

# Tidy Towns Competition 2009

## Adjudication Report

Centre: **Kilkea** Ref: **372**  
County: **Kildare** Mark: **237**  
Category: **A** Date(s): **17/06/2009**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2009
Overall Development Approach	50	26
The Built Environment	50	33
Landscaping	50	34
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	20
Litter Control	50	39
Waste Minimisation	20	3
Tidiness	30	17
Residential Areas	40	30
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	28
General Impression	10	7
<b>TOTAL MARK</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>237</b>

### Overall Development Approach:

Kilkea continues to make steady progress in the 2009 Tidy Towns competition and while more work needs to be done, the noticeable improvements since last year are commendable. It is observed on your entry form that you seem to be a small and committed group with 4 members and it is positive to see that the Golf Club have offered support – as additional resources are normally required at this time of year.

We agree with the previous years adjudicator regarding the level of involvement and we would encourage you to invite new members to join. One option that might be successful is the organisation of a 'Spring Clean' day and request help for a single day as this could be useful in raising awareness of the work of the Tidy Towns Committee and for getting people who cannot commit to an ongoing involvement to participate. We would also encourage you to further develop relationships with the Church in Kilkea, Kilkea Castle and any local businesses (such as the Yew Tree Gallery) as all of the above will benefit from the improved appearance of the village. You should also consider approaching any Sports Clubs that there may be in Kilkea to see if any of their members would like to get involved.

The entry form contained very little information with respect to the relationship with the local school. It is strongly recommended that the School are encouraged to get involved as this could potentially result in an increase in awareness of environmental issues at a local level among the younger generation as well as involving new and enthusiastic young helpers! The Committee are also encouraged to involve the School in areas such as waste minimisation, wildlife and natural amenities as well as litter control. In addition, we would encourage you to advise the adjudicators in the future on any initiatives being undertaken by the school that are relevant – such as working towards a green flag.

It was noted from your application form that there is no reference to either Kildare County Council or any of the agencies such as Fas and LEADER. It is particularly important for the Committee to build a relationship

with the County Council as their assistance is required in most of the categories in the Tidy Towns Competition. Fas may be able to provide materials and labour for some of your projects, while other agencies such as LEADER can generally provide advice and assistance on undertaking projects at a local level. The Committee should also consider preparing a tidy towns action plan. This plan should include realistic time frames for the completion of projects as the success of the plan will be measured by the number of projects it helps to bring to fruition.

Thank you for the map which was included in the application form as it was most helpful. We would encourage the Committee to include as much detail as possible on the map, drawing particular attention to the location of projects completed (such as planting beds etc) since the assessment of the previous year.

### **The Built Environment:**

The streetscape and the built environment of Kilkea is very impressive, with a number of the buildings drawing the attention of the adjudicator. The focus of the village is the Church, which is a particularly attractive building set in well maintained grounds, and the mature trees and the natural stone boundary walls all add to its splendour. The parochial house to the rear of the Church appears to date from the same period as the Church and it complements this building very well. Has the Committee (or the Church) considered providing a plaque or small information panel at the entrance to the Church to inform interested passers by of its history?

The central area part of the village is completed by the entrance to Kilkea Castle, with its intact boundary walls and entrance, magnificent gates (which appear to need painting) and the particularly impressive lodge house, which seems to be in residential use. Although the adjudicator did not venture into the castle grounds due to the presence of a 'private property' sign, the visual contribution of the entrance, lodge and gates to the streetscape of Kilkea is very positive. The old School House on the opposite side of the road is perhaps one of the nicest buildings in the village. It was observed to be in particularly good condition while the gardens that surround it were particularly attractive and well maintained.

The road opposite the Church (heading in the direction of Moone) contains an attractive mix of original buildings (such as the Yew Tree Gallery) and more modern structures, which for the most part, try to harmonise with the existing historical buildings in the village. The hoarding around one of these properties was noted and it hoped that these works will be completed in time for next years competition. Further out this road, the old stone bridge, which appears to be original, adds distinction to the entrance to the village.

It is considered that the original buildings in Kilkea, which are intact and appear to date from the same period, combined with the natural stone walls and the mature trees provide a lovely distinctive character to the village. If an action plan is prepared, perhaps the undergrounding of the wires and the replacement of the lamp standards (to ones of more appropriate style) could be considered?

### **Landscaping:**

The efforts of the Committee with respect to landscaping and planting were observed on the day of adjudication. The numerous mature trees in Kilkea, particularly on the approach roads and around the Castle and Church give the village a huge advantage in terms of planting. However, it was noted that opportunities for landscaping have also been identified by the Committee. The landscaping bed at the pedestrian entrance to the School was very nicely laid out and maintained and it brought a lovely splash of colour to this part of the village. Attractive and colourful landscaping was also noticed on a row of 3 houses approaching the old stone bridge on the Moone Road. The adjudicator was especially impressed with the high standard of planting and maintenance observed in a number of the gardens in the village.

It is recommended that the Committee try and identify some other opportunities for planting and landscaping in the village. For example, landscaping at the signage on the approach roads could be considered, while the residential area of Castlewood would also benefit from landscaping. Other opportunities include the pump (which has now been painted) in the centre of the village.

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

This category provides a massive opportunity for Kilkea. The large number of mature trees in the village provide an excellent habitat for bird life and the adjudicator also witnessed rabbits playing in the cemetery beside the Church while the grounds of the Castle could also be expected to make an important contribution to wildlife habitats. The efforts of the Committee in Mullaghcreellan Wood (which serves as a woodland habitat) are also noted. The Committee is also encouraged to use native plants and flowers when undertaking landscaping schemes, which will help to encourage bee and other insect life.

Has the Committee considered a river walk from the Bridge? Advice on both the provision of nature walks and amenity areas can be found in the tidy towns handbook. The School could be a valuable resource in this category either by becoming involved in providing the walk and / or by completing a survey of wildlife that can be observed from the walk. This information could also be used in information boards for users of the nature walk.

### **Litter Control:**

A good standard of litter control is being achieved in Kilkea. This is clearly the result of the hard work of the Committee. Well done! There is no doubt that a lot of attention is paid to this category. Do you have regular litter patrols? Is the School involved? Please provide your adjudicator with details of your successful approach to litter control in your application form next year.

### **Waste Minimisation:**

This is an area that is becoming increasingly important in the tidy towns competition and judging by the low mark achieved in 2008, it is an area of great potential for Kilkea. The Committee is encouraged to explore additional actions that would help to minimise waste. They include segregating and recycling the waste collected on litter patrols or during the National Spring Clean, running awareness campaigns of reducing, reusing and recycling at a local level and investigating the provision of composters to individual houses and for communal use. The Committee is also encouraged to provide a composting area so that the resulting compost can then be used in their ongoing landscaping projects. Actions such as these will significantly improve your performance in this category in future years.

### **Tidiness:**

In general, it is considered that a reasonably good standard of tidiness has been achieved in Kilkea, with many areas appearing clean and tidy on the day of adjudication. Some improvements are possible. There does not appear to be a consistent approach to cutting back verges on the approach roads and this gives a rather untidy appearance. For example, the 50 kph signs on the Athy road were slightly overgrown, while the verge opposite the school was also overgrown.

It was also noted that the signage outside the Church (the finger post signs in particular) were in need of painting and washing, while the sign pole also needed to be painted. The seating bench at the junction is also in need of paint job. On the Moone Road, the entrance to what appears to be the sewerage treatment works is very overgrown with weeds and the dilapidated boundary fences add to the untidy appearance – it is possible to provide screen planting here? Finally, the lane to the rear of the houses adjacent to the treatment plant is also overgrown and in need of weeding.

Although, the above points are minor, if some or all of these jobs could be undertaken, it would improve the level of tidiness that is visible

### **Residential Areas:**

The quality of the residential areas in Kilkea and those of individual properties was generally quite high. Full credit is due to the property owners for their careful maintenance and planting, particularly the owner of the Old School House and 3 houses adjoining 'Nannies Garden'. Castlewood was reasonably good, but it would benefit from additional landscaping.

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

In general, the approach roads to Kilkea are good with a good standard of surfacing and maintenance. However, a consistent treatment of verges is needed on all approach roads. The provision and maintenance of name place signage should also be considered in consultation with the County Council.

### **General Impression:**

The general impression of Kilkea is very good and with continued good work and priorities being set in key areas of waste minimisation and wildlife and natural amenity areas, there is no doubt that the Committee will continue to make progress in the years ahead.

