

# Tidy Towns Competition 2017

## Adjudication Report

Centre: **Kells** Ref: **397**  
County: **Kilkenny** Mark: **303**  
Category: **B** Date(s): **25/06/2017**

|   | Maximum Mark | Mark Awarded 2016 | Mark Awarded 2017 |
|---|--------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Community Involvement & Planning          | 60           | 42                | 43                |
| Built Environment and Streetscape         | 50           | 40                | 40                |
| Landscaping and Open Spaces               | 50           | 38                | 38                |
| Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities  | 50           | 33                | 34                |
| Sustainable Waste and Resource Management | 50           | 13                | 14                |
| Tidiness and Litter Control               | 90           | 64                | 65                |
| Residential Streets & Housing Areas       | 50           | 34                | 34                |
| Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes           | 50           | 34                | 35                |
| <b>TOTAL MARK</b>                         | <b>450</b>   | <b>298</b>        | <b>303</b>        |

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

We welcome Kells to the Supervalu Tidy Towns competition 2017. You have made significant progress in recent years and are now at a high level in the competition. Thank you for your entry form, which was accompanied by a helpful map and photos. We would kindly request that you submit a bigger version of your map (A4 size would be fine) so we can more easily pinpoint your work. You also included a brief summary, which includes your plans for future projects in Kells.

Your voluntary committee of six members has good support from local businesses in the area. Positive engagement with Kilkenny County Council is also helping you to achieve your goals. We are glad to read that you are now receiving good support from Kells N.S., Cubs, After-school Club and the Bahai Community. You communicate with your residents via posters, flyers, church notices, texting, Facebook and local radio. Keep up the good work.

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

Kells is an attractive village built around the bridge crossing of the King's river. The village is steeped in history and the impressive built heritage tells its own story. We were delighted to see some work going on at the Hutchinson Mill area. We're not sure that this might be but look forward to an update next year. The old forge 'windows' have been painted for good effect. Shirley's pub looks fresh – we admired the wall mural here. Smyth's building is neatly presented – just be mindful any unnecessary items lying around the front area that tend to give an untidy impression. All was in good order at the Squash and Handball Club – we personally would feel that more vibrant colour would work for any future painting job – good landscaping was noted here. The iconic phone box looks great. We were intrigued by the American spelling on the sign to the Kells Childcare Centre, even more curious about the sign across the way 'To all the Hens past and present' at the attractive Community Centre/ Scout Den! The Old Motte & Bailey and Bob's shop are fine – the latter would look a lot more aesthetically pleasing without the main window blocked off. ML Murphy Auto body Repairs was neat in presentation.

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

You have done some nice work within this category while still respecting your local biodiversity. The colourful raised bed surrounding the water pump outside Smyths draws the eye from the commercial side of things. The stone bed along here also looks well. Window boxes and hanging baskets throughout the village bring a welcome splash of colour. We loved the undulating playground and the way it has been landscaped, particularly both meadows of ox-eye daisies and the little log cabin hidden in the 'wilder' central area. There is scope to plant a native hedge along the car park boundary fence in the future, when resources allow. We note you have had to recently replace a few trees here. Do keep the tree at the car park entrance gate trimmed so it doesn't impede access. Flowers on the front rails of the church enhance the entrance here as do the flowers in front of the Community Hall. The two smaller

black containers weren't in great condition, unlike the larger planters. We noted the attractive stone flower bed at the Kings River sign. The raised bed at the crèche car park is lovely and the creepers are starting to provide some screening. Well done to the children for their gardening enthusiasm! We particularly liked the photos of the sunflowers from last summer.

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

You are making good progress here and have heartily embraced the National Pollinator Plan – well done. Getting the right advice is key and there is plenty of it available for free. We admired the perennials at the lovely St. Mary's (COI). You have put a lot of work in here to clear the area of invasive laurel to make way for more wildlife friendly planting (trees, flowers, shrubs). Do please continue your management of the laurel along this boundary section as it can be invasive. We would also recommend that you remove any sycamore saplings that arise as a result of reseeding here. King's bridge is lovely – we noted good wildlife signage here and learned of the Priory loop walk. We struggled to find it later on but perhaps your planned signage will rectify this over the coming months. The area at the Mill Craft Centre is just lovely – the picnic area is beautifully maintained and the unspoilt Island walk was enjoyed. It is heartening to see these buildings in use and we wish the owners well.

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

Congratulations on getting your new polytunnel up and running – this is a great way to galvanise the community as well as produce food and be more sustainable by growing your own plants from seeds instead of transporting them thousands of miles. You have also been innovative in sourcing harvested rainwater from a nearby roof. You have reused your flower pots and overwintered plants inside where possible instead of letting them go to waste. You are using horse manure as an alternative to fertiliser. You have reused and recycled plants for your Pollinator project at St. Mary's COI. What stage is the school at in terms of its Green Flag programme? Tie-in with their actions should be easily achieved. How do distribute your fruit and vegetable crops? The little WEEE library was noted at the Mill Centre. We commend your initiative to collect jam jars; however we personally feel the two containers here give a somewhat untidy impression and might attract further litter/dumping. Could you have a drop-off point elsewhere in the village? We look forward to hearing of further progress next year.

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

Kells presents a neat and tidy appearance. Well done for getting the school, cubs and after-schools club involved in your litter-picking efforts. Many hands make light work...Your 'National Spring Clean' in April sets the tone for the season – well done for your efforts to segregate the litter for recycling where possible. Your ongoing litter patrols (are these daily/weekly/as required?) keep on top of the litter situation. Your new customised wheelie litter bin is assisting your collection efforts. Litter thrown from passing traffic is a very frustrating issue for many villages.

There were a few very minor Tidiness issues that could be easily rectified. The blue barrel (on its side) inside St.Kieran's church should be removed or put to good purpose. One of the picnic tables here will require attention soon, as will the wire mesh fence at the gate into the priory. The flower beds each side of the steps are lovely; we just couldn't figure out the purpose of the plastic plant containers on their sides? It just detracted a little. Can the Mills Market sign here be cleaned or refreshed as it was quite difficult to read? A paper poster was barely hanging on at the playground gate. A broken planter but should be removed from the unoccupied premises beside Bob's shop. Closed-down/unoccupied businesses are always a challenge. It would be great if the debris around the old petrol pumps could be swept up and areas inside windows decluttered (both buildings). In the ideal world, we would love to see these buildings painted in the near future as they feature prominently.

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

Kells residents are obviously proud of their lovely village. Residences along approach roads were neatly presented. We admired some lovely gardens with a good mix of colour for year round interest. Kells has a few residential developments, all very nicely maintained and landscaped. Some have lovely open green areas. Burgess Court has some good tree planting. A neat row of homes was observed close to the playground and another lovely terrace on the Callan Road. Priory Grove is a neat development of modern homes with some lovely landscaping at its entrance. The neat townhouses across from the phone box fit in well with the village streetscape. We admired the charming cottages on Danesfort Rd. Well done for your ongoing engagement with all Kells residents – continue this approach.

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

We enjoyed the lovely countryside views from the Priory car park, with the impressive Priory in the distance. Stone walls are another fine feature in Kells and really enhance the overall impression, particularly on the road from the Priory into the village. We observed very good signage for cycling routes throughout the village. The newly surfaced car park at the Creche really tidies up this whole area including the bottle banks. We wish you luck in securing a new footpath to the playground and look forward to an update next year.

### **Concluding Remarks:**

We were very impressed by our first visit to Kells as well as your positive 'can do' approach and community spirit. Well done Kells and keep up the good work.

