

Tidy Towns Competition 2017

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Kiskeam** Ref: **654**
County: **Cork(North)** Mark: **315**
Category: **A** Date(s): **05/07/2017**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2016	Mark Awarded 2017
Community Involvement & Planning	60	42	43
Built Environment and Streetscape	50	45	46
Landscaping and Open Spaces	50	45	45
Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities	50	30	30
Sustainable Waste and Resource Management	50	14	14
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	68	69
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	32	33
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	35	35
TOTAL MARK	450	311	315

Community Involvement & Planning / Rannpháirtíocht an Phobail & Pleanáil:

Kiskeam is very welcome to the 2017 Tidy Towns competition. This was this adjudicator's first visit to Kiskeam and I was very impressed by the huge amount of work you have carried out over the years. The results are wonderful and your village struck me as very vibrant with its heritage celebrated and enjoyed by its inhabitants and visitors alike. Many thanks for your clear map and accompanying legend and for their very thoughtful lamination although thankfully Kiskeam was basking in sunshine the day of my visit! You have an extensive list of volunteers and supporters – this is great to see. Anyone who visits Kiskeam can clearly see that there is a vibrant community spirit with everyone pulling together to improve quality of life for all – the epitome of the Tidy Towns spirit. Well done to all.

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

Kiskeam is a very pleasant place to stroll around with a lovely mix of old and modern houses set against a beautiful backdrop of the Araglin river and its river meadow habitats. Everywhere was looking well-cared for and maintained. The newly surfaced Why Not car park was noted as were all the well painted street furniture, the school and graveyard walls. The Old Lane provides a lovely vista and a glimpse into the busy history of Kiskeam – the heritage noticeboards helped paint the picture. Although the old cottages are derelict you clearly, have carried out a lot of work on them and have them looking their possible best. This kind of result is hard to achieve so well done to all concerned.

Landscaping and Open Spaces / Tírdhreachú agus Spásanna Oscailte:

The Glouneen River Walk is a wonderful amenity and its history as a main thoroughfare linking the two parts of the village is highly unusual so it is terrific to see this part of the village being looked after and well-used by all. With this part of the village being a natural landscape, perhaps it calls for some more natural planting ideas – a swathe of wildflower meadow for example could be left grow along the narrow grass strip on the eastern side of the path (in the long run this means less maintenance work for yourselves). See the Community version of the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan which is freely downloadable from the National Biodiversity Data Centre for lots of ideas and guidance. The green shed/gazebo was looking a little sad and the bench in front of it was broken, this part of the Park has great views and I imagine this shed would make a great rain and wind shelter if it were open. It also struck me that this area could make a terrific Outdoor Classroom for your local school – so much potential! All the little parks are obviously well cared for and for a small village you have several which means a lot of work. The roses in the 1916 Memorial Garden looked stunning on the day of my visit. The Grotto had also had work done, this area appears a perfect rock garden situation and perhaps in the future the planting of some arctic-alpine plants might work here – they'll mind themselves into the future leaving you less maintenance and their flowers will be great for

our much-needed pollinators. The flowerbeds along the main street of the village were looking well – in particular the planting around the church looked well – the Hypericum shrubs in the carpark were beautiful in the sunshine.

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

It is great to see that you are working with the terrific IRD Duhallow LIFE project – they will be a great source of guidance and ideas for you. Your knowledge and appreciation of the special species of your area such as the Hen Harrier and the Freshwater Pearl Mussel is great to see – keep spreading the word as most Irish people don't realise the natural wonders we have on our doorstep. I note your piece about the fencing off of the Araglin banks from livestock in order to prevent pollution – this is so important, especially for silt-vulnerable species like the Freshwater Pearl Mussel – well done to all concerned. As noted above the Glouneen River Walk is a beautiful spot and lots of biodiversity was noted during my visit. There are already wonderful wildflowers here and if you wanted to create a wildflower meadow you wouldn't even need to buy seed! Just leave areas unmowed til late June- early July and then mow once more in September and remember a wildflower meadow doesn't have to be a large block of grass – it could be a long, narrow strip such as along one side of the path and/or managing the area along the riverbank in the same way. Also a point to note in relation to hedgerow management is that apart from not trimming during the bird-nesting season, ideally hedges should only be trimmed every three years in order to maximise their flower and fruit production. Irish hedgerows are vitally important food sources for our wild birds and mammals as well as the pollinating insects. Only trimming your hedges every three years (obviously apart from the odd unruly stem that's poking walkers in the eye!) means less work for your volunteers and has benefits for biodiversity. I noted the patch of dead Japanese Knotweed on the Ballydesmond Rd but unfortunately another section of this tenacious plant is growing just metres away – this will need to be addressed by Cork Co. Co. if they are not aware of it already.

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

You've carried out a lot of work on Energy and Waste surveys of your local community. This is very laudable and will guide you as to where to spend your own energies in the coming years. Composting is a great way of harnessing waste to produce something very useful – particularly for all the beautiful flowerbeds and gardens of Kiskeam! On my visit to Glouneen I noted that all the grass cuttings were being left in a heap beside the river bank. Unfortunately this is not a good idea as rotting grass exudes a nutrient-rich run-off which pollutes adjacent watercourses. Cork Co. Co. Environmental Awareness Officer and/or your local Communities water Officer should be able to advise you on how best to deal with the grass cuttings – something like a 'New Zealand pallet box' composting system is ideal and make sure to place it at least 10m away from a watercourse. Alternatively do not collect the grass cuttings but let them lie where they fall. Also if you follow the wildflower meadow idea you won't have so much grass cuttings to deal with!

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

Kiskeam looked immaculate on the day of my visit – you have clearly put in a huge effort at tidiness and litter control and this is not at all easy for a village with a busy thoroughfare going right through it – well done to everyone on this.

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

The Sheltered Housing Units along the Old Lane looked very well cared-for. Every house was beautifully painted and so many private gardens looked gorgeous – lots of sources for herbaceous perennial cuttings for public planting areas if the gardener owners are feeling generous!

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

Lovely approach roads lined with great hedgerows and wildflowers as befitting the rural location and backdrop.

Concluding Remarks: