

Tidy Towns Competition 2014

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Kildangan** Ref: **163**
County: **Kildare** Mark: **275**
Category: **B** Date(s): **25/06/2014**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2014
Community Involvement & Planning	60	42
Built Environment and Streetscape	50	34
Landscaping and Open Spaces	50	32
Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities	50	32
Sustainable Waste and Resource Management	50	12
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	56
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	34
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	33
TOTAL MARK	450	275

Community Involvement & Planning / Rannpháirtíocht an Phobail & Pleanáil:

Welcome to the SuperValu Tidy Towns Competition 2014. We have noted that your committee of five people hold up to 10 meetings throughout the year and have strong links with residents, voluntary groups and schools. You receive support from local businesses and public bodies and benefit from TUS community employment workers. You make good use of text alerts in addition to the weekly parish newsletter. The involvement with local schools is commendable and it is good to see their participation in the Green Schools programme. It is also great to note that school children assist the village clean-up schemes through their estates. Many thanks for attaching a map of the area with project locations marked for our attention and we also appreciated the pictures in the submission. This is very helpful. We encourage communities to prepare a 3 year plan by identifying suitable projects under the eight criteria of the competition and then deciding on phasing of their implementation. We realise that funding for projects has been difficult, especially in recent years and wish your community well in the completion of the unfinished estate.

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

Kildangan Hall was well painted and the plant containers were noted. The railway bridge is a nice stone structure. Kildangan Stud has three impressive entrances and all around, the grass and hedges are well trimmed. They add a strong impact of neatness to the village environs. The Stramillian Yard also had a nice entrance and gates. The church was well painted and landscaped. The school had one Green Flag; we admired the mural and the trees. The old school house is a stone building which is being restored. The GAA grounds behind the laurel hedge and green gates had well-kept grounds. Crosskeys Pub wall needs painting. We note your information regarding the big barn. The Emo station and the Sugradh pre-school had a Green Flag.

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; there is scope for additional planting throughout Kildangan. In planting new trees it is best to use a single species on a road or street for uniformity. When trees die, they become a safety hazard and we have mentioned this in relation to the Paddock's estate below. 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. When trees are established it is important to remove the stakes as the stems can get damaged from the ties or stake. This is an issue in some residential estates mentioned below. The use of permanent planting is encouraged rather than relying on annuals which are more time consuming.

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

You have mentioned the rich natural area surrounding your community which supports wildlife, including the reserve at the bridge near Bridgeside Cottages, the railway corridor, Kildangan Stud grounds and the river running through the Paddocks estate. It is important to promote an awareness of these habitats and we note that several residents are members of Birdwatch Ireland. 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. List the plants and animals to be found in your natural environment and recognise their significance (native, protected, or alien invasive?). This would be a very useful project for schools. We note your proposals to install an information board in the village listing the flora and fauna in your community.

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. We note that the number of recycling activities taking place in the Kildangan area and wonder if it is possible to obtain information on the volumes of material collected and recycled. For example, how many tons of glass is recycled from the bottle bank? Congratulations to the local primary school for achieving their second Green Flag. The information about a reed bed system for sewage treatment in Kildangan Stud Stud is interesting. 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. One third of our waste is organic in nature, such as grass clippings. We noted grass clippings under trees in Abbotts Wood estate. This is an undesirable practice. The simplest solution is not to remove the cut grass and this can be achieved by more frequent mowing and using mulching mowers which shred the clippings and facilitate faster decomposition. If it is removed it would be best to establish a composting facility. 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:

Your ongoing litter control programme is effective because we were pleased to see very little untidiness and litter in Kildangan. The support of community employment scheme workers is a great help in this case as is the road sweeper from Kildare County Council and residents taking care of their own property. We note your plans for the removal of litter bins and wish you luck; some other communities have been successful with such an initiative. We noted some weeds in the kerb after the Emo service station and in some residential estates mentioned below.

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

Abbotts Wood estate has fine houses, is well planted and the grass is well maintained. No evidence of weeds or litter and seats were noted. Screen walls could be softened with climbing plants. Cottages opposite Abbotts Wood were grand, pity about the disused shop and house. In the unnamed estate beside The Paddocks there were plenty of trees and we saw weeds in the paving and litter. The Paddocks is an unfinished estate with a temporary entrance at which we noted one dead sycamore tree at the entrance and another beech tree nearby which is dying. Both should be removed as they are safety hazards. The estate has a nice open space. We suggest that the use of climbing plants to screen the block wall in one section be continued for other sections. Kildangan Manor has a good fence and houses. Bridgeside Cottages is a little oasis that is very tastefully done with brick and stone buildings and boundary walls; all well maintained. The gardens are well planted. Cluain Dara estate had nice houses looking onto a clover rich open space with a picnic table. The entrance sign needs cleaning and the planting requires control to enable the sign to be seen. The Courtyard estate had a well maintained hedge and grass area. There were good specimen trees and shrub and there is scope for additional trees in the margins and on the open space. We also admired the beech hedge and group of hornbeam trees. We advise that supporting stakes and ties on trees in Abbotts Wood, Kildangan Manor, Cluain Dara and the Courtyard estates be checked and loosened or removed whichever is appropriate. Stakes should not be necessary after two years of planting and if not removed they can cause damage to tree stems.

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

We note your programme of works for this year including the maintenance of hedges and trees on the main roads. The signs on these roads needed cleaning. We admired the bi-lingual Slán Abhaile signs. There was a good road surface. The Courtyard road had weeds all along the kerb and a bad road surface.