

Tidy Towns Competition 2014

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Kilkee** Ref: **72**
County: **Clare** Mark: **303**
Category: **C** Date(s): **18/06/2014**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2014
Community Involvement & Planning	60	48
Built Environment and Streetscape	50	43
Landscaping and Open Spaces	50	40
Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities	50	35
Sustainable Waste and Resource Management	50	15
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	60
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	32
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	30
TOTAL MARK	450	303

Community Involvement & Planning / Rannpháirtíocht an Phobail & Pleanáil:

Ta Fáilte Romhat Cill Chaoi Welcome Kilkee to the Super Valu 2014 National Tidy Towns competition. Firstly we would like to congratulate you on your success in the competition in 2013 - achieving a bronze medal. Secondly we would like to say that we are impressed with your resolve in dealing with the bad storms of early spring and in moving forward. We knew already from television coverage how much these storms affected your area. But if we were left in any doubt - your photographs confirmed the worst! You have risen phoenix-like from the ashes! We appreciate that everything damaged cannot be resolved overnight, but you have made great strides. In all cases you acknowledge the assistance you have been getting from agencies, bodies, and businesses. Your bad luck with the storm however is well balanced with the good luck you have had in having the particular expertise and attention of many - spearheaded by the local authority in compiling the plan 'Towards a Better Kilkee'. This is a very good document for many reasons, but it is of particular assistance to you as a Tidy Towns group. We read it with interest. We note that this document relates to the next six years. It is ambitious. We would suggest that for next year you send us a three-year Tidy Towns plan - using 'Towards a Better Kilkee' as a base guidance document. You should set your own three year Tidy Towns plan out under the various category headings, and extract from the parent document those projects which you think you can reasonably achieve annually. You may also wish to add your own feasible projects.

Thank you for your Tidy Towns Action Plan for this year - 2014. Thank you also for your background submissions. We used the various maps in the various plans submitted as our map for adjudication day. However a specifically focussed map for Tidy Towns adjudication is necessary. This year's guidelines to compiling the Entry Form asked that you number each project for this year sequentially through the Entry Form, and provide a map with the corresponding sequential numbers to match. Your Tidy Towns map should show all major landmarks and all approach roads should be named; all housing estates should also be named, and finally - and most importantly each project which you have undertaken for the adjudication year. Obviously some projects will not be 'mappable'. Do read the Entry Form guidelines carefully every year.

You meet regularly, with increased meetings during the busy season. You liaise with many local groups whom you name individually. You also take the opportunity to acknowledge those imithe ar Slí na Fírinne - as you say this is the last Tidy Towns submission with a local Town Council in place. We have no doubt but that you will continue to receive excellent advice, assistance and funding from Clare County Council.

You communicate by various methods - traditional and modern. This is good. You have two members who liaise with the school and a number of young people who assist your. Perhaps it is time to consider setting up a Junior Tidy Towns committee.

You have an exceptionally long record of entry to the competition. You have been chosen as one of the groups to implement 'Towards a Better Kilkee'. This shows how well you are regarded.

Built Environment and Streetscape / An Timpeallacht Thógtha agus Sráid-dreacha:

The seafront promenade and walls are very much part of your built environment and many parts suffered devastation less than six months ago. We note that some of these walls were built as Famine Relief Schemes. Well done on the progress you have made to date as a community, whilst acknowledging the assistance you have received from local authority and central funds. The work was ongoing on adjudication day. However, you saw the silver lining in adversity. The bandstand was in need of conservation, and now it is getting a full overhaul supervised correctly by an architectural conservation specialist. The new lighting scheme contributes to the improvement of the built environment at the seafront.

You have worked with the local authority planning staff in compiling details of derelict sites in the town. Two period houses in the West End are being repaired.

We read and understand the comments in relation to progress in relation to signage. We agree that it was best to wait until you had the full picture in view before you commenced providing for new signage. We hope that you will receive the same professional advice in relation to the great possibilities modern urban design can apply to a town signage programme. It is better to have a signage plan of the best quality architecturally, and to implement this plan incrementally - rather than 'go for the jugular' and try to complete the signage programme instantly. Too many mistakes have been made in the past in many towns and villages in relation to this issue.

We note your comments in relation to the GAA club. We also noticed the comments of last year's adjudicator. You have improved the situation here. The blue/white paint has been cleaned.

We particularly look forward to the upgrading of the Percy French Square near the Railway Station. Bollards were in place on the 'island' but no work appeared to have commenced. We wish you luck with this. And we note that this is being completely refurbished by the Kilkee Civic Trust Association.

The Health Centre boundary wall requires painting.

At St James Church of Ireland we admired the lovely stone wall, but the gates are in very poor condition. We note that last year's adjudicator also mentioned this fact. Behind the church a substation needs painting.

A brown premises on the Carrigaholt side of the Texaco garage needs improvement. The wall outside O'Neill's funfair would benefit from upgrading.

There are some good Victorian style villas in Marine Parade which are mostly well maintained.

Near the Diamond rocks/West End a well presented plain green house beside Waters Edge had nice hood mouldings picked out in contrasting paintwork.

A large property Clár Ellagh is for sale, and its boundary wall is presented poorly.

We admired good cast iron red railings which were rusting on the corner site of Wellington Square. Such railings are an intrinsic part of the architectural heritage of your town and deserve attention. A boundary wall facing the three-storey apartment block at the top of Wellington Square required painting. On our visit the actual apartments were being painted.

The Methodist Church building could be freshened up somewhat – especially in door. There was a little dereliction on the corner of Geraldine Place. The Fire Station looked well.

The Catholic Church looked bare and would benefit from some landscaping. We also consider that it would benefit from repainting.

Railway Road has some old and new properties, the infill development being sympathetic with the streetscape.

We were very disappointed in the condition of the Railway Station building. We understand that it is a Protected Structure and we hope that some funding can be obtained to deal with its obvious ongoing deterioration. The extensions to the side detract from the original building.

The Deli opposite Stella Maris needs repainting. This nice rounded corner building on the end of the street looks well in its prominent position.

At the Ocean Cove hotel there were some missing letters on the hotel name sign. The Kilkee Boat and Fishing club

building needs painting – the gable. Battered by winter storms – this must be - we think an annual project – not yet completed in June this year.

One of the areas which was not affected by the storm but which is very poor in its presentation is the large hard landscaped open square O' Curry Square in the centre of the town. This looks very bare and uninviting and is a real missed opportunity to date in potential urban landscaping forward/urban design. It really looked very drab. We look forward to its complete redesign when funds permit. Such design will obviously provide for the public facilities already included in an upgraded imaginative landscaped fashion. Obviously bus parking and public toilets would be part of this scheme. At another level it is a lovely canvas for you to work on, as rarely has a town centre got so much space ripe for public use redevelopment.

Kincora was being painted on adjudication day and this is a simple bright well presented premises without any clutter on its street elevation. We saw a really excellent two-storey pale green house with red door, with its timber sash windows in good condition on the edge of the square. Well done to the owners!

Hickie's victualler's property was very well presented in a lovely cheerful yellow. It is a pity that the railings in front of the property are raw metal. Some properties like Marrinan's and Lynch's B and B are clean and well painted. But too much projecting signage and lighting often detract from the presentation of business premises- as is the case in these two shop fronts. We also note the insertion of uPVC windows at first-floor level. We would encourage you to encourage owners to conserve their timber sash windows. Murphy's on the square which is for sale is an excellent example of vernacular Irish shop front architecture. We hope that it can find a new owner who will conserve this lovely building. At the back of the square there are some nice terraced small streets which are looking well. The derelict building beside Halpin's hotel looked poorly, as did the building on the corner beside Murphy Blacks. Murphy Blacks itself had too much clutter in the form of signage and pots on the narrow frontage. The Punjab restaurant on O' Curry Street is an extreme example of building elevation clutter.

O' Curry Street is an important Street in your town being the main business street. It has mixed built heritage. The green railings outside the red brick (old Bank?) premises need conservation. Some boundary walls – in particular an ochre coloured boundary wall off this street – need painting. The Bank of Ireland is a simple two-storey building, the plinth of which would benefit from repainting. Claremont is a building with character, but needs upgrading. The Beach Hut has good hood moulding. Its frontage was a riot of colour of seaside accessories on a sunny day. Because the footpath is wide at this point this did not create an obstruction to footpath at users.

The Post Office is a delight! Its presentation was impeccable. Its signage was limited to the absolute bare essentials. We commend the owners of this premises highly for their excellence in presentation. Even the window blinds were hanging at an identical level! The terrace of houses on the outward side of the Post Office also looked very well.

We admired the modern Cuirtlinn building and its incidental planting - including the Butler Memorial. The good presentation of the terrace of houses on the outward side added to the pleasantness of this area

Landscaping and Open Spaces / Tírdhreachú agus Spásanna Oscailte:

You have the assistance of TÚS and FÁS workers. All public areas are maintained and you carry out planting annually. The Percy French Square will have a good landscaping impact.

The good shrub edged planting opposite the Colaiste Pobail looked well.

At Wellington Square the grass was well cut, including the tennis courts area.

We admired some very nice cottage style gardens on the approach to the Methodist Church. These had stone wall boundaries. One example is Woodbine Lodge on Geraldine Place.

On the town side of the GAA we noticed three planting beds being got ready for the summer. The fourth had not yet been dug.

The 'island' area across from the Catholic Church has some substandard blue seats. We note that last year's adjudicator also remarked on this. Perhaps you are waiting for general upgrading here to deal with seating. We admired the nice trees on Railway Road.

The playground is a good amenity and the Astra turf pitch beside the school likewise. There is a nice shrub bed in front of the wall here.

At the Ocean Cove hotel we admired some nice shrubbery.

Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities / Fíadhúlra, Gnáthóga agus Taitneamhachtaí Nádurtha:

You have not indicated any particular Wildlife projects carried out under this category heading for this year. Your 2014 projects simply involve new planting work – but you do not say how focussed this is on wildlife suitability. Of course native hedging and tree planting contribute, but we want you to work specifically on a project which is totally about this category. We note that you have the assistance and advice of the County Heritage Officer and the County

Biodiversity Officer, so we look forward to your partnership work. You should read the Tidy Towns Handbook which is quite detailed on this category. The Heritage Council's 'Wildlife in Towns and Villages' booklet is also a useful resource. Engaging with schools (or colleges) on even elementary nature study surveys can lead in time to the further analysis and interpretation/presentation of the findings. We loved your reference to the migratory birds returning and behaving as though nothing had happened in Kilkee since last year – it was almost poetic! Now there is a project for you 'Migrant birds and Kilkee - survey, analysis and management'! Of course you do not have to choose this suggestion - but do choose some project and perhaps involve the schoolchildren – who already have a great appreciation of nature as their 'Spring' project shows. Please thank them for letting us have a copy, and tell them how we enjoyed reading their posters. Your marks are exceedingly high in this category already so you obviously have done well with work in this area in the past. However as the 2013 marks were the same as 2012 – it is clear that you have been concentrating on other categories lately.

We noted the use of what appeared to be chemical weed killer in places. This is bad for the environment. Please try to use manual or organic methods of weed control.

Sustainable Waste and Resource Management / Bainistiú Acmhainní agus Dramhaíola Inbhuanaithe:

Your work with the many restaurants and bars in relation to waste minimisation through the cessation of the use of small butter and condiment packs, even though on paper a small project, is a waste minimisation project, and, given the number of catering establishments in the town is significant. Likewise children have been encouraged to avoid wrapped lunches. You have also been involved in a number of recycling projects such as the use of reusable ink cartridges in the schools and a charity shop. We are glad that the schools have Green Flags, but on adjudication day we noticed two empty flagpoles at the school near the playground.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

The entire rebuilding and repair work at the seafront was a project which you did not expect to have to deal with. Had the repair work not gone ahead so quickly – apart from losing much business – the seafront area would be a very untidy place to be in June on our visit. The magnitude of the tidying that had to take place is seen in your photographs. The new lighting scheme contributes to the improvement of the built environment at the seafront. It is also contributes to the general improvement in tidiness.

On our visit the footpath and stone walls along the seafront were very clean. At the Diamond rocks/West End there were also very clean footpaths to be seen - as well as a clean road. Newer the Methodist Church a sign pole needs painting along the seafront wall. The stump of a sewerage vent pipe on the seafront wall also requires painting.

You acknowledge the hard work carried out by the local authority staff in street cleaning teams throughout the summer months.

We noted that the bank at the GAA frontage has been improved – see our comments under approach road with monbretia planting and hedging - together with a nice stone wall. Some notices around the premises are torn. And we would ask if the windows really do have to have grilles. The entrance area on the town side is still poor - outside the concrete block wall GAA lateral boundary. We also noted fly posting on a pole opposite the GAA grounds

The hoarding at The Colaiste Pobail was clean.

The bins were grubby at the bottle banks site in the car park. We saw small amounts of paper, and some broken glass was noted fronting the bins. This area required sweeping and tidying. The red clothing bank was very rusty.

We noticed another headless sign at the entrance to Castlefield estate. The Loop Head Scene Drive road (up from the seafront) was weedy. Yet there appeared to have been chemical weed killer used in this area also. We noted a rusty gate and some dereliction, as well as nice stone walls at the lower town end of this road.

We noted some fly posting beside Kincora.

The 'no right turn' sign was bent at the golf links/Doonbeg junction.

A two-storey empty metal sign holder was observed on O' Curry Street on a corner premises. This looked ugly.

The problem with household refuse being dumped in litter bins is one which affects all holiday resorts. You might let us know how you are working with the self catering sector to avoid this happening. We assume that this problem is created by your visitors rather than by yourselves and therefore it is seasonal one. We do not think notices alone would deter such people from dumping household rubbish in your bins.

We noted a black sack and two pieces of litter outside the Station building. The playground was clean. There were a few pieces of litter near the school/playground. Generally we found that there was very little litter in Kilkee. There was some litter and some weeds around the footpath area across from the Ocean Cove hotel. There was a black sack thrown in the grass near the picnic area on the road to Georges Head. The shelter on the approach to Georges Head needs painting. Several rusty barrels marking a boundary and tyres were seen at the green space, also

stays/ties (from elections?) on poles. We would like to hear more about your litter rotas and schedules. Well done to all those who help you with this work at National Spring Clean and throughout the year. Perhaps you would consider putting a Litter Management Plan together. This will help you plan and focus on this issue and will gain you some extra marks.

Some paper litter was noted around the Bank of Ireland premises. Here too - beside the bank - a disabled parking space needs relining.

Residential Streets & Housing Areas / Sráideanna Cónaithe & Ceantair Tithíochta:

You encourage householders to paint their houses and present them to a high standard. You are having good success in this.

On the Carigaholt approach we visited the Moore Bay estate. We would recommend the screening of washing areas. Some signs here were a bit rusty. The Moore Bay sign itself facing towards Carrigaholt is faded. The grass was well cut, and we admired the fuchsia planting throughout. There was nice gravel bedding inside the entrance, but also two empty sign poles.

The Brooks estate had well cut grass and good Liscannor type stone wall splays. We noted a large concrete pipe and some dead conifers.

Cluain na Mara was well presented. We noticed a headless road sign pole and a rusty upright on the school sign outside.

In the Marian estate there were some weeds around the name sign. We admired the nice grotto and its surrounds. This estate is generally excellently presented, although the road surface in the upper part of the estate is poor.

Some boundary walls fronting the estate near the Health Centre would benefit from improvement.

Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes / Bóithre Isteach, Sráideanna & Lánaí:

As requested by the local authority you have had to put your plans with regard to Laneways on hold until the commencement of the implementation of 'Towards a Better Kilkee.' The traffic management plan at present is temporary, but by next year's adjudication it will be different.

Our earlier comments in relation to the damage at the seafront are relevant to this category also because your seafront is very much part of your roads and streets. Improvements carried out in December 2013 were short lived. Yet you have now included this in a major improvement of the seafront area generally.

We are delighted to see that your 'Towards a Better Kilkee' document deals with the approach roads in detail. However for this year's adjudication we are commenting on what we saw on our visit. Some of these comments relate to issues which you could resolve quickly yourselves. Others relate to projects which are more long-term and require input from other than your group. You know yourselves which is which.

On the Carigaholt approach we noticed two derelict properties. We did not observe any name sign for Kilkee on this approach road. However we did note the large tourist information 'tourist centre ahead' sign, which we are glad to see included some Irish including 'Fáilte'. We noted some farm outbuildings which could benefit from repainting and also some derelict farm buildings. Just a few properties would benefit from upgrading on this approach.

On this approach road -as on all approach roads - we would recommend that you would consider painting all field gates in a uniform colour. As one emerges for instance from the Moore Bay development there is a raw metal field gate facing one's exit. Its pillar caps need repairing also. On this approach road we observed some sub standard signage for Loop Head. A minor road 'joins' the Carrigaholt road at an angle. On this minor road we noted a factory with broken windows. We also admired some monbretia planting along this minor road edging. On the other side of the minor road there was a weedy footpath bounding the rear access of Moore Bay. Some trimming is required on this minor road around the 50 K pH speed limit. A headless road sign was noted at the junction area.

The speed limit signs were tilted on the right-hand side as one approaches Kilkee on the Kilrush road. The blue bilingual Kilkee sign was partly obscured by uncut vegetation on our visit. We noted a derelict house and the badly derelict garage. We see that this is one of your opportunity sites in your plan. We noted that the bank at the GAA frontage has been improved with monbretia planting and hedging, together with a stone wall. We also noted fly posting on a pole opposite the GAA grounds.

Very poor road surfaces were noted around the Catholic Church area.