

Tidy Towns Competition 2014

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Kilkishen** Ref: **999**
County: **Clare** Mark: **198**
Category: **B** Date(s): **09/06/2014**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2014
Community Involvement & Planning	60	28
Built Environment and Streetscape	50	29
Landscaping and Open Spaces	50	22
Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities	50	26
Sustainable Waste and Resource Management	50	9
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	40
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	19
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	25
TOTAL MARK	450	198

Community Involvement & Planning / Rannpháirtíocht an Phobail & Pleanáil:

Ta Fáilte Romhat Kilkishen- Welcome Kilkishen to the Super Valu 2014 National Tidy Towns competition. You have 12 committee members. We appreciate how the main focus recently has been on the conservation of the Church of Ireland building. You have given us a very long list of all bodies, agencies, and businesses that assist you. You have not forgotten to acknowledge anybody whose help you have availed of in any way. It shows that you are held in high regard when so many people are willing to help you.

Your communication methods are many, and they range from the traditional to the modern. This is good. You have a member who devotes one day per week working with schoolchildren. This is excellent. The children are preparing a Green Flag entry. We wish them every success!

We do not appear to have received a Tidy Towns plan from you. We would encourage you to draw up a Tidy Towns plan – a three or five-year plan will focus your mind on what you can hope to achieve. A plan need not be prepared professionally, but you should consult locally in preparing such a plan. You should also consider any statutory and non-statutory plans applicable to Kilkishen in drawing up your work programme. Please refer to the Tidy Towns Handbook for advice in relation to the preparation of a three or five-year plan. It is essential to progress in the competition and to gain extra marks under this particular category that you submit such a plan in 2015.

You have given us some photographs including the title page of the first draft of the Kilkishen Development Association Plan for the Twelve O' Clock Hills Recreational and Heritage Project. We consider this project to be a very fine project, but one which is a Development Association project – rather than a Tidy Towns project. The project is a landscaping project, but one that is well outside the boundaries of your village. More likely to be included would be your amenity at the lakeside - as this is half the distance from your village. However, we would respectfully suggest that you concentrate on the village itself in the immediate future. You have many issues and challenges within the village boundaries to occupy your time and attention. The competition is for towns and villages and not for community projects outside town and village boundaries - unless there is a very proven and regular use by the villagers on a daily basis of the amenity in question. If the lake is visited regularly as an amenity by many villagers – then you could perhaps include it in future. But do not extend your remit so that your efforts are too diffused.

Thank you for your map. Thank you also for your 'before' and 'after' photographs and your photograph of the lovely spring daffodils. Your list of ways in which you have benefited from entering the competition is a long list. We are delighted that the competition brings so many positive benefits to your village.

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

Your main project under this category heading is the conservation of the Church of Ireland and its reopening to the community in May of this year. Well done on this project! It is the essence of good conservation that such a building finds a new and appropriate use. We would like to see the stone walls leading up to this church (as one approaches from the Sixmilebridge side) repaired in the traditional fashion of dry stonewalling. A sign on the village side of the church- in relation to the restoration of the church - is now in poor condition and should be removed. This sign is attached to a wooden pole, is quite unattractive and detracts from the church site.

Kilkishen is a typically vernacular rural Irish village. The street line has remained unspoiled with a mix of good and not-so-good properties. You are making contact with absentee owners in relation to the possibility of your carrying out some basic maintenance on unoccupied properties. We wish you lots of success in this endeavour.

Jack's Place and the red house adjacent were cleanly presented. On the other side of the street the ochre property (with 'Up the Banner' written on its doorway) was in need of a repaint, as were other properties more difficult to identify by name.

The Catholic Church boundary wall needs attention. A corrugated shed roof behind the church would benefit from painting, and a concrete block wall adjacent to the church roadside boundary would benefit from plastering.

A shop window needed paint and removal of redundant brackets. Tidying of the notices in its window would also make this frontage look neater. A directly adjacent gate pier looked very badly – beside a lovely traditional gate.

A row of whitewashed cottages – one with a half-door remaining – are an important part of your streetscape, and we suggest that you contact the County Architectural Conservation Officer with regard to these buildings. Near these cottages we observed another good traditional gate.

The P. Donnellon property is a very good part of your streetscape. It is beautifully maintained. Its sash windows were admired. The empty sign holder might be carefully removed. On the other side of Gleeson's we admired a tan coloured very well presented house. There was some dereliction noted beside Gleeson's, which itself was well presented.

You mention the old building which was once a garage at the Sixmilebridge end of the village being in need of maintenance and you say that you hope that this can be achieved.

The old school would benefit from repainting signage under the eaves perhaps, and the repainting of the white railings on the bank fronting the school. At the new school the gates would benefit from painting. The school is nicely landscaped. There was fly posting on a pole at one end of the site. The playground was colourful and clean. As one enters the village from the Sixmilebridge approach there is a very nice good entrance (to an estate?) which could benefit from general maintenance and tidying. It is in the access splay of this house entrance that the very nice simple black and white metal Kilkishen village sign is located. We noted a beautiful deteriorating white traditional gate with stone piers on arriving at the village from the Sixmilebridge direction.

The Sleán 'sculpture' area has been enhanced.

You have dealt very well with Teach an Gabha Dubh, and it is now a very attractive building. We would prefer to see a traditional gate instead of security fencing at its gable. An Cearta has not been as lucky to date. We look forward to improvements on the Old Forge and its surrounds.

A very derelict house was observed on road L3002. This was located beside some very well kept single storey houses.

Landscaping and Open Spaces / Tírdhreachú agus Spásanna Oscailte:

We admired the triangular green space at the L3016 junction. The well trimmed grass and trees looked very well, but we would suggest that this area is a naturally landscaped area not requiring the insertion of the hanging basket pole. Likewise on the green space near the Knappogue brown and white directional sign, we do not think there is any need for the plastic white flower containers. At the junction of the L3002 two further white plastic urns might be removed from the footpath edging. They look somewhat incongruous in this location, and they had nothing of interest or colour growing in them. Thirdly at the green area at the forge junction we noticed a white hanging basket holder which was redundant. Once again we feel in this rural village edge the landscaping should be left to native trees and shrubs, and, if desired, to flowers planted in the soil. We would encourage you to plant sustainably in the soil as this is more environmentally friendly, and is also more appropriate to a rural village.

You have been busy planting native trees. The FÁS and TÚS workers maintain grass areas and flower beds. Landscaping at the Sleán project includes a major bog oak find which is surrounded by heathers. You have grown shrubs in containers and you have added bedding plants.

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

Although you mention the development of the Castle bog walk under the Built Environment Section, it is here that we consider this project. Please send us further details of this project in 2015, and update us with progress.

The bat population have not been disturbed in the conserved Church of Ireland.

Well done on obtaining funding for the Castle Bog Walk. Bat boxes and bird boxes are being installed. Children are learning about bats. You say that you have decided to seek advice regarding the conservation of wildlife. This is critically important – but do get the children or local people with knowledge of wildlife to help also. The County Heritage and County Biodiversity Officers would be great contacts in this regard. NPWS are helping out – this is excellent.

The lake amenity Park is looked after by a TÚS worker.

We recommend that you use manual or organic weed control methods.

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

Well done on the workshops and demonstrations to promote sustainable waste which were held in the local school. We assume that these were for the schoolchildren in relation to their Green Flag application. Have you considered trying to organise a community Sustainable Waste and Resource Management seminar or talk? Perhaps your County Environmental Awareness Officer might be able to help. You could increase your marks in this category as a community by taking on board some of the suggested projects in the leaflet distributed with the Entry Form in 2013. The Tidy Towns Handbook is also a good source of information in this regard. We hope that in 2015 we will hear about your efforts to progress further in this area.

You have a plan to make an old junk mail laminated sign for use locally.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

Flyposting is a big problem for you it seems. There was some very strident fly posting on the Sixmilebridge side of the Church of Ireland as one entered the village from Sixmilebridge, and beyond - at the curve in the road which leads directly into the village. This was repeated immediately around the corner. Further towards the village centre (just before a red painted semi-detached single storey house) there was further very obtrusive fly posting and a sandwich board advertisement beside the footpath.

On the road to the cemetery we noted machinery. There were lovely views to the Lake from the Cemetery road.

The corner at the Emo garage area could be tidied. The dark grey corrugated gate and the lighter grey adjacent building detract from the stone-surrounded village pump, as the paint is chipped in each case.

Litter did not appear to be a problem in the village – we saw very little. You say that litter control and dumping are problems for the Kilkishen area. This is difficult for you to control. You have requested additional visits from the local authority in this regard.

Well done on taking part in the An Taisce litter clean-up in April/May.

Anti litter posters belong to this category heading rather than the previous category heading where you have discussed these posters. You have also distributed litter pickers in the village. This is a good idea. How often do you pick litter? And do you have a litter rota?

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

Houses in the street are a mix of good and not-so-good in their maintenance. There are a lot of housing estates in relation to the size of the village. The housing estates are generally well presented.

Cutting of grass in the open area in the lower end of Hillcrest Grove is carried out by FÁS and TÚS workers. There is a nice treed entrance to this estate. We admired a stone seat at the treed entrance access. A sign here needs renewal, as does a 'caution children' sign. We noticed evidence of - what appeared to be chemical weeding on the approach to this estate - and at the circle at the end of the estate. A concrete block wall needs repair. On adjudication day the open space resembled a wildflower garden. Have wildflowers been planted there? If so it would appear that they are of a limited species. If not this area should be regularly trimmed. Throughout this estate we noticed cars parked on the footpaths, despite the fact that car parking spaces were available at the houses. Such parking creates footpath obstruction and looks untidy.

There is a leafy green access area to Plunkett Drive estate. We noticed an ugly steel security boundary to what appeared to be a pump house here. Planting should be carried out to 'soften' the security boundary. A unfair was either being set up or taken down in the green area. We noticed what we consider was evidence of chemical weeding. We noticed some broken kerbing. We considered the plastic pots of flowers on the green area to be unnecessary – particularly as they were empty. Planting in the soil is much more sustainable and also looks better in a rural village.

The grass area in Dun an Óir (and in Plunkett Drive) is attended to by local residents.

Teeronea estate is unfinished. However that part which is finished is well-kept, and the estate has a nice rural ambience. However there was no name on-the-ground. A name plate or name boulder should be provided. In this estate we also noted evidence of chemical weed killing along the access kerbs.

The Cluain na Laoi estate also has an unfinished section. We noticed unfinished roadside gardens. Good trees were noted here and a nice new dry stone wall, but - yet again - evidence of chemical weed killing on the footpaths. In the vicinity of this estate the base of a sewer vent pipe needs painting.

Dun an Óir estate has a lovely curved stone wall bounded by a grass margin with good trees. This is a well matured estate. The road fronting the estate is in need of repair along the wide edges.

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

You say that your FÁS/TÚS workers have a programme of work that covers the presentation of approach roads including verges on all entrances to the village. However you have not given us any details of this programme.

On the Sixmilebridge approach we would suggest that you face the entrance area to the GAA grounds with stone to match the existing road side boundary. The lotto sign here is faded and dirty. Is it necessary to have such a sign in this location? We would recommend the painting of the gates and of the sign. Two flagpoles here were empty, and we noted two clean clothes banks. We observed two wooden supports on a pole on the right-hand side of this approach. These appeared to have no function, and should be removed. Close to the village we admired the nice stone walls and trees. The paths were weed-free and looked well. We observed two 'headless' rusty road sign poles – one on either side of the road beyond the Church of Ireland on the village side. The signage should be reattached or the poles should be removed

On all approach roads and within the village itself we would recommend a painting scheme for field gates. This gives a tidy and cared-for look to the approach roads and to field gates within the village confines. It also gives a sense of identity to the village and distinguishes it from the rural area adjacent.

On the Tulla approach one 50 K pH speed limit sign was obscured by vegetation. A road sign at the corner of the old school is bent and rusty and facing inwards. There was a 'headless' pole at the L3002 junction at the 'Sleán' end of the road, and another in the project area itself. The upright pole of a sign approximately opposite Gleeson's bar (and beyond the garage) is rusty. The Reilig cemetery sign was clean.