

# Tidy Towns Competition 2003

## Adjudication Report

Centre: **Kells**

Ref: **499**

County: **Meath**

Mark: **216**

Category: **E**

Date: **18/06/2003**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2003	Mark Awarded 2002
Overall Developmental Approach	50	37	35
The Built Environment	40	33	32
Landscaping	40	32	31
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	15	15
Litter Control	40	28	27
Tidiness	20	15	14
Residential Areas	30	21	20
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	27	27
General Impression	10	8	7
<b>TOTAL MARK</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>216</b>	<b>208</b>

### Overall Developmental Approach:

The Committee is thanked for their entry into this year's Tidy Towns Competition. This entry included a very well completed Entry Form, a three to five-year Development Programme and a Town Map. These documents are of great help to the Adjudicator in seeing the work being done. A very comprehensive collection of photographs of houses and gardens through the town was very interesting and helpful. The Town Map, however, was very difficult to follow. The Committee is to be congratulated on their work with statutory bodies such as the County Council, the O.P.W. various local interest groups and the schools. It is very important to continue this liaison with all the above groups as they can give invaluable help and advice to the Committee.

### The Built Environment:

Kells is a very pleasant, compact town to walk in, with its network of narrow streets developed around an historic core of High Crosses, round tower and St. Colmcille's House. The round tower is a beacon from the surrounding countryside. Outside this inner core are the wider streets of a much later period, with shops, housing and public buildings that make up a typical small Irish town. St. Columba's Church grounds, with its High Crosses, are very well kept and the Church authorities are to be commended on this care and the welcoming nature of these grounds. Should these crosses be protected as is the High Cross at the Interpretative Centre?

The single storey terrace housing outside the walls of the Church with St. Colmcille's House among

them is a charming sight. Possibly this small street should be paved in limestone setts. The Committee, and especially the O.P.W., are to be praised for the removal of the famous High Cross to its new location in front of the renovated Church which is now the Interpretative Centre. The children's play area in Fair Green is very fine. Possibly this area should now be enclosed in a deep bank of trees, but with vistas through the trees to the surrounding countryside. The new lamp posts were greatly admired.

### **Landscaping:**

The small triangle of land in front of the Visitor Centre is very well handled, with the recently re-sited High Cross as the focal point of this small area. The protective canopy over the cross is a pleasing structure considering that it has to both shelter the cross and still be relatively unobtrusive. Other landscape improvements using new paving, street furniture with planters, window boxes and hanging baskets have also been most successful. Further tree planting should be considered by the Committee. These trees should be berried or with other forms of fruit bearing trees. Tree species could be oak, ash, rowan, beech, chestnut, lime or thorn. The school children must play an important role in this planting programme, both to give them a pride in their town and, by their participation, reduce vandalism.

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

There is very little information on this in the Entry Form. The creation of a wildlife sanctuary is often a difficult undertaking. However, it is suggested that the Committee initially start with the tree planting referred to above using the trees listed. This could be most successful in introducing more bird life into the town. The Committee should also contact ENFO to obtain some of their very fine publications on wildlife conservation.

### **Litter Control:**

On the day of adjudication no litter was observed and the Committee is to be congratulated on this fine achievement. The eight bin recycling unit was also seen in Fair Green. This is a great contribution to the Committee's anti-litter programme involving recycling, refuse control and collection and should assist in achieving the ultimate target of a permanent litter-free town. It is suggested that the Committee organise a mulch or compost bank for the grass cuttings and leaves etc. This compost could then be used in various locations throughout the town. And this action could draw in more members to the Tidy Towns Committee.

### **Tidiness:**

Kells is both a very pleasant and tidy town and the Committee is again to be congratulated on this achievement. The Committee has been doing splendid work in assisting the removal of empty or derelict buildings. Dereliction can contribute to blight in a town and create a feeling of not caring, so well done.

The Adjudicator did notice some houses with defective gutters and R.W.P.'s. This is bad housekeeping. These should be attended to as these faults reflect badly on the appearance of a row of housing as well as being detrimental to the fabric of a building. Though possibly not occurring in Kells, it is worth highlighting the tendency during the long school summer holidays to neglect school grounds. It is important that the Committee and pupils from the school keep the grass cut, pick up windblown litter, keep the adjoining verges cut and kerbing and bases of walls free of weeds.

### **Residential Areas:**

There are some very fine gardens in Kells, both on the approach to the town as well as in the town. These gardens give a very pleasing welcome. It is suggested that the Committee could organise two small Competitions, one for new front gardens and the second for the different small housing groups in the town. The two Competitions could contribute to bringing many more gardens up to the same

standard.

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

The grass verges leading into the village need some attention. If the cutting of wide verges is proving onerous, they could be reduced to one and a half metres which is sufficient to cut and the remaining uncut grasses can be left as a contrast and possibly sown, in places, with wild flower mix. This area can then blend into the adjoining hedgerows and be an added and safe area for fauna. A programme should be organised to keep road signs clean and free from grasses.

### **General Impression:**

Kells is a very welcoming and pleasant village and the Committee is to be congratulated on its very well detailed Programme of Works. It shows in the quality of finishes and in the general care to the approach roads on streets within the town and around the heritage monuments.