

Tidy Towns Competition 2008

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Kill** Ref: **374**
County: **Kildare** Mark: **285**
Category: **D** Date(s): **24/06/2008**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2008
Overall Development Approach	50	37
The Built Environment	50	38
Landscaping	50	41
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	23
Litter Control	50	40
Waste Minimisation	20	7
Tidiness	30	21
Residential Areas	40	31
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	38
General Impression	10	9
TOTAL MARK	400	285

Overall Development Approach:

Thank you for giving this adjudicator the opportunity to visit your village with your committee as guide by entering TidyTowns 2008!

Your entry form was clear. The map and associated key which you submitted, based on an older O.S., map was helpful, but perhaps in future years you may be able to obtain a baseline map which shows the extended and growing village.

The liaison which you have with local businesses is good and obviously results in some sponsorship (seating noted). We are sure that you have a good relationship with your local authority, given the good condition of your public places. However you do not mention this! Do you liaise with any other agencies or bodies? This is not spelt out in your application form. We are impressed with your communication channels. Do you involve the schoolchildren in any activities? We note that you speak to them regularly. Last year you stated that schoolchildren were involved in litter picking for a half hour per week, but you do not mention that this year. We are glad that you regularly visit the school, but perhaps the children should be encouraged to help in other practical ways also.

We are glad that you use a parish newsletter – we hope that you can access all church newsletters. House to house flyers are a good idea provided you ask for recycling of those distributed. Utilising the Leinster Leader as a method of communication is also good.

The new work which you draw the adjudicator's attention to - both in your maps and enclosed photographs is clearly delineated.

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. As a group you have been working together for a long time, and you have a good membership at fourteen. The lack of a plan is a pity, because in all other respects your overall development approach is extremely good. A plan need not be prepared professionally. You have the resources from within your group to do this if you so wish. 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 the Local Area Plan prepared by the Local Authority under the Planning and Development Act 2000.

The adjudicator looked at the Kill Plan on the Kildare County Council website. It is good to note that Kill Tidy Towns Committee gets a special mention in the local authority's Kill Town Plan. This epitomises the special regard in which this committee is held, and has been over the years.

The Built Environment:

Kill retains a village feel despite its incremental increase in size and population.

Kill does not have many public buildings. However both churches are most wonderfully presented. St John's church is a beautiful cared-for landmark building in the centre of the village, and creates a focal point of interest. The mature trees which surround it frame it in views. It has lovely gates which are well maintained with wonderful piers. The mature tree setting in which this fine church is set is a vital asset to the village and it is encouraging to see the regard in which it is obviously held. New tree and simple non fussy shrub planting outside the grounds in the public area were admired.

St. Brigid's church and old school/hall are very fine early nineteenth century buildings, and are, together with and its associated newer hall equally well cared for. The attendant grounds and associated car parking are scrupulously cared for and maintained. This entire area of the village and contiguous to the recycling area is a model of how to care and respect one's place.

Clarendon Court is a good neighbourhood shopping enclave. There is a nice small-scale village feel to the buildings and the space, and the trees in the pavement are appropriate and healthy. The Dew Drop Inn and The Late Lounge areas are presently undergoing a revamp. The cottages opposite Clarendon Court are attractive, as is the two storey house with brick window surrounds.

The Mace shopping centre and its yard/parking area to the rear are very well laid out and maintained, with very clean walls despite the business of the centre. There is also good timber fencing in this area. There is interesting timber detailing to the building.

It is encouraging to see an old building which is part of the village core finding a new use as in the HSE Health Centre. The garden of the said building is also well maintained. The HSE are to be commended on this, as also on the discrete signage attached.

Downhill of the Health Centre is a lovely row of cottages all looking resplendent and a credit to their owners/occupiers.

There appear to be no derelict sites of note in the village. Eventually you will be able to underground all your wirescapes.

We encourage your efforts in the use of the Irish language in signage and admired those wooden examples at the recycling centre. We look forward to eventually seeing all estate names in Irish. The historical trail signs which you propose will be an asset to the furthering of interest in built environment visitor attractions in the village.

Litter bins are black in colour. This is not the best choice of colour for street furniture, as it is difficult for people with visual impairment to see. So in future you might consider another colour for street furniture in all its manifestations. (As this is a little known fact marks are not taken away from any group for such, but it is an area where it is good to know the way forward. The National Disability Agency has publications in this regard which are helpful).

The pump near Newhaven Manor estate opposite Breffni was noted.

The seating at the bus stop outside and opposite St. John's Church have been sponsored locally. This type of community support is great. Furthermore the sponsorship signage is discrete and in scale.

Landscaping:

Both your hard and soft landscaping is very good, and your maintenance of both is also very good.

Kill benefits from a heritage of mature plantings, and it is encouraging to see that the community are still

involved in providing new plantings. It appeared to this adjudicator that every inch of open space in this village was well landscaped and cared for.

The mature trees in St. John's church grounds, and those in the Health Centre are important to the village, as are other privately owned treed areas. There are some new terraced houses opposite the Mace shopping complex with some good semi mature planting.

The flower stands in the area across from St. John's church in the centre of the village are very colourful and vibrant. Just beyond the Health Centre, on the same side of the street, are many mature trees, and there are many, simply, but effectively, planted stone edged beds along this stretch of widened paving with seating, tubs and litter bins. The configuration of all these items creates a very good linear effect to the area opposite St. John's church. A successful "marriage" of soft and hard landscaping is achieved here.

The new raised beds were admired with the adjacent seating and semi mature tree planting, all within the green area on the village approach from the south. Perhaps it is unnecessary to have half tubs in this area, as they are perhaps "overkill" in such an otherwise natural space, and the palm shrubbery which they contain is not a native plant.

The Community Park is a wonderful resource for the village centre, and it is also beautifully maintained. The grotto is looking well.

What a joy it must be to go to the recycling centre in daffodil time. Thank you for the photograph showing the daffodils in full bloom. The roundabout at the recycling centre is beautifully landscaped in a natural fashion.

The woodland walk must be a very restful place to walk and it is level and accessible, with a great mix of mature and semi-mature trees in view. Well done on such an extensive planting programme!

The site for the new school has a backdrop of trees on the approach, and grass verges and wall plantings are being established in the vicinity

The Ascon/Rohcon site on the Killeel approach is very well landscaped.

The welcoming village name signs are surrounded by shrubs and colourful summer bedding plants. The Northern approach is now well landscaped, which landscaping will mature well in time.

There is good planting in many estates (see "residential" section) and at the splayed entrance to the G.A.A. centre/pitch.

Generally all landscaping is appropriate and restrained, creating a classic planned village ambience.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

The woodland walk is a refuge for wildlife as well as being a great amenity for recreational purposes. The creation of the wildlife meadow in the Community Park reminds people of the necessity of leaving some managed space for wild flora and fauna even within a town park. The Fairy Wood is also an imaginative idea which will provide such habitats. You obviously have been very well advised and informed with regard to the rescue of Lady's Smock. We look forward to photographs of your proposed bluebells and foxgloves in next year's application.

The bird/bat boxes were noted, including those in the grounds of St. John's church, which must be an oasis for wildlife.

The wildlife area close to the southern approach is welcomed and will earn you extra marks in this section. The wooden signage for the woodland walk and wildflower area is appropriate to purpose and informative.

You do not mention the proposed restocking of the River which you had as an objective last year. Has this progressed? Information panels documenting wildlife would add to the enjoyment of all these spaces, and would serve good educational purposes?

You have the potential to score extra marks in this category. Unfortunately you have not submitted a Wildlife Habitat Survey or Management Plan. Such a survey or Management plan can be basic and does not have to be prepared professionally. Do you have a third level student from the area who might require a thesis topic? Your proximity to so many third level colleges might create an opportunity to liaise/provide a fieldwork site for a class project. Could you encourage your local school to get involved? Could you contact your local authority Heritage Officer to help in this regard?

Litter Control:

There was no litter in evidence on the day of adjudication! Well Done! Obviously the litter pickers were up at their usual 6.30 a.m. What a dedicated group these people are. But it is obvious that they are respected and helped, because the adjudicator's visit was in the afternoon, and still no litter was in evidence. Even "hidden" areas were litter free, such as the car parks behind the shopping area.

Litter bins are obviously being emptied on a regular basis, as they were in use, but nowhere approaching even the "half full mark". Credit is due to the local authority's vigilance in this regard also, and to the obvious cooperation that exists between the committee and the local authority.

Your usage of the local church bulletin (we assume this applies to both churches) is also a great reminder in this regard. And we will be interested to hear more about your school education proposals in 2009!

The recycling/bring bank centre area was pristine. This is a major achievement as the site is off mainstream routes. The fact that an actual litter bin is also provided on site is excellent. So often people abandon the containers in which they bring their recycling material at the sites. The provision of a litter bin is a deterrent to such carelessness. The signage is informative, positive, and polite! The entire landscaping and design of the area is a joy to behold, and again credit is due to all involved. It is a prime example of how, when an attractive facility is provided ab initio, it can, and is, respected by its users. An initial investment has paid off. It is, as last year's adjudicator said "the best recycling point seen"!

This adjudicator is recommending your Bring Bank for an award!

Waste Minimisation:

The metal informational signage at the recycling centre is clean and clear. Its message of "welcome" is inviting and positive. The "rules" are conveyed in positive language with a "please". Your recycling centre is indeed excellent, but waste minimisation involves more than this. It involves prevention and minimisation of waste in the first case. We are glad to see that you have plans in mind with regard to Waste Minimisation for the new school. It is a pity that you did not elaborate on these.

Perhaps you could work with local businesses and schools to develop a local waste minimisation programme? Perhaps begin waste awareness campaigns as part of the Green Schools programme. Your local authority will have staff to advise you on how best to achieve results with waste minimisation issues. Your leafmould heap is good. Your "Fairy Wood" idea is an aspect of recycling which is interesting. Read the "Race against Waste" literature produced by The Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government.

You have the potential to gain many more marks under this section. Perhaps you are involved in projects - existing or proposed - to minimise waste which you do not mention? This is an area on which your 3 or 5 year plan could focus.

Tidiness:

Kill is a very tidy village.

Well done on the purchase of your road sweeper and strimmer. You are obviously putting them to good use!

There was no evidence of weeds on public footpaths or in public spaces.

The older car park to the rear of Clarendon Court is tidy despite it not being in view of street. (Adjudicators do look at many nooks and crannies!)

The only negative in this area would relate to - and it is a very small criticism - to the number of signs on the exit from the car park area on the timber boarding.

The wall behind the seats at the bus stop is spotless, despite its being near a busy village street. This is the constant attention to detail that leads to constantly improving marks in the competition.

The seating in the community park was freshly painted

St. Brigid's church and hall grounds were exemplary, and absolutely fault free! Even the barriers - so often a forgotten or damaged aspect - were as beautiful as barriers can be, freshly painted and undamaged.

As already stated the recycling centre is one hundred per cent tidy! In its design and in its maintenance it is an example to be followed! The wooden slatted backdrop to the recycling bins gives the area an aesthetic and tidy quality lacking in many such centres

The frontage area of Newhaven Manor estate needed weeding on adjudication day.

At the G.A.A. pitch the car park needs resurfacing and ordering (see last year's adjudication). The back of the building is a little untidy, with a seemingly rusting BBQ on site. The security fencing needs extra planting in places also.

Your village parking is tidy in layout, as are road signs and markings! You have increased your marks well in this overall category.

Residential Areas:

The presentation of individual houses and estates in Kill is very good, showing a broad based community interest in the TidyTowns efforts.

The first estate on the approach from South is Embassy View which has exceptional planting in an estate without rigid front boundaries to houses which works very well. The open space is also good and well maintained. Could the advertising sign be removed now that the estate would appear to be fully occupied? It is out of scale and character. The access and boundaries have simple railings which were admired. There was however a flood at the entrance; drainage needs attention. The ESB box towards the entrance area is rusting.

Gaelic View estate has good gardens and well cut open space with two attractive sculptures, a tree trunk and an abstract sculpture.

Boundary treatment is also good The GAA pitch is off this estate entrance.

Whitethorn Grove at the approach to the centre of the village from South has good planting, giving the visitor the impression of being in a very rural place despite its proximity to such a busy traffic artery. The plantings create both a very effective visual and sound barrier. It is a lovely peaceful cul-de-sac quite obviously well cared for by all its inhabitants. Only one small negative comment – on the approach the cream coloured garage /shed blue door could do with repainting.

The Gables estate is also extremely well kept with a nice name sign with simple stone and shrubs. The two small park areas in front of the adjacent local authority houses, again on the southern access are very well kept with bench, seats, stone containers nice hedging and trees in gardens opposite. All these houses are also very well cared for.

St Patrick's Park Estate on the Kiltel approach has maintained the standard it set itself in winning an earlier Kildare County Council award. There are beautiful floral displays in the area.

Newhaven Manor, a relatively new housing estate has good open space which is well kept, but the estate needs more planting. A wildflower verge adjacent was noted.

Individual house gardens are well planted within the village and add to the overall sylvan effect.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

The overall presentation of your approach roads is very good.

Wild dog roses planted in the vicinity of roundabouts creates a lovely rural feel to what otherwise might seem like a very urban type of road development close to, and accessing a village from a major carriageway. New landscaping generally along the village edges benefits from existing treed views.

Nice new stone name signs on the approach from the South (from Johnstown), and from the North (from Naas) set the atmosphere in welcoming the visitor and resident alike to this beautiful village. The name signs are surrounded by shrubs and colourful summer bedding plants. The fact that they are of a similar design gives a sense of unity to the approach roads. The roadbridge for pedestrian usage is in very good condition visually.

The footpath area along these approaches is shared in places by cyclists and pedestrians without segregation. Is this a good idea? There are nice wooden bollards in evidence and a good simple bank with fencing segregating this local road from the dual carriageway forming a protective space and sound barrier. It is amazing how less conscious one is of the passing traffic on the dual carriageway than one would expect to be. You will probably landscape these banks in time. There is an extensive wildlife habitat area between the dual carriageway and the village with access from the approach road and from the recycling area. Again the linear clean lines, already evident in the village are respected in the design of the approaches.

The Kiltel approach road could do with some resurfacing and edge tidying.

Within the village the streets and back areas are impeccable as referred to already under earlier categories. You are also lucky in not having too many inaccessible areas. Your signage is well cared for, as is your new

village signage. It is remarkable how well maintained the road signs are in the village and on the approaches. The community obviously work well with the local authority engineer, who is to be complemented on retaining the striped effect to such great advantage, and not using the raw metal uprights, so common in many areas.

General Impression:

The general impression one takes away of Kill is one of a village where a community has a great sense of pride in their place and has welcomed newcomers without allowing a dormitory mentality to develop. Through obvious years of hard work, the village has maintained its sense of scale and individuality, and services have increased in line with need. It is also to the credit of all the new residents that they are also taking on board this sense of place and pride. Perhaps a more focussed approach to the planning of the future is needed at this point. Much practical on the ground work has taken place. It is time perhaps to coordinate all the goodwill toward a mutually satisfactory plan for all for the future. Kill is a special place and its public face is that of a cared for and loved very tidy village.