

Tidy Towns Competition 2005

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Kilrush**

Ref: **579**

County: **Clare**

Mark: **267**

Category: **D**

Date: **11/08/2005**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2005	Mark Awarded 2004
Overall Developmental Approach	50	49	48
The Built Environment	40	38	37
Landscaping	40	38	38
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	26	25
Litter Control	40	37	35
Tidiness	20	17	16
Residential Areas	30	26	26
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	28	27
General Impression	10	8	8
TOTAL MARK	300	267	260

Overall Developmental Approach:

The momentum continues in Kilrush towards improvement of the environment and general life style for all the towns' residents. This is a great achievement for the Committee who have worked unceasingly over the last 15 years towards this end. Thank you for all the documentation sent in - completed entry form and well presented bound submission detailing the work of the various Committees over the year. Yours liaison with the Local Authorities and State Agencies is admirable. However, as you stress in your submission, your most important co-operation is with the people of Kilrush themselves which is as it should be. It would appear that you have motivated 99% of this population. Fundraising has also been one of your projects together with sponsorship and the ways you have undertaken same are imaginative and obviously productive. Planning, of course, is the key to any achievement and we note that you have undertaken a number of studies and research projects over the years including Anne O'Leary's Plan, the Litter Management Plan 2005 -2008 produced by Kilrush Town Council and the Visitor Management Plan for Scattery Island which has now come into the public domain. The Litter Survey is also a worthwhile project and is obviously showing results. Initiatives such as the encouragement of people to use Sli na Slainte; the production of a Calendar of Events and looking at issues such as Irish language promotion and wheelchair access is all part of the overall tidy towns ethos. Well done.

The Built Environment:

The built environment continues to improve and impress in Kilrush with the exception of some derelict buildings which still remain. However, with access now to the Town Renewal Scheme this should assist with the disposal of some of these poor properties. Already action has been taken in a number of instances and the fact that Glynn's Mills have been purchased should make a great difference to this end of Francis Street. No doubt the planned hotel and office complex will be of an appropriate design for the area. It was good to note that the two properties mentioned in last years report O'Duibirs and the Kilrush Dry Cleaners have both received attention - one was being re-furbished and the latter have painted their premises. We noted that both Churches are still in the course of restoration and these again will further enhance the town upon their completion. No doubt the railings in front of the Roman Catholic Church will also be painted upon completion of the restoration work. The photos enclosed with your report were helpful and projects such as the restoration of the bridge at the Vandeleur Walled Garden were noted. In the Square the work on the Maid of Erin was remarked upon and also the painting of the Town Hall. However, the two tone approach to this building does not appear to work - we would suggest that the yellow colour prevails throughout. Plastic signage is being removed in some areas and we would encourage the continuation of this approach. Derelict buildings that definitely need attention as well as the ones mentioned are the old Inis Cathaigh Hotel, the old Cinema, which is still for sale on Francis Street and the very visible derelict bungalow on Grace Street. Most business premises in Kilrush are well presented and appropriate to the town with a few exceptions. It was noted that another Mill or Granary off the Square was for sale and no doubt this will also improve in the years ahead. Colour co-ordination throughout is quite attractive and we note that a study is being done on further promoting the use of same in estates around the town. The buildings at the Marina are well presented but the marking in the car park at the rear should be renewed. The new Fire Station was in pristine condition but the old Fire Station still needs attention as mentioned previously. Also as mentioned in regard to the Golden Vale building both the premises and the exterior walls need attention. The Garda Station was noted as being well presented. In Cappa, the village street is very attractive and enhanced by the landscaping undertaken there. Missing flagstones on the quayside, as well as looking bad are dangerous for walkers.

Landscaping:

Landscaping, as usual, was impressive in and around Kilrush with many planted areas well kept and very attractive. A number of people were noted working on these areas on the day of adjudication. Well done on winning the Clare in Bloom Award. New planting was admired in a number of areas especially on Francis Street. As mentioned by the second adjudicator last year this is such a wide street that a more comprehensive programme of planting should be planned for this area. The Vandeleur Walled Garden was looking extremely well during the adjudicators visit and the fact there is a walk from Kilrush to the Garden was noted. Signage in the car park as mentioned last year has been replaced and the same type of signage was noted in the town to indicate the walk at the Walled Garden. The fact that plants are for sale is a very good idea as people having seen the lovely garden would want to buy these plants. However, the ones for sale were not labelled with a note of their species or price. We would suggest that this could make people more willing to buy same. Also perhaps some cuttings of the more exotic plants in the garden could be offered to customers for a choice. At the marina the planting around the large shed at the entrance does not seem to be growing as quickly as would have been envisaged. This is rather an unsightly building and perhaps something else like re-painting could be undertaken to improve its appearance until the trees mature. The seating around the town was noted as being of exceptionally good quality. The green area opposite the library was very well maintained. On the Kilkee Road the landscaping was very good and three people were working on same during the day of adjudication, as were others throughout the town. The Shrine opposite the Roman Catholic Church is very impressive and well maintained. All the approaches were well presented and the flag poles to welcome visitors to Kilrush were noted on the Limerick approach. Trees throughout were maturing and will be there for citizens in the years ahead. Even more tree planting would be recommended - some good broadleaves to note are chestnuts,

ash, beech, sycamore and lime. The little park on the way out to Cappa was noted and also the good appearance of the area to the right of the Pier in Cappa where there is a well kept children playground. The rose beds in Cappa were a little poor this year and looked as if they needed pruning and some feeding. However, the new landscaping opposite the Galleon Pub in the village was admired. It was noted that there were eighteen landscaping projects listed as bullet points in your submission. Each of these no doubt represents quite an amount of work and so the commitment under this heading is very worthwhile and commendable.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

The projects you have undertaken in regard to wildlife (including retatching the duck crannog) were noted. Also the research put in place in regard to the flora and fauna of the area. Wild plants especially Valerin with its deep pink flowers was noted in a number of areas around the town. An extension of this wild flower planting would be recommended. Purity of water comes under this category and it was good to note that both Cappa Pier and Kilrush Creek Marina obtained blue flags in 2005. Also that the Community School and the National Gael Scoil entered into the Green School concept. Waste management also comes under this category and we viewed the recycling bank at the Plouzane car park. Unfortunately, this area was quite dirty with rubbish strewn around during our visit.

Litter Control:

Litter control appeared to be in place in Kilrush as very little was to be noted throughout which is quite an achievement in a town of this size. No doubt you are following the recommendations contained in the litter management plan mentioned above. We note that the litter warden comes to the school to give talks and, of course, this is the stage where awareness should be emphasised. Also the involvement of Boy Scouts and Brownies is excellent and the schemes involving adopting an area very worthwhile. The bins in Kilrush, as already mentioned, are attractive and efficient looking and are strategically placed around the town. At the Vandeleur Gardens, unfortunately the bins are situated quite near to the outdoor dining area. A stone enclosure has been built to disguise the oil tank here and we would suggest that a similar enclosure be built to hide the bins. Unfortunately, around the town there was an abundance of cigarette butts which are a problem everywhere and some solution must be found. At Cappa, near the promenade there was a number of litter bins but unfortunately there was still a sprinkling of litter in this area. As previously mentioned, could the cleaning services which were very evident in the town be extended to Cappa.

Tidiness:

Tidiness in Kilrush is improving. However there is quite a lot of building going on at present and some of these sites are quite untidy. It should be emphasised to Developers that sites should be left in order when they have completed the work. At the Marina the quayside was quite weedy although this was being tended to on the day of adjudication. We would suggest that weeds be removed in May and that the area be sprayed. Also near the Marina there was an untidy area on the way to the Shankyle Graveyard at the end of the cul-de-sac. Tidiness includes signage and we would recommend that Kilrush resist the temptation of having too many signs which create clutter. Also some shops display their wares on the pavement. If this is to continue, we would suggest that it should only be on one side of the pavement as otherwise it creates a hazard for mothers with buggies and those in wheelchairs. The Square unfortunately presents an untidy appearance due to all the cars parking both at the sides of the area and also beside the Town Hall. If a solution could be found to this problem it would enhance this area considerably. Ideally the answer is pedestrianisation. In Cappa the post box, if it is being used, should be replaced or if it is not used should be removed as it is in very poor condition.

Residential Areas:

As in most towns around Ireland housing is expanding around Kilrush. These new residents should be encouraged to assist you with your efforts in the future and also to keep their premises to a good standard. Most established residential housing in and around the town is looking well with a good use of colour and nice planting in a number of areas. As mentioned previously the outside boundary walls of houses should also receive attention and this does not happen in Kilrush in some instances. The derelict bungalow at Grace Street is a very visible eyesore and if possible a long term solution should be found to this.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

The upgrading of lanes in a number of areas around the town was noted. Also improvement in some signage. A long term project for Kilrush could be considering siting wiring underground as this would make the town present a much more open appearance. However, roads and road verges are still poor in certain places. The nicely attired traffic warden was noted on his duties around the town. This helps to some extent with the regulation of parking and is very necessary. However, as per our previous comments the ideal solution in Kilrush would be to pedestrianise the Square. The lampposts, litter bins and guards for trees are functional and also attractive around the town. Stone walls throughout were well presented and free from ivy and briars.

General Impression:

It is obvious that people in Kilrush have pride in place and we look forward to seeing the momentum continue with a further progression in the competition in the years ahead.

Second Round Adjudication:

The remarks of the first adjudicator, and the unusually high increase in marking awarded for a town that is so far up the scale already, are heartily endorsed by the second. For the first-time visitor to Kilrush what is most striking, and probably unique, is the design and scale of the warehouses at the foot of Frances Street. At present they look somewhat gaunt and forbidding in their dishevelled state, but if it is correct that a new purpose has been found for them, this is splendid news. This was the second adjudicator's first visit to the Vandeleur Garden, a splendid and most sophisticated attraction from the historical, horticultural and design points of view; it may seem churlish to voice a mild criticism, but the incidental signage at the main gate and at the gardens is of poor quality and haphazard of positioning: not of the high standard one would expect. At the intersection of the Kilkee and Ennis roads imaginative building initiatives were in progress which will be assessed next year. Interesting colour schemes were noted – for example, at the un-named housing development opposite the main Vandeleur entrance; and the use of colour on business premises as well as private homes throughout the town are another quality which immediately strikes the visitor. It was a pity to see several broken and/or ill-painted boundary walls in front of several colourful houses on the Killimer road – this would be described as a 'black spot' except that black is one colour that is not prominent! Apart from the other black spots in the marine quarter, referred to by the first adjudicator and seemingly of long standing, Kilrush was looking very smart and inviting in mid-August. Planting was surviving the sharp changes of weather very well; the landscaping on the wide sweeping hill on the Kilkee road was particularly impressive. One wonders if the boulevard-like Frances Street would look the better for a line of trees down the centre – this is merely a thought in passing. Your planning is so well conceived and so clearly articulated in your documentation that one wonders anxiously if all the proposals can possibly come to fruition – but one prefers such an approach to the cautious variety which one encounters in so many places. Every good wish for your continued success.

