

Tidy Towns Competition 2021

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Wexford - Loch Garman** Ref: **458**
County: **Wexford** Mark: **337**
Category: **G** Date(s): **02/08/2021**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2021
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	60	54
Streetscape & Public Places	60	49
Green Spaces and Landscaping	60	47
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	50	32
Sustainability – Doing more with less	50	21
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	51
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	40
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	43
TOTAL MARK	470	337

Community – Your Planning and Involvement / An Pobal - Pleanáil agus Rannpháirtíocht:

Fáilte Chuig Comórtas na mBailte Slachrmhara Super Valu 2021. Táimid buíoch daoibh as ucht na hiontrála a chur chugainn. Go raibh maith agaibh as ucht bhur dtacaíocht le linn na paindéime. Lean leis an dea-obair. Welcome to the 2021 SuperValu TidyTowns competition. Thank you for your entry and for your commitment to your place in these difficult times. Keep up the great work.

- Wexford a Large Urban Centre with a population of 20,188 people – has entered the competition for the last 10 years and has been awarded Silver Medal and a committee of 8 members with support of another 25 volunteers. 750 Residents Association members and 170 interested Business partners.
- The committee meets on Zoom once/month plus extra meetings with Wexford County Council.
- Support received from a total of 28 different National and local agencies.
- Wexford Tidy Towns has produced a 3-year plan 2019-2022.
- Facebook/WhatsApp/Twitter/local radio/Newspapers/Public Meetings and Notices are used for communications.
- Wexford Tidy Towns is always available to assist local groups with clean ups, provision of bags, litter pickers and the collection and removal of litter.

The maps 1 and 2 provided are of high quality, and it is good that you have identified the project numbers based on the competition categories.

The quality of the application form is excellent and the many photos highlighting the projects are informative. Please note that the adjudicator is not visiting the Town at this time and the assessment is based solely on the Application Form. The text inserted on the form is also quite easy to read but perhaps the font could be a little larger in places. You have attached a 3-year plan with your application. The objectives of the plan are laudable and comprehensive, but the plan needs to have more specific actions and timescales, and these should be more closely aligned with the 8 different categories of the competition. The Tidy Towns supports many initiatives and developments in the town lead by other agencies. Where possible, more detail needs to be provided in the entry form regarding the precise nature of this support.

Streetscape & Public Places / Sráid-Dreach & Áiteanna Poiblí:

- The photos of the various projects listed under this category and the other categories are very helpful.
- It is impressive to note that Wexford Tidy Towns has acquired a new headquarters in the Bullring - this is a very big step forward.
- It is noted that Tidy Towns are highlighting the work of Árd Aoibhinn as one of the big successes in Wexford over the past two years achieved in conjunction with your own activities. This is a wonderful project and is quite transformative.

- The Crescent Quay/Henrietta Street Public Realm Scheme looks very well and the footpath improvements and undergrounding of cables etc. here have significantly improved the local built environment and quality of the streetscape.
- The safety and boundary fence improvements along Railway Line at the Quay have been tastefully implemented and hopefully this scheme will be extended in the future.
- Wexford County Council continues with the ongoing restoration of the historic Town Wall with further works planned for 2021.
- Harpur Eleven Coffee Shop and Garden – this is indeed a fine example of how a modern building can be built close to an historic monument, while still conserving and protecting the monument.
- Various other projects are ongoing or planned under this category including the refurbishment of unoccupied buildings, clearance of derelict sites, installation of 'big belly' bins, LED lighting schemes, extension to Wexford Arts Centre, Monck Street improvements, and the 'Paintbox Wexford' public art project etc.

The extent of the developments underway in Wexford, as indicated by the range of interesting and significant projects listed above is impressive and it is good to note that the Tidy Towns Committee continues to advocate strongly for these improvements in co-operation local agencies and interested parties. The appointment of a Heritage Officer and establishment of a heritage sub-committee within the local authority is also a welcome step.

Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:

Projects completed in Wexford Town since June 2019 under this category include.

- The development of Min Ryan Park (18 acres) and the Rocks Park (7 acres).
- 'Flowering up Wexford Town' – installation of 320 hanging baskets and 60 window boxes.
- Tree planting ceremony at the Rocks in conjunction with St. John of God's School.
- New pedestrian walkway at Ferrybank. A very important local amenity.
- Tree survey and pruning of trees at the Quayfront. The trees are an important feature here and you are taking steps to implement good tree management.
- Tree planting ceremony and tree maintenance at Ferrybank.
- Planting of roundabouts – with permanent low maintenance plantings. Sustainable perennial planting is always recommended for busy roundabouts.
- Re-development of Redmond Park - installation of adult exercise equipment and refurbishment of playground. It is good to note significant ongoing investment in this important recreational amenity.

There have been many positive developments under this category in Wexford since June 2019 and the Tidy Towns Committee has played a significant role in this. It would be opportune to consider developing a tree planting policy and detailed greening plan for the town which can be implemented over a number of years, in conjunction with Wexford County Council and the Wexford Borough District. A detailed survey of existing green spaces should also be considered to identify local recreational needs and future green space initiatives and improvement possibilities.

Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality / An Dúlra agus an Bhithéagsúlacht i do cheantar:

You are emphasizing a diverse range of biodiversity projects the under this category including the following;

- The development of community orchards within a number of housing estates.
- Reservation of pollinator friendly areas and wildlife retreat areas - a total of 2.7 acres at 6 locations in the town comprising '6-week meadows'. Is it possible to create a compost from the meadow clippings?
- Re-wilding Wexford Project – involving 50 acres of so called 'unmanaged wilding' and 20.83 acres of woodland on council lands. I would say wilding should always be 'managed' with appropriate signage and maintenance of tidy edges. The more woodland the more carbon trapped – well done.
- Continued improvement and maintenance of 1798 Biodiversity Garden.
- Maintenance of Ely Square Wildflower memorial garden.
- 'Cuan Aingeal' remembrance Garden occasional maintenance.
- Monitoring and protection of wildlife at Wexford Quays – otters and egrets.

Your involvement and support of the above projects demonstrates a heightened awareness of by the Tidy Towns Committee of biodiversity and nature conservation issues as they relate to the development of the Town of Wexford. It is great that the otters and little egrets are now frequenting the harbour area and is capturing the imagination of local people. Keep up the good work in this area.

Sustainability – Doing more with less / Inmharthanacht - Mórán ar an mbeagán:

A major project for you under this heading was your involvement with the Global Citizenship education programme organized by Selskar College and Earth Day, where the issues of marine pollution, fast fashion, upcycling, responsible consumption etc. amongst other pressing environmental issues were considered by the students under the provisions of the UN Global Goals.

This was a Special Award Entry for Sustainable Development Goals Award. Other items considered/supported by your committee under this heading included;

- A move to sustainable planting on the roundabouts on the Ring Road – this is a positive step and will reduce the need for physical work to carried out on these.
- Promotion of re-usable 'conscious cup campaign' with installation of water refill stations at the Bull Ring

and Redmond Square. A great initiative to target our young water drinkers and those not so young with the aim of reducing usage of plastic bottles.

- Sustainable licensing of mobile coffee outlets with re-use principles as a condition of licensing arrangements. This is an interesting initiative which one feels could be replicated elsewhere.
- 'Green Picnic Campaign' – the re-use and not single use of picnic items and leave no trace afterwards. The staycation picnic should be organized with sustainable principles to the fore.
- Home energy saving kits and extensive LED public lighting upgrades.

You have been active this year under this category as evidenced by the wide range of projects listed. Some other areas where you may pick up additional marks, as indicated in the 2019 Tidy Towns report, could be the further promotion of alternative modes of transport in the town, extending street pedestrianisation and summer outdoor dining schemes, greater use of non-polluting low carbon vehicles in the Town including Council maintenance vehicles, park and ride and car-pooling schemes, advocating for additional electric car charge point(s) in the Town and additional covered cycle parking facilities at appropriate locations. The promotion of the greater use of solar panels on roofs and heat exchange units to reduce energy consumption by households/businesses/schools/Community buildings etc. are also worthwhile initiatives to consider. The installation of district water butts and rainfall harvesting systems for the watering of private gardens and public floral displays during the summer period significantly aids water conservation and can be further and actively encouraged by your committee.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

- We note that prior to the Pandemic the Tidy Towns volunteers picked litter regularly around the town on Saturday mornings and Wednesday evenings and have continued your Action Days in a socially distanced manner in recent months. In May 2021 you organized a three-day litter pick at the Rocks area with Loreto School - well done to all concerned with this.
- Your anti-litter awareness campaign has been reinforced with the erection of information stickers on the 17 Big Belly bins erected around the town.
- Communication skills were to the fore in your resolution of the problem of overflowing bins on the Quays, following a bank holiday weekend.
- It is interesting that the problem of flyposting has reduced due to Covid, but you remain active in having unauthorized signage at Drinagh removed.
- The erection of cigarette boxes seems to have been a reasonable success and these can be targeted at the major problem areas.
- Wexford Town is in safe hands when you can call on the services of the secret weapon - the 'Wexford Golden Boys' who pick litter as they go and at such a young age it is great that they are already committed Tidy Towners - very well done to them for their dedication to the cause.
- As noted previously, the major tidiness issue in Wexford under this category is likely to be the presence of intrusive over ground cables and poles, which are significant dis-amenity at a number of locations and you are wished well in advocating and pressing for the undergrounding of these networks.

Residential Streets & Housing Areas / Sráideanna Cónaithe & Ceantair Tithíochta:

- We note that the new housing developments currently underway in Wexford town make use of solar panels and air to water heat pump systems as standard and some even feature plug-in points for electric cars – this is great progress.
- You have the co-operation of many residents' associations to keep the many estates in the town presented to a high standard. Because of the large number of estates, a district 'Tidy Estates Competition' would be appropriate with perhaps a prize for 'overall Town winner' each year.
- You have undertaken a housing estate survey during the period of restriction the outcome of which has been generally positive in relation to presentation and maintenance arrangements. The estates included were Richmond, Bishopswater, Lus Mór, Whiterock Heights, Whitebrook, Hillview, Árd na gCuan, Árd Uisce.
- The improvements at Talbot Green estate indicate a very strong community spirit and the residents are to be commended for their initiatives here.

Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes / Bóithre Isteach, Sráideanna & Lánaí:

- Significant road and footpath improvements have been carried out in the Town during the period of the Pandemic, resulting in major safety benefits for road users and pedestrians.
- Wexford is noted for its narrow and historic laneways, and you continue to improve these by historical research and the erection of name signage, lighting and regular maintenance including litter control, power washing and graffiti removal. This is very important work, and you are commended for all your efforts in this regard.
- As noted in the 2019 Tidy Towns report the approach to the town from the Gorey side had a low concrete post and rail fence adjoining the roadside boundary the removal of which was recommended. One wonders whether this matter has been considered further by the Committee?

Concluding Remarks:

Tidy Towns can be a struggle particularly during a pandemic when social contact is restricted and trying to plan and implement actions in a large urban centre is a major challenge. Wexford Tidy Towns has survived and will prosper by continuing to push through and to keep on trying to achieve your goals. We thank you for your uplifting submission and wish you well in all your future endeavors.

