

Tidy Towns Competition 2007

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Kilcurry** Ref: **1391**
County: **Louth** Mark: **171**
Category: **A** Date(s): **17/07/2007**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2007
Overall Development Approach	50	25
The Built Environment	50	25
Landscaping	50	20
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	20
Litter Control	50	25
Waste Minimisation	20	6
Tidiness	30	10
Residential Areas	40	20
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	15
General Impression	10	5
TOTAL MARK	400	171

Overall Development Approach:

Kilcurry was entered as part of the drive by SuperValu to work with communities to approve the environmental standards of their areas through participation in the National TidyTowns Competition. Areas were entered on the basis that they fall within the catchment area of the nearest SuperValu store and this 'baseline assessment' is intended to provide a basis on which progress could be made over the coming years through partnership with residents, businesses and local agencies. As such it should not be interpreted as a critique of the area but rather an opportunity for everybody to work together to make their hometown a better place to work, live and visit. As part of SuperValu's strategic approach to sustainable development in the area, a nominal mark has been given to reflect this. Further marks will be awarded in future years where more tangible TidyTowns structures are developed and local environmental plans prepared and implemented.

The Built Environment:

The church in Kilcurry is the centre piece of the town and is beautifully presented. Houses on the main road also are well kept. Unfortunately, on the day of the visit, major road works were underway to widen the road all the way through the town. Completion of these works presents a good opportunity to ensure well built footpaths and perhaps install some decorative feature for the town and I've no doubt the town could make considerable progress under this category in future years. The Kilcurry resource centre looks very well - well done to those involved.

Landscaping:

Completion of road works through Kilcurry presents a good opportunity to plan civic landscaping along the main street. Choose deciduous trees that will flower in spring and add colour in autumn - whitebeam or hornbeam for example. Shrubbery should be selected for a year round aesthetic while flower pots can be planted at any time of year. Avoid Leyland cypress and lauryl at all costs. The area around the church and

graveyard is very bare - thoughtful landscaping here would add a lot to the character of the town. A magnificent sycamore tree stands on the road in front of the church.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

The surrounding land has an abundance of hedgerows and the Kilcurry river flows nearby. These are priceless wildlife highways that can be used for education and enjoyment. They should be highlighted and enhanced wherever possible. There is an excellent line of mature Scot's Pine to the rear of the church and this is a rare ecological feature. Amenity grassland, particularly next door to the school, could be turned into a wildlife meadow with minimum effort - cut the grass once in early spring, and again in September, let nature do the rest. A thin margin can be mowed regularly to create a more 'looked after' appearance. A similar effect could be achieved on the tightly mown grass in the graveyard and the grounds of the resource centre.

Litter Control:

Overall very little litter was seen in the town, although some litter was present on the minor approach road from the south-west. Real progress could be made under this category when the adjudicator gets more information on how this standard is maintained - litter patrols, involvement of school children etc.

Waste Minimisation:

Without details of ongoing community projects, it was difficult to assess the extent of progress being made under this category and I would look forward to seeing whether progress has in fact been made on future assessments. However taking into account the existing council facilities and SuperValu's own commitment in this area, I believe a nominal mark is appropriate for this year. There are however plenty of ways in which local communities can assist in tackling this growing problem, such as promoting best practice in local businesses and schools, encouraging household composting through local workshops and lobbying for access to appropriate recycling facilities. How this has been achieved in other areas, and indeed many other useful tips, is contained in the Race Against Waste community booklet available from the Tidy Towns Unit in the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government.

On the day, I was glad to note the well kept bring centre between the Church and the resource centre. I didn't see a green flag on the school - have they entered this brilliant initiative?

Tidiness:

Kilcurry looks like a town that could be very tidy indeed. Unfortunately, due to the major road works (that look like lasting some time), the town was made to feel congested and cluttered. No doubt this will change and the town will be restored to its former glory. There is scope to position some sign posting on the approach roads - there is currently nothing on the main road to identify the town.

Residential Areas:

Overall residences looked very well kept on the day. A new estate adjacent to the resource centre was noted which is a collection of beautifully built houses with well maintained gardens. Some interesting landscaping of this area would improve the aesthetic even further.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

Unfortunately, the road from the south-west is littered and pot holed. The road from the north east is much better. Some welcoming signs would be a good idea here. Hedgerows should be replaced where it has been necessary to remove them as this adds greatly to our countryside landscape as well as improving air quality and providing habitat for wildlife.

General Impression:

Unfortunately, the current road works takes considerably from the feel of the town. This, of course, is temporary and presents significant opportunities upon their completion. The town has a solid focal point in the church and there is much potential to build on this and do really well in Tidy Towns. I hope the community and local businesses get behind the renewed Tidy Towns effort and assist Kilcurry so it develops this inherent potential.