

Tidy Towns Competition 2013

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Killarney** Ref: **340**
County: **Kerry** Mark: **315**
Category: **F** Date(s): **26/06/2013**
01/08/2013

| | Maximum Mark | Mark Awarded 2012 | Mark Awarded 2013 |
|---|-------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Overall Development Approach | 50 | 47 | 47 |
| The Built Environment | 50 | 38 | 38 |
| Landscaping | 50 | 45 | 45 |
| Wildlife and Natural Amenities | 50 | 34 | 35 |
| Litter Control | 50 | 35 | 37 |
| Sustainable Waste And Resource Management | 20 | 14 | 14 |
| Tidiness | 30 | 20 | 21 |
| Residential Areas | 40 | 31 | 31 |
| Roads, Streets and Back Areas | 50 | 37 | 38 |
| General Impression | 10 | 9 | 9 |
| TOTAL MARK | 400 | 310 | 315 |

Overall Development Approach:

Killarney is welcome to the 2013 National SuperValu Tidy Towns Competition. Thank you for a well-documented and comprehensive application that included a completed form, photographs and coloured maps together with your 3 to 5 year plan and Killarney Urban Habitats and Bio-diversity Survey. The photographs and maps were very much appreciated by the adjudicator and greatly facilitated the visit. Your partnership approach has proved very successful involving Killarney Town Council, Kerry County Council, National Parks and Wildlife Service and a myriad of voluntary organisations in your area. It is particularly encouraging to read of this effort being led by your schools and sports clubs and that there is an increase in residents' groups becoming involved in neighbourhood clean-ups. Your list of sponsors is impressive. This is particularly important as you are not eligible to receive Leader or South Kerry Partnership funding. Your statutory bodies, including Killarney Town Council, Kerry County Council, Fas, National Parks and Wildlife, Killarney Arts, Killarney Chamber of Tourism and Commerce have set a headline in how partnership really works. Your promotion using local media, the website and Facebook obviously get your message across effectively. Congratulations on all your schools having achieved Green Flag status. You are fortunate to have the benefit of Kerry County Council's Environmental Officer to co-ordinate your engagements with the schools. The 'Killarney Looking Good' focus on environmental and innovation projects for schools is a great step forward.

The Built Environment:

The Killarney Statutory Town Plan in recent years has focused on area regeneration and building conservation in conjunction with land use and transportation issues. The results of your structured approach are now very evident in the town and environs. Public realm spaces in the urban core particularly at Main Street and Kenmare Place have a very good standard and contrast with the rural setting of the National Park, woodlands and lakes beyond.

The town centre contains a great number of well-presented shop fronts and business premises, too many to mention individually. Imaginative colour schemes with attractive signage are a feature throughout. Hand-painted fascia signage has a very high quality and continues a great local tradition. Ornate individual, gold-leaf lettering was hugely admired. On college Street, the Lord Kenmare, Serendipity, The Snug Bar, Murphy's and the Towers took the eye. On Plunkett Street, Courtney's and Joevany's were admired, as were Quinlan's, Cronin's, Treyvaros, Speak-Easy, Bricin and Foley's on High Street. The commissioning by the Chamber of Commerce of an urban colour scheme study was a very pro-active initiative to protect and further develop these fine

presentations.

The cluster of monastic, religious and education buildings at Mission Road/South Ring and Beech Road contrast with a more tranquil atmosphere dominated by the magnificent St Mary's Cathedral. The presentation of the grounds at all of these buildings was excellent, some having very colourful plant and shrub presentations. The contemporary design of Government buildings on New Road is excellent but the surroundings hard landscaped area and the entrance areas to the car park looked a bit neglected and weedy. Deenagh Lodge operated by Autism Ireland looked charming and was bustling with visitors on the day of adjudication. The external forecourt with tables and seating added greatly to the atmosphere here and both the operatives and Office of Public Works are to be commended on this excellent restaurant.

The redevelopment of numbers 3 and 4, St Mary's Terrace are great examples of both conservation and preservation and the owners here are commended also on a fine achievement.

Landscaping:

You are to be commended for engaging with qualified arborists on your three year planting programme. The division of your programme into 7 separate zones brings clarity to your campaign. Your focus on native planting should ensure less of a plant loss in future years, an issue that has affected many other groups in recent times. The more sustainable planting at the roundabout should ensure a less labour-intensive solution, an important consideration in the present financial climate.

The inner town has some very colourful arrangements. The begonia bed at the top of High Street creates a great splash of colour in this important vista. The rose beds at the monument opposite enhance a well-manicured green located at an important traffic junction. The Deer sculpture at the Courthouse is a fine recent addition and like the White Tail Eagle sculpture at Main Street has a meaningful relevance to your location.

Kenmare Place is unique in that it incorporates some very high quality, hard landscaping finishes surrounding a contemporary design, practical convenience service building while incorporating tree presentation enhanced by a colourful annual bedding plant presentation. The Grotto presentation on Rock Road looks very well and the mature green at St Columbanus Hospital has a tranquil atmosphere. The famine memorial here is simple and evocative. The old cast iron railings on the boundary are in need of repainting here.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

It is well recognised that Killarney and its hinterland contain rich wildlife habitats of international importance. The production of the Atkins Report "Killarney Habitats and Bio-diversity Survey" is an important document for the understanding and protection of your area. The three walking trails from Deenagh Park, the Deenagh River Walk and the Deer Viewing Trail at Knockreen, at Muckross, and Ross Castle, all contribute to visitor accessibility and enjoyment of your wildlife habitats. Again the committee is commended on their professional, enlightened and futuristic approach to this agenda. The recent success in the hatching of a male chick to a pair of white tailed sea eagles is exciting. The new male chick, now tagged and named after ranger Paudie, is to be monitored on an on-going basis and the results here should prove scientifically interesting.

Litter Control:

On a previous visit which coincided with the Munster Final, this adjudicator was hugely impressed with the management of the litter problem following the match. Your town obviously copes well with large numbers of visitors and this was in evidence again during this year's visit. One issue that continues to be a problem was the number of cigarette butts discarded on the street at various locations, particularly Glebe car park and St Anthony's Lane. The 'Adopt a Road' policy and your regular litter picking patrols are working well. Congratulations on your success in the Irish Business Against Litter awards scheme and on being adjudged to be 'Above European Norm'.

Sustainable Waste And Resource Management:

The list of initiatives submitted under this category is extensive and it is noted that your activities continue to expand. Your schools have impressive achievements and this is evidenced by the number of Green Flags they have achieved. It is encouraging that many of your hotels are members of the Green Failte scheme and that you continue to promote the objectives of this category with assistance from the Killarney Looking Good committee and the Killarney Advertiser. Your Bring Centres are well dispersed throughout the town, are clean and well-presented and all were visited.

Tidiness:

The signage survey was a well worthwhile undertaking and is particularly important in a premier tourist location. Problem signage has now been substantially identified and we will look forward to further progress and improvements here. At Park Road, signage close by the Deerpark roundabout appears oversized, out of scale and somewhat indiscriminate. This contrasts enormously with the good quality directional and street furniture, finger-post signage in the inner town.

Recent resurfacing at College Street car park is impressive and has hugely improved the visual aspect of this location. The nearby Clovers Lane colour scheme looks very well and is a significant improvement. Clover House remains unsightly but even if the weeds growing at windowsill level were removed its dereliction impact would be reduced. Well done on initiatives regarding fly posting and graffiti. A number of plant box containers at the College Street car park and public footpaths had their plants removed and are now being used as discarded receptacles. These should be planted or removed. A similar situation arises at a number of plant boxes at the

Hahah on the paved area outside the stone wall of the Methodist Church. The Jarvey centre is excellently maintained and fresh painting was being carried out here by a number of your Social Scheme operatives.

Residential Areas:

The formation of residents association in individual housing estates works very well for your community. Recent improvements at Woodlawn Park are impressive and newly planted areas look very well. Congratulations to all involved in this initiative. All estates and housing developments were visited ranging from Coolgrean Park and Oakland Retirement Village, to Arbutus Grove, Elmwood, Pinewood, Countess Road and the Woodland Road area. The standard was generally very good. Many contain some high quality stone-built walls. A feature in many of these locations is the backdrop of mature trees and the colourful presentation of individual private gardens. The professional horticultural advice available to residents can only have a positive effect on your proposals for further improvements in this category.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

Your programme of road surfacing this year is impressive. The main approach roads generally look very well and are well-maintained. In the inner town the paving and street furniture improvements carried out in recent years have provided a very attractive public realm that visually favours the pedestrian. Your adherence to the objectives of the Killarney Urban Master Plan is now paying dividends and results are clearly to be seen in the developing laneway linkage through the town.

General Impression:

There is a confident air about the presentation of Killarney. The colourful hanging baskets, window boxes and tubs, dispersed throughout the town, have a welcoming flavour. The focused and structured approach to your continued improvement schemes is testament to your successful working partnerships. Well done to all concerned!

Second Round Adjudication:

Killarney, a recent Nation Winner even in indifferent weather was looking spectacular especially when viewed from the elevated approach roads from the north. This initial favourable impression is reinforced on closer inspection. The sizeable set piece locations and items, Killarney National Park, Ross Castle and others are presented in a pristine condition. But minor items also contribute; the well presented grounds of Teagasc; the bright mural of Mons. O'Flaherty; the wooden, book embossed seat outside the library and the grass covered "roof" of Supermac at the Topaz filling station. The many historic plaques providing details of the lanes off High Street caught the eye together with the photograph of Old Market Lane c1800 (should this read c1900?) .

The town hall with its many awards for Tidy Towns and other achievements suitably displayed caught the eye as did Credit Union House, large and imposing overlooking the orderly central car park area. The low level boundary wall here is beginning to unravel at one end and needs attention. The colourful shops on Church Street and the houses and shops on New Street collectively make a fine impression. Kenmare Place, flower bedecked, colourful and bustling is surely the quintessential Killarney unchanged for decades. Mission Road with its fine monument but equally its small almost discrete signage with details of the various trees and shrubs is a delight. Unhappily litter through limited has not been completely eradicated; some noted in filling stations and in the Library outdoor seating area.

Generously wide cycle tracks were admired along the ring road and also on the Ross Castle Road. However where this latter narrows the cycle lane has been eliminated at the point where it is actually most required and necessary. In addition to cycles, walkers are well catered for with suitable marked routes, the Deenagh River Walk being a good example of what is provided. Roundabouts are given great attention, that at Upper Lewis Road, Saint Ann's Road junction and also the Ballydowney are examples that stood out.

Killarney continues to excel in its presentation of the town which is nearly universally acknowledged as one of the earliest centres of tourism. To all involved and who helped this very fine presentation in any way well done