

Tidy Towns Competition 2008

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Kilkea** Ref: **372**
County: **Kildare** Mark: **227**
Category: **A** Date(s): **21/06/2008**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2008
Overall Development Approach	50	25
The Built Environment	50	31
Landscaping	50	33
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	18
Litter Control	50	38
Waste Minimisation	20	2
Tidiness	30	17
Residential Areas	40	29
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	27
General Impression	10	7
TOTAL MARK	400	227

Overall Development Approach:

Go raibh maith agaibh go leir! Thank you to Kilkea TidyTowns and to the community you represent for having given selflessly of your time in working towards entering Kilkea in this 50th anniversary year of the TidyTowns Competition!

Kilkea is a small village with a small TidyTowns committee. We hope that you will be able to increase your committee size with increasing membership from the new residents of your village. It must be very difficult to operate a committee of four, as you will always be on call! You yourselves consider that your level of involvement – even for a small village - is low, and that it is difficult to engage others. We hope that you can see an improvement in this in 2009. Perhaps you might arrange to visit a successful TidyTowns village of similar size, and ask for their advice in this regard.

Apart from sharing workloads, new members bring their own creativity and individual strengths and insights to any organisation. You have the support of your local authority. Do you have any contact with other agencies that could help your work? It is good to see that Kilkea Castle Hotel support you in your endeavours. It is to both your advantages that this is so.

In a small village communicating by word-of-mouth is a satisfactory way to get your message out there and heard, but perhaps you might consider using local media now to encourage new residents to get involved? You mention “public meeting” as a way of communicating. However you do not indicate how often you would hold such a meeting. You also say that you engage with local schools in relation to litter and safety issues. You might in future elaborate on this cooperation, as it is difficult to assess its strengths from the information supplied. Is the local school working towards a Green Flag?

You should also work on improving the map which you submit. The map submitted is very basic and a little

inaccurate in places.

You have not completed your application form, with no submission made under "Residential Areas", "Roads, Streets and Back Areas" not under "General Impression". You have denied yourselves some marks by not completing the application form.

But especially we note that you do not appear to have submitted a Tidy Towns action plan. To make substantial progress in the competition a plan is required. A three or five year plan is recommended. A plan need not be prepared professionally. However, you should try to get the views of the community at large when preparing the plan and take into account other plans for the area such as Local Area Plans / County Development Plans prepared by the Local Authority under the Planning and Development Act 2000

The Built Environment:

Kilkea church is a very attractive building. Kilkea Castle is a well known landmark building set in beautiful parkland. Its presence provides good stone wall boundary treatment and an interesting entrance and gate lodge to the public road going through the village. Kilkea has some lovely old stone houses with pleasant mature gardens. The National School is being extended. The existing 1950 type school building retains its traditional plan and finishes - including sash windows. This is good, and it is hoped that the extended school plan will respect the existing in design and finish.

The stone bridge on the Castledermot side of the village is an attractive feature on that approach. The pump is an attractive small feature close to the entrance to the Castle. More could be made of the Built Environment of the village through perhaps the provision of a suitably designed information board providing a background to the settlement?

There is a derelict house on the Castledermot side of the village in the vicinity of the old bridge.

We hope that you will work towards the provision of bilingual text in any new signage.

Landscaping:

Kilkea has a distinct natural advantage in the fact that it is a village located within and beside an old demesne and its attendant buildings. The mature trees are a great asset, but must be planted like for like from now on if the village is to retain this asset. Mature trees have a lifespan, and future generations are entitled to inherit the same heritage as we are only custodians of. The Tidy Towns Committee might consider this issue. We are glad to see that you obtain support from Kilkea Castle in your maintenance of landscaped areas.

The new housing estate owners appear to have taken on the mantle of providers of new plantings within their own gardens.

There are beautiful tree approaches to the village from both directions. The avenue of Kilkea Castle is visible clearly from the public road and is an adornment for the village. We would respectfully suggest that the avenue/gate lodge do not need any embellishments such as hanging baskets. Such items can, and do, detract from the natural landscape and from the historic buildings by adding a layer of "fuss" or newness which is not appropriate or necessary. If you wish to "add" to an already fairly perfect site, consider extra avenue or roadside bulb planting.

The colourful flower filled window boxes in the school were admired, and this despite building work in progress!

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

Kilkea, with all its deciduous tree cover, stream world and remoteness from polluting atmospheres and human disturbance is a veritable haven for wildlife. You must build on this and maximise your efforts in order to progress in this area.

A logical place to start would be to carry out a very basic survey of wild flora and fauna in the area. Perhaps your school could help you with this? Do you have a young person studying Environmental Science in a 3rd level institution from the area who might require a thesis topic? The absence of a survey and management plan inhibits you gaining more marks in this section. In last year's adjudication it was also recommended that you might consider conducting a wildlife survey, so do remember to endeavour to do this for 2009! Your work at the bridge has not been detailed; in fact it has only barely been given a mention in your application form and map.

Findings can subsequently be made public on information panels. This information would add to the enjoyment of your village for local and visitors alike, and would serve good educational purposes.

Litter Control:

Litter was not in evidence on adjudication day. There was no evidence of illegal dumping as referred to as being a problem in your application form. We hope that you have been able to become permanently rid of this annoying and damaging problem. Whereas you plan to liaise with the local authority and the community and school in relation to litter, you have not listed any projects planned for this year, nor have you clearly indicated how you achieved the no litter status observed by the adjudicator on adjudication day.

You could gain more marks in this section if you had a current litter control plan and information about your promotion of litter control awareness. You should in future make sure that all information you can provide is provided in your application form, with relevant back up material.

Waste Minimisation:

We are pleased to see that you are encouraging the use of recycling in neighbouring towns, and that you plan to work in the future with the local authority and schools, residents, and the Litter Warden on this issue. However you should remember that waste minimisation is about more than recycling. It involves prevention as well. It is really what it says – to minimise on waste production before we, as a community, private or public create it in the first case. You might refer to the Race Against Waste booklet available from the Tidy Towns Unit of the Department of the Environment, Heritage, and Local Government. Consider organising or attending a Waste Minimisation Workshop with your local authority. In the extended school there will be opportunities to involve the students in an effort to work towards this end. You could increase your marks considerably in this section by so doing. Perhaps you might prepare a flyer/newsletter on this subject?

Tidiness:

Surface dressing which had currently taken place left a residue of some untidiness at road verges, and - for instance - a non-pristine traffic cone beside the pump near the Castle! Trimming was a little sporadic in places especially on the near approach to the village from the Athy side.

The school boundary frontage, outside the wall could have been weeded. Despite construction work inside the boundary, it should be possible to keep the outer verge weeded.

There was an area of weeds and considerable untidiness beside the footpaths in front of the new housing estate.

The road off the Athy, Castledermot Road (main road through the village) was in general tidy. The lane behind the local authority houses was also in general tidy, but two field gate areas here could be cleaned up a little and perhaps field gates could be painted.

The pump area on the approach road from Athy outside the village was in need of trimming and weeding, and at the opposite approach the area around the bridge was not weed free. You actually mention both the estate verges and bridge areas as "projects planned" under the "Tidiness" category in your application. However they are not major projects, and really should be carried out on a regular basis.

You mention "stone walls" as a summary of projects undertaken for this year, but you do not elaborate on your actions in this area.

Residential Areas:

The individual houses in the village and on the Athy approaches are almost all entirely well maintained and landscaped. This applies to houses of all types and periods. The four main types are those on the approaches, those associated with the estate, local authority houses, and a new housing estate.

The new Castlewood Housing estate has gardens which are well stocked and maintained. We encourage the owners to maintain these standards into the future. The green open space within the estate was a veritable clover meadow on the day of adjudication; it was mowed, trim and attractive.

The local authority houses are very well maintained, and this care extends also to the rear of the houses and its associated access. This is laudable, as so often the "hidden" areas are overlooked.

From your application form you have no projects "earmarked" under this heading for this year, nor do you appear to have any plans for the future here. We hope that this is not the case!

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

The overall impression of approaches is generally good, but with some attention to some verge trimming and weeding required in locations already referred to under "Tidiness" section. The road has been recently resurfaced in the area. This will help in future submissions, and marks are not deducted because of any

residual works under this heading in this year. The old stone walls on the approach from Castledermot and within the village itself are in good condition and add considerably to the aesthetics of the village setting. As already stated the side road is neat, as is the rear lane behind the local authority houses. There are few signs and those in evidence are acceptably clean. From your application form it would appear that you have no projects undertaken in this area this year, nor do you plan any in the future. We hope that this is not the case.

General Impression:

Again you do not let the adjudicator hear your voice on this subject as you have left the application form blank here. The adjudicator's general impression is that of a potentially very successful Tidy Village, with natural assets, and built environment assets that many villages would "kill" for, but with so small a committee you appear to be battling against the odds. It would appear to be imperative that you engage with the new residents and involve them in helping you. They bring new ideas and skills to their village of adoption. You do not have any major problems, and you do have potential.