

Tidy Towns Competition 2012

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Kilbehenny** Ref: **1251**
County: **Limerick** Mark: **248**
Category: **A** Date(s): **13/06/2012**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2011	Mark Awarded 2012
Overall Development Approach	50	39	39
The Built Environment	50	28	29
Landscaping	50	28	29
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	20	20
Litter Control	50	33	34
Tidiness	30	19	19
Waste Minimisation	20	10	10
Residential Areas	40	28	28
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	31	32
General Impression	10	8	8
TOTAL MARK	400	244	248

Overall Development Approach:

Kilbehenny is most welcome to the 2012 TidyTowns competition. Many thanks for your clearly presented application form, action plan and accompanying photographs. It is acknowledge that you have been preoccupied with the development of your community centre and so it is all the more impressive that you have managed to complete a range of projects besides. This shows an impressive level of commitment and you are to be commended for it.

You have 11 on your committee and this is an impressive number. Particularly if you have an additional 20 upon whom you can call for extra assistance. You have been working with a wide range of local groups and this has clearly stood you in good stead. How would you gauge the community response to TidyTowns, would most people be aware of the work that you do? Have you considered setting up a Facebook page? This is very complementary to your website and is very effective for providing updates, uploading photographs or organising events. It may even result in new volunteers coming forward.

You have a well-established relationship with your school and this is excellent. This is some achievement for them to have retained their green flag for seven years, well done!

Thank you for including your map, however it was quite schematic and as a result hard to follow. It is suggested that the main landmarks of the town be written in longhand while numbers could be used to refer to specific projects or points of interest to the adjudicator.

Your three-year plan is now out of date. Did you manage to complete all the actions? It is now time to prepare a new three-year plan (perhaps you want to wait until your community centre has been completed).

The Built Environment:

It would seem that your community centre is on track to open shortly and this will be a great addition for Kilbehenny. Congratulations and we look forward to inspecting the finished product in 2013.

The work on the creamery is very impressive and the colour scheme with the milk urn is most eye-catching. Your ongoing discussions regarding the derelict site opposite the creamery are acknowledged and sometimes these things just remain outside of the control of voluntary bodies. Do consult with Limerick county council on this however as they have powers that may be of some use.

Your graveyard survey is appraised under this category. This sounds like a very exciting project to have been involved with and to have the results online makes it so accessible.

The limestone church is a wonderful building and is very well presented. Some flags on the poles would be nice as they would add colour and movement to this scene.

Dan Caseys is looking well and its planted flowerbeds were admired. Its car park too was very clean and tidy. The Kilbehenny creamery 1926 – 1982 is now a real feature, well done on this addition.

Landscaping:

The landscaping pilot project with Ballyhoura development is an exciting development for your town. The plans were viewed with interest. One concern did arise where it seems to be suggested that river vegetation would be removed to be replaced by 'marsh vegetation'. This seems unwise since the plants that are already there are suited to this location and provide resources for birds, fish and invertebrates. It is recommended that you consult with Inland Fisheries Ireland before doing any works in or near a river of fisheries value. It was also disappointing that *Prunus laurocerasus*, or cherry laurel was included in the hedge planting schedule. This is one of Ireland's most unwanted alien invasive species and should be avoided altogether.

In the town shrub beds were admired in the car park across from the post office while the numerous tall trees and hedges have a wonderful overall effect.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

The Mill river is a wonderful amenity and wildlife area and is worthy of conservation (see previous comments regarding landscaping of the riverbank).

This category is principally about encouraging communities to appreciate natural heritage. This can be done through heritage walks or simple interpretive material. Your proposed riverside panels are a good idea here.

Kilbehenny is endowed not only with the Mill river but also numerous tall trees and hedgerows that are all valuable wildlife habitats. Hedges should be restored wherever possible and cherry laurel never used as a replacement. It is of no value to wildlife and will eventually strangle forest or hedges by blocking the light to other plants.

A nice project, perhaps in conjunction with the school would be to do a wildlife survey of the town to map all of these habitats and start identifying the plants and animals that use them.

Litter Control:

Well done on participating in the national spring clean, did many people turn out for this? Your photos of before and after would be most welcome to give a sense of the scale of what you have achieved. You also seem to have a regular programme of litter patrols and are engaging with the school. This is all commendable work.

Litter control was excellent in Kilbehenny on adjudication day, with no litter noticed during the walk around. Well done on this great achievement.

Tidiness:

The town is generally very neat and tidy with no major issues to report. Kerbs are weeded and fly posting under control. One sign on the entry for Anglesborough is facing away from the road while the Bus Eireann bus stop on the main N8 looks quite rusty.

The lack of overhead wires significantly frees your skyline from clutter while the reduction in traffic since the opening of the M8 has seriously slowed the tempo, all to good effect.

Waste Minimisation:

The energy audit sounds interesting. Did the community centre incorporate novel energy saving innovations? One imagines big halls to be difficult places to heat so savings here would be most welcome. Your school's green flags are most important in this category, are students continuing to find ways to reduce waste?

It is good that you have designated composting units for landscaping waste as so much of this is just dumped over a hedge. Is home composting practised in Kilbehenny? Would you consider holding a composting workshop to encourage this practice? You could also liaise with Limerick county council to hold a seminar on reducing food waste as this is a growing problem.

Residential Areas:

Well done on repairing the church road wall as per the recommendations in the 2011 report.

A number of very attractive homes were admired in the town including one beautiful dormer bungalow in stone, and bounded with a tasteful stone wall and broadleaved trees.

Elsewhere other homes were all presented to a very high standard.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

The approach from Anglesborough is most inviting with the lovely old stone bridge across the Mill river and the tall ash trees. Signage here is clean and well maintained. The derelict house just past the bridge is very well disguised. The approach from Cahir is looking well with well-trimmed verges and attractive planting arrangements in stone beds. The stone name plate is very eye-catching while the seats are also inviting. On the other side of the road there is an excellent opportunity to plant a new native hedge.

General Impression:

Kilbehenny TidyTowns is to be commended for the hard work and dedication that has brought about the fine appearance of the town. Best of luck for the opening of your community centre and keep up the good work!