

Tidy Towns Competition 2014

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Kilcock** Ref: **748**
County: **Kildare** Mark: **253**
Category: **E** Date(s): **17/06/2013**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2014
Community Involvement & Planning	60	40
Built Environment and Streetscape	50	28
Landscaping and Open Spaces	50	35
Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities	50	29
Sustainable Waste and Resource Management	50	15
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	46
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	32
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	28
TOTAL MARK	450	253

Community Involvement & Planning / Rannpháirtíocht an Phobail & Pleanáil:

Welcome to the SuperValu Tidy Towns Competition 2014 and congratulations on your participation of 45 years. We have noted that your committee of twelve people have a good gender balance and some have done committee skills training. We calculate that there are almost 40 meetings held altogether when you include the various sub-committees and meetings with Kildare County Council so well done on that high level of activity. You have strong links with residents, voluntary groups and schools and support from local businesses and public bodies. The use of Facebook, email, local papers and radio are some means of communication that you use to engage with the community. Many thanks for attaching a very good map of the area with project locations marked for our attention. That is a great help. However, the town centre (on the map) is concealed under stickers and it would be better if enlarged. May we suggest that submissions in future years have sections bound into a folder rather than using plastic pages as folders because they are quite cumbersome to remove and replace the material. We are pleased that you find the competition a help for planning projects including the conservation and enhancement of the natural and built heritage. We note the inclusion of your 3 year development plan and suggest that you study the Tidy Towns Handbook which is available from www.tidytowns.ie website. It is important to study the eight criteria and identify projects within your community that fit into each of the criteria and aim to phase them over the coming years. Such phasing will relate to the amount of finance required for their implementation.

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

The canal is a very attractive feature. We admired the seats, floral displays and well painted bollards. The Dragon Boat and Harbour Café looked well. For the most part, buildings along the harbour were in good condition and the area was very pleasant, enhanced by the view of the canal and stone bridge. The Wellness Centre is prominent and enhances the corner. The footpath on Bridge Street is fine and buildings for the most part were in good condition. The Tiger Tyre Centre was untidy and weedy. The Garden Centre premises look temporary. The dark building adds little to the streetscape. St. Choca's Church is a focal point from Bridge Street. It is a nice well-kept building. Scoil Choca Naofa and Scoil Dara were clean and tidy. We suggest the old sign on the pole outside Scoil dara be removed. Many premises were closed on New Lane with the exception of Callagy's Pharmacy which looked well. We admired the effort to improve Stapletons. The Square has great potential for a regeneration project/redesign, but sadly it is dominated at present by some empty buildings which spoil the view as does the car parking. Two sides of the square have commercial buildings which are operating and look well. The Ulster Bank premises are good apart from some weeds on the chimneys. Other buildings include The Barbers, The Credit Union, Horizon, Collins Auctioneers and Gregorys Tavern. Macari's building on the corner is fine but the adjacent site is derelict. We noted the improvements on the vacant site at the town square with planting and a boat and wonder if a small grassed area would be simpler to maintain and have the same effect? The train station looked fine as did Hugh Murphy's and the Rye River Café. Corscaddens was closed down. Plant containers throughout the town were

noted. St. Joseph's cemetery was in reasonably good condition but an apparent over use of herbicides is evident. An unusual and helpful feature was a map of the graves in alphabetical and numerical order. The fine plant containers at the entrance were hidden by car parking. We suggest a rearrangement to encourage right angled parking. We noted the interesting building that looked well beside the cemetery. It seems to be a former church now being used as a private dwelling. The Garda Station and the Esso Station looked fine. Presentation convent where conservation work is underway and the Shalom Nursing Home look well. We noted construction works underway. Fine specimens of Cedar and Sequoiadendron were admired in the church grounds. The car park along the rail line was well surfaced, signs were clean and a good railing is on the boundary with the rail track. The open space adjacent with a granite cross central feature was admired. Some enhancement at the entrance to the GAA complex would be beneficial. St. Joseph's School was well painted; a dead tree here needs to be removed. Scoil Ui Riada had a Green Flag. There is scope for more tree planting in the grounds. The park and playground opposite are a valuable resource for the community. The cycle and walkway along the canal is a great amenity.

Landscaping and Open Spaces / Tírdhreachú agus Spásanna Oscailte:

The main structural elements in the landscape are trees and you have some good examples especially in the church grounds and in some housing estates. There is little street tree planting in the town centre which is due to the lack of space in the narrow streets. However, there is potential in the Square for a tree planting scheme in association with a redevelopment proposal. It is noted that large steel containers with trees are placed here. Trees in containers have a limited life and limited impact and therefore we suggest that trees be planted directly into the ground as part of a proposed scheme. In the meantime, we regard the choice of trees (purple leaved plum) in the containers as too dark and do little to enhance the area. Trees with green leaves complement buildings much better. In planting new trees it is best to use a single species on a road or street for uniformity. Also, it is important to ensure that the base of new trees is maintained free of weeds and grass and also flower beds to ensure early establishment. We note that you were successful with bulb planting under trees and that is fine. When trees are established it is important to remove the stakes as the stems can get damaged from the ties or stake. This action is required in some estates as mentioned below. A guideline for plant containers is to use them only where planting directly into the ground is not possible. The use of permanent planting is encouraged rather than relying on annuals which are more time consuming. If considering more seasonal flowers the use of permanent planting including herbaceous perennials for floral displays is encouraged rather than relying on annuals which are more time consuming. We admired the planting at the Spin Bridge.

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

Kilcock is fortunate to have the canal as a resource for amenity as well as wildlife interest and we note that you have made good use of this facility by working with Waterways Ireland for information boards. Other important facilities that serve Kilcock are Donadea Forest park and Larchill Gardens. The Slí Na Sláinte trail is another important activity that makes use of natural facilities and highlights their value. You also have a rich natural area surrounding your community and it is important to promote an awareness of its many traits and to map these habitats. We enjoyed the red Valerian on the bridge. Appreciating your local wildlife resources is vital in order to achieve under this category. In this regard researching and raising awareness is more important than 'doing' at the early stages. Biodiversity is under threat globally and sadly Ireland is a part of this trend.

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

This category is becoming more and more important and the available marks are now increased to 50 to highlight the need for communities to address the issues involved in tackling the growing waste mountain that is creating problems of pollution, unwanted land use, and the use of dwindling resources. The involvement with schools in your locality is an important part of this criteria and congratulations to the four schools for achieving the Green Flags. The scrap metal collection by the soccer club is a worthwhile exercise; do you know what volumes were collected? The high usage of commuter trains is important in reducing the carbon footprint; do you have information on numbers of commuters compared with those who use their own cars? The recycling of goods through charity shops and bring banks are very relevant activities under this heading. The success of the Babyboy.ie website for reusing baby clothes is noted. However we were unable to find that site, perhaps it is misspelled. There are a number of other measures that your town can take in regard to sustainability. Contact your waste contractors and try to find out what is being thrown away and armed with this information you can start to think about how waste can be reduced. Examine the waste pyramid and note the recycling is only the fourth most preferred option after avoidance, reducing and re-using. One third of our waste is organic in nature, such as grass clippings. You can avoid collecting mown grass by more frequent cutting and using mulching mowers which shred the clippings and facilitate faster decomposition. In regard to water usage, self-watering hanging baskets are a help in reducing the amount of water used and also the task of watering. Other waste minimisation projects might include working with retailers to cut down on packaging, reminding people to re-use shopping bags, discouraging junk mail, encouraging the re-use of water bottles and coffee mugs at school and at work. In response to an over use of chemicals for weed control, many useful products of the past are no longer available and therefore communities are encouraged to use other means such as hoeing to maintain weeds. In some cases, allowing wildflowers to develop is an acceptable alternative. These activities will highlight the fact that you are focussing on this category and when you develop more projects in the future your marks will increase.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

Under this heading there are many actions that you can take, the result of which is not visible to the adjudicator. That is why we appreciate your informing us about actions such as removal of redundant ESB poles and the many

litter picks being done by your committee and cooperation from others such as Irish Rail as well as school children in Spring Cleans. Some areas such as the Tiger Tyre Centre have untidiness which takes from the impact of other actions. Some weeds in the gutters of buildings along by the Harbour. Green Lane was generally good but some weeds were growing towards the rear. On Bridge Street we noted litter, weeds at the base of walls and in some gutters of buildings. A small amount of graffiti was also observed here. Unused buildings show signs of deterioration with weeds in gutters on New Lane. The car park opposite the Ulster Bank was very untidy and littered. The entrance gates and railings need painting. Adjacent to the cemetery, a machine access gateway and an old building were unsightly. The boundary wall of the cemetery was dirty and some litter was noted here also. We admired the attractive wildflowers opposite the cemetery but the impact was spoiled by a rusty gate. Planting at the hoarding at the bus stop on Enfield Road is doing a good job in screening but we noticed some graffiti here. From the car park at the railway line, rubbish is very visible between the fence and the wall bounding on the other side of the rail line. Some litter in the vicinity of Centra. Beyond the Clane Road roundabout, the No Through Road and No Dumping signs were dirty. At Topline Clerys, we suggest reducing the number of signs. Some graffiti on signs at the park.

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

The Abbeyfield estate had good planting at the entrance, nice mature trees and the houses looked well. A dead tree at the entrance should be removed. Ryebrieger estate has great open space that is well planted and well maintained. Some stakes supporting trees need to be removed before they damage the stems. We admired the wildflower section and the laurel hedges. The small Sycamore estate was well maintained. Unfortunately, a building opposite had dirty walls. Pinewood Lawns had good trees and plant containers at the entrance. The name stone and associated plants are too shaded here and the feature would best be repositioned into a more open location. Opposite Scoil Dara we recommend climbing plants on the entrance walls to the estate. Connaught Street had some untidiness. Rye Abbey is an unfinished estate; the finished section is very good. Royal Meadows and Village Green estates have plenty of trees. However, some stakes here need to be removed. A small amount of litter noted also. Highfield Park estate looked well.

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

We enjoyed the approach from Maynooth, however, the metal sign needs cleaning. The Tourist Route sign was fine. We liked the unmown grass on the canal bank. The old Texaco sign should be removed. Road surface was poor on the Enfield Road near the Spin Bridge. The roundabout on the Enfield Road (sponsored by Lidl) was well planted and very colourful. The same comments apply to the roundabout on the Clane Road. Fingerpost signs were dirty at the junction of Enfield and Trim Road. There was also a rusty pole and a concrete rail was broken and the premises opposite were untidy. The trees looked fine. Some planting outside Whitestown House would benefit.