

# Tidy Towns Competition 2008

## *Adjudication Report*

Centre: **Kells** Ref: **579**  
County: **Meath** Mark: **239**  
Category: **E** Date(s): **01/01/2008**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2008
Overall Development Approach	50	37
The Built Environment	50	34
Landscaping	50	35
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	15
Litter Control	50	29
Waste Minimisation	20	10
Tidiness	30	15
Residential Areas	40	30
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	27
General Impression	10	7
<b>TOTAL MARK</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>239</b>

### **Overall Development Approach:**

Congratulations to the Kells Tidy Towns Committee for participating in the Tidy Towns Competition 2008. Well done on reaching 40 years in the competition and thank you for your support for the competition over the years and your trust in the adjudicators. Thank you for your submission and for your maps. There may be some misunderstanding about the nature of the map which you are requested to enclose. A hand drawn sketch of the town which highlights the places you regard as being most important for the Tidy Towns Competition is a great help to the adjudicator. While your tour guide of Kells was very useful a map highlighting the places mentioned would be more valuable and less labour intensive on the person compiling the submission. The maps submitted were both a help and a hindrance as they were too detailed for the purposes of an adjudication and too large to take out on a wet day. It is a pity that you did not include a 3-5 year plan. If you do not have one the exercise of compiling such a plan would enable you to set immediate and medium term targets for yourselves, would help you decide which local bodies and agencies would assist you with your various projects. As all projects need funding you would set down in your plan how you propose to fund these various projects. As well as that there are marks involved! It is most commendable that you have both a Senior and Junior Committee for your work. It is obvious from the visit that you have the goodwill of many in your community and your engagement with businesses and local agencies is vital in pursuing your plans. Your Junior Committee suggests that you enjoy the trust of the younger folk. Why not encourage the schools to attempt to achieve Green Flag Status. That would further buttress the support of the kids. Kells is well worth a visit on a wet day. It must be a wonder on a fine day.

### **The Built Environment:**

The submission decries the amount of dereliction there is in Kells. It is obvious that every effort is being made on your part to improve the situation. The street at the end of the Dundalk approach road has been badly hit by lack of occupancy and it tells on the state of that area of town. On one occasion in Bective Street a

vacated building is spared becoming a shabby shed by colourful artwork while its colleague across the road weeps with shame. But this decay is countered by the colourful shop fronts on the bustling main streets as at Arches, Blackwater Inn, Jack's Railway Bar, The Westway, Kenlis Pharmacy to mention but a few. And then there are your fine period buildings. Some of them present themselves boldly. In the case of one of the buildings the banking tenants should be reminded that they are fortunate to be the present users of a fine building that deserves better treatment than they are giving it. Others buildings are more discreet in their presentation as is the red brick building before the garage after the schools. Your schools and the landscaping around them present a proud appearance throughout. A power wash would help the pebbledash on the Primary School wall. What was once the CBS is now an endearing site of remembrance and is a joy to visit. The Council has provided amply for the kids with your fine play amenity. One is struck immediately by the absence of over ground cables. This adjudicator enjoyed the many fine chimney stacks, unimpeded by cables. Finally there are your many heritage sites, all of them maintained with the reverence they merit. The area around the Heritage Centre welcomes one to visit, sit and rest or contemplate. Bins for rubbish flourish. Yet someone had the cheek to debase St John's Cemetery with garbage. The terraces of houses where many of an older generation grew up help create the heritage character of Kells though in some cases they are in need of some maintenance. Overall, the experience for the adjudicator what the submission promised.

### **Landscaping:**

You can be justifiably proud of the landscaping projects that have been undertaken by your committee. Sometimes the landscaping beckons a hearty welcome to an estate. Other times the landscaping adorns one of the many historical memorials to your proud past as at the Parnell Gardens and at the An Tóstal commemorative sculpture. In other cases the landscaping enhances the appearance of one of the heritage buildings in the town as at the Heritage Centre. Private homes or street side businesses project a multitude of summer colours from a tub or hanging basket and add to the colourscape of the streets. There are spots where landscaping could be used to screen off the less attractive enterprises which are an important element of town life. Identify these places with a view to screening and enhancement.

### **Wildlife and Natural Amenities:**

This is an area in which your committee can make inroads. The content of your submission was vague and generalised. Encourage the schools to carry out a survey of wildlife in the Kells area. There may be people in your community who have an informed interest in wildlife and who would be willing to assist you with this section of the competition. When planning your landscaping projects keep in mind the welfare of birds and bees. Follow the advice of previous year's adjudicator as there is need for a plan with immediate targets, medium term plans and long term aspirations.

### **Litter Control:**

Well done on the many bins about the town. Those bins are a major step forward. A lot of work is being done by you in this area and your efforts are paying off. While there was litter evident it is not the curse it could be. The emphasis on your work regarding litter is on clean up. This is a vital element in the battle against litter. You must also consider methods of reducing the amount of litter you have to clean up. The bins are a help in this regard. What other litter awareness and litter reduction strategies would suit your community?

### **Waste Minimisation:**

The workshops are a great idea. What items are planned for the agenda of these workshops? This information would prove useful to the adjudicator for assessing this category next year. It could benefit your committee to study the booklet 'Race Against Waste'. Such a study would stimulate new waste elimination projects for you. The emphasis in this section is not on litter control but on minimising waste in your community. There is no mention of Green Flag Status for the schools. You could encourage the schools or a school to try to achieve Green Flag Status. The pupils would learn much about recycling, reusing, reducing and composting. They would be involved in waste minimisation projects and would bring their new found skills, their new found knowledge and their new found enthusiasm home to the generations at home.

### **Tidiness:**

Overall Kells projects a tidy image befitting a 'baile oidhreachta'. Your skyline is not cluttered with crisscrossing cables. The traffic is unavoidable but seemed to flow quite freely through the town. However, on closer inspection there are a few problem areas. Weeds on the kerbside project a neglected image of a place. And there are such weeds. A definable project for some members of you committee or your local authority is to maintain the many road signs that there are. Even some of the town signs need a wash.

### **Residential Areas:**

No wonder you encouraged the adjudicator to visit so many estates and residential areas because these estate abound with magnificent design, are glowing with summer colour, are meticulously maintained. The

estate entrances are most attractive. The adjudicator did not follow the list provided in case he was being led to the prime estates but visited many of the town's estates. These were pleasant experiences. Not only do the housing estates enhance your town but so do the many private dwellings on the approach roads. These residences are a testimony to the pride people feel in their town. The adjudicator was also taken by the many terraces of houses on so many streets in the town. Sadly as times change some houses become unoccupied and some streets suffer from this notably as one approaches from the Dundalk side. There is a charming terrace of 7 houses at a busy junction, all beautifully painted including number 7 which is now no longer occupied. The name stones on estates are most attractive but the adjudicator was surprised that these did not include the Irish version in some cases. The lack of care that is mentioned regarding approach roads is not present at all in the estates.

### **Roads, Streets and Back Areas:**

There are more roads into Kells than there are lines into Paddington station. The submission says nine and all nine routes were travelled. To a great extent the overall picture of the approach roads to Kells is the same. The town signs are welcoming and maintained. But the cutting and maintenance of the grass verges on the roadsides, where not tended to by the home owners along these roads, is sporadic and very often neglected. Even allowing for the disruption of construction works there is room for improvement. The hedges also need attention. In most cases the footpaths were of a high quality. On the Oldcastle Road there is a fence for some distance that detracts from the image nearby. There is a fabulous piece of landscaping outside the Bridge Water Estate while across the road buachallán buís thrive destroying the ornate image. These approach roads are one's introduction to the town. Even for the native, if the approach signals a neat and cared for town, it will be easier to row in behind any projects to further improve the place. If these roads project a neglected image then that is the standard one may aspire to when living or visiting the town. Continue to liaise with the various bodies you mention. In a 3-5 Year Plan set out your targets for this section.

### **General Impression:**

The enthusiasm of the author of your submission was infectious and the adjudicator felt guilty that he had not paid homage at the altar of the Book of Kells as yet in his many years. It was an honour to tread on the same hallowed ground as the illuminators of the Book of Kells for the first time. There is a real sense of our noble, scholastic, ecclesiastical past in that area of the town and it was wonderful to see the area so painstakingly preserved. The enthusiasm was also evident in the work that is being carried out about the town so that Kells can retain its heritage character while coping with the inevitable demands of a housing market boom. The enthusiasm was obvious in the work to beautify Kells so that its brand image is of a clean and colourful place, a home town to be proud of.