

# Tidy Towns Competition 2013

## Adjudication Report

Centre: **Wexford**

Ref: **458**

County: **Wexford**

Mark: **273**

Category: **G**

Date(s): **25/06/2013**

	<b>Maximum Mark</b>	<b>Mark Awarded 2012</b>	<b>Mark Awarded 2013</b>
Overall Development Approach	50	39	39
The Built Environment	50	39	39
Landscaping	50	39	40
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	27	27
Litter Control	50	27	27
Sustainable Waste And Resource Management	20	10	10
Tidiness	30	15	15
Residential Areas	40	33	33
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	35	35
General Impression	10	8	8
<b>TOTAL MARK</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>272</b>	<b>273</b>

### Overall Development Approach:

Welcome Wexford Tidy Towns to the 2013 Supervalu Tidy Towns Competition. Your entry is very much appreciated. Thank you for your entry form, maps (see comment below), press cuttings, ecological report on Trespan Rocks, etc. The 22 members of your main committee are divided into 3 sub-committees that meet at regular intervals. You have a diverse range of support agencies – public sector, private sector, voluntary bodies, etc. You use the full range of communication channels – social media, broadcast media, printed media, e-mails, etc. Your entry form gives your website as [www.wexfordtidytowns.ie](http://www.wexfordtidytowns.ie). It should end with .com? When this adjudicator accessed it the Projects category did not work and the images in the Gallery did not appear.

Engagement with your local schools is to your mutual benefit. We note that 10 out of 13 schools have Green Flags. It is helpful to the adjudicator if you list their number of Green Flags as the adjudicator may wish to prioritise visits to those with the greatest number of flags. Your comments about the benefits of the Tidy Towns to your community are well made.

Maps: the document titled "Wexford Tidy Towns Application 2013" lists "Appendix 1 – Maps Section". Appendix 2 is the Photographic Section. In the entry form the category "Built Environment" says "see maps 2 & 3 appendix 1". However, Map 2 is titled Map 2 (appendix 2). Map 3 is also listed as Appendix 2. All of the locations 1-13 marked on Map 2 were visited by the adjudicator.

### The Built Environment:

Hanrahan Railway Station has been improved at this key location in the town. Well done to all concerned. However, there is a once – green corrugated iron shed that seems disused. If it could be "disappeared" the area would be further enhanced. Main Street was walked and the refurbishment programme was admired. The Fettitt's Lane Street Art Project is a creative solution to improving the appearance of this lane. However, the graffiti artists got there before this adjudicator and they added embellishments to some of the artwork.

Page 5 of the entry form refers the reader to [www.tidytowns.ie](http://www.tidytowns.ie) for more information about this project. Presumably that reference should be to [www.wexfordtidytowns.com](http://www.wexfordtidytowns.com) rather than the national tidy towns website. The lane brought the adjudicator out on to Anne Street again where Revenue and Wexford Credit Union are next door neighbours. If I was a customer of the credit union I am not sure if I would want Revenue looking over my shoulder. Revenue's front door is flanked by 2 hanging baskets but the credit union, one of your sponsors, has

no floral adornment. The Church of the Immaculate Conception, Rowe Street, is impressive. Lots of well filled flower containers on top of the railings add colour. Noted that the church car park is pay per use. The Church of the Assumption Franciscan Friary and the United Presbyterian and Methodist Church were neat and tidy. The 3 storey red brick post office, dating from 1894, is in good condition and its colourful window boxes give it a lift. On North Main Street a 4 storey building with Mechanics Institute caught the eye. The Wesleyan Methodist Chapel is very weedy. The Wexford Opera House looks very well and would look even better if there were window boxes at first floor level over the name and entrance.

White's Hotel, with its futuristic design, fits in very well. It is so different to its predecessor. This adjudicator had his best ever hotel lunch in White's Hotel many years ago. The Bull Ring attracts school children judging by their uniforms. Large tubs of flowers and window boxes added colour and the market stalls looked attractive. The Vocational College was well presented and, opposite it, the premises of the Wexford Male Voice Choir 1941 caught the eye.

The Westgate Heritage Centre and the County Hall are examples of "recycle, reuse" being implemented to great effect. The 1798 bio-diversity park was noted with interest. Westgate/Selskar Abbey newly painted railing and lampposts were noted. Now the gates need painting. In Redmond Park the bust of Redmond gives him the rank of major while a monument in Redmond Square reduces him to the rank of captain. The fence around the toilets in Redmond Park was gone on adjudication day. The RNLi building looks very well and, needless to say, its environs were spotless.

Nearby Monck Street caught the eye with an eccentric collection of tables and chairs on the footpath outside eating/drinking establishments, plus the occasional casino and Maggie May's bar. Dulux Project Painting of business premises – no location given. Perhaps in next year's entry form some information can be given on the full review of all derelict sites in the town e.g. total number, location, etc. "Flowering up" the Faythe area should be in the landscaping category.

### **Landscaping:**

Wexford in Bloom – increase in shops and estates taking part. In next year's entry form please give the numbers of each. The Ferrybank area was examined in some detail. Clearly it is a project in progress. The new swimming pool is impressive and was busy on adjudication day. Already it seems to be attracting increasing numbers across the river. The grove of trees dedicated to the Wexford Festival Opera was noted. There is one tree for each opera performed. Quite an imaginative acknowledgement of the value to Wexford of this cultural highlight of the year. There is a bottle bank in the car park close by. It will be commented on in the litter category. Site preparation work is underway in this area but, not knowing the overall plans for this area, the adjudicator cannot comment.

KAAT Strand is a small newly grassed area opposite the hotel with a path and a seat. There is a lot of debris at the high tide point. Further along there is a square grassed area extending out from the shoreline. The grass is overgrown and very weedy. Plans for this area? A section of grassed shoreline at the end of this area has been cleared suggesting that work of some sort is about to start here. The Trees of Wexford Campaign is an excellent initiative with a considerable number of beneficiaries. Selskar Square "flowering up" of the area had not started by adjudication day. St Peter's Square is very well presented. Lots of clean, large wooden planters with trees and flowers, 20 in total. Central raised flower bed with working fountain. Impeccably painted. Newly painted seats. Bollards and chains. Bandstand with clean, well painted railings and hanging baskets. The square was spotless. A delightful surprise to discover in the evening after a long day.

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

No doubt the setting up of the Biodiversity Committee is to be commended. What are the recommendations in the Council's Draft Biodiversity Plan? What are its objectives? Your entry form is silent on these questions. A map prepared by Wexford Borough Council last December accompanies your entry. It lists 18 potential biodiversity sites. Perhaps next year's entry would give information about this topic. Last year's adjudicator's report expressed disappointment in Redmond Park. Your entry form refers to [www.tidytowns.ie](http://www.tidytowns.ie) in relation to the Wexford Harbour Wildlife Brochure. Should that be your own website rather than the national tidy towns web site? Are the bat boxes monitored to determine usage? How are they cleaned? The Trespan Rocks site was visited. It is a very rugged area but it has a large, well kept playing field for ball games which is surrounded by strong security fencing. Whoever cuts the grass on the playing field dumps the cuttings beside the gravel path to the rocks and this dump is beginning to smell. What a waste. This adjudicator has read the expert's report. It is not possible to adjudicate it yet as no project has actually been agreed.

### **Litter Control:**

The Wexford in Bloom Competition does not belong in the Litter Control category. Generally, litter control measures are keeping Wexford relatively litter free. Collecting 1,000 bags of rubbish after the housing estates clean ups indicates that there was a problem to be tackled. Hopefully, fewer bags will be collected next year. On adjudication day litter was spotted at the bottle bank in the car park near the swimming pool at Ferrybank. Three of the four containers were full and paper bags had been squeezed between them. An old umbrella lay on the ground. The grass in Redmond Square was neatly cut but there was some litter – plastic bottles, cigarette boxes, drinks cups. The worst example was the bottle/can bank in the car park of the Londis near the lane to Trespan Rocks. It was badly littered. At the end of the row of containers black plastic sacks are dumped with cardboard boxes, paper bags, etc. Plastic sacks, paper bags squeezed between containers. Attending with an anti-litter stand at Supervalu and at Expo in White's Hotel were good initiatives. More details would have been appreciated on the gum litter awareness campaign.

## **Sustainable Waste And Resource Management:**

The entry form for this category asks for details of "promotion of best practice in waste and resource management". Your Development Plan 2011-2014 says that this area of work is a challenge (page 3). We acknowledge that some tidy towns groups do find it challenging. The waste pyramid in the entry form sets out priority areas graphically. The Tidy Towns Handbook has advice and tips. Please look again at the projects/actions listed in this category. Some cannot be evaluated due to lack of details e.g. "external cladding John's Gate Street", "Eco-Cert Business" convey nothing to the adjudicator. The Chamber of Commerce diary cannot accrue marks for Wexford Tidy Towns. Had the workshop organised by An Taisce been organised instead by Wexford Tidy Towns, then it might have won marks. In what way has Wexford Festival Opera been "greened"? In next year's entry form please provide details and, if possible, outcomes.

## **Tidiness:**

In this category also more detail is needed. Some projects have already been assessed in other categories e.g. Fettitt's Lane Arts Project, railway station, Ferrybank. Gum Litter Awareness Campaign is also included in the Litter Control category, but no details of what was done for this year are given. ESB poles along the quays are rusty and an eyesore. Directional signage was clean and traffic was moving well. As mentioned elsewhere in this report graffiti artists had left their mark on some of the artwork on Fettitt's Lane. Otherwise there was very little graffiti evident on adjudication day.

## **Residential Areas:**

The Wexford in Bloom Competition is having the desired effect of enhancing the town in a targeted way. While it would be invidious for an adjudicator to compare one housing neighbourhood to another it is allowed for an adjudicator to say that the Faythe area had been lifted by the increase in window boxes. High Street also looks well and this adjudicator's favourite residential area was St Peter's Square as mentioned elsewhere in this report. The terraced houses, whether cottages or more substantial residences, give Wexford its unique character rather than the newer housing estates further out. Your entry form acknowledges that there are issues that are being dealt with – unfinished estates, dangerous structures, etc, but the important point is that action is being taken.

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

The approach roads give a good first impression of Wexford aided greatly by the N11/N25 which makes the approach so much easier. The R741 makes its own contribution in a more traditional, rural way. If one approach stands out it is the one from Rosslare. Main roads are well surfaced and directional signage is good. Within the town significant improvements are being made e.g. South Main Street. There are no major issues in this category.

## **General Impression:**

Wexford Tidy Towns can, and should, be scoring more marks in the Tidy Towns Competition. This adjudicator urges your committee of 22 to review each category to see where your strengths and weaknesses are. In your entry form for this category you say that all categories are receiving on going attention. The Sustainable Waste and Resource Management category you do find challenging. Your entry form tells us that 40% of Secondary Schools and all of the Primary Schools are in the Green Flag Programme. Many Tidy Towns groups have partnership projects with a school that has been awarded the Green Flag for waste reduction/energy saving, etc. That school is operating to a strict regime of waste elimination so you could work with a school that is embarking on implementing such a regime to be awarded that Green Flag. Some counties have set up networks of Tidy Towns Groups and they meet on a regular basis to share information, experiences, etc. South Dublin County Council set up such a network earlier this year and there is very positive feedback from it. Wildlife is another category where you should be scoring well given that you have wildlife in the sea, air and on the land. An abundance of riches. Your 4 year plan needs to be updated next year so it is timely to prioritise your workload to focus on categories where you can develop projects which will earn marks next year. Extra marks will have a motivational effect on volunteers, sponsors, etc. We look forward to receiving your entry in the 2014 Supervalu Tidy Towns competition.