

"Caring for our environment"

Centre : **KENMARE**
County : **KERRY**
Category : **C**

Results

Date of Adjudication : 07-08-2001

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2001	Mark Awarded 2000
Overall Developmental Approach	50	44	44
The Built Environment	40	34	34
Landscaping	40	35	35
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	27	26
Litter Control	40	36	35
Tidiness	20	16	16
Residential Areas	30	25	25
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	36	36
General Impression	10	9	9
TOTAL MARK	300	262	260

Kenmare, Co. Kerry

OVERALL DEVELOPMENTAL APPROACH

The Application Form noted that "Our efforts this year goes on maintenance of high standards..." This indeed is a wise policy for Ireland's Tidiest Town in 2000, and the adjudicator congratulates you on your outstanding success, and the winning of your Gold Medal. Work will now need to start on the preparation of the up-dated Action Plan for the town.

It was a real pleasure to adjudicate Kenmare on a warm July afternoon, and it is very obvious that the sense of community spirit and pride is as strong as ever in the town. This is indeed a key quality for any town or village that hopes to do well in the Tidy Towns Competition.

There is also an important sense that though Kenmare is a large town, it is visually closely linked with the surrounding countryside. This is demonstrated by important buildings such as the Catholic Church that is so beautifully framed by mature trees when seen from the side of the Town Park.

THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

The built environment is one of the many strong features of the town, and that fact that Kenmare was originally a planned Estate town is still evident today. This is reflected in the many fine buildings and street-scapes that you see as you walk around. Your work on making sure that the old Convent building was retained is commendable and your Committee must be congratulated on this. Your plans for a town Monument are also noted and the adjudicator looks forward to seeing this in place. The National Schools are a model of excellence in terms of presentation – excellent colour schemes complimented by for good landscaping. Kenmare has a very large number of quality shop-fronts such as O'Sullivan-Ford, the Cosy Cottage and Quill's to name just a few. The best of the shop-fronts have a traditional simplicity in terms of design and lettering not found on more modern retail elevations elsewhere. Kenmare however still has a few shop-fronts that require improvement and presumably you are in discussion with the owners on these. The lawns at the Garda Barracks are extremely well presented and the level of landscaping is most appropriate. In Shelbourne Street the SuperValu Car Park is a good example of how parking can be handled – the red railings and barriers are crisp and clean and effective. Henry Street has many excellent elevations and very good shop-front lettering. The Market House still awaits a new future in the Square. This is a fine building and hopefully a new appropriate use will be found without delay. It appears to be a much deeper building that the front elevation would at first suggest. The Tourist Information Office and Heritage Centre nearby, is well presented and occupies an important place and role in the town.

LANDSCAPING

The grounds of the Kenmare Bay Hotel looked extremely well on adjudication day. They help to provide an excellent introduction to the town for those arriving from the Sneem direction. Hanging baskets, window boxes and flower tubs play a major role in the visual presentation of the town. Kenmare is large enough to take the numbers on display. In a smaller town or village too many baskets and window boxes can have a potentially negative effect. Reennagros Park is a fine amenity for Kenmare and is excellently maintained. The smaller Town Park near the Square plays a very important role and the mature trees and shrubs here look most attractive. Fine displays of roses in flower were noted. There are many other smaller incidental landscaped areas in Kenmare all of which when combined give a very welcoming feel to the town.

WILDLIFE AND NATURAL AMENITIES

Your work for wildlife in Reennagros Park is noted, including the provision of bird boxes. The brochure on the Park provided with your Entry Form is most interesting. The numbers of birds, plants and mammals found in the park is very extensive, together with the many trees and shrubs. The Pier area is the departure point for the Echo Cruises on Kenmare River and this project fits well with the aims of your Committee in terms of your work for wildlife.

LITTER CONTROL

Some small quantities of litter were noted on the Sneem approach to the town. In the town centre litter control was excellent on adjudication day, and indeed on other days when the adjudicator happened to visit the town during the past few months.

TIDINESS

At the junction of the Sneem/Killarney roads there are over 25 road signs that are really quite untidy and unacceptable in a National Tidy Towns winning town. Can some element of rationalisation not be used here? Your adjudicator has written about this problem in the past and it is time to see if a suitable resolution can be found.

There are other smaller examples of clusters of signs in Kenmare that also need urgent attention.

Two temporary "A line" advertising signs were noted on the Killarney approach road and this is an undesirable trend that should not continue. A few field gates are in need of painting on this approach road.

In Rock Street the storage of the large wheeled litter-bins looks quite untidy. On the basis that they must be stored somewhere perhaps some element of screening may be possible here.

A number of retail premises are displaying goods on the pathway. This looks untidy and may cause difficulty for the disabled. Can you take some action on this for next year please ?. This problem was noted in Henry Street and Main Street. In Henry Street there are some fine arches that lead to off-street areas. In some cases these are untidy and attention is needed.

RESIDENTIAL AREAS

The majority of private houses in Kenmare and on the various approach roads are excellently presented. Many have a very high standard of landscaping and use strong bright colours for buildings. On the Kilgarvan approach some gardens have used naturally occurring rock to excellent effect in their landscaping plans. All good landscaping plans should first of all take into account the natural features of the area to be landscaped.

ROADS, STREETS AND BACK AREAS

On the approach to the Road Bridge the green signs on the left-hand side have been damaged and need repair or replacement. All approach roads were excellently presented on adjudication day. The approach from the Killarney side is especially impressive.

Has any consideration been given to the temporary pedestrianisation of Henry Street in the evening time during the main visitor season? With the many restaurants in this area it would appear that such action would bring economic benefits for everyone in this area of the town.

GENERAL IMPRESSION

It was a most pleasant experience to adjudicate Kenmare this year.

The standards that you have set for yourself are extremely high, but they are being achieved. Well done on your progress to date, and the adjudicator wishes you well in 2002.

SECOND ADJUDICATION (07/08/01)

The pier was being well used during our second visit; the grassed area on the approach looked particularly well with the glistening sea beyond. A little more attention generally could have been paid to weed growth at the base of walls and at kerbsides on the outskirts of the town centre. Litter control was again at an exceptional level. Road markings are beginning to fade. However, as we have become accustomed to expect most of the street buildings looked fresh and cheerful. The public buildings too were generally exceptional. The dilapidated state of the Market House is becoming all the more apparent every year. The Reenagross Woodland Park is a wonderful project; all those responsible both in terms of design and implementation are to be congratulated. We wish you well with your hopes to erect a central monument. There are still parts of the back area behind the square which need

improvement. Also, it is suggested that the Sneem junction would be substantially enhanced with the planting of dense clumps of trees as well of course as the rationalisation of signage.