

Tidy Towns Competition 2017

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Killeigh** Ref: **596**
County: **Offaly** Mark: **253**
Category: **A** Date(s): **21/06/2017**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2016	Mark Awarded 2017
Community Involvement & Planning	60	32	32
Built Environment and Streetscape	50	39	39
Landscaping and Open Spaces	50	40	40
Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities	50	16	16
Sustainable Waste and Resource Management	50	9	10
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	46	46
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	34	35
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	35	35
TOTAL MARK	450	251	253

Community Involvement & Planning / Rannpháirtíocht an Phobail & Pleanáil:

Thank you for your application to the 2017 Tidy Towns competition. Your application was concise (don't be afraid to write a little more!) and the attractive map was helpful. You have a small committee but others who volunteer and help out with your work. Do you have any TÚS or CE workers that work with you? The Community Grants Scheme has supported your work. Do you work with other agencies or bodies that might be able to provide resources, ideas and/or advice e.g. the Heritage Officer and Environmental Awareness Officers in Offaly County Council, Inland Fisheries Ireland (in relation to the river) etc. Do you partner with local groups or organisations apart from the National School e.g. the local GAA club, local businesses and pre-school? It's great that you see the Tidy Towns Competition as an incentive to carry out new project work. A three-year plan, as recommended by last year's adjudicator could greatly help by providing direction for your work. Some photos of your activities would be most helpful with you application, particularly before and after shots.

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

The village green in Killeigh is a wonderful centre piece for the village. The green reflects some of the rich heritage of the area and interpretive panels offer information to the visitor. One of the panels is a bit lost under vegetation, though, and not easy to find. It could be refreshed and perhaps re-located. Some of the shrubs in the green require some gentle pruning to improve their form and vigour. There are several attractive houses facing on to the green, which add to the strong identity of the village.

Doyles Pub is very well presented with a freshly painted exterior and attractive signage. The pre-school is a delight with colourful boots outside the front door. The school looked very well too on adjudication day although there was some litter close to the school gates. The trees along the road frontage provide great screening for the school and bring nature into the playground. The grounds of the Catholic Church would benefit from some additional planting to soften its appearance (e.g. between the church and the GAA grounds) but there is some nice hedging to the rear. The GAA grounds are most impressive and were a hive of activity on adjudication day. A newly landscaped area celebrates local heroes. While this area looks a bit sparse at present, the planting should develop over time. The gates to the club are very nice. The front wall would benefit from painting but otherwise the grounds very tidy with no litter. It is worth seeking advice from the Heritage Officer and/or Inland Fisheries Ireland prior to undertaking any river clean ups. It is important to keep our rivers clean but it is also important to do it in a way that doesn't inadvertently cause more damage. The 'Blessed Wells' walkway is a pleasant walking route. Some information on where best to park would be helpful.

Landscaping and Open Spaces / Tírdhreachú agus Spásanna Oscailte:

As stated above, some of the shrubs in the village green would benefit from gentle pruning. There were quite a few

weeds in the paths and the beds, and some litter. The area looks so inviting from a distance but it needs a little more work to help it truly shine. You adjudicator sat on the picnic benches and enjoyed the sunny day but I wondered how many locals use this space. It might be worth thinking about potential users and how the space could be upgraded somewhat to make it more inviting. Spraying herbicide around the base of mature trees to keep the grass down is unnecessary and not recommended.

There are several attractive flower beds and planters around the village that add a splash of colour. You could consider incorporating some perennials that will attract pollinators into your planting schemes. This could be a good project for the school too. Consult the Offaly Heritage Officer for advice.

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

The natural wild area in the village green is a nice addition. A little more information on how this area is managed would be helpful. A small sign to highlight this area could raise awareness of the value of leaving some areas unmown. Again, consult your Heritage Officer for more information. This wild area could be expanded as the green is very large. It would reduce your mowing costs, as well as benefiting wildlife. The biodiversity flag the school is pursuing will provide great opportunities for collaborating on wildlife-friendly projects. The Seven Blessed Wells is a natural walkway that should be a haven for wildlife. Please ensure no herbicide use near the small stream or any water-bodies. Herbicides are bad for our health and the environment and they should only be used with caution. This area could be enhanced by planting a native hedge adjacent to the fencing around the wells. It would be great to learn more about the hives kept nearby. Perhaps you could run a talk on beekeeping or the importance of pollinators during Heritage Week. The Heritage Officer or local beekeeper may be able to help in this regard.

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

It's good to hear that the school are working hard on their green flag. There are at an advanced stage in the green schools programme, which represents a considerable amount of work and dedication. It would be great if some of their projects could be extended to the rest of the village and the work of the Tidy Towns Group e.g. water butts for collecting rainwater to water planters, promoting home composting, recycling electrical goods, disposing of batteries safely etc. The Environmental Awareness Officer in Offaly County Council has a wealth of information on this category and could greatly aid your work. There is also lots of information on the Tidy Towns website. Have a look at what other Tidy Towns Groups are doing and talk to them about how they approach this category.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

Very little litter was encountered on adjudication day apart from a small amount village green and in front of the school. The impression of the village as your drive through is very positive with the mature trees in the green, colourful planters and attractive buildings. There are some weeds in the gravel area of the green and a couple of other locations with shrubs. Planting ground cover will minimise the need to weeding by covering all bare soil. Perhaps weeds could be pulled where spotted on your weekly tidy evenings. The sign to the Seven Blessed Wells needs to be cleaned

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

Residential areas in and around the village are maintained to a very high standard. There are many mature trees and attractive gardens.

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

Traffic calming measures would be very beneficial for Killeigh as many vehicles travel at speed through the village. The approach roads are attractive but there is potential for more tree planting to create a 'gateway' to the village.

Concluding Remarks:

I really enjoyed an opportunity to stop in a village I have often driven through. Keep up the good work and seek advice where required.