

Tidy Towns Competition 2005

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Kilcullen**

Ref: **633**

County: **Kildare**

Mark: **232**

Category: **C**

Date: **11/08/2005**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2005	Mark Awarded 2004
Overall Developmental Approach	50	43	43
The Built Environment	40	29	28
Landscaping	40	34	33
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	27	27
Litter Control	40	25	25
Tidiness	20	14	14
Residential Areas	30	24	23
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	29	29
General Impression	10	7	7
TOTAL MARK	300	232	229

Overall Developmental Approach:

The Action Plan submitted with the entry form was most helpful at adjudication time and gave a great understanding of the on going development work and progress in Kilcullen. The huge amount of new housing estates and the strain on the infrastructure is notable – on the other hand the absence of the vast amount of traffic that the motorway has taken away is a great benefit to the town. The riverside setting is very helpful and gives a great identity to the town. The map was also very helpful and gave a detailed indication of all the interesting places in and around the town.

The Built Environment:

The bridge forms an integral part of the towns built structure and it is important that this lovely bridge is highlighted as best can be done. The Credit union is a very imposing building and adds well to the built environment of the town. The Town hall buildings also look well. The Bardons building looks very well– a landmark with its Virginian creeper for many years as people drove through the town on their way south. The lowering of the Convent wall idea is very good and the idea of railings will give a very attractive view along the roadside of the beautiful trees inside the grounds. The business premises along the streets look very well presented with good standards of paint and general décor. There are still some that require attention but hopefully as the standard rises, those in need of attention will come on board. The repainting of the church roadside wall is welcome and the Parish centre makes a very good contribution to the town. The roadside wall at the carpark next to the church is in urgent need of attention and the carpark itself is very raw at the moment. The

schools look well and also the community centre. The Dental Clinic building is an attractive building to have included right in the core of the village.

Landscaping:

The riverside areas have been well developed. The river valley walk is very attractive and makes very nice strolling ground. The path behind the Town Hall buildings is also pleasant giving a nice view of the river and the lovely bridge. Landscape work on the Athy road at the Dun Ailinne Monument is very rewarding and the photographs outlining the stages of development here give a good understanding of the work that was involved. The planting used at the Dun Ailinne monument is attractive and the treatment of the slope is well done. This will require much maintenance. The containerised plantings through the streets give a great sparkle of summer colour and add greatly to the town. The entrances to housing estates play a very significant role in the landscape appearance of the town. It is good that these new estates have such attractive appearances and as the trees mature the estates will merge with the surrounding background landscape well. At Cnoc na Greine estate the retention of mature trees as a central part of the green is excellent – this illustrates the effectiveness of even a small number of large type trees. These trees were planted by previous generations and we owe a similar legacy to the next two generations. Some of the mature trees have also been retained along the road frontage to the New Abbey and New Berry estates. The entrances to Laurel Wood, Moanbane Park and Esker Lea add well to the landscape also. Tree planting along the way to Riverside Manor is very good and with maturity will make a great impact. The area behind the Parish centre is attractive- some attention is needed to weediness in the paving.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

The riverside area offers great opportunity under this heading. The planned audit of wild life will provide very useful information. The information can then be assembled and made available. The information boards at each end of the walk are helpful. A leaflet or other form of publication would also be helpful. Perhaps schools could become involved by making a planned wildlife observation walk guide. The work of the transition year students in the Cross and Passion College in making the bird boxes is an excellent idea giving young people a practical example of the value of wildlife appreciation.

Litter Control:

There is generally a good level of litter control in the town – some litter was noted by the town hall area but there was a very clean appearance along the riverside walk. Small amounts of litter were noted through the main street. The problem of litterbins themselves contributing to the litter problem was noted and this is frequently observed in towns and villages

Tidiness:

The problems of traffic as a result of the huge increase in population puts a strain on the roadways and your achievement of having a plan now prepared for a relief road is excellent. Particularly when the work is already in progress. There are a few buildings and spaces near the Town Hall building that look a little in need of upgrading, particularly by the sides of buildings. The complete removal of overhead cables would be very helpful.

Residential Areas:

There is a combination of old and new residential buildings and it would be good to retain the character of the original residential buildings of the town. These original street side buildings, terraced and having good character are a lovely asset now. The individual houses along approach roads look well and the care and attention that these receive reflects well on the town as a whole. The housing estates- a huge influx to the town, are generally very well cared for and well treated with landscaping as stated above. The roadway approach to Cnoc na Greine is a little street with the

very high concrete block wall and a and the poorly maintained verge on the other side. Perhaps either tree planting along by the wall or ivy planted at intervals at the wall would break this very blank view.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

The work completed on the Athy road is very attractive - a good step forward. The Naas road approach with the attractive entrances to the housing estates looks well and the walls at Laurel Wood and Esker Lea are a lovely feature. Some road surfaces are however very patchy and in need of attention. Footpaths by the church and along towards the bridge are in very poor condition with many slabs cracked and broken. The new footpath laying is helpful along by the library. On some of the roads better definition is needed between the roadside verges and the road surface.

General Impression:

Kilcullen is showing good progress and is building well on its integral core values of the river, the bridge, and the attractive streetscape. The increased population and the massive housing estate buildings have put strains on the town. This presents a positive situation and the challenge of meeting this is far preferable than if the population was declining.

Second Round Adjudication:

By virtue of its increase in marking, Kilcullen has entered the upper section of the competition and has therefore been accorded a second adjudication. Congratulations to Community Action and to the residents and business people of the town. It was the second adjudicator's first visit to Kilcullen in this capacity, and he found a vibrant town rather than the quiet village recollected from stops at the Hide Out many years ago en route for places further south! Clearly due to the work of Community Action, the town seems to be coping well with the increase in population. It is hoped that the immense housing development at Riverside Manor will enhance rather than detract from this attractive area and that there will be public access along the Liffey bank. Similarly, it is hoped that views of the Liffey valley from new developments on the left side of the road to Naas will be left open. It was good to see men deployed at entrances to construction sites to control and ease traffic. Cnoc na Gréine was visited and appeared to be imaginatively laid out, but it did seem that it has created a motordependent population; do you recruit new members from recently established householders? The majority of the business premises were well designed/well maintained, throwing into unfortunate relief those that were not. There is a real gem next O'Connell's Bar – an employment agency – which needs repainting. The riverside walk is a first-class amenity, but an unsightly building at its central entry; clearly you must have plans for both ends to be made more accessible. Maintenance was a little behind in early-August, with some weed growth and litter. It is a pity that you find you have to employ so many litter watchers/pickers: one looks forward to a time when litter will simply not be dropped. Have fines been imposed for littering? – a few well-publicised prosecutions can help greatly. The Dún Alaine landscaping at the Ballymore Eustace intersection was looking very well; grass was being carefully mowed at the time of adjudication.