

Tidy Towns Competition 2018

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Kilcock** Ref: **748**
County: **Kildare** Mark: **279**
Category: **E** Date(s): **29/06/2018**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2017	Mark Awarded 2018
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	60	43	44
Streetscape & Public Places	50	31	32
Green Spaces and Landscaping	50	36	37
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	50	32	33
Sustainability – Doing more with less	50	20	21
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	48	48
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	33	33
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	30	31
TOTAL MARK	450	273	279

Community – Your Planning and Involvement / An Pobal - Pleanáil agus Rannpháirtíocht:

Cuireann an moltóir seo fáilte roimh Kilcock Cill Choca chuig Comórtas na mBailte Slachtmhara SuperValu 2018 agus chuig Ceiliúradh 60 Bliain an Chomórtais. Kilcock is most welcome to the SuperValu Tidy Towns competition 2018, your 48th year entering the competition. Thank you for your Application, your 3 Year Plan 2017-2019, newspaper cuttings, leaflets, wonderful historic and contemporary photographs and reference Map. Your submission was clear and concise and provided plenty of good quality information which was most appreciated by the adjudicator. The map showing the various sites of interest was easy to read and with a numbered legend, was helpful in navigating around Kilcock. The historic town of Kilcock has been transformed in recent years with new developments and population growth. It has now the potential to become a central hub of economic, social and cultural activity ensuring the continued vitality and vibrancy of the Town Centre. The work of Tidy Towns fosters pride of place and your input is important in guiding the sensitive and sustainable development of the Town into the future. You have a Committee comprising 6 members, with 10 volunteers. You engage with a range of organisations to further your goals and you value most of all the support of local residents who through the 'adopt an area' initiative care for specific parts of the Town. You have had a busy year and you are to be commended for the planned and rounded approach to your participation in the Tidy Towns competition. Your partnership with local groups and the Kildare County Council provides for a sharing of your vision. It is wonderful for two of your members to have been nominated for their contribution which was acknowledged at the Community Awards night organised by Kildare County Council. Your deep interest and pride of place is demonstrated in your commitment to make Kilcock shine and your motto 'it's easy to make a difference'. It is praiseworthy that you engage with experts such as Dara Wyer and Dr Christy Boylan to guide your work. It is commendable that you have strong links and support with a diverse range of over 20 Organisations and Businesses; well done on this. Your involvement in the Kilcock Community Network is further testimony to your dedication and strategic determination. We wish you success with your planned initiatives including partnering with your local SuperValu store in arranging an instore information event, flying of the Irish Flag and promotion of the new greenway.

Streetscape & Public Places / Sráid-Dreach & Áiteanna Poiblí:

It is fortunate that Kilcock has a layout and streetscape where the original building form based around the historic and ancient marketplace has remained largely unchanged since mediaeval times. The market Square was a busy hive of activity twice weekly until the 1950's after which there was some decline in business activity. The recent regeneration scheme has added a renewed vibrancy to this area. There are many heritage buildings to enjoy within the curtilage of the Town Centre and with the recent development of the Market Square as a civic space and urban plaza, the quality of the streetscape experience here has improved greatly. On the Enfield approach to Kilcock the gable facing the road at the Healthy Lifestyle Club/Config. building has become badly stained and unsightly and would be improved with painting. The frontage of Shalom Nursing Home was well presented as was the Timeless

Café premises. One wonders what the future plans are for the Corscadden's building, whose current condition is somewhat forlorn but this remains a landmark property in the town. In the Town Centre the garden area was visited – the plant containers here have deteriorated in condition over the years and the gravel surfacing has become somewhat 'weedy' and drab and difficult to maintain. The old boat has seen better days and the fencing is broken. With regard to the long-term future of this area, perhaps it may be possible to use it instead for car parking in order to move more parking spaces out of the Market Square and increase the area of pedestrian space there. The sensitive development of the SuperValu old Monastery site is wonderful and has hugely improved the quality and character of the streetscape in Kilcock. The new entrance arch at the old porch is a lovely feature. The young red oak trees which are growing well in the pedestrian plaza were particularly admired - these provide striking leaf colour in the Autumn. It would be good to top up the areas around the base of the tree pits as these can become a hazard. The presentation of Supervalu carpark was excellent and the Costa Coffee premises was very well presented. The heritage information panels in the Town Centre were very informative and well presented. The new planting scheme at entrance to the car park is superb. One wonders whether there are future plans for the attractive heritage building overlooking the square whose façade is covered with Boston ivy - perhaps this could be developed as a Kilcock Visitor Centre, tourist hostel, hotel or restaurant. The presentation of the Hugh Murphy licensed premises and Rye River Cafe is worthy of great praise. It is recommended that the trees outside Gregory's Tavern should be planted in the ground and not in planter boxes. Some of these are drying out because of the extremely dry weather. The timber public seating in this area also needs to be painted. The small metal planting containers work well and have plenty of depth to retain moisture. Some of the timber half barrel planters are now in a poor condition and could be replaced. The presentation of the commercial premises facing the Harbour area was generally very good. The train station carpark at the Fairgreen was well presented although the information panel here was empty. The Penal Cross Monument was visited and some of the paving stones are loose and should be replaced and the surround repaired.

Perhaps the Memorial stone to all those involved locally in the rebellion of 1798 might be relocated, subject to local agreement, to a more prominent location in the town and a new landscaping scheme carried out as part of the improvement works. The grounds and frontage of Scoil Choca Naofa were well presented. The old graveyard on Church/Mill Lane was visited although the gates were unfortunately locked. The visit was not in vain as the attractive residential properties along Church Lane with their superb floral displays were particularly enjoyed.

Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:

The developments which have taken place recently along the royal canal greenway has opened up the potential for Kilcock to take advantage of increased levels of tourism to the area. It is noted that Kilcock Tourist Group is promoting the development of the Canal Greenway for cycling tourism and they are wished well with this initiative. The towpaths along the canal now have a smooth tarmac surface well suited to leisure cycling or commuting and the completion of the route to Enfield is awaited. Kilcock is adorned with wonderful flower planters installed at strategic locations around the town which add great colour and vibrancy to the town - thanks are due to the recycling of gas cylinders undertaken by the Men's Shed. These planters are attractive when placed in small groups and provide a suitable depth for plant successful root growth. The presentation of the Clane Road Roundabout was admired as was the landscape development works at Millerstown. It is noted that you have not erected hanging baskets in the centre of the Town in the last 3 years in an effort to conserve water. The new timber planters and the painting of the gate at the old graveyard on Church Lane has enhanced this entrance.

Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality / An Dúlra agus an Bhithéagsúlacht i do cheantar:

The Royal Canal and the Rye River are wildlife corridors of significant importance located in close proximity to Kilcock. It was wonderful to experience the scent of the meadow sweet along the margins of the Canal Greenway and to view yellow water lilies in full flower in the canal. It is noted that a Wildlife and Habitat Survey has been carried out by Kildare County Council and information boards will be erected along the Canal Greenway shortly. Are there any plans to extend a greenway along the Rye River corridor? You are participating in the Swift Nest Box Scheme in conjunction with the Heritage Officer Kildare County Council, Wild Kildare and Birdwatch Ireland. The creation of a wildflower meadow at Chambers Park is a worthwhile initiative and perhaps this approach can be replicated on open spaces in other estates within the Town. Congratulations are due to the 4 local schools who have achieved green flag status and in particular Scoil Choca Naofa who this year have received their 7th Green Flag.

Sustainability – Doing more with less / Inmharthanacht - Mórán ar an mbeagán:

It is good to note that there has been a significant increase in recycling trends in the Kilcock area over the last 18 years from a low of 6% in the year 2000 to 89% today, as confirmed by local waste operators. The use of the brown compost bin and greater public awareness has clearly helped to significantly reduce the amount of waste going on landfill. The installation of solar panels is now standard practice in new developments. It would be good to see this approach extended to the more older housing stock to continue to reduce dependency on fossil fuels and also to reduce CO2 emissions. The use of water butts to facilitate the watering of gardens during the summer months is important as means of conserving scarce drinking water. The use of organic mulch is also a useful water conservation tool and your proposal to create a leaf mould to mulch planting beds using leaves collected at autumn time is a good initiative. As mentioned previously the recycling of gas cylinders by the Men's Shed to create attractive plant containers is considered to be your flagship project under this category. For next year you could consider further initiatives under this category such as promoting the use of low carbon vehicles, pursuing the installation of electric car charge point(s) in the Town village and extending cycle parking facilities along the canal and in the town. The further promotion of grant aid for the installation of wall and attic insulation on older building stock, the greater use of solar panels on roofs and heat exchange units to reduce energy consumption by

households/businesses is a worthwhile initiative to consider. The greater use of water butts for the watering of private gardens and public floral displays during the Summer period might also be further encouraged. The Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland website has good information in relation to the development of Better Energy Communities.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

It is good to note that seven business owners have now applied for the Shopfront Improvement Grant Scheme. Incremental improvements in this regard will make a significant difference to the presentation of the Town. The Harbour area and greenway along the Canal was generally neat and tidy and presented to a high standard. However, some of the railings would benefit from a touch up with paint and some litter was noted around the lock area. Material cleaned out from the canal was heaped beside the lock and detracted from this area. The Merry Christmas lights could also be removed from the bridge over the summer months. On a vacant site side near Lidl there were heaps of builders rubble dumped which detracts from the general surroundings here. It is suspected that this site may be earmarked for the future development of a park and ride facility? The fingerpost sign for Dunshaughlin needs cleaning as do a number of other road signs in the Town. At St Josephs School the boundary boundary would benefit from painting. Some litter was noted in front of the Tesco Express, at the Town Square and in front of the Church at School Street.

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

There are a number of new developments currently under construction or recently completed in Kilcock. The new environmentally friendly housing development at Millerstown was admired and it is hoped that the further provision of greenways and wildflower meadows can become an important element of this riverside open space in the future. In general terms the housing estates in Kilcock are well presented with well maintained open spaces, estate entrances and trees. At Village Green and Royal Meadows the roadside margins, open spaces and trees are maintained to a good standard. It is noted that new access steps to the greenway has been provided at Royal Canal Court. It would be good to provide a suitable ramp in the vicinity to facilitate universal access to the greenway here in the future. At the entrance to Highfield Estate vigilance is needed to ensure the namestone is not obscured by planting. At Bawn View some repair works to the kerbing in the estate are now required. At Ryebridge Estate the old bridge over the Rye River is an important feature as is the swale designed for flood attenuation on the open space. The development of extensive areas of wildflower meadows would be appropriate in this area, in the interest of habitat creation and conservation and to minimise future maintenance requirements. It is good to note the cycleway which extends along the linear open space here. The trees and fencing along the road frontage at Abbeyfield Estate were admired. Well done to the residents of Mill Lane/Church Lane who put so much effort into the presentation of frontage of their properties.

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

Surface dressing works were in progress along some of the approach roads into Kilcock on the day of adjudication. In general terms the approach roads to Kilcock are presented to a good standard with well - maintained roadside margins and good quality road surfaces and markings. It is presumed that the roundabout at Chambers Park will be landscaped in the near future. An enhancement scheme for the Kilcock GAA Club entrance and car park is something which might be considered in the near future. Underplanting would be desirable on the Summerhill Road Roundabout. The margin of the roundabout at Mollyware Street requires landscaping to facilitate future maintenance operations.

Concluding Remarks:

Kilcock Tidy Towns has put a great effort over the last year into improving your Town for the benefit of local residents and visitors alike, as is evidenced in your submission and the projects noticed on the ground. Keep up the good work and we wish you well for the future.