

# Tidy Towns Competition 2011

## Adjudication Report

Centre: **Newtownforbes** Ref: **910**  
County: **Longford** Mark: **232**  
Category: **B** Date(s): **15/06/2011**

	<b>Maximum Mark</b>	<b>Mark Awarded 2010</b>	<b>Mark Awarded 2011</b>
Overall Development Approach	50	0	38
The Built Environment	50	0	37
Landscaping	50	0	31
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	0	14
Litter Control	50	0	27
Waste Minimisation	20	0	7
Tidiness	30	0	16
Residential Areas	40	0	25
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	0	29
General Impression	10	0	8
<b>TOTAL MARK</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>232</b>

### Overall Development Approach:

Greetings Newtownforbes. Welcome to the 2011 TidyTowns competition. Your entry is welcome and appreciated. Having a 3 year plan is strongly recommended in the TidyTowns handbook. It is good to read that you now have one. Please send a copy with next year's entry. It will be returned and it may earn extra marks. Well done in compiling this. In last year's adjudicator's report your group was urged to include it with this year's entry. You may have gained marks had you done so. You have a numerically strong committee that meets regularly so you are resourced to undertake a busy work programme. The links that you have forged with Longford County Council, FÁS, Longford Community Resources, School, etc are already paying dividends as outlined in your entry form. No doubt you will strengthen these links into the future to release even more resources to you. You have a comprehensive communications programme which is also paying dividends. Please enclose copies of notices, newsletters, cuttings from newspapers, etc with your entry. These will be returned to you and may earn extra marks. You are very fortunate to have such an active and environmentally committed school as Scoil Mhuire is. Its very significant achievements have been marked in tangible ways through the award of Green Flags, Certificates and Commendations. Very well done to all concerned.

### The Built Environment:

St Mary's RC Church is very well presented. The extensive renovations detailed in your entry form were noted, particularly the new rose window above the front entrance. The grounds were immaculate. The mature trees at the entrance caught the eye. Having been resurfaced the car park looked very well also. The trees along main street are an important valuable feature that enhances the street greatly. St Paul's church and grounds are also very well presented. As adjudications are done in daylight I was not able to judge the effect of the flood lighting but I am sure that it does enhance it, it is such an imposing building. There are some very nice shop fronts on Main Street including Casey's Bar, The Castle Inn, Bell's Butchers and the Post Office.

The Castle entrance looks very well. The bollards were clean. The National School with its 2 Green Flags looked very well. The new trees were noted, also enhanced grounds. So, also, did the GAA pitches and clubhouse. However, the car park looked as if almost any attention would enhance it. The cemetery and its car park are well maintained and the attractive planting at the entrance was admired.

### **Landscaping:**

Approach roads – your FÁS workers are doing excellent work maintaining the landscaped areas on the approach roads. The landscaped area at the blue and white village name sign on the Carrick-on-Shannon road is very attractive with a nice verge, trees, flowers and seats. Other landscaped areas are also well maintained and attractive. The increased use of hanging baskets and window boxes was noticed and admired, particularly on buildings such as the school.

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

Your comments in your entry form on your approach to this category have been noted. Your 3 excellent walks were evaluated and included in last year's adjudication award. This category is worth up to 50 marks and Newtownforbes has the potential to score highly here. You have an abundance of wildlife, habitats and natural amenities including raised bog and river. Many communities have wildlife enthusiasts who are only too happy to impart their knowledge to others. Your entry form tells us that your committee secretary is the Green Schools co-ordinator in your national school, Scoil Mhuire. Why not search for a wildlife expert in your local community and co-opt that person to your committee? We do urge your committee to include this category in its work programme for 2012.

### **Litter Control:**

The work done by the school is very encouraging, particularly the structured way they tackle anti-litter awareness, survey the problem, use of litter wardens and having their achievements acknowledged with 2 Green Flags, Supervalu Certificate, etc. The daily litter patrol by the FÁS worker is paying dividends. There was very little litter evident on adjudication day. Well done to all involved. Under the Residential Areas category the adjudicator comments on those estates. Litter prevention was very good. Litter generated by the heavy volumes of traffic passing through the village is a problem over which you have little direct control. Your anti-litter programme is effective in minimising its effects. We wish you well in your efforts, working with the local authority, to eradicate fly-tipping. Well done in obtaining public liability insurance.

### **Waste Minimisation:**

Your national school certainly is a role model in its achievements in waste minimisation and other environmental activities. The scrap metal collection by the GAA club is proving to be an unusual but effective way to raise funds and is becoming an increasingly popular fund-raising method around the country to the benefit of the environment. The other environmental initiatives listed in your entry have been noted.

### **Tidiness:**

Well done on the new bi-lingual signs. They are terrific – large, colourful and well designed. They compliment the new blue and white village name signs which look quite elegant. The adjudicator has already commented on the attractive landscaping at the village name sign on the Carrick-on-Shannon Road. However, the adjudicator noticed one of these signs on another approach road where it was sited on the verge without anything other than the grass it was standing in. Landscaping needed? On a point of clarification – your new signs show 'Newtownforbes' as one word. The blue and white village name signs spell it as two words? We note your liaison with the NRA re signs. The adjudicator used the upgraded car park at St Mary's church. Excellent facility. Your weed control programme was noted. No weeds evident on adjudication day.

### **Residential Areas:**

Newtownforbes is blighted by the presence of unfinished housing estates. This is a national problem. The presence of these unsightly developments does not detract any marks. Improving them is beyond your control. The adjudicator was able to visit and evaluate estates mentioned in your entry form and some others. The map that accompanied your entry identified your perceived black spots. These have been noted but cannot be ignored. The new name signs are a great addition to these estates – they allow the adjudicator to locate them and they provide residents with an identity, even more important. Well done to all concerned. In addition to the residential areas listed in your entry form the adjudicator added Mahon Avenue, Castle Glen, Castle Court, Corryline Close, Meadow Court, Castle Park and Caislean Breac. There is a slight overlap. All are well presented and it is clear that their residents have considerable 'pride of place' in wanting to display their neighbourhoods as pleasant places to live in. There is a contrast in Newtownforbes between the traditional Irish village with its churches, traditional shop-fronts, castle gates and the new housing estates – finished and unfinished. This adjudicator sensed that a balance is being achieved between both. A common

denominator is that both the old and the new want to be part of a community in an attractive, peaceful village which is held in high regard by its community. Your TidyTowns group is a catalyst in merging the old with the new. You have been giving excellent leadership. You have sufficient self-contained residential areas – is it time to organise a “Tidy Estates” competition? There were very few weeds evident on adjudication day. Very well done to all involved – the residents associations and Newtownforbes TidyTown Group. You have achieved a lot in the past year.

**Roads, Streets and Back Areas:**

Additional landscaping on approach roads is enhancing the good first impression of Newtownforbes. The new 'Welcome/Slán' signs are very attractive. Well done. Repairs have been carried out to roads and footpaths. Crash barriers and railings have been painted. Signage, not alone on approach roads, but throughout the village has improved significantly.

**General Impression:**

Newtownforbes TidyTowns Group has got off to a good start. We have every confidence that you can build on it. Already you have the support of a wide range of agencies, businesses, residents associations, indeed, the whole community. You have an attractive village which has a lot of positive features which you should build on. It is a competition, as you know, so concentrate on gaining marks. Some of the challenges your village faces are beyond your resources. Prioritise your work programme to maximise your marks. Improving your score will have a motivational result. You are off to a very good start. Well done to all involved. We look forward to receiving your entry in the 2012 competition.