

Tidy Towns Competition 2009

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Kilrush** Ref: **77**
County: **Clare** Mark: **298**
Category: **D** Date(s): **28/06/2009**
29/07/2009

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2009
Overall Development Approach	50	45
The Built Environment	50	40
Landscaping	50	41
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	31
Litter Control	50	39
Waste Minimisation	20	15
Tidiness	30	17
Residential Areas	40	30
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	31
General Impression	10	9
TOTAL MARK	400	298

Overall Development Approach:

Welcome Kilrush to the national TidyTowns Competition for 2009 and we would like to congratulate everyone involved in your wonderful achievement of a Highly Commended County Award in the 2008 TidyTowns Competition.

Thanks to Kilrush TidyTowns Committee for submitting the 2009 entry form, incorporating photographs of projects undertaken, a very useful map of the town and the press release on your Composting Workshop.

It was good to learn that you have managed to retain an active committee of 22 members, holding 12 meetings per year and undertaking meaningful and very appropriate projects. It is encouraging to note that 2 members of the committee are representatives of the local schools, thus ensuring that the schools play an active part in the TidyTowns activities. Your commitment and hard work have, no doubt, played an important part in encouraging your sponsors, patrons, organisations and various state agencies to support your activities, well done.

Your use of Parish Newsletters, local media, leaflets, distribution of the Tidy Towns report and public meetings are all excellent ways of involving the wider community.

We note that you did not submit an annual plan with your entry this year. In order to make significant progress within the Tidy Towns Competition, a plan based over 3 to 5 years would be advisable and we strongly recommend that you consider this option. It wouldn't need to be prepared by a professional, it can be prepared by your own committee, but views should be sought from the local community. Any plan should take into account existing plans for the area such as a local authority's Local Area Plan. Ideally your plan should clearly explain what you are trying to achieve each year, the approach planned and indicative costs for each project, any supporting agencies and an indication of the lead partner.

Festivals and the Tidy Towns Competition offer great opportunities for people to work together and foster a good community spirit, so we hope that the Kilrush Traditional Festival in August will be well supported and enjoyed by everyone.

The Built Environment:

Kilrush extends an immediate welcome to visitors as they arrive in the town and view the exhilarating and colourful presentation of the fine terraces drawing them towards the Market Square, the heart of the town. The Town Hall was very impressive in its key location and other public buildings which were noticed during our visit included the wonderful Comhaltas Teach Cheoil in the renovated Church building; Kilrush Hospital which was well presented in its extensive grounds and An Ceard Scoil Cillruis with attractive landscaped grounds, bench seating and a bird box proudly displayed. The Catholic Church was imposing and the Grotto nearby was evocative; the Post Office was very well painted and had colourful window boxes which added to its appeal. The Library and nearby Kilrush Family Resource Centre, with its picnic table and seats, were inviting.

The Marina has certainly put Kilrush on the tourist map and, in the long term, there should be huge benefits to the town from its development, well done to all involved in its ongoing operation.

We admired several business premises including the Bank of Ireland, AIB Bank, Kilrush Credit Union and Queally's SuperValu. In addition to all the fine premises which impressed last year's adjudicator we also thought the following were well presented: J & M Grogan, M Eustace, S O'Quibin Pub and the Harbour Restaurant. There was a fine corner building (painted blue and white) at the Vandeleur St/Henry St junction which was very imposing.

The redevelopment of the Glynn's Mills premises has created a spectacular vista at this prime location and in our opinion has succeeded in blending modern architectural design with existing structures.

Kilrush status as a Heritage Town has resulted in many benefits to the town, including the lack of overhead wires in prominent positions and this is a credit to all concerned.

As covered later in this report, there is some dereliction within the town, including some residential houses which have been boarded up, however, in order to make significant progress with this issue it is vital that all concerned bodies (Town Council, County Council, Tidy Towns Committee, property owners) work together to bring about a resolution.

Landscaping:

Excellent landscaping was admired on the main routes to the town including the colourful flowerbeds and well cut verges on the Kilkee and Ennis approaches; and the very attractive stone flowerbeds and seating at the Ennis Road/Limekiln Road junction. We thought the Marine themed display at Tesco was very appropriate and the currach placed on the Kilkee Road also suited Kilrush's maritime history. The Market Square was adorned with well protected trees, some spectacular displays in planted containers and hanging baskets. Throughout the town the standard of planting in the hanging baskets was superb. The landscaping jobs undertaken near O'Shea's Garage and at the Grotto by Wilson Road have certainly improved the presentation.

The Vandeleur Gardens were absolutely divine – a peaceful hideaway from the stresses and strains of life. Nearby, a replica of the Cathedral Church of St Mary's and Round Tower of Scattery Island caught the eye.

The new angled stone flowerbed at Island View estate enhanced the view and the bilingual stone signs for Island View and Shanakyle were attractive. Along the road (at Pella Road Cross) two bright red benches with yellow bedding plants between them added a lovely splash of colour and the Grotto nearby was appealing and neatly presented.

The garden area near the Marina entrance had all the ingredients of a well landscaped area - good pathways, stone tables/seating, walled shrubberies, pedestrian bridge, securely staked trees, well cut grass, and the lovely Dolphins focal point, well done.

The Cappa Road was very impressive with colourful hanging baskets at the Bridge, bench seating at various stages along the road, shrubberies and some superb stone flowerbeds. The children's playground beside the Lifeboats building was a wonderful amenity. The shrub bank at Galleon was very pretty.

Congratulations on the wonderful ambience which has been created by the hard work of everyone involved.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

Kilrush offers many excellent locations for the encouragement of wildlife. The magnificent Vandeleur Demesne, Kilrush Woods and the Harbour all have great potential and should be examined with the aim of providing the necessary food chain and habitat to entice further species of indigenous wildlife. This could be done with the help of a local wildlife expert.

The new nesting boxes for ducks at the Marina were admired and will surely be appreciated by their intended residents, well done.

Your schools initiative – to organise wildlife lectures and to install bird feeders at schools and assign responsibility to a class for their maintenance is a super way to raise the children's interest.

We noted the area which you have designated as a nature reserve at the Kilkee Road/Doonbeg junction and the sowing of wild flowers and tree planting should be helpful but we were just a little concerned about the amount of traffic passing that area and wondered if it might discourage the wildlife you are hoping to entice?

Thank you for the very interesting history of the Two Dolphins – they couldn't have found a more appropriate home

Litter Control:

Your litter management programme - involving daily clean up sessions; involvement of the local school in a litter survey and clean up evenings; seminars and legal enforcement - seemed to be working fairly efficiently. Litter bins throughout the town were handling the volume of litter satisfactorily. During our visit, approach roads, businesses, residential estates and amenities within the town were almost litter free. The Cappa area, including the recycling bank, was also clean and tidy. A credit to both communities. We did notice some litter at the entrance to the Marina area.

We wish Kilrush Tidy Towns Committee and the Town Council success with the 'stubby bags' campaign to combat cigarette butt litter.

Waste Minimisation:

We commend your co-operation with the Town Council and Chamber of Commerce in organising a waste minimisation programme. The 2009 home and garden waste composting project is an excellent one. We particularly liked the fact that the resultant compost will be used to fertilise flowerbeds in the town, excellent work. It is encouraging that businesses and the schools in Kilrush attended the Seminar at Vandeleur Gardens – if they manage to put into practice the initiatives outlined at the Seminar, everyone will benefit.

Well done on your achievements so far and we wish you every success with your planned project for 2010.

Tidiness:

It would be important to keep a check on the number of signs on the approach roads to Kilrush. There were quite a few signs (including a couple of temporary Sale signs) on the approach from Kilkee which tended to give a slightly untidy appearance.

Signs leading to the town and within the town were generally clean and in good condition but we did observe a small amount of graffiti on the Kilrush Marina sign near the entrance.

While there were a few small areas of dereliction, Kilrush was mainly clean and tidy during our visit.

Residential Areas:

Kilrush possesses a lovely mix of mature terraced properties in central locations around the town, complemented by several newer estate developments and individual homes around the outskirts. The homes, like the business premises in Kilrush, were generally fresh and colourful in their presentation and the overall impression was of a community which takes great pride in its town. Homes which caught the eye during our visit included Shannon Heights estate with the lovely landscaped green areas; several wonderful individual houses on the Cappa Road, Kilkee Road and Ennis Road. Island View and Dooneen estates had attractive large green areas.

Hanging baskets and planted containers were prominently displayed at many homes and where gardens were

visible, they were maintained to a very high standard.

Congratulations on your organisation of the Kilrush Tidy Towns/Queally's SuperValu Environmental Awards 2008 and your Best House and Garden Competition which you have been organising this year. Projects such as these can have a major impact on the appearance of the town and will help to promote even closer community relationships, keep up the good work.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

Well done on the new bilingual signs which have been erected at Shanakyle and Fort Road, they are very appropriate. We were impressed by the excellent stone tables and seating in the area near the Marina and also at the Ennis Road junction with Limekiln Road – they certainly looked as if they could survive the vandals, let's hope they live up to our expectations.

Road surfaces were fairly good during our visit, thanks to the considerable amount of resurfacing work which seems to have taken place over the past few months. However, there were a few potholes in need of attention on the roadway at the Marina.

We were glad to note that you have taken on board last year's recommendation, regarding the creation of cyclepaths, and that you are planning to introduce one on the Killimer Road, well done.

The Kilrush Historic Town Trail is a superb project, funded under the Failte Ireland Historic Towns initiative and the NDP 2007 – 2013. It will certainly enhance visitors' appreciation of the character and appeal of Kilrush and it should encourage longer stays in the area. Congratulations to all involved in the project.

General Impression:

Kilrush certainly lives up to its Heritage Town status and provides visitors with countless opportunities to appreciate its impressive built environment, landscaping and truly enviable seaside location. It has many fine facilities on the doorstep including the Golf Club with its well designed Clubhouse, Cappa Pier, the Vandeleur Demesne, Aylevarroo and of course, its magnificent Marina.

We appreciate your concerns regarding derelict properties or properties in need of decoration. Progress with premises owners can be very slow but you have been taking appropriate action and we noted the improvements which your committee had undertaken in the absence of co-operation – there is not a lot more that can be done except to work with other concerned bodies (Town Council, etc) and continue lobbying for action.

Well done on the projects which have been successfully undertaken in 2009 and we wish you further progress in the coming years. Hopefully, we will get many more opportunities to appreciate the charms of Kilrush.

Second Round Adjudication:

Entering Kilrush from the Ennis side one meets very good landscaping, fine traditional stone walls and well kept open grassed areas, and there is an air of anticipation of further treats of aesthetics. There were good displays of floral arrangements, notably hanging baskets on T standards that gave great colour and freshness to the area, and also a variety of window boxes and tubs of flowers on private and public buildings that showed the town at its best. Some trees here and there are attractive and they also soften the visual impact of a few of the buildings. The square was wonderful where the Market House and Maid of Eireann monument looked supreme. All around Kilrush my attention was drawn to a number of beautifully presented shops that were doing vibrant business, and examples of this was Clancy's on the way in at Vandeleur street, The Credit Union, S O Duibhir, Crottys, The Family Store, Hartman Jewellers, O'Sullivan, Saunders, The Central Pharmacy, Leo McInerney, Kenny's Bar and restaurant, De Brugha, the post office and O'Luanigh. These business places mentioned are not necessary the best presented, as there are other wonderful business houses, but they are listed as an example. There were a number of items for sale inappropriately displayed out on the footpath in Henry Street.

The town has developed in recent years in an orderly fashion with new developments blending in well with the older town buildings, especially the Merchants Quay area where the restoration of Glynn's Mills gave a new lease of life to the building, and while the function of this building is now very different it has for the most part retained a lot of its original identity. A sign of the times was noticeable in this area with some properties for sale or for lease.

I loved the little park down opposite Glynn's where there are good pathways through it, and the notice board about the West Clare railway is interesting, roses were in full bloom in well attended flower beds and together with permanent shrubs were most picturesque and a wonderful seating offers relaxation facilities to be enjoyed. The theme of dolphins is prominent in sculptures in Kilrush. The little footbridge is useful and

attractive. I admired the unusual traditional water pump, but really the small boat (currach) in this area could be removed.

The Marina has been added to the town since I last visited the area and this is a wonderful addition and it was great to see all the activity in the boats there.

“Man of the match award” goes to Toler street area where St Senan’s Church nestles supreme with a very elegant form of circular window with the mullions converging towards the centre like the spokes of a wheel, and therefore it is called a wheel window – wonderful! The great wrought iron gate and railing with the backdrop of the magnificent cut stone structure with the stained glass windows is a truly wonderful setting. Here we enjoy traditional building techniques where the workmanship is of a very high quality. The Priest’s traditional water pump has its own unique character and stands proudly here amidst the defining architectural features of the wonderful stone Grotto and the church. The stone building down from the church is pretty and does it link on to the family resource centre around the corner? The library looks good amongst suitable landscaping. Travelling back towards the town centre we admire a fine traditional stone wall that leads on to the convent which now appears to be disused. I hope this great stone building can be put to another use in the future.

The first adjudicator has given to you a very detailed description of Kilrush and I agree with the suggestion that a plan be supplied in the future.

Well done for a great effort.