

Tidy Towns Competition 2009

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Kilmeade** Ref: **375**
County: **Kildare** Mark: **260**
Category: **A** Date(s): **17/06/2009**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2009
Overall Development Approach	50	42
The Built Environment	50	28
Landscaping	50	40
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	28
Litter Control	50	34
Waste Minimisation	20	7
Tidiness	30	17
Residential Areas	40	26
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	31
General Impression	10	7
TOTAL MARK	400	260

Overall Development Approach:

Kilmeade continues to make noticeable improvements in the TidyTowns competition. The TidyTowns Committee, with their committed team of 7 members are congratulated on their hard work and the continued enhancement of their village. We also commend you on the high quality submission that you have made with a detailed plan of action for projects that are planned and for projects that have been completed. The map submitted is also of a high standard. In relation to your plan, there is no doubt that your committee are particularly ambitious in setting goals and targets for each year, but as adjudicators we accept that it is not possible to get everything completed in a single year due to ever dwindling resources and the need to involve other bodies / agencies in projects (such as the County Council) who have a much wider remit than a single village or town. In view of this, we recommend that a time frame of 3 – 5 years is taken for a plan and the target completion date for each project outlined in the plan is realistically set within those 5 years (or even beyond the 5 years if necessary). This assures the adjudicators that you are highly organised and taking a planned and considered approach to your work as a committee.

One minor point relates to an ecology study that was referred to in last years report, but does not seem to have been included this year. It is recommended that all the available information is made available to the adjudicator each year to ensure that marks can be awarded for work done.

Aside from the above minor point, the Committee is to be congratulated on their first class development approach – which is clearly reflected in your high marks in this category. You are to be commended on your close working relationship with the School, as well as your engagement with the County Council, other agencies and local businesses. We were particularly impressed with your excellent initiative to put together an information booklet for new comers to the area in order to raise awareness of the work of the Tidy Towns. It is also recommended that this information booklet is submitted with your entry form.

The Built Environment:

The adjudicator noted during the visit to Kilmeade that part of the village is located on the N78 (Dublin to Athy Road), while the larger part of the village is located to the south of the N78. On the section of Kilmeade Village that is located along the N78, the building that formerly accommodated the post office is quite attractive as it is a good example of a traditional design. However, the half built structure adjacent to the old post office detracts somewhat from the entrance to Kilmeade.

The larger part of the village also contains some attractive buildings such as the Church, which is well presented and has particularly attractive grounds. The School building is also an attractive structure that adds to the streetscape and focus of the village. The residential areas in Kilmeade represent an attractive mix of architectural styles and layouts from the modern (and most recent) estate of Cluain Ard, to the established estate of New Line Grove and the mature estate of Moat View, which appears to be the original housing estate in the village.

Landscaping:

The hard work of the Committee was very visible in this category. The adjudicator was very impressed with the number of examples of good quality planting that were observed during adjudication day. The planting observed includes the landscaped bed at the junction of the N78 and the road leading to the Boley Cross Roads & Nurney as well as the attractive landscaping around the pump at the junction of the N78 and the stretch of road connecting the Church and Kilmeade Post Office. This landscaping added a welcome splash of colour to both of these locations.

Attractive landscaping was also observed at the base of the mature tree close to the Church, while the impressive white thorn hedge was also noted. The mature trees opposite the Church car park are also considered to add character to Kilmeade village. However, it is recommended that additional areas for small scale planting beds are identified. These could include the approaches from Narraghmore / Crookstown and the possibly the approach road from Kilmead View to the south.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

This category presents an excellent opportunity for Kilmeade to improve on their performance in the competition. The work completed by the Committee in the Moate and the Park (with the Gordon Bennett Race Memorial) is most impressive. The high standards of presentation and maintenance on show in both of these excellent amenities are clear evidence of your commitment and appetite for hard work. Well done. The wildlife garden in the Moate is a particularly good idea and the adjudicator was delighted to see that it has won awards in the recent past.

The attempts made by the Committee to improve wildlife habitats in the village were also noted, with the provision of bird nesting boxes in the Church grounds being commended. As the ecology study has not been submitted with your application this year, the adjudicator recommends that the Committee ensure that as many native plants and flowers are used in your landscaping scheme as these plants and flowers support the largest diversity of bees, birds and other insects.

The wildlife sanctuary close to New Line Grove and Cluain Ard was also observed during the visit by the adjudicator. This is considered to be an excellent idea and the Committee are strongly encouraged to involve the School while pursuing their action plan objectives of providing signage, a name plate and an information board for the species that can be found within.

Litter Control:

A high standard of litter control is being achieved in Kilmeade and it is clear that the highly organised litter patrols referred to in your application and action plan are being implemented with great success. On the day of adjudication, the village was virtually litter free. However, two exceptions to this excellent record were noted. The field between the School and the Church had evidence of litter while the road verges on section of the N78 that passes through Kilmeade also showed signs of littering – most likely from passing cars.

Waste Minimisation:

The category of waste minimisation was introduced in 2006 and it is increasing in importance each year. This category represents an excellent opportunity for Kilmeade to improve their marks and the Committee is encouraged to research this category in order to improve their performance in future years as it is noted that there is no individual section on waste minimisation in your action plan. However, the current performance is relatively good as actions are undertaken that include battery recycling and it is noted that blue bins are used

and an awareness campaign is underway. However, other actions are possible like identifying potential sites for a bottle bank, producing information leaflets or organising a talk or seminar on reducing, reusing and recycling at a local level. Investigating the provision of composters to individual houses in the village should also be considered and the Committee is encouraged to find a location for 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, a good standard of tidiness was observed in Kilmeade and it is clear that much work has been done by the Tidy Towns Committee. However, a number of improvements could be achieved by focussing on a number of areas including the maintenance of roadside verges. It was observed on the day of adjudication that there appeared to be an inconsistent approach to trimming roadside verges, with overgrown and untidy verges noted on the section of road connecting the Church and St Ita's (on the side without the footpath), while the Council sewerage works and caravan add to this untidy appearance. It is noted that the issue of the sewerage works is to be addressed in your action plan.

The approach road from Narraghmore / Crookstown and the area between Cluain Ard and New Line Grove detract somewhat from the high standards achieved elsewhere. On the approach road from Narraghmore / Crookstown, verges were overgrown, no Kilmeade sign was observed and the speed limit signs were in need of a wash. The road surface in this location was also in quite poor condition. The verges opposite the entrance to Cluain Ard were not trimmed and untidy looking, while the signage for the Fitzgerald Graveyard and Wildlife Garden (both of which were pointing the wrong way) was old and tired looking. It was also observed that the gate was missing from the Graveyard adding to the untidy appearance of this part of the village. The large planting bed close to the entrance of New Line Grove was also quite overgrown and weedy. Finally, the approach from Kilmeade View to Moat View appears to be problematic as it accommodates a construction site, which one hopes will be completed soon.

Residential Areas:

The residential areas in Kilmeade are generally in good condition, with a high standard of maintenance throughout. On the day of adjudication, all of the residential areas of Cluain Ard, New Line Grove, St. Ita's and Moate View achieved a good standard of presentation. The standard of maintenance of individual dwellings was also generally good with the gardens of individual dwellings in both New Line Grove and St. Ita's reaching a high standard. Well done!

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

The most significant approach road to Kilmeade (from the N78) is particularly well maintained and it provides an excellent first impression for visitors, particularly on the entrances where the new boulders are in place. However, the more minor approach roads (such as the road from Narraghmore / Crookstown and when approaching Moat View from Kilmead View), the maintenance is of a lower standard. It is recommended that a consistent approach is taken to each of the approach roads. The maintenance of the verges in the part of Kilmeade along the N78 verges also appears to be lower. It is recommended that the issue of entrance signage on all approaches to Kilmeade and verge maintenance is included as an action in the Tidy Towns Plan.

General Impression:

Kilmeade continues to take big strides in this competition. There is no question that Kilmeade Tidy Towns are committed, ambitious and hard working, and the size of the village (which is laid out over a large area) and the number of projects is likely to pose challenges, but we are confident that the Committee will continue to progress in the years ahead.