

Tidy Towns Competition 2004

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Kilbeggan**

Ref: **54**

County: **Westmeath**

Mark: **210**

Category: **B**

Date: **03/07/2004**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2004	Mark Awarded 2003
Overall Developmental Approach	50	37	37
The Built Environment	40	25	25
Landscaping	40	35	36
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	15	15
Litter Control	40	30	30
Tidiness	20	10	10
Residential Areas	30	22	22
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	29	29
General Impression	10	7	7
TOTAL MARK	300	210	211

Overall Developmental Approach:

The prospect of Kilbeggan's bypass by the new motorway creates both challenge and opportunity. A more integrated infrastructure which will capitalise on the village's natural amenities and built facilities is an exciting prospect which must be recognised and equally important, planned for.

The Built Environment:

The school looks well with nicely painted walls and conifer trees although the high fence is distinctly unattractive. St. James Hall presentation is fine. While some attempts have been made to improve the Square's appearance there are problems with buildings falling into disrepair. Considerable effort has been made by a number of commercial premises along the main street to add colour to its presentation with hanging baskets. The fire station is cleanly presented as is the Garda Station., the Loft Restaurant and the village's main attraction, Lockes Distillery is in reasonably good shape although painting of the wall overlooking the mill wheel is recommended. The Powerscreen premises looks fine but some more needs to be done in the forecourt area. The church is very nicely presented with trees set around the perimeter of the car park. Probably the strongest image the visitor gets on entering Kilbeggan from the Dublin side is the arc of premises which are located at the top of the main street on the Tullamore corner. It seems a pity that the architectural and historic quality of this building is hidden behind an advertising hoarding and petrol service station. The Midland Health Centre looks tidy on the Mullingar Road.

Landscaping:

The Park at the Relic Road was disappointing. The entrance along by the riverside was being used as a storage area for house building materials and inspection day. There are attractive river and wildlife views from both sides of the bridge. On the Lockes Distillery side the grass areas adjacent to the mill wheel has been trimmed and well presented and gives an indication of what could be achieved if extended to other parts of the river. The approach from the Tullamore side is quite nice with trimmed verges and tree plantations. At ground level the Square is improving with new pavements and maturing trees, but as indicated there are problems with a number of its surrounding buildings. The green triangle on the Dublin / Tullamore Road corner was attractively presented with its maturing trees and lamp standards. At the other end of the village the Marian Statue amenity was nicely presented.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

Kilbeggan Grand Canal Harbour is excellent and should receive a higher profile. There are picnic facilities and nature walks along the canal which stretch for six miles into wonderful wildlife countryside. The old harbour buildings have been restored and, along with their old style lamp standards, are fine examples of the cut stone style of their period. This is ideal wild life terrain. It caters for grass, woodland and wetland creatures. There is an old house within the complex which is falling into disrepair and urgent attention is required if it is not to be lost. Church Lane leads up to the old church and cemetery. This is a fine location for wild life with the old spire of the church and mature trees around, with plenty of wild grasses .

Litter Control:

The main street in Kilbeggan looks litter free. There was a good distribution of litter boxes and this along with the programme of street cleaning and litter picking is having a very positive effect.

Tidiness:

On the approach to Kilbeggan at the 30mph sign from the Kinegad side, there is an unfortunate link fence and wall both of which are fairly weeded. It is a busy town with high levels of traffic . The village square is the main car park and bus stop. The number of empty premises many of which have fallen into complete disrepair is a major problem. Some restoration work appears to have been done the old Credit Union building but the roof looks troublesome and there is considerable growth evident in the chimney stack.

Residential Areas:

St. Marys Avenue is an attractive housing estate with a number of grassed areas and maturing trees. The new housing estate 'the Gallops' signifies a new investment and confidence in the village which should reflect in village renewal of the derelict sites. Housing on the approach roads to the village display many mature gardens and trimmed grass areas.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

The car park area beside Lockes was well presented and is an amenity focal point within the village. Nevertheless, the bridge itself should be considered for special amenity attention. The metal bars are unattractive and perhaps a cut stone finish would be more in keeping with its surroundings. The entrances to the village are good with trimmed grass verges. From the traffic calming facility on the Athlone side the verges are rough cut and the young trees need tidying. The road up to the harbour is a delight with a combination of trees, hedgerows, stone walls and mature houses and gardens. There was a little kerb weed in evidence.

General Impression:

The general impression is that Kilbegan is beginning to see new life coming into the village. There is a major change imminent due to the new motorway development which will give the community the time and space to renew the village's focal points. This opportunity should be treated with great care to ensure that its natural amenities and historic facilities are properly accounted for in the village's future development.