

Tidy Towns Competition 2009

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Knocklong** Ref: **461**
County: **Limerick** Mark: **248**
Category: **B** Date(s): **10/06/2009**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2009
Overall Development Approach	50	36
The Built Environment	50	32
Landscaping	50	38
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	19
Litter Control	50	35
Waste Minimisation	20	6
Tidiness	30	12
Residential Areas	40	27
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	36
General Impression	10	7
TOTAL MARK	400	248

Overall Development Approach:

Welcome Knocklong to the 2009 TidyTowns National Competition. Thank you for submitting your completed entry form together with supporting material, consisting of the brochure on Knocklong Sli na Slainte, and correspondence from Ballyhoura Failte Ltd. on Three Year Plan preparation and Limerick County Council on Limerick in Bloom 2008. It is recommended that the planning process be undertaken as soon as possible. It is suggested that a Three Year Plan would be more appropriate than the longer term of five years which is obviously more difficult to forecast in years four and five, in particular in current economic circumstances. The resultant Three Year Plan will enable you to set out clear and specific measurable targets that will assist in your overall activities and will improve the partnership approach with all agencies. One target could link to any proposed Festivals and Summer Events currently being planned by other organisations in the community. A further target could deal with the issue of derelict sites in Knocklong. Well done to your Committee of 10 for their involvement in TidyTowns, as you mentioned in your entry, voluntary commitment is scarce so it is good to note that you continue to have a committee of 10 members. As you state, one benefit is that it encourages pride of place in the community. You have done well in achieving support from the Irish Heart Foundation, Limerick County Council, FAS and Ballyhoura Development Ltd. The use of newsletters, local press, meetings to communicate with the local community is very appropriate. Your contact with school staff to include a building project in the Three Year Plan should prove very worthwhile.

The Built Environment:

The centre of Knocklong is a mixture of some fine old commercial premises and modern enterprise areas including Dan Dooley's Car Dealership. In general, the premises currently in use were well maintained and in excellent condition. The owners of these premises deserve credit for their excellent presentation of these

premises. In contrast, there are some derelict premises, for example the railway/old creamery, Walshe's Foodstore. These detract from the otherwise pleasant appearance of the village. There is no apportionment of any blame to the TidyTowns Committee for the existence of these derelict buildings.

The new bridge with its excellent pedestrian pathway is the link between the Church side of the village and the commercial side. Commercial premises that impressed the adjudicator included the stone and brick building functioning as solicitor's offices at its prime site in the village centre. Other well presented premises included Hayes Bar, the Credit Union, Meade's Xpress Shop, and the Post Office. Dan Dooley Car Dealership and adjoining Topaz Garage occupy a prime location in the village centre; this premise is also well presented. As this category will be part of your plan preparation, it is suggested that options for Village Renewal Programmes and Incentives be examined as a possible source of financial and non-financial support.

The Church was well painted and the graveyard looked very neat and tidy. The Grotto was attractive with its lovely statue, blue and white railings, impressive walls and planted containers. The School building was in good condition and had a lovely selection of trees in its grounds. The community sports ground and building (yellow and black painting in progress on the day of our visit) were well maintained.

The Community Centre built in 1980 would benefit from some painting on the front wall of the Centre, but this suggestion is balanced with the need for repainting being caused by and due to the use of the wall as a ball alley, which obviously benefits the health of children of the area. The Train mural of Cnoc Loinge would also be improved by a painting touch up.

Landscaping:

The landscaped areas near the Church and St. Joseph's Cemetery were in excellent condition, featuring some well developed trees, a nice stone wall and neatly painted cemetery wall. The area around the Grotto was also attractive and well maintained. The Presentation of the village pump was neat and nearby shrubberies were attractive. It was a pity however, to see the pump chained to prevent usage.

There were some fine landscaped features throughout the area including the stone ringed flowerbeds beneath the bilingual town signs and along main approaches. On the Church Road, there was a fine shrubbery at the junction with the old road and near the Bring Bank, the presentation of the village pump with shrubberies nearby was attractive. Near the Quarry, there was a lovely shrubbery with a fine example of old farm equipment. The presentation of the yellow and black water pump and unusual co-ordinated flower container nearby was very eye catching. There was a well maintained shrubbery at the Topaz Garage on the main road.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

As stated in 2008 adjudicator's report, the Sli na Sláinte Walk is a superb amenity and offers a fine introduction to natural habitats of the area. Congratulations on receiving an award for the Golden Mile Walk. Your proposal to erect nesting boxes, for the encouragement of birds in the Hill area, is encouraging. Please do take up last year's recommendation to involve the local school in one or two projects under this category – it would be interesting for the children and could advance your rating under the TidyTowns. You should seek the advice of a local wildlife enthusiast when considering new projects.

My compliments to both FAS workers busy on the day of our visit with painting at the Sports Ground and strimming the grass verges along the upper stretches of the Sli na Slainte walk. The output of their work adds to the positive image of the town and its environs. Sli na Slainte offers a beautiful vista of the surrounding countryside to the walker, jogger and cyclist and should be appreciated by young and old alike. It's well signposted and well maintained.

Litter Control:

As in previous year 2008, litter was fairly well controlled and there was a good supply of suitably located litter bins to serve the area. Litter Bins at the sportsground were good to see. Overall, your litter management programme with the co-operation of Limerick County Council seemed to be effective. Your promotion of anti-litter awareness and the recycling centre in Kilmallock are important aspects of litter management and should ensure that you receive community support in keeping the village clean.

Waste Minimisation:

As was stated in last year's report, the Bring Bank was a credit to the village and was clean and tidy at the time of our visit.

We noted your comment that you intend to inform residents, through the distribution of leaflets, on the opening times of the Kilmallock Recycling Centre, as these have changed as a result of cutbacks. The Green Flag programme for the school should be examined further. Other possible projects you might consider, include the organisation of a waste awareness day or a waste minimisation workshop, which could be run in conjunction with the County Council.

Tidiness:

The standard of the footpath leading to the Church and the concrete post railing were in good condition, but there were some weeds along the kerbside which needed to be removed. As pointed out above, the Community Hall was suffering from ball marks on its wall. The new pavements and stone wall at the junction with the main road were clean and tidy. The Horseshoe Inn was in need of some attention.

Road signs in the area were generally in good condition. While it is the responsibility of the political parties to remove Election posters and ties, it is positive action on behalf of your Committee that these will be removed from the various lamp standards.

Residential Areas:

Congratulations on your award for first place in 2008 Gold Mile of County Limerick competition.

As was stated in last year's adjudicators report, Knocklong has a fine range of residential properties which have been well maintained by the residents. We particularly noticed a lovely terrace of stone/brick built houses at the start of the Emly road and the immaculately presented white cottages at Curraheen with hanging baskets, planted containers and mature landscaping. The estate near Walsh's had a large green area and some well painted properties with colourful planting. The new development at Railway Close was settling neatly into its surroundings. There were some attractive individual properties on the Kilmallock approach and some nice older properties with well kept gardens near the sports ground.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

The approach from Kilmallock direction was neat and tidy, with grass verges well trimmed. The village signs were well presented with colourful cape daisies and other flowers planted beneath.

Route on Sli na Slainte is well kept, grass verges well cut, offering beautiful views of the countryside, especially at the old National School of 1879.

Garryspillane direction was impressive with the new sections of pavement and improved bridge structure. The Emly Road was in fairly good condition. The Limerick approach was in reasonable condition and the Church Road looked well with the new pavement. Your maintenance of the roadside verges has been fairly successful.

General Impression:

Well done to your Committee in your positive approach to TidyTowns activities. As you comment this is not easy, in particular in the current economic climate. The various derelict sites in the area make progress on the tidiness front difficult for your committee, but hopefully some small progress will be made on the redevelopment of Walsh's Wholesale and the Old Creamery. It is a pity that the old Railway Station has been left in its derelict state. There are many fine examples of renovated stations around the country and it would be wonderful if something could be done to progress a similar project for Knocklong.

We would encourage you to have some emphasis on the treatment and approach to this problem of derelict sites in the preparation later in 2009 of your three year plan. Where possible to work with the bodies involved in trying to achieve some progress.

We congratulate you on the work you have completed and we wish you and your community success for the future.