

Tidy Towns Competition 2012

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Kilfinane** Ref: **277**
County: **Limerick** Mark: **240**
Category: **C** Date(s): **13/06/2012**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2011	Mark Awarded 2012
Overall Development Approach	50	33	33
The Built Environment	50	38	39
Landscaping	50	37	38
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	19	19
Litter Control	50	25	25
Tidiness	30	13	13
Waste Minimisation	20	9	9
Residential Areas	40	27	27
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	29	30
General Impression	10	7	7
TOTAL MARK	400	237	240

Overall Development Approach:

Kilfinane is most welcome to the 2012 Tidy Towns competition. Many thanks for your completed entry form and map. You have five in your committee and I sense a degree of fatigue after long years of commitment. This is understandable but have efforts being made to widen the net in terms of participation? Kilfinane is a decent sized town and there must be people out there willing to improve the community and meet new people. Many are put off by excessive meetings but people can be encouraged to participate in cleanups or particular areas where they may have knowledge and skills. Your walking Festival and community festival could prove to be good recruiting grounds. You may want to try new communication methods, particularly online where most people now get their information. Social networks such as Facebook have been extremely effective for some groups. They can be used along with photos to demonstrate what needs to be done, highlighting problem areas and broadcasting success stories. It can be a useful recruitment tool also.

Do consult the Tidy Towns Handbook for ways in which to reinvigorate your committee. You are encouraged to prepare a three-year plan which would set out a strategic approach with projects across all headings. It need not be an onerous task and it may help you attract additional support. It is wonderful to hear that you engage directly with your local school children. How about getting them involved in a project? E.g. a cleanup are creating a wildlife garden.

The Built Environment:

Congratulations on your new playschool. This will be a fine addition for the town.

Main Street is looking very well and retains its vernacular layout. A number of premises caught the eye such as O'Seachnasáigh, O'Céilleachair and Healys. McCarthy's Hardware and Crowley, although in disuse and

slightly dishevelled, retain facades of conservation interest.

The elevated Market Square is a wonderfully kept public space with modern seating and attractive planting. The Ballyhoura heritage panel is clean and interesting. It is a shame that one of the old buildings here has had to be enclosed with unsightly metal fencing, is there no alternative to this?

The old church of Ireland church seems sadly forgotten, which is great for wildlife, but is a magnificent structure to be hidden from view. It is perhaps sad that those buried in its graveyard are also forgotten.

The library is well presented but some flags on the poles would be nice. The Stalker Wallace Memorial is striking and eerie.

The lovely sandstone church and parochial house are real architectural landmarks for the town and both are superbly presented. The nearby girls school looks austere while it's railing needs some attention.

Derelict and disused buildings are an issue in Kilfinnane and effort should be made to tackle these. Try working with Limerick county council in developing an inventory as they have particular powers in this regard. Hennessy vicualler and Powers pharmacy deserve special mention for the old-style facades and letter writing. Street names appear to be completely absent from Kilfinnane, could this be addressed?

Landscaping:

Street trees along Main Street are very attractive features and soften hard lines on a year-round basis. You are encouraged to avoid planting flowers at the base of these trees as it robs the trees of water and nutrients, so stunting their growth.

Landscaping on Market Square is generally very good. The rubber ties should be removed from the whitebeam trees as they may be retarding growth. The fountain is a curious installation and was turned off and adjudication day. Planting in gravel areas was clean and weed free.

Trees at the church car park are maturing well although kerbing here needs to be weeded. One rowan tree is in bad shape and could be replaced. Rubber ties on these trees should be removed as they can damage bark. Another rowan beside Molly's takeaway is also faring badly.

Colourful planting was admired in stone beds off Stráid Bháraic.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

In this category groups are encouraged to engage with their natural heritage. Understanding what this is is usually the first step. Habitats are places where plants and animals are to be found and there are likely to be lots of valuable habitats in and around your town. Hedgerows, tall trees, streams and rivers all provide resources for wildlife and once you have identified where they are you then set about finding out what is there. This could be a great project for school students or a wildlife enthusiast in your town.

Your walking festival provides a great opportunity to get to know your natural heritage and you could contact Limerick county council to find out if there are local experts that could lead guided walks.

Litter Control:

Do you participate in the national spring clean? This event in April is run by An Taisce and is a great opportunity to attract volunteers and get something done. Do the school children get actively involved in cleanups or litter patrols? Does the committee have an active rota of litter pickups? This category awards your approach to litter management as much as the condition of streets on adjudication day.

Litter control on adjudication day was very good in general. Minor amounts of litter were noted on the road leading to the education centre. The path outside Ballyhoura upholstery was a black spot on the day. The screening of the bring bank is an innovation not seen elsewhere and is very effective. There was minor litter around the base here that could be swept.

Tidiness:

The lack of overhead wires on Main Street has done wonders for the town's appearance and frees the sky from clutter. The lamp standards are perhaps a little too tall but they are of an attractive design. Do solicit the

ESB to see if wires can be put underground elsewhere. Roads and path surfacing on Main Street is of a very high standard and good parking spaces creates an ordered and tidy appearance. Torn bunting hanging off a wall across from Powers pharmacy should be removed. However these are just some points of potential improvements and overall the town is extremely tidy in appearance.

Waste Minimisation:

This category is concerned with how we as a nation can reduce the amount of rubbish we throw away. We are the worst in Europe per person on this count and much of what ends up in our bins goes to landfill. At the community level we can reduce this through minimising what we consider to be waste. This can be a difficult category for towns and many struggle to get past promoting recycling. A good start would be to contact Limerick county council and see if there is a seminar your members can attend. Local businesses may want to get involved as waste costs money. You could hold a composting workshop to encourage home composting.

Do your schools have green flags? This is a most important achievement in this category so please do give full details next year.

Residential Areas:

Kilfinnane, like nearly every town in Ireland, is home to unfinished estates. These at best can be ugly and sometimes downright dangerous. You are encouraged to work with residents and Limerick county council to find ways of resolving problems of this nature.

Kilfinnane has a number of residential estates and a number were visited on adjudication day. Radharc Cillin was admired for its planted names sign and sandstone wall. It certainly enjoys a fantastic view but a few trees would soften the edges.

Radharc na tSleibhe is another estate that as well enhanced with greenery. While annual flowers at the entrance provide attractive summer colour planting for year-round effect should be considered here.

Treada na Rí is most well presented but with an untidy allotment at one end.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

The approach road from Killmock is very attractive and the new brick welcome sign was noted. It was planted with the lovely array of flowers and complemented the older sign.

The old cemetery at Marian's corner is well maintained with freshly cut grass and its ruined church. The gates here could do with a wash. The newer, neighbouring graveyard is immaculate while the adjacent car park was spotless. Stone walls in back areas pronounce the mediaeval character of Kilfinnane and these are worthy of conservation.

General Impression:

Kilfinnane is a fine town with a lot of heritage and history. It is hoped that you can reinvigorate your group and build on the success you have achieved to date. Best of luck!