

Tidy Towns Competition 2006

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Kilrush** Ref: **77**
County: **Clare** Mark: **282**
Category: **D** Date(s): **14/07/2006**
07/08/2006

| | Maximum Mark | Mark Awarded 2006 |
|--------------------------------|-----------------|----------------------|
| Overall Development Approach | 50 | 49 |
| The Built Environment | 50 | 39 |
| Landscaping | 50 | 38 |
| Wildlife and Natural Amenities | 50 | 27 |
| Litter Control | 50 | 37 |
| Waste Minimisation | 20 | 11 |
| Tidiness | 30 | 17 |
| Residential Areas | 40 | 27 |
| Roads, Streets and Back Areas | 50 | 29 |
| General Impression | 10 | 8 |
| TOTAL MARK | 400 | 282 |

Overall Development Approach:

Thank you for your very comprehensive and detailed application that included a resume of actions undertaken for the year and planned for the future, supplementary material in the form of the town enhancement plan, events guide for 2006 and town maps that were very helpful to the adjudicator in identifying relevant areas of the town and its environs.

The improvement in overall appearance and the positive developments that have taken place in Kilrush, especially over the last five years, have been quite dramatic and has resulted in a massive confidence boost for its residents

The people have been imbued with a sense of pride of place and that has been evident when talking to locals at various intervals during the adjudication period.

The committee of 22 have been assigned different responsibilities under a series of sub committees that report back at interval meetings.

This is the most effective way to work to one's ultimate goal of eventually getting Kilrush to the top spot in the competition.

This type of planned approach has resulted in a significant increase in marks last year(267) that contributed to the Town winning a Silver Medal in category D and a just a mark behind Kinsale.

The interaction between the committee, Clare County Council and relevant agencies especially FAS is very commendable and has proved invaluable in your quest to get tasks complete and contentious items addressed.

This is the type of co-operative approach that could be used as a model for any other Town or Village that has similar aspirations.

But the most important element in the whole mix is the contribution of the greater community of Kilrush and its environs.

The businesses have supported your innovative fundraising and sponsorship efforts and other residents have become involved by practically supporting the work of the appointed sub committees.

As stated at the outset the overall application is very comprehensive and contains very detailed information under each category heading.

The adjudicator cannot address each item in detailed isolation but has to summarise as best possible in an overall context under the category headings bearing in mind that fairness and objectivity are key.

The Built Environment:

The adjudicator has had recourse to visit Kilrush at intervals over the last few years and the standard of presentation in the built environment has continued to improve in structure and colour coordination.

The buoyant economy has given towns like Kilrush a new sense of confidence and this can be seen by the amount of new building development and refurbishment of existing buildings that is taking place in the core area alone.

The Kilrush Tidy Towns Committee has played a very active part in encouraging this type of new found confidence.

Dereliction, which has plagued the town in past years, is now being tackled in earnest and positive results have been forthcoming.

Your involvement with the Town Council to accelerate the implementation of the town renewal plan should intensify, as should your efforts to have cable placed underground especially in the core area.

The Committee reviewed areas of concern highlighted in last years report and has submitted a summary of findings and possible actions to be taken.

It is good to see that focal point buildings such as the Golden Vale Store and yard on the Cooraclare Road will not be unoccupied for long.

The building, which is up for sale, will in all probability be a prime location for some form of mixed development in the immediate future.

Some fine former business premises such as Griffins on Moore Street had planning notices for full-scale refurbishment.

It is hoped that these buildings will be refurbished in a manner befitting of a streetscape such as Moore Street and that original features such as name sign will be retained.

The vibrancy of colour was one of the most striking things that one noticed about Kilrush and being a bright summer's day helped in this respect.

There was ongoing painting in Lr Moore Street and the residents deserve credit for employing lovely bright colours such as oatmeal and bluishstone.

This type of approach to maintenance of premises and colour was replicated in other parts of the town and on the outskirts.

The following were the personal choices of this adjudicator chosen at random.

The Garda Station on the Kilrush Road and the new building that houses the Harbour Restaurant are excellent examples of modern type architecture that is not too intrusive on the existing fabric of the town. Congratulations to the developers that have restored some fine buildings in keeping with street architecture. Examples were to be seen in Vandeleur Street and at the junction of Toler and John Streets.

Commercial premises were very well presented on the day and although many had items on view in front areas this practice is part of the appeal of market towns.

The following were just a few examples of well-maintained premises Queallys Super Value at Francis Street, Johnson's Bar on Henry Street, Minter Grocers except for plastic sign.

The retention of old shop fronts is a feature that is very much associated with Kilrush more than other market towns of its size and on this score the following were noted:

P O Loughlin on Henry Street, Considines On Francis Street colour chosen by local politician and artist, James Clancy Hardware on Vandeleur Street very attractive front, J M Grogan on Henry Street recently refurbished but retaining its originality and Chambers also on Henry Street. Full marks to O Duighirs for upgrading premises and having the Irish name sign as a prominent feature.

The schools were in good condition with the new community school on the Cooraclare Road being a big addition to the town and the surrounding parishes.

The Colour scheme on the Town Hall was excellent and made this exceptional building stand out.

The memorial to the Manchester Matyrs in the square needs to be cleaned and weed growth.

Landscaping:

There are a few initiatives in your submission in this category that show forward thinking.

The introduction of a polythene house to propagate own plants and seedlings is a very practical move in terms of cost and resource saving.

The town has the ideal location in the Vandeleur Garden, what a wonderful visitor attraction, and the advice of the expert gardeners here will be invaluable.

The overall standard in this category was extremely good and has been underpinned by the proactive work of the committee and the expert advice given by the head gardener at the Vandeleur Walled garden.

As one enters the Town from all entrances the evidence of this ongoing work is to be seen at its very best.

While many may argue that the Kilkee entrance is the more attractive entrance the planting arrangements at

the Ennis side are on par with anything viewed by this adjudicator in similar situations.

The colourful stone beds were complemented by an extended shrub bed on the right into the verge of town punctuated with stone resting places. It is a pity that one or two commercial premises on the opposite side of the road don't offer a better vista !

To have such expert advice and help to carry out the actual work is an invaluable resource and it should be cherished as such.

The Vandeleur Walled Gardens are due another visit in more leisurely times as it has a rich history that needs to be examined in more detail. In the context of landscaping and colour the standard of presentation and layout was very good.

There were many examples of prudent and colourful planting arrangements in the town proper. The use of wooden flower boxes at the restored arch at Malthouse Lane immediately attracts your attention. There are similar such examples to be seen by way of hanging baskets and other forms of planters.

There is a very attractive combination of planting arrangements at the flagged area at the junction of O Deas Road but an intrusive telegraph pole and inappropriate placing of directional signs have spoiled it somewhat. A further example to strengthen your case for undergrounding cables(is there such a word!).

Overall very good work being undertaken and indeed planned for the future.

A comment in relation to siting of more trees in Francis Street, I am not so sure as the planting arrangements in place are very complementary to the area as it is.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

There is an action item in your projects attachment that refers to Plouzane Car Park(Last years report in this category) and it is probably in the wrong section -just a clarification. This area will be commented upon under tidiness.

A lot of good work undertaken and planned hence you have achieved quite a high mark last year.

The facility for the apple yard ducks in the Crannog is very innovative and still in keeping with the folklore culture.

There is little area across from the Millennium Bridge Amenity Park that you might consider adding to your survey list for future projects.

This area, which the adjudicator has on photographic record, is just below the bridge and facing on to the back garden of a private residence.

Availing of the expert advice and involvement of schools show a commitment to the promotion and preservation of the wildlife, including maritime, of the immediate area.

Credit on a job well done.

Litter Control:

The comments and suggestions made in last years report have been acted upon and the adjudicator can vouch for this after spending some quality break time in Cappa Pier and in the little beach area near Aylevaroo – don't let the masses discover this spot!

The ongoing work and the appointment of a litter warden have paid off, as litter control was good in what was a very busy Saturday.

There were a number of areas on the outskirts for instance at the stone seat on the Ennis exit out of town ,wrappers, fag boxes and butts were strewn around this and the pump area.

It just means that one has to be aware and vigilant in areas that may not be obvious.

Once again one has to admire your commitment to good litter control and it is obvious that this is getting through to the local community both young and old.

A poster campaign for visitors welcoming them and asking them to abide by your litter code might be worth considering(it may be already on the agenda) as the town has seen increased visitor traffic in the last few years.

The town has retained its marking in this category.

Waste Minimisation:

This is a new category and one that is important in the overall context of better waste management.

The Race Against Waste booklet included in the application package is seen the de facto set of guidelines and it gives ideas and examples of work being done in other towns and villages.

The work undertaken already and the interaction with the schools and town council has suggested that the Town has embraced the concept of better waste management as a major contributor to the a better environment for Kilrush and its residents.

Will look forward to even more innovative projects in the future and it is good to note that productive use can be made of residue such as saw dust.

Tidiness:

The three main components under consideration in this category are location and maintenance of recycling facilities, absence of fly posting both in communal areas and in shop windows and control of weed growth. In the first one the recycling facilities at Poulzane Park or Plaza de Poulzane were not what they should be with bags of rubbish in front of badly sited receptacles (photographic evidence as proof) and this area needs to be better managed.

Fly posting is the bane of most towns and villages and Kilrush is no better or worse than most, in fact given its size it has a better standard than most.

But shopkeepers and others businesses should be encouraged to keep window notices to minimum or employ a notice board system within the premises.

Slight weed growth was evident in Henry Street, cobblelock is notorious to keep free of weeds and this was not at a time of accelerated growth conditions – yes a little picky here maybe.

The area around the Boat Yard is rather messy and one is aware that efforts are being made to have the owners improve matters.

A number of back lanes, one earmarked for attention, were visited and for the most part were acceptable.

On the positive side the simple horse compound in the marina area was well corralled.

Retention of mark for the ongoing efforts to further improve in this category.

Residential Areas:

There is a large volume of new housing stock being built in Kilrush and its environs and more planned.

It is hoped that it will not get too developed and that what is being put in place will complement the existing structures especially the town houses off the centre of the town such as the excellent examples on Burton Street

The adjudicator traversed most if not all of the older established areas from Grace Street on by Wilson Road where there is a nice memorial garden to former residents on to the Pella Cross, Pound Steet to the excellent St Patrick Terrace on the Cooraclare Road.

Most residents, as can be vouched for by the photographic evidence, are doing their utmost to present the best image possible of their respective areas.

That said there are a sizeable number of houses that are boarded up and in poor condition, in one area the attention afforded was not welcome but as the Tayto add says- there always one.

Overall a very good performance and credit in this instance is to the residents themselves.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

A very strong performance in this category as all the approach roads was noted for small but effective improvements, the Ennis approach being the most significant.

Kerbsides were tidy and verges were cut back appropriately, trees were maturing although a few seemed to have disappeared on the right hand side in from Kildysart.

The stone flower beds added the colour to all entrances and are well tended to

The Killimer approach has the magnificent entrance and wall at Van Deleur Gardens, although a broken directional or name sign needs to be replaced at the stone flowerbed further in.

The Cappa approach has seen effective improvements as well. Again there was broken directional or name sign just opposite Castle Holiday Complex entrance.

General Impression:

The general impression from this adjudicator's perspective is that Kilrush has now gained an appetite for success in the competition. The town has benefited hugely from this, as there is a strong sense of commitment to the Tidy Towns effort.

The Committee seems to be able to mobilise nearly all residents to make a positive contribution to the cause in a seemingly effortless manner.

Success does not come easy and no doubt there is a lot of hard work done behind the scenes to ensure that problem areas and issues are addressed.

A silver medal is not easily attained so congratulations to all concerned and looking forward to more success for the town in the immediate years ahead.

Just a comment on the Protestant Church and grave yard nominated for Promotion of Heritage Award.

It was not possible to enter as it was padlocked with planning sign on front gate so one could not determine if it was a suitable entry or not.

Second Round Adjudication:

Your 2nd Round Adjudicator had not visited Kilrush for some years and was immediately impressed by the

overall presentation of the town. Even before arrival in Kilrush an examination of the detailed file submitted with the Entry Form made it obvious that Kilrush adopts an extremely structured approach to the competition. Frances Street as the central spine of the town is impressive and the presentation of many public and private buildings impressed. The majority of them had been recently painted. The overall use of colour on buildings in Kilrush is excellent and either by accident or design some good colour schemes for groups of houses have been achieved. The SuperValue premises with the stone frontage caught the eye as did a number of commercial premises that used the Irish language in their name. Some interesting window and door detailing was also noted such as that used on the Bourke premises. Some derelict buildings remain and the old Mill at the Marina end of Frances Street must have some future redevelopment potential. On the road to the Marina the field one left is poorly fenced and timber post and rail fencing here would look well. Some excellent landscaping was noted including that at Clare Marts on the Cappa approach road. However the 2nd Round Adjudicator is of the view that Frances Street would benefit from the planting of additional trees. Some litter was noted on the approach to the Marina and occasionally in the town centre. The Kilrush approach road was extremely well presented apart from an uncut area by the black timber posts on the right hand side. The left hand verge on the approach from Ennis would have benefited from some additional work. Some advertising signage was noted on at least one approach road that detracted from the overall presentation. This adjudicator endorses fully the marks awarded by your 1st Round Adjudicator and wishes you well in your plans for 2007.