

Tidy Towns Competition 2018

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Kilcullen** Ref: **371**
County: **Kildare** Mark: **305**
Category: **D** Date(s): **04/07/2018**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2017	Mark Awarded 2018
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	60	49	50
Streetscape & Public Places	50	38	39
Green Spaces and Landscaping	50	45	46
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	50	34	35
Sustainability – Doing more with less	50	16	18
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	50	51
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	30	31
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	34	35
TOTAL MARK	450	296	305

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

Cuireann an moltóir seo fáilte roimh Kilcullen Cill Chuillin an Droichid chuig Comórtas na mBailte Slachtmhara SuperValu 2018 agus chuig Ceiliúradh 60 Bliain an Chomórtais. Kilcullen Community Action is very welcome to the SuperValu Tidy Towns Competition 2018 which celebrating it's 60th year and your 25th year or more entering the competition. Thank you for your comprehensive entry form and attachments including the Market Square Public Consultation Results Survey, Sustainable Energy Community Charter, Pinkeen Stream Recommendations, website publicity material and copies of the Bridge Magazine etc. The map and legend included with your submission was excellent and assisted greatly in navigating around the central part of the Town. You have a Committee of 12 active members and at least 20 volunteers who help with different projects at different times of the year. You hold fortnightly committee meetings and gather to undertake works on Saturday mornings during the year and at other times, as needed. A range of local organisations and businesses support your activities. You mainly utilise the local on-line Kilcullen Diary website and the printed magazine 'The Bridge' to communicate with local residents and members. The Kilcullen Town facebook page and local newspapers are also used for this purpose. Strong links have been established with young people and local schools and you have engaged with schools in the implementation of a number of projects involving students on work experience and working towards their Gaisce Awards. A range of projects have been identified to which you have given particular attention this year including the Public Consultation process regarding future plans for the redevelopment of Market Square. It obviously has been a very busy year for your group and you are commended for the level of commitment your Committee has given to progressing all of these projects. It is evident that the local community has hugely benefitted from your efforts over the years in improving the physical environment of Kilcullen whilst at the same time fostering improved community spirit and social integration.

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

Kilcullen Town Centre is characterised by the traditional building forms of the Irish market town. The Main Street sweeps down on both sides to the River Liffey towards the bridge crossing and is set in the attractive sylvan landscape of the River Liffey valley, with the church and more recent tall apartment developments dominating the skyline. It is noted that there are a number of unoccupied premises on the Main Street and you are making great efforts to improve the situation which is largely outside of your control. This is an issue causing blight in many towns and villages in Ireland and it is hoped that these heritage properties can be brought back into use in the near future. You have completed the upgrading of the derelict building beside Berneys Saddlery and have also carried out improvement works to the façade of a two-storey house on Main Street. Well done on this great work. Your main project this year in this category has been running the Public Consultation process on plans for the future development of the Market Square area. It would appear from the survey that there are differing views on the plans for future use of this area. In view of its historic context and location beside the river, it may be worth considering

designating the area as a pedestrianised civic space for the town with linkages to the riverside walk including access for physically impaired, comprising a high quality urban plaza, suitably developed for staging concerts, performance theatre, Christmas markets and other community events etc. Numerous commercial premises are making great efforts to improve the streetscape along Main Street including The Spout licensed premises, Kennedy's Optimetrists, Ellen's Hair Salon, The Locker Room Bar, Annette's Kitchen to name but a few. The Eurospar has a good floral display but the window stickers detract somewhat here as is the case with the Centra store. Wonderful window displays and presentation were noted at Berney's Chemist and Nolan's Butchers. The bollards along the street here could do with a lick of paint. The overhead power lines detract from the appearance of the Main Street - perhaps this might be dealt with as part of any future redevelopment of the Market Square. Some premises including takeaways are less good in terms of their shopfront presentation - grants are available to property owners to improve their shopfronts. Bardon Bar and Grill had a wonderful window display tastefully presented. The Credit Union building and Medical Centre have high quality building facades - it was wondered what the future plans are for the unoccupied premises adjacent to the Medical Centre? Traffic congestion in the town at peak times is a problem due to delays at the main traffic junction. Noise and air pollution is an issue which impacts adversely on pedestrians. On street car parking also impacts on the walkability of Main Street - are there any footpath widening options here or public car parking options to the rear of the Main Street. The façade of An Tearmann Craft Shop complemented the traditional character of the streetscape. Kilcullen Farm and Bridge Community is a wonderful local resource with organic vegetable gardens etc. along the riverbank. The hanging baskets and window boxes displayed throughout the Town brought a splash of colour but were not overpowering. The Community Centre and the GAA club are a vital recreational resource for the residents of Kilcullen. The Children's playground and other facilities are well used. Scoil Bhride Cill Chuillinn National School was visited and the grounds are well maintained with good quality trees along the frontage and it was pleasing to note the green flag flying in the breeze here. The restoration works in progress on the Church of the Sacred Heart and St Brigid were noted and the church and grounds all looked very well as did the adjoining parochial house and Library on the opposite side of the Road.

Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:

Well done on the Kilcullen in Bloom project which has made a significant difference to the overall presentation of the Town - the signs erected around the Town were an attractive addition. The floral display at the entrance to the Coss and Passion College including the old bike painted lime green made a bold statement at the junction here. It is noted that you have an automatic irrigation system installed for your floral displays - a good investment given the drought conditions this year. The riverside walk at the Market Square and the Valley Riverside Walk were both visited and are maintained to a good standard. You have carried out a significant amount of work at the Valley Riverside Park over the year including the removal of large poplars on safety grounds. One needs to be cautious when removing overgrown vegetation in these areas as such vegetation can have significant wildlife value. Provision for improved access to these areas for the disabled or wheelchair bound might be considered in the future e.g the provision of ramps and upgrading of gravel paths. Both parks provide stunning views of the arches of bridge over the Liffey. The birdlife sign at The Valley Riverside Walk was admired and it is noted that you are working on a further two signs relating bats, fish and invertebrates. The Spout feature was very interesting and it was wondered whether this is an artesian well system? Some information on its history, construction etc. would be worthwhile here. The Camphill Community farm was visited and this is a fabulous amenity so close the town and the An Tearmann coffee shop was inviting and well presented.

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

Well done on the installation of Swift Boxes at Scoil Bhride and the rearrangement of scaffolding at the Church to maintain access to the nest sites here. You have undertaken suitable wildflower and pollinator friendly plantings at Naas Road, The Curragh Road, Dun Allinne Interpretive Park and at the Nun's Garden at Cross and Passion Secondary School and have introduced primroses to the Valley Park. The works undertaken on the Pinkeen Stream rehabilitation is laudible and it is good you have got expert advice on this. Removing rubbish and overgrown ornamental vegetation and adding boulders for sinuosity is a great first step. One wonders whether any further steps are necessary in relation to water quality monitoring on those pipes discharging into the stream? Your information talks on the wildlife in the Liffey and the Swift Nest boxes appear to have been very successful-well done to all concerned here.

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

The launch of the Sustainable Energy Communities project, receipt of €15,000 grant aid by SEAI and the setting up of a subcommittee to progress same, is your flagship project under this category. The issue of energy usage is critical in dealing with climate change and CO2 emissions and no doubt more can be done in local communities in the area of sustainable transport and energy. Your sub-committee could look at ideas such as the possibility of developing an on-site car-pooling and park and ride facility in the town, promoting the use of low carbon vehicles, pursuing the installation of electric-car charge point(s) in the Town and extending cycle parking facilities etc. The possible development of greenways and cycle routes along the Liffey Valley could be investigated, where this is feasible. The 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 and in public buildings are worthwhile initiatives for the sub-committee to consider. As well the energy issue, water resources are now scarce and the greater use of water butts and rainfall harvesting and storage tanks for the watering of public floral displays and private gardens during the Summer period should be further encouraged. You have undertaken other worthwhile initiatives under this category, including the holding of a recycling workshop, shop local campaign and Kalbarri Food Night,

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

The large recycling facility and car park on the Newbridge Road was visited and was generally found to be neat and tidy, although a small amount of bagged material was left on the ground near the bottle banks. There was generally an absence of litter in the Town. The presentation of unoccupied premises along the Main Street is generally good and you are making good strides in this area. Well done to all the volunteers who carry out the Saturday morning clean ups on the approach roads and along the Pinkeen Stream. Your photographs show the excellent work carried out and the large accumulations of litter dealt with. The green Kilometer idea is a good initiative. Signage in the town is generally appropriate although some signs on the Newbridge Road could be replaced or renewed. The advertising banners on the fencing approaching the Community Centre are numerous and some are falling down adding to the visual clutter here. You have done great work in developing the Kilcullen Signage Project and you are wished well with the further implementation of this.

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

You are right to say that Kilcullen has really good housing areas and they were generally found to be very well presented. Cnoc na Gréine estate had an impressive line of trees at the entrance and on the main open space. Standard of maintenance here was very good. The planting climbers to screen the high wall along the entrance to this estate should be considered. Castlemartin Lodge estate has a colourful entrance with flower boxes on the railings. It was good to see the wildlife areas present at Nicholastown estate. Esker Lea estate provided a very attractive entrance landscaping and stone piers with unusual and attractive mounding on the open space. Private gardens here were well presented. Laurel Wood estate was particularly well maintained with attractive open spaces and flower plantings around trees and other obstacles. Moanbane estate was noted for its attractive landscaping at the estate entrance. In Hermitage Park estate, consideration should be given to planting hedges along boundary walls here.

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

The four approach roads into Kilcullen are presented to a high standard. Road surfaces, markings and road signage are generally good although road markings are faint in places on the Athy approach. Road markings in centre of town are in need of renewal. The floral displays along boundary of Athy Road approach creates a positive visual impact for the road user. The sign for Kilcullen Auto Centre on the Newbridge Road has seen better days and could be replaced or renewed. The brown coloured Tourist signs on the approach roads are due for renewal at an early date.

Concluding Remarks:

It was a pleasure for the adjudicator to visit Kilcullen and there was much to see and enjoy with some welcome surprises. You are wished well with your further deliberations on the Market Square proposals and all your future endeavours for the Town.