

Tidy Towns Competition 2008

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Kells** Ref: **397**
County: **Kilkenny** Mark: **251**
Category: **B** Date(s): **17/06/2008**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2008
Overall Development Approach	50	39
The Built Environment	50	33
Landscaping	50	28
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	24
Litter Control	50	38
Waste Minimisation	20	10
Tidiness	30	15
Residential Areas	40	29
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	28
General Impression	10	7
TOTAL MARK	400	251

Overall Development Approach:

Thank you for your entry-form which is informative on current and future initiatives, and the map, which is unusually interesting with areas such as 'historic footpath' marked – fascinating. It is very good to read that there are students on your committee, and also to see the no doubt useful circular which you send to residents. The number of organisation which which you co-operate is remarkably extensive. We noted that you had taken the trouble to visit last year's National winner 'to touch base'; we frequently advise committees to do this, and in fact have suggested that some less-successful groups in the smaller categories take a look at villages such as Kells – really to see that other centres can have problems too and how they manage to present a positive stance. Do not quail in your determination to maintain the character of the village and its surroundings, but do not take on too many new projects while much that remains ongoing has to be completed. This adjudicator was quite taken aback to come across the new motorway and wondered if it would have a deleterious effect on Kells: quite possibly not. It will be interesting to read your comment on this next year.

The Built Environment:

The Roman Catholic church was beautifully presented with its bright paint. The new Resource Centre is a handsome addition. The school was neat and tidy. The pretty Church of Ireland church was seen to be well cared for. The bridge must not go unmentioned although it has been there for a very long time: a superb example of its era. The restoration work on the frontispiece of the old church and its surroundings constitute an immense visual Improvement to this area; the Priory itself is of course extraordinary, and comparatively unknown outside the county. (If this adjudicator had a visual wish-list it would be to move the Community Hall to a site that does not interfere with the river frontage, and move Smith's premises to a more motor-accessible site outside the village centre: both these buildings are very well maintained as they are, but in an ideal world one would like to see views preserved and buildings in village centres kept on a small scale!)

Landscaping:

Planting at the Priory access was admired, and also the floral displays at the RC church. The not quite completed flight of steps at the mill (is this called Mullins Mill? – the map does not say) looked most inviting. Landscaping and picnic tables here were of good quality. The bedding at the Resource Centre was weedy on the date of the visit and there was weed growth alongside the building – the kind of growth that could be attended to in fifteen minutes' work. The incised name-stone and planting at Lacken Well was favourably noted.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

In Kells one is always conscious of the presence of nature – riverine, pastoral, woodland. The interpretative board at the bridge is first class. The butterfly garden was very favourably noted. The photographic record of flora and fauna was much appreciated – thank you – as part of the study of the banks of the King's River; documentation of this kind makes us doubly aware of the extensive work being undertaken and enjoyed under this heading.

Litter Control:

Your mark is comparatively high for what can be a variable from day to day. It is good to read that you make builders aware of potential littering and that you undertake three major clean-ups.

Waste Minimisation:

The bring bank is discretely sited, and it was good to see it being used many times throughout the visit. Your mark here is well above average, so you are clearly on top of this issue.

Tidiness:

There were three major sources of untidiness which owners of the properties concerned should be made aware of: the yard of the recycling station, which was surprisingly weedy, an unsightly open space at the entrance to Priory Grove, and a nasty small dump beyond the three pink houses that make up the village-centre estate. If the concrete-block boundary wall at the recycling yard were plastered and painted – or, better still, though very expensive – faced in stone, it would cease to be an unpleasing eye-catcher to those travelling towards the bridge from the village.

Residential Areas:

Very charming traditional houses of varying sizes were seen on the Ennisnag road. The two old houses in the village centre on the Prior road were superbly maintained. Generally, new housing in the village centre blends well with the older in terms of scale and certain features. It is clear that where new housing is proposed by the local authority or by developers you use your influence to see that the designs are in keeping with the existing. This is less important – but not unimportant – when new housing is out of sight of older. Burgess Court is a well-maintained superior suburban estate that really does not have much conversation with traditional Kells. In Priory Grove there is an individualistic approach to gardens and good use made of low stone walls. The residential road by the Forge has a pleasant rustic feeling with much stonework, and gardens spilling out onto the roadside.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

Road surfaces are generally poor: in a village of growing population with much farm-based traffic the County Council needs to take action. Surfaces are especially poor around the community hall and petrol station. While they are at it, the Council could remove the ugly overhead wires. Paths are of good quality, and 'backs' do not cause unsightly problems.

General Impression:

'Tidyness' is perhaps not the proper term for Kells, and one would not wish a village of this nature to be over-tidy: its charm lies in the fairly haphazard blending of ancient and modern, its crooked roads and surprising corners. All this, as you know, requires much planning and hard work to keep in reasonable order, and to foresee and anticipate future developments. Your committee does all this in full measure, and it has been a real pleasure to see the results of the well-orchestrated work to date to and read of your further plans. All good wishes for the coming years.