

Tidy Towns Competition 2009

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Kildangan** Ref: **163**
County: **Kildare** Mark: **256**
Category: **A** Date(s): **18/06/2009**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2009
Overall Development Approach	50	35
The Built Environment	50	32
Landscaping	50	29
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	30
Litter Control	50	33
Waste Minimisation	20	10
Tidiness	30	19
Residential Areas	40	29
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	32
General Impression	10	7
TOTAL MARK	400	256

Overall Development Approach:

Kildangan continues to make noticeable improvements in this competition. The TidyTowns Committee are congratulated on their hard work and the continued enhancement of their village. Judging by your performance this year, there seems to be no doubt that your 5 member committee is ambitious, hard working and determined to succeed. Perhaps some additional members should be recruited. It is clear from the number of new houses that Kildangan has grown significantly in recent years and it is hoped that new members can be attracted into the TidyTowns Committee.

It was also observed from your entry form that your Committee have good relationships with the local community, local businesses (Emo service station, Kildangan Stud), Kildare County Council and other agencies (such as Fas, etc). This partnership approach is an excellent way to proceed and you are encouraged to maintain and build on these relationships. You are also to be commended for involving the School in the work of the TidyTowns. Not only does this raise environmental awareness among the younger generation, but it can bring in many young and enthusiastic young helpers.

The adjudicator would like to thank the Committee for submitting the entry form and map. However, in order to further improve your performance in this category, the Committee is encouraged to draw up a 3 – 5 year action plan which should clearly set the priorities for the years ahead. This plan should be drawn up in partnership with your Council (and other stakeholders) and it should include realistic time frames for the completion of each of the identified projects. You are also to be commended on the quality of your map, which was of a very high standard and a great help to the adjudicator.

The Built Environment:

The layout of the village of Kildangan is rather unusual, as it has quite a dispersed settlement pattern with two

relatively obvious points of focus. The first point of focus is perhaps around the school and the Church (which are located at the junction of the Kildare Road and the road leading to the GAA grounds). Both of these buildings are very attractive and well maintained with impressive grounds. The second point of focus is perhaps the junction of the Kildare Road and the Athy / Monastevin Road). This part of the village accommodates the commercial functions of the Cross Keys Pub (also an impressive building) and the Emo service station, which also includes a shop. The railway line and railway station lies between the Crosskeys and the Church. Other significant buildings include Kildangan Hall and the old school house.

Kildangan has clearly grown very significantly in recent years and a number of new residential areas were observed. The oldest of these estates is perhaps the Kilbeg estate, which is comprised of single storey dwellings located on the Athy Road. Castle Park is also an established estate which is located opposite Kildangan Hall. A range of newer estates are located on the Kildare Road (the Paddocks and Abbots Wood) while the larger modern estates of Cluain Daragh and the Courtyard estate are located close to the school on the road leading to the GAA grounds.

The natural stone walls that can be found throughout the village are very attractive and give the village great character. It is noted that there are some minor problems with vacant / derelict sites and it is noted that there is concern regarding an unfinished housing estate. The derelict / vacant site beside Bridgeside Cottages and adjacent to the Cross keys pub was observed during adjudication day. While it is unfortunate, it is recommended that these matters should be raised with the Council and any potential interim solutions to the problem (e.g. screening, painting, etc), could be included in your action plan.

Landscaping:

The hard work of the Committee is evident in the landscaping projects that were to be seen on the day of adjudication. The planting at the entrance to Kildangan Stud and the landscaping on the approach road from Kildare deserve a special mention. This landscaping, combined with neatly trimmed hedges and clipped grass give an excellent first impression of Kildangan.

Nice landscaping was also observed at the Cross Keys Pub junction and also at the Emo service station on the Athy road, both of which added a lovely summer colour to the streetscape of the village. Some of the residential areas also had high quality planting scheme in place – particularly the raised sleeper beds in Cluain Daragh. Attractive landscaping was also observed outside Kildangan Hall. The adjudicator was also impressed with the high levels of maintenance and landscaping on view in a large number of the gardens in the village – especially the garden of the period dwelling immediately opposite the Cross keys pub.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

The details provided of the wildlife and game reserve in your entry form are acknowledged and it is clearly a key element of the wildlife and natural amenity provision in Kildangan. However, some further details on this facility (such as the types of birds and flora that it accommodates) should be included and perhaps a map indicating its location. This would be particularly helpful to the adjudicator. Secondly, it is also noted that neither the habitat for wildlife along the Irish Rail permanent way, or the Wildlife and Game Reserve is included on the map supplied. Please note that it will not be possible to award marks for projects unless they can be found on the day of adjudication.

It is noted that no further projects are planned until housing development in Kildangan are finished and completed. However, it is suggested that other actions are possible that could benefit wildlife and need not wait until all development is completed. Why not suggest that the school complete an inventory of the wildlife in the wildlife area as a school project? This could raise environmental awareness and provide baseline data for an information board. Or how about researching suitable plants, flowers and berry bearing bushes (that would support) wildlife and which could be used in your planting schemes. Or how about completing a brief information map and guide for the Irish Rail permanent way with the help of one of the funding agencies?

Litter Control:

The approach of the Committee to litter control is proving successful as Kildangan was for the most part litter free on the day of adjudication. However, it would be useful to provide additional details on the approach used to control litter, for example, did you have a daily or weekly litter pick up? Do you give responsibility for the area around the School to the pupils? Have you organised a spring clean this year? Once again, this information would prove useful to the adjudicator as suggestions could be made on how it could be improved. Although, the overall standard observed was good, it should be noted that some evidence of litter was observed on the site between the school and the Courtyard estate, on the verges on the approach road from Athy and on the Castle Park estate. However, these are minor points and the Committee (and any others involved) should be very proud of their performance in this category.

Waste Minimisation:

Kildangan continues to improve in this category, which is growing in importance in the TidyTowns Competition. The extensive list of actions in your entry form is noted and you are to be congratulated on how proactive you are in this area. The adjudicator wishes you luck with your future endeavours and reminds you that additional ideas can be found in the 'race against waste' booklet.

Tidiness:

Kildangan have performed strongly in this category. The adjudicator was very impressed with the level of tidiness observed during the assessment and the Committee (and land owners) are to be applauded for their hard work and careful attention to cleaning verges and removing weeds. The power washing of walls is considered to be a particularly good idea.

Some improvements are possible however. It was observed on the road coming in from the GAA grounds that the verge of the Cluain Daragh side was overgrown and untidy looking with a very dilapidated looking red and white pole present. Between the Courtyard estate and the school (on the same side as the school), It was also noted that there is an untidy verge, which is overgrown with weeds and some litter evident. It would be nice to have grass planted in this area. Finally, one or two of the traffic signs on the Athy Road were in need of a wash.

Residential Areas:

There are numerous residential areas in Kildangan and in general, a high standard of maintenance was observed in them on the day of adjudication. Cluain Daragh is particularly attractive with very nice landscaping and carefully trimmed grass indicating diligent maintenance. It was also considered to be a very good idea to install picnic tables and bins to allow people to enjoy this space in the good weather. Abbotswood deserves a special mention as it was spick and span during the assessment. Although no landscaping, the manicured grassed areas and well maintained gardens were very impressive.

The Courtyard estate on the road leading to the GAA grounds was also nicely maintained with some attractive semi mature planting. However, some of the planting beds at the entrance appeared to be overgrown with weeds. The well maintained grass and maturing trees were observed in Kildangan Manor. The Paddocks is a nice estate also, but would benefit from some kerbing at the entrance – this would give it a tidier appearance.

Castle Park estate is reasonable, although a little more overgrown than others. Problems with graffiti were noted and small amounts of weeds and litter were evident. The planters however, provided a splash of summer colour. The Kilbeg estate is quite impressive at the entrance, but inside the estate, weeds were observed between the kerb and the road while the flower beds were also in need of maintenance and this detracted somewhat from the recent investment in seating and planting.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

The approach roads to Kildangan were generally good. In particular, the approach from Kildare (coming past the the Kildangan Stud entrance) was excellent with good signage, planting and trimmed hedges and verges. This gives a very positive first impression of Kildangan. Well done. The approach from Athy however, was quite poor with overgrown verges that somewhat obscured the 50 kph signs, while the road surface on the stretch of road between Bridgeside Cottages and the railway could be improved.

General Impression:

Kildangan continues to make steady progress in the TidyTowns competition. The adjudicator has no doubts that your performance will continue to improve in 2010.