

Tidy Towns Competition 2014

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Killaloe**

Ref: **73**

County: **Clare**

Mark: **271**

Category: **C**

Date(s): **26/06/2014**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2014
Community Involvement & Planning	60	44
Built Environment and Streetscape	50	39
Landscaping and Open Spaces	50	36
Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities	50	26
Sustainable Waste and Resource Management	50	10
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	54
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	31
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	31
TOTAL MARK	450	271

Community Involvement & Planning / Rannpháirtíocht an Phobail & Pleanáil:

Ta Fáilte Romhat Killaloe- Welcome Killaloe to the Super Valu 2014 National Tidy Towns competition. Four core members is a very small group of people to sustain a Tidy Towns programme for a town the size of Killaloe. We understand that you have links to other groups, but we certainly feel as if you could do with more focused commitment. We do understand that Killaloe is a vibrant town, and that there are competing activities. You acknowledge the work of the Business Association and the Environmental Group in working on various projects involving Tidy Towns.

You list a large number of agencies bodies and businesses who support you.

Your communications system may need improvement. The reason for this is that you do not seem to include any modern communication systems such as texting, e-mail, web presence, or Facebook page. These are sustainable, instant methods of communication, and importantly they appeal to the younger generation. We hope that you circulate your parish notes to all religious groups in your area.

It is good to see that the schools are very active in the Green Flag programme. We note the Scouts involvement in the spring clean up.

We note that you acknowledge LEADER funding in 2012 in relation to a strategic development plan for the town which involved a series of public consultations.

Thank you for your map which was useful to a certain extent, but did not extend to include the full extent of the town to the south. Your plan shows prominent landmarks. However it should also show individual projects for this year's adjudication, which should be numbered or lettered sequentially in tandem with a sequential numbering or lettering in your Entry Form. Your one-page Tidy Towns plan is basically a list of projects which you intend to carry out, but you have given us no indication as to how many years it will take to complete these projects. It is important to attach a timescale to your Tidy Towns plan; because it makes you focus on what is realistic given your resources. Otherwise a plan without a timescale simply becomes a wish list.

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

In working on the strategic development plan for the town we note you have concentrated on The Green area. This is most important. As you so rightly say it is the central area of the town surrounded by important buildings. You appear to infer that its parking function is still seen to be a very important element in any reordering. On our visit we found The Green to be an absolute chaotic and off-putting town core. We understand how difficult it can be to

minimise parking spaces in any area due to local business resistance, but we feel that it is absolutely critical that you turn this area into a desirable focal point for your town, and cease to see it as a parking lot. Parking should be a very secondary function of this area, focused on providing parking for disability spaces and delivery/set down points for local businesses. It could also serve as a public transport pickup drop-off point. Alternative parking should be provided close to the square, and if this is not possible perhaps you can see if you can provide a 'park and ride' solution. The entire upgrading of The Green should be properly funded and designed by the Architects/Planning Departments of your local authority/and/or with specialist architectural/conservation architectural/landscape architectural/urban designers advice in consultation with the town engineer in relation to engineering requirements.

The Courthouse looks somewhat neglected, and we would strongly recommend that you speak to the Architectural Conservation Officer in the County Council in relation to the building's future and in relation to the possible removal of ivy from the building. Chippings left at the corner of the building should be removed. . The Garda Station railings detract from the building as they require painting.

The Church of Ireland Cathedral is very well presented and the views to this building from the far area of the riverside quay are delightful. Excessive parking obscured any appreciable enjoyment of the good presentation of the Catholic Church, and even more importantly St. Lua's Oratory. Be very careful with your proposals to flood light the church. There are issues in regard to architectural conservation and in relation to wildlife to such a project. We recommend that you speak to the County Architectural Conservation Officer and the County Heritage Officer in relation to this proposal for advice.

Main Street is hilly and narrow, full of character, and choked with traffic. Its potential is enormous but totally unrealised. Presently it is a traffic 'nightmare'. We particularly admired the John Crotty/Italian warehouse building. Reddan's is bright. An empty shop at the bottom has two windows crowded edge to edge. Costcutter has too many projecting lights and clutter in the window. It is sad to see so few sash windows remaining in a heritage town.

The corrugated building at the Killaloe end of the bridge looks poorly when driving across from Ballina.

Coláiste Phobail Naomh Áine is well presented.

Abbey Street looks well and you have dealt well with the derelict property here. We would suggest that satellite dishes not be attached to front elevations of properties. As far as we are aware planning permission is required for such attachments; this requirement should be implemented.

Good stone walls to the Deanery and the Cathedral area were admired.

Convent Hill is well presented including Supervalu.

The furniture shop and the line of tidy premises near St. Lua's villas looked well, but the boundary wall to these units would benefit from repainting. We admired the nice stone sign.

The Lakes Nursing Home and retirement village looks well. Clare Care is a new building.

The Kincora Kids premises were tidy on both elevations.

We noticed a nice simple stone building at the entrance to the coastguard station.

The Fire Station was well presented. A few houses are for sale along New Street and one of these has an overgrown curtilage.

You did not say who has given you 'strict instructions' on how to restore the well in Tobermurragh Park. We expect that this advice has come from the County Architectural Conservation Officer and the County Heritage Officer. If not, do consult with them. Well done to the Men's Shed group in undertaking this work.

Landscaping and Open Spaces / Tírdhreachú agus Spásanna Oscailte:

Killaloe has a wealth of natural landscaping and is set on a verdant lake edge. Approaches to the town are through mature landscaped 'avenues.' Lakeside vegetation is lush.

You have planted spring flowers and flowering summer plants in the town. You say that the landscaping aspect of The Green project is important to you. We are quite surprised at your comment that the plan has 'specific provision for a means of ensuring that the trees will be able to have water whilst not interfering with the parking or traffic flow!' It would appear from this that all other considerations give way to traffic and parking issues. We feel that until such time as a mindset change happens the future of The Green looks a little bleak!

Good planting was observed on the edge of the Supervalu car park. Good trees along the road boundary near the Lakes Nursing Home were admired.

The grassed area with the seating near the Irish coastguard entrance looks well but cut grass had not been removed.

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

Tobermurragh Park is your main project under this category heading. You have not given us any details of the proposed interpretative or management aspects for the future of the park from a biodiversity/educational point of view. Your mark is already high in this category and we did not see any evidence on-the-ground or in your entry to increase the mark this year.

We observed hedge trimming (locations detailed under Approach Roads category) Remember that it is permissible to trim hedging along cultivated ground (e.g. gardens) throughout the year. However with regard to hedge trimming, you are reminded that it is an offence under the Wildlife Act 1976 and Wildlife (Amendment) Act 2006 to cut vegetation in a hedge or ditch on lands not cultivated between 1st March and 31st August annually - this is for the protection of nesting birds. We also noticed evidence of weed killing. Resultant burnt vegetation had not been removed. We would recommend that you desist from weeding chemically. Chemical weeding is injurious to the environment and wildlife and leaves visual scarring. We would encourage you to try to weed manually or through chemical-free methods. Your County Heritage Officer would be able to advise you in relation to this issue. We noted some ducks in the canal.

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

You honestly admit that there is nothing new to report this year in this category. Ongoing use of the bottle bank / recycling is important, but is low on the sustainable waste and resource management pyramid. We feel that you would very much benefit from some help in progressing your marks in this category. Sustainable waste and resource management is about trying not to produce waste in the first case. The Environmental Awareness Officer in your local authority would be an excellent contact to help you to put a programme together in relation to this topic. Perhaps you may be able to attend a sustainable waste and resource management seminar. In the meanwhile look at the Tidy Towns Handbook, and the revised guidelines on this topic - which were sent out with your Entry Form in 2013.

Work continues on the community garden of organic vegetable growing.

Your schools are involved in the Green Flag programme. Perhaps you could involve the students in your work. The Green Flag is a very useful educational programme both for the students and their parents, which in turn transfers to the participating communities. It is an effective way to learn how to be active in relation to sustainable waste and resource management. You could also consider getting involved in the Green Homes programme.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

You have not submitted any particular projects under this category heading - apart from 'the usual litter patrol.' The Business Association and the Secondary school students are credited with help in this area. You give us no idea as to how regular the patrol is. However on observing a number of outbreaks of littering we think that it is irregular – or certainly not as regular as needs be.

Generally the riverside area was well presented. Part of the wall is collapsed at the Tourist Information Office corner. This building and its boundaries also have excessive signage attached. The bottle banks by the river are grey and rather featureless. Litter beside included a small box. The Mill Yard/ESB property had a well presented boundary wall, but it was weedy inside the boundary. Red machinery along the quayside was well painted. The door of the stone building on the quayside needs paint. A tin can was abandoned on the window of this building. We noted a double 'headless' road sign by the river and the 'no camping' being small sign was a little battered. The 'headless' road sign should either have the relevant sign attached or be removed.

Well done to the Smith O' Brien GAA club in providing you with a shed for gardening/litter picking tools.

We note the Scouts involvement in the spring clean up.

The playground was clean as was the tennis club area.

Security railings to the school boundary near Radharc na hEaglaise would benefit from planting.

Around the town and on approaches we noticed several fly posts for cemetery Sunday. Fly posting in relation to a circus which was well over was noted close to the Garda station. Some fly posting was noted at the Abbey Street/convent Hill junction on a public light.

Smith O' Brien's GAA club near the school needs planting to the concrete block wall and a reduction in notices, as well as painting of its gates. A nursing home directional sign here is bent and a town centre sign is dirty. One green flag and two empty flagpoles were noted at the school. There were a lot of notices in the school door. More use could be made of the school notice board which requires tidying.

Across from the entrance to the Lakes Nursing Home and retirement village there is a weedy fence.

The car park at Clare Care has good plants but is very weedy,

A green village pump at the back of the Catholic Church looked somewhat abandoned,

An amount of litter was noted at the start of the East Clare way. This looks particularly bad in an area where visitors arrive or depart for the walk. We noticed planted pots surrounded by litter at a gate near the statue to Tobermurragh Park. Plastic bottles were thrown behind a small building near the access steps to the river/canal adjacent. Outside Colaiste Phobail Naomh Aine we noted a few paper cups in a flower bed. Please note our comments in relation to litter in the garage forecourt on the O'Brien's Bridge approach road and on this approach are also considered here under Litter.

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

The quality of house presentation in the town is good and within estates is also generally good. You do not appear to have any organisational contact with the estates as you say that they look after themselves.

An estate on the O'Brien's Bridge approach appears to have no name. It was generally well presented. On the open space cut grass was left in small heaps. This should be removed for composting. We also noted a good number of empty tree stake holders. These trees should be replaced. The paths were weed-free. We noted empty flagpoles. On this approach road we also noted a good (treed background) mature bin enclosure which appeared to serve adjacent apartments.

Lakeshore Marina gate was closed, but what we observed looked well.

A relatively new terraced housing estate on the town side of the bus stop on the O'Brien's Bridge approach looked somewhat run-down and repainting of properties is required. A security fence at the back of the estate looked obtrusive and requires screening.

We saw that the Mill Stream estate was the overall winner in the Best Kept Estate competition in 2011. In 2014 this estate still looked well, although the road surface is poor and some boundary walls need touching up. Here we noted good planting of the half moon green area. Bright flowers and shrubs looked well. Projecting dividing walls to a cream coloured terraced development at the top of the hill in this area were dirty.

Na Deirge estate requires the removal of dead trees from the entrance.

Most of the residential areas you say organise their own cleanups and maintain common areas.

At Radharc na hEaglaise the name sign in the stone wall looked well. A little litter was noticed in this general area. Good planting was also noted.

Marian Place should have a name sign. Good mature trees, poor but road surfacing was observed. A little litter was noticed here.

Cross roads is tranquil and leafy especially at the school end. We observed two beautifully-kept two-storey white houses with good gardens on the right-hand side of the Bridge town road and a poor complex on the town side for sale.

St Lua's Villas has a good trimmed entrance with good fencing and seating.

Béal Ború estate has a good stone splayed entrance.

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

A totally faded brown and white Heritage Trail Killaloe sign was noted on the O'Brien's Bridge approach. This sign was also partially hidden by growth. This is a poor introduction to a Heritage Town. Between the 60 KPH and the 50 KPH we observed evidence of recent hedge cutting.. We have made comment in relation to this under the Wildlife category. We also noticed some evidence of weed killing. We noticed fly posting and a sandwich board advertisement. A very poorly maintained abandoned garage and forecourt exists along this approach. The large sign is badly broken. Dirty plant containers along grass edging contained burnt weeds. There was quite an amount of litter along the margins of this property and in its recessed spaces -for example plastic bottles, papers etc. Furthermore litter from this garage forecourt had spread across the road to the An Post (?) (a turquoise building with a wire boundary). Fly posting was also noted at the corner of the garage site. This forms another poor first impression on one's entry to the town. Verges along this approach need trimming in places. Some areas were full of nettles. A large hoarding for a housing estate is dirty and should be removed. Here we noted recessed entrances with unfinished /temporary wire/gates. Some nice garden/verges were observed. A 'caution children' sign was dirty. And a bed and breakfast sign was placed in front of this sign. The paths were generally weed-free along the inner section of this approach road, and we admired the lovely hedging. Trimming of the verges was needed around the 50 KPH speed limit signs. On the left-hand side the 50 KPH sign was totally obscured by vegetation. Weeds grew at the traffic island kerbing near the bus stop. The bus stop/shelter was littered. There was graffiti on the bus stop

panel.

On the Bridgetown approach road there was further evidence of weed killing opposite the GAA and alongside. Despite this there were remaining weeds. There is a large unfinished structure on one side of the GAA property. Road surfaces in this area need attention including the edges, and the school sign was bent. The graveyard is well presented and has a nice inset gate, but chippings storage with moss growing on them outside detracted.

At the riverside the road is potholed beyond the stone building.

Some traffic signs in the centre of the town need painting such as a 'caution children' yellow and black sign on the Supervalu side (opposite a bookmaker).

We would suggest that you paint all field gates in a uniform colour within the town boundaries.

We noted the new pedestrian lights which give access to the tennis courts/children's playground, linking Cottage Road to Tobermurragh. We are sure that these are a great help.

There were road works near the school.

On the entrance to the town via the Benson Box Factory we wondered if this factory is still functioning, as it looked somewhat neglected, although it appeared to be open. There are weeds and evidence of weed killer in this area. A town centres sign at the junction wall was illegible. A string of litter along a wire fence and onwards created a poor impression on this entry to Killaloe. The Great Gas garage at the junction is neat. Good stone walling and footpaths and good fencing inwards from this point looked well, but some weeds and protruding gorse required attention.

At the junction opposite the Irish coastguard entrance the 'stop' sign needs upgrading.

On adjudication day one set of traffic lights at the western end of the bridge was not working.

We noticed some litter and evidence of discoloured vegetation due to weed killing along the outer Scariff approach.