

# Tidy Towns Competition 2014

## Adjudication Report

Centre: **Kells** Ref: **397**  
County: **Kilkenny** Mark: **283**  
Category: **B** Date(s): **11/06/2014**

	<b>Maximum Mark</b>	<b>Mark Awarded 2014</b>
Community Involvement & Planning	60	42
Built Environment and Streetscape	50	37
Landscaping and Open Spaces	50	35
Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities	50	29
Sustainable Waste and Resource Management	50	12
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	62
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	32
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	34
<b>TOTAL MARK</b>	<b>450</b>	<b>283</b>

### **Community Involvement & Planning / Rannpháirtíocht an Phobail & Pleanáil:**

The concise narrative style of your submission, linked to efficient numbering of headings, is appreciated. The supremely enjoyable map that takes a real delight in the locality, and the Visitors' Guide prepared 'by kids', some of whom clearly have knowledge beyond their years, are emanations of the Kells Tidy Towns Group that mirror it's own creative absorption with the local environment. The 'weekend village makeover' catches the attention, with the motto of 'looking after your own patch'; this could be emulated to advantage by other Tidy Towns groups that are community-orientated and indeed we may see versions of it springing up elsewhere; the sense of it's being a 'fun weekend' entirely removes any notion of drudgery that might be inherent in dutiful community work. You will certainly be aware that the competition is now more community orientated than heretofore. You have been awarded a considerable increase in marking: committees should not be taken aback by the relationship of totals to last year's in the new system. Your work is understandably well supported by official agencies and local businesses, congratulations to the latter. The level of practical contribution by the school and the scouts group are well above the average found elsewhere. .

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

In visual terms Kells has a real 'villagery' feel in the best sense. The traditional buildings are well kept up with a blend of residential and commercial in the centre. The two large businesses are well presented and do not seem to interfere, rather the reverse, with village life. Murphy's and Smith's premises and the pub near the bridge are nicely presented. The Roman Catholic church was looking spic and span on the date of the visit as was the Community Centre. The Children's facility is enviably well kept. Of individual older buildings some are at advanced stages of rehabilitation: the immensity of the project at Hutchinson's Mill impressed, as did what has already been achieved at Mullin's Mill, with its museum and craft centre (and simply magical situation). From here a full view of the handsome bridge is obtained. Best wishes for continued sympathetic development at these two sites. The picturesque Church of Ireland church is well looked after, as indeed are the remains of its former building beside the Priory. It is very good to read that the scaffolding seen at the Priory is to do with an Office of Public Works regeneration scheme – a huge task. The remarkable early Christian remains at Kilree should perhaps be mentioned here.

### **Landscaping and Open Spaces / Tírdhreachú agus Spásanna Oscailte:**

The proposed village amenity area looks imaginative and not over-ambitious in plan form and we would like to hear how this progresses. It was interesting to see more emphasis on perennial herbaceous plants and also shrubs; Kells is the ideal location for 'old fashioned' garden planting. That you propagate your own plants provides an enjoyable task and a rewarding outcome. Annuals still have their place as eye-catching points of colour; well tended

window-boxes and containers were noted throughout the village. Young trees were favourably noted. The entrance area to the Priory with its picnic tables is most attractively planted and neatly kept; the interpretative boards are well placed here and provide fascinating information. A new hedgerow was seen at Prior Grove. It is good to read that you put down bulbs for spring showing.

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

The engagement of a third level student on a holy well rediscovery project is an enterprising departure. The collection of information by the pupils of St Brigid's National School for use in the Guide to Kells, with its list and photographs of local animal and bird life, is exemplary, stemming according to your notes, from an earlier survey of the wild life of the King's River. It is so encouraging to read that regular walks of this fascinating riverine area – so greatly connected with fine examples of manmade structures of earlier centuries – are undertaken: do you facilitate parties of interested tourists? now that walking and cycling have become so popular.

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

You do not mention the input of the school under his heading, perhaps as a Green Flag recognized school that goes without saying. Much of the components of this topic are invisible to the adjudicators and so we rely on what you report of your activities and thus are able to recommend increases in marking. Use of river water to irrigate the numerous plantings is one of them. You mention your Facebook page as significantly reducing paper use. A discreetly placed but highly accessible bring bank was favourably noted near the bridge; it is understood that you make use of WEEE collection and that clothes are similarly disposed of. You emphasize the importance of composting and that one of the estates has its own compostor. It is noted that a resident mulches contributed waste. Being a rural community you are much more aware of the importance of natural fertilizer than urban dwellers and in this regard it is noted that you obtain topsoil and manure from local farmers.

### **Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:**

The cement block wall leading to the Children's Centre compares unfavourably with the stone walls that are so prominent in and around the village. A weedy area with a cement platform for an unknown purpose near Priory Grove will no doubt become concealed by the new hedging. It is probably correctly assumed that you undertook an immense amount of tidying up after the winter storms and the uprooting of trees – if so, there is nothing left to show for this and your diligence is commendable. The "before" and "after" pictures of an improved field entrance create thoughts of how much the rural landscape has deteriorated (throughout the country) and how well projects of this kind restore pride as well as convenience. As to litter control, your community clean-ups are clearly successful. It is good to read that the local scout groups are very vigilant of litter 'when out on their activities' and this seems to imply that litter-picking is not imposed as a drudgery. The work of your Tus helper must surely be greatly appreciated.

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

As mentioned above, business and residential properties blend well in the village centre. The motto 'Each householder responsible for their own patch', now disseminated widely, originated here. It is most constructive to have the people from the various housing sectors meet informally – so much clearly merges from this practice. Charming old stone houses festooned with flowers were seen on the Ennisnag road. The quaint stone houses just off the village centre are obviously greatly loved, as is the thatched cottage. The chic Burgery Court looks highly prosperous. Planting in Priory Grove, both individual and on open spaces, is of a high standard. You are right when you say that houses that do not have front gardens make very good use of window boxes and hanging baskets.

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

Particularly good stone wall construction was admired on the Kilkenny road; excellent roadside planting and trim verges were noticed here too. As well as stone boundaries, timber fencing where it exists catches the eye attractively, as do native hedges. Poor road surfacing was encountered in the centre of the village and some footpaths leave much to be desired. The interpretative signage is excellent at the bridge (as it is at the Priory). The car park at the Priory and the car park at the Handball Club are well maintained. The design of the new name signage was admired. Good luck for the lighting on the bridge.