

Tidy Towns Competition 2014

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Kilcullen** Ref: **371**
County: **Kildare** Mark: **284**
Category: **D** Date(s): **27/06/2014**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2014
Community Involvement & Planning	60	48
Built Environment and Streetscape	50	36
Landscaping and Open Spaces	50	44
Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities	50	32
Sustainable Waste and Resource Management	50	15
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	49
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	26
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	34
TOTAL MARK	450	284

Community Involvement & Planning / Rannpháirtíocht an Phobail & Pleanáil:

Welcome to the SuperValu Tidy Towns Competition 2014 and congratulations on your 20 years of participation. We have noted that your committee of twelve people hold two meetings per month and have regular work sessions throughout the year. Having the support of three community employment workers is an important benefit. It is great that you have good community support and have strong links with residents; voluntary groups receive support from local businesses and public bodies. The use of Facebook, weblog and the monthly Community Magazine are your means of communication. The involvement with the local scouts group and other youths is commendable. We note your view that the competition helps to engender community spirit and that it has resulted in major impacts on the local landscape. Many thanks for attaching a map of the area with the Action Plan for 2014 and interesting before and after pictures with the text. Please prepare a larger map for next year as we found the text too small. Please consider preparing a plan for a three year period identifying projects appropriate to the eight criteria of the competition. This would help to obtain sponsorship and assist you in prioritising projects for each year.

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

In the Main Street we admired many well-kept buildings, most of which had window boxes. These included Rea's Take Away. Bridge Barber, The Medical Centre, An Tearmann and Bardons. The street paving was very good. We noted some weeds in gutters and chimneys. The Farm and Nature Trail and the Bridge Community accessed through an inconspicuous entrance were a delight to discover. There were farm produce, turkeys and sheep and vegetable crops to be seen at first hand. The area is also part of a walking trail. This is a unique facility in the heart of a town. Opposite the entrance to the farm, we admired the Credit Union building with the tower corner. The bridge across the Liffey looks very well with attractive lighting and hanging baskets. McTernan's, The Town Hall looked fine as did Brennan's. A boarded-up vacant house beside Brennan's has windows painted on a vacant house and we also noted similar work done on other houses, so well done. Centra and Burke's Pharmacy are well maintained and we admired the plant containers on the corners. The Kaymed premises have great specimens of trees in their grounds inside the boundary. Naas Oil premises were fine and the empty beds are an opportunity for landscape planting. The church is a fine limestone building which is clean; the walls of the car park would benefit from being painted and we noted the plant containers here. Nolan's car park opposite has a good surface and is well landscaped. The library would benefit from being painted and the sign being cleaned. New Abbey Cemetery and St. Brigid's lawn cemetery were well-maintained. St. Brigid's had a fine big entrance and we admired the birch and ash trees here. Dun Áilinne monument and information board is a fine feature at the Athy road junction. In the Cross & Passion College there were big beech and lime trees. Scoil Bhride had one Green Flag. At the Kilcullen Community Centre complex, the GAA gates were well painted, the Pitch and Putt course looked well and we liked the playground here as well. No litter to be seen. The Garda Station was fine

Landscaping and Open Spaces / Tírdhreachú agus Spásanna Oscailte:

We have noted the work done on pruning shrubs in the Valley Riverside Park to improve security for users and the ongoing work at Dun Ailinne. There are many fine specimens of trees in Kilcullen, especially in the Cross & Passion College grounds, in the Valley Riverside Park, on the approach roads and in residential estates. In particular, we admired the fine specimens of cedar and copper beech in the Cross & Passion grounds; they are a significant part of Kilcullen's heritage. These are the main structural elements in the landscape and it is important that they are given adequate care. In planting new trees it is best to use a single species on a road or street for uniformity as was done for example in Castlemartin Lodge estate. 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. Flower beds are best positioned in sunny locations where they can benefit from rainfall without the competition from tree roots. This is mentioned again under residential estates. When trees are established it is important to remove the stakes as the stems can get damaged from the ties or stake. We have made reference to this problem where it exists in some residential estates. Guideline for plant containers is to use them only where planting directly into the ground is not possible such as the 200 window boxes and 10 plant containers on the bridge which we admired. The use of permanent planting is encouraged rather than relying on annuals which are more time consuming. We saw examples of this type of planting at some entrances to residential estates. At Kilcullen Tennis Club, the grass was overgrown. The hedge in Leinster Marts softens the view from the road. Further out the road to Ballymore Eustace we were surprised to see well maintained bed of petunias. Such a scheme would serve a better purpose if it was closer to the town centre rather than its somewhat rural setting.

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

Under this heading you have mentioned the biodiversity study carried out on the river from Camphill Community to the cemetery on Dunlavin Road and the public launch of the information. The organised nature walks and trails on bats, birds and butterflies are also noted. The Kilcullen farm and Nature Trail also fits the bill for promoting an awareness of wildlife as does the Valley Riverside Park; a valuable facility for Kilcullen. You have a rich natural area surrounding your community 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. Habitats of value include specimen trees, hedgerows, treelines, streams, woodlands and wetlands.

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

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. We note the new recycling facility for bottles and cans. It would be interesting to determine the volumes of material recycled over the next year. Similarly, we would be interested in learning some further information on the composting facility in Nicholastown. It is good use of the compost to use them in window boxes and plant containers – have the plants grown well or did they require supplemental feeding? The adoption of paperless communication is innovative and we hope it works satisfactorily for you. Do you have information on the volumes of segregated material collected by your teams? Congratulations to the primary school for achieving the green flag. We note the automatic irrigation system for watering the window boxes and flower baskets and hope that they have saved you some work in manual watering. 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. 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:

The weekly litter picks on Mondays are working well as we were pleased with the level of litter control in Kilcullen. The annual clean-up no doubt yields significant volumes of material which we note is segregated for recycling. Well done on graffiti removal; we didn't see any. The several empty buildings are a challenge for you to prevent them looking untidy. Finger post signs for both cemeteries were dirty. A small amount of litter and kerbside weeds was seen in some residential estates.

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

We note that you include best kept estates in your Community Awards. Esker Lea estate has a nice entrance and boundary walls. The houses are very good and there were interesting lamps. We liked the undulating topography of the open space dotted with trees. In Esker Lea and Moanbane estates, we advise that you check the supporting stakes and ties on trees as they should not be needed after two years from planting. If not loosened or removed, they can cause damage to the tree stems. Moanbane estate had plenty of trees at the entrance including some fine Cedars. Laurel Wood had a very nice standard of piers and walls. Logstown has nice entrance planting and the

houses looked well; one is overgrown with climbing plants. Planters need refreshing and there were some weeds. Hillcrest had old flower beds at the base of trees. As mentioned under landscape above, we suggest they be removed as well as some dead trees. The grass and weeds at the base of trees need to be controlled. Some good specimen trees were seen in the estate. Small amount of litter was seen here. Riverside Manor houses and apartments look new. The meadow effect looked nice; more tree planting is needed here. Some kerbside weeds noted. Avondale Drive entrance sign was hidden behind wildflowers. There were fine specimen trees at the entrance. Some kerbside weeds also noted. Houses looked very well. Opposite the entrance we could see the remains of spring flowering bulbs. In Conroy Park, the sign was also covered with vegetation. Castlemartin Lodge had lots of trees, granite wall and nice lamps.

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

We note the reclamation of footpaths from the motorway bridge back to the town by your FAS team. The approaches to Kilcullen looked well with plenty of green foliage. The Tourist Route sign was dirty and partly hidden with vegetation and the finger post signs needed cleaning. We noted the range of works undertaken to keep the approaches to Kilcullen looking presentable. Some road surfaces are in need of improvement; perhaps these are on an audit by Kildare County Council for future programmes of works.