

Tidy Towns Competition 2017

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Killarney**

Ref: **340**

County: **Kerry**

Mark: **328**

Category: **F**

Date(s): **20/06/2017**

26/07/2017

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2016	Mark Awarded 2017
Community Involvement & Planning	60	48	48
Built Environment and Streetscape	50	40	41
Landscaping and Open Spaces	50	47	47
Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities	50	37	39
Sustainable Waste and Resource Management	50	21	21
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	59	60
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	33	33
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	38	39
TOTAL MARK	450	323	328

Community Involvement & Planning / Rannpháirtíocht an Phobail & Pleanáil:

Killarney is very welcome to the SuperValu National TidyTowns Competition 2017; thank you for your clear submission with helpful map and five-year plan. It is clear from spending time in Killarney that the community lives up to its motto "working together we can achieve so much more". There is a good working relationship between all involved with the development of the town and its community which is a pleasure to witness. The links with the schools are an investment in the towns future. Communication methods are 'tried and tested' and get the Tidy Towns message across effectively. It is a pleasure to see the contribution the TidyTowns Competition has made to the life of the community and the appearance of the town, a job well done!

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

Killarney's streetscapes within the town centre looked really well with the lack of overhead service cables, attractive lamp-standards and other street furniture and nicely presented shopfronts; roller security shutters to the roadside of windows were noted in some instances however many were brightly painted and looked well with others less so. O'Sullivan Cycles was admired for the presentation of its gable wall and sets the standard in this respect. It was a pleasure to note improvements to the O'Shea's Motor premises given that the building is a key focal point in its streetscape. The refurbishment of the Flesk Restaurant draws the eye immediately, however be careful that posters in the window don't detract from an otherwise excellent presentation. Public buildings, the Town Hall, St Mary's Church and in particular St Michael's Cathedral all enjoy a magnificent presentation! The newly developed Killarney Cultural Centre is favourably noted too. Amenity spaces at High Street and Fairhill add significantly to the amenity status of the town. Killarney House and Gardens remains of course a major element of the townscape.

Landscaping and Open Spaces / Tírdhreachú agus Spásanna Oscailte:

Roundabouts are beautifully landscaped and particular praise goes to roundabouts marking entrances to Killarney from approach roads. The Park Road roundabout is dazzling in the display of colour. The Saint John's wort shrub lining the road at the entrance from the Kenmare Road catches the eye favourably. Might the stone beds at intervals along Port Road be planted for pollinators? The 'Tree Trail' is an excellent initiative being fun, educational and of course an occasion for gentle exercise; the Monterey Cypress within the grounds of St Mary's Church is especially impressive (your adjudicator all the way to Monterey in California to view these trees in their natural setting, imagine how pleased I was to find such a magnificent specimen in Killarney!). The completion of landscaping at Killarney House and Gardens is looked forward to, work achieved to date has been so successful. The Tralee Road Viewing Point and Picnic Area delights also. The three-year tree planting programme is an excellent initiative. A successful balance appears to have been achieved between permanent and summer planting and choices made have been in the interest of wildlife.

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

Well done on on-going work to control invasive species which is a tiring and expensive undertaking but is essential for biodiversity. The pollination project is favourably noted in this respect. The biodiversity study in the National Park has had some surprising results. The series of public talks given by the Killarney National Parks and Wildlife Services sounds so interesting your adjudicator wishes to have been in the audience. The clean-up of the River Deenagh is commendable, hopefully it will remain clean. The Sports and Leisure Centre and the Fitzgerald GAA stadium are nicely presented the latter featuring an attractive roadside boundary wall.

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

It is good to note the participation of Killarney's schools in the Green flag Programme' the students are to be commended for their involvement and success to date. The take up with the Green Hospitality initiative is encouraging too and we anticipate its expansion. Can a figure be placed (even an informed 'guesstimate') on water saved by separating storm water from the sewerage system? If so this can be a start in quantifying resource savings and used to formulate future goals to measure Killarney's progress to being a zero waste town eventually. The provision of e-car facilities is noted. Some dumping was evident at the recycling point in the Rock Road / High Street carpark.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

The audit of collected litter is useful in devising a strategy to reduce the amount on our streets; other initiatives such as 'Adopt a Road and the Wednesday Clean-Up are no doubt responsible for Killarney looking so good most of the time; the Meitheal Work is invaluable also. Litter control was very strong throughout Killarney's town centre with the exception of Chapel Place and the stretch of road leading to the Brook Lodge Hotel which was quite littered again this year although not as bad as in previous years; the new tree planters here (outside the Centra premises) looked great unfortunately the container was spoiled with beer bottles cans and other rubbish around the base of the trees. Some cans and bottles were noted in the stretch of the river Deenagh within the National Park, the river clean-up earlier in the season has been acknowledged. Work accomplished in respect of graffiti, weeds, signage, dog fouling and more has not gone unnoticed.

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

Green open spaces within residential estates enjoy good maintenance and identification signage in most instances. The good working relationship with residents of estates and the grass cutting of public open spaces within estates by the Municipal Council has made a significant contribution; the refurbishment of footpaths is important also. A few roadside boundary walls need to be improved on entering Killarney from the N23; try to get residents to take responsibility for roadside areas to their boundary walls also.

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

As noted above Killarney's roundabouts which mark entrances to the town centre from approach roads are beautifully presented. Road direction signs are good with high visibility and easy to understand directions. Car parking appears to be ample throughout the town and carparks are nicely presented in general; the entrance to the one at the Rock Road / High Road was admired in respect of its landscaping. Although road and footpath surfaces are good overall some stretches of footpath are spoiled with chewing gum and bird droppings and many road edges within the town centre are quite uneven. Street furniture looks well in general although seating along Port Road needs attention and the interpretive sign for Red Deer and Sika Deer badly needs repainting. A high wall near the charming Grotto is weather stained and could be improved and the same point applies to stretches of high wall along Countess Road. Well done on the Plunkett Street redevelopment.

Concluding Remarks:

Killarney is a wonderful town with plenty to offer all lucky enough to experience its charms. Congratulations on your Purple Flag status.

Second Round Adjudication:

There are very few places that are as pleasing to visit during the summer months as Killarney in County Kerry. This year proved to be no exception and we were delighted to find that the improvements in your town have continued unabated with a number of wonderful new projects added for 2017. The opening of the newly restored pleasure gardens in the grounds of Killarney house and the provision of an interpretive centre in the house itself provide excellent illustrations of how Killarney is determined to continually enhance its many attractions and distinctive features. The renovation of the town hall also provides a reminder of your laudable commitment to maintaining and improving your historic buildings – of which you have many and we were pleased to see that the vast majority are in excellent condition and productive use. Using the lovely old telephone box to house a defibrillator is another innovative example of your conservation focused approach! We were interested to see the revitalization of the Cultural Centre and we understand that this project is ongoing with phase 1 complete and future work phases anticipated. A major attraction of your town is the many splendid shops, pubs and restaurants that are presented to an exceptionally high standard. While good examples are far too numerous to mention, it is pleasing to see that business owners recognize the importance of building maintenance and the refurbishment of the Flesk Restaurant provides firm evidence of this. We were particularly impressed with your attention to the public realm with some significant enhancements observed. The glass rock feature at Anne Street is particularly striking while the

improvements to the amenity space at Fair Hill that include the addition of the 1916 Garden of Remembrance (with its 7 Killarney Strawberry Trees) are similarly impressive. These works compliment the many existing sculptures and works of art such as the Monsignor O'Flathery monument and they provide an additional layer of interesting features in your lovely town. The almost complete absence of litter and cleanliness of signage, roadsides, benches and litter bins further improve the appearance of Killarney. However, it is noted that the total number of bags of litter collected each year is somewhat constant and we wondered if the reason for this is known.

The appointment of a horticulturist has proved to be an inspired move with abundant examples of this to be seen during adjudication. The tree planting programme is particularly impressive and in our view, serves as an example for others to follow while the tree trail is very effective at illustrating the diversity and quality of the trees to be found in Killarney. We also loved the mature trees to be found along New Road. We strongly endorse your departure from displays based on seasonals to permanent planting schemes comprising shrubs, perennials and evergreens and some wonderful examples of this could be seen on the roundabouts around the town with the Lissivigeen roundabout and the Supervalu roundabout (on the N22) standing out. You are commended on your many excellent wildlife projects and we were most impressed with your collaboration with IT Tralee to complete a biodiversity study. Is it proposed to use these studies to monitor biodiversity in the years ahead? If so, be sure to find a role for the schools in this process. Your excellent work on removing rhododendrons and Japanese Knotweed is also appreciated. The many projects that you have undertaken with respect to sustainable waste and resource management is appreciated but we agree with the first round adjudicator and recommend that your focus must now switch to quantifying the impact of these initiatives. Has green hospitality meant a reduction in phosphates, if so, how much? Is more recycling taking place this year than last year? If so, by what percentage? In terms of sustainable travel, what proportion of visitors arrive in Killarney by bus and train? The answers to these questions will tell you whether your projects are working and that is why we would like to know them. The standard of presentation of residential areas was particularly high during our visit so well done to the hard working residents associations who make this possible. The approach roads into Killarney also looked very well with carefully maintained verges, trees, landscaping, clean signage and attractive boundaries and this is most effective at creating a positive impression.

The effort required to achieve this strong performance is appreciated and we would like to commend the committee (with its 20 core members), the 500 volunteers and the many other groups and organisations involved for their vision and hard work this year. As always, we are very looking forward to returning to Killarney in 2018!