourist Office presents a major hazard to people trying to reach it from the town centre. Street labelling seems total be lacking on a number of areas e.g. around the 1798 memorial. This should be audited and addressed. It is great to have Main St. partly pedestrianised but a more permanent solution to traffic cones should be explored for marking its start. The lane across from 'Corry #15' was graffitied and uninviting. The pedestrian surfacing on Main St. is excellent although towards the southern end this deteriorates badly. The approach road from Rosslare is in very good order and it is great to see a cycle lane along some of this stretch. The area around the Omniplex appears to have been sprayed with chemicals and this has led to a very unsightly scene. Excessive low quality advertising hoarding at the nearby industrial estate also looks poor. The Rosslare Road roundabout has a combination of dead Palm trees, vacant poles and too-small annual flowers to have any impact here. The Duncormick Roundabout was similar in appearance. Please audit the number of poles along the bypass road. There seemed to be a great number of them serving no function. The approach road from Ferrycarrig is very well maintained and has managed to retain a leafy rural feel.

### **General Impression:**

Wexford is a fine town that has done much in recent years to reaffirm its identity as a heritage and recreation location. This adjudicator found that by focussing on issues of tidiness and litter you would reveal these inherent features. Your strong community approach leaves no doubt that solutions to these problems are within easy reach. Best of luck!