

Tidy Towns Competition 2018

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Kildare** Ref: **100**
County: **Kildare** Mark: **277**
Category: **E** Date(s): **04/07/2018**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2017	Mark Awarded 2018
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	60	47	48
Streetscape & Public Places	50	35	36
Green Spaces and Landscaping	50	39	40
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	50	27	28
Sustainability – Doing more with less	50	15	17
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	45	47
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	31	33
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	27	28
TOTAL MARK	450	266	277

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

Cuireann an moltóir seo fáilte roimh Kildare Cill Dara chuig Comórtas na mBailte Slachtmhara SuperValu 2018 agus chuig Ceiliúradh 60 Bliain an Chomórtais. Kildare Town Tidy Towns is very welcome to the SuperValu Tidy Towns Competition 2018, your 16th year entering and being actively engaged with the Competition. Thank you for your comprehensive submission which was very well presented and included useful photographs with completion dates and timelines showing works undertaken over the last year together with your updated Multi-Annual Development Plan. The numbered and colour-coded map provided with your application was easy to read in conjunction with your submission, with different coloured numbers denoting various categories of the competition. For next year it would be good to provide an A3 size detailed map of the Town with all the projects described and pinpointed on the map itself, together with any other noteworthy features. This type of approach is desirable in providing the adjudicator with the necessary guidance for navigating around the Town and for visiting the important sites. You have a core Committee of 12 dedicated members comprising people with a range of skills and experience. Sub-committees have been set up taking into account the various competition categories and these are matched to the skills available on your Committee. You are fortunate to have 22 area champions who have teams of dedicated volunteers comprising 200 in total. Meetings are held monthly with clean ups carried out on Saturday mornings and at other times, as required. Support is received from a number of local organisations including Kildare County Council, Kildangan Stud Community Fund, Irish National Stud and Kildare Town Credit Union. Different means of communication are used by your Committee to get your message across to the general public including Facebook, Whatsapp, e-mail, Local newspapers and Radio, Public Meetings and workshops. Strong links have been established with local schools through the Green Flag programme and you propose to have a junior tidy towns member on your committee next year. You also have established close links to Rehab Kildare and your Community Inclusivity Project is worthy of great praise. It is good to see the important heritage of Kildare Town coming to the fore in your 'Walks for Business' Initiative – well done to all concerned with this.

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

The traditional streetscape and character of Kildare as a vibrant Market Town remains largely intact. Many of the commercial premises have attractive floral displays and shopfronts are generally presented to a high standard. The newly painted bicycle stands at the Heritage Centre were greatly admired. The Heritage Centre was visited and your adjudicator was treated to a very interesting video and exhibition of the history of Kildare. There are so many wonderful heritage sites to visit in the Town. The lime trees at Market Square really added to the quality of the urban space here. The presentation of the paving in Market Square could be improved with power washing. Road surfacing and traffic markings in car park areas at Market Square have deteriorated in recent years and some improvement works are required. At Boyle Sports and Eurostar premises, the window sticker advertising is intrusive on the streetscape and an alternative approach should be considered here. Harte's Gastronomie Licensed premises

was very well presented with colourful floral displays. St Brigid's Cathedral was visited and the site of the round tower was particularly impressive. At Claregate Street and at a number of other locations in the Town the overhead power lines are quite prominent and detract from the streetscape. Are there any plans to underground these? J. Mahon and Sons licensed premises had a particularly good window display. In relation to the Water Tower - is it still in use and what are the future plans for this? The Kildare Credit Union building was greatly admired and particularly the railcar flower planter located outside this premises. The frontage of St Brigid's primary school was well presented although the nearby traffic safety barrier is in need of painting. The limestone Acorn sculpture located outside Saint Bridget's parish Church is a delightful piece of urban art, erected to commemorate the success of Kildare in the IBAL litter survey and has great symbolism and relevance to the Town of Kildare. It is noted that you are spreading awareness of Kildare County Council's Shopfront Grant Scheme with local businesses with 100% Grant Aid available for improvements. Has there been much uptake in relation to the Grant Scheme? Are there any further plans for the building located beside the Flanagan Harhen premises? Round Tower House could be improved with painting. It was great to visit the Kildare Castle restoration project which appears to be progressing well - well done to all concerned with this. The Silken Thomas accommodation building was also very well presented with attractive floral displays. In relation to the old Courthouse building, it is good to note that this property has now become a hub for Tidy Towns activities – are there any plans to repair the windows and carry out further restoration works here? Virginia lodge, with its façade covered in virginia creeper was positively noted - perhaps this building is named after the climbing plant? The Kildare Railway Station was visited and the Station building is a joy to behold. However, the car park would benefit from landscaping and a new car park marking scheme. The Kildare Town Renewal Plan and Health Check are worthy initiatives and you are wished well with the implementation of these.

Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:

St. Brigid's Environmental Garden was visited and was looking well. The large portuguese laurels in the timber planters in the garden seem to be struggling due to the severe drought. Perhaps these should be planted in the ground and this would also reduce future watering and maintenance requirements. Are there any future plans for the restoration of the adjoining premises which appear to be unoccupied.? The formal garden and general presentation of the grounds of Pan Veterinary was superb. The significant new tree plantings carried out at various locations around the town were positively noted. The galloping horse sculptures on the roundabout to the east of the N7 are striking features and significantly enhance the driving experience for road users in this area. The use of a wildflower meadow here is also very appropriate and the daffodils no doubt make a wonderful splash of colour here in the Spring. It is good to note that Kildare Town Tidy Towns Committee have been actively involved in the Plans for the development of Cherry Avenue Town Park and Kildare Town Mediaeval Garden. Future developments in relation to these projects is awaited with interest. Your expansion of the hanging basket scheme including the addition of 20 new hanging baskets has made a significant difference in relation to the presentation of the central part of the Town. The local businesses are to be commended for their support of this project. The arrangements for the watering of floral displays in the town such as the use of automatic irrigation and water reservoirs which follow sustainability principles, has no doubt lead to a reduction in water consumption, so important this year during the recent drought.

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

It is noted that you have provided two town centre locations for the erection of swift boxes and have used an electronic device to attract the birds to the sites. Hopefully in the coming years the swifts will start to nest at these sites and it would be good to monitor usage patterns over time. You have also provided bird and bat boxes at various graveyard sites in the Town and you are encouraging wildlife by reserving areas of unimproved grassland. Well done on your involvement with the Harvest Centre gardening initiatives and the provision of window box planting in their biodiversity garden. The Kildare Town Swift Walk seems to have been a success and your actions with pollinators and invasive species is beginning to bear fruit. The Curragh Plains is a unique heritage landscape of significant wildlife value and it pleasing to note that a Curragh Plains Tourism Initiative has been launched in order to develop sustainable tourism in this area including the development of walking trails, cycling trails and interpretative infrastructure. For next year you could consider developing other projects under this category e.g. are there any other sites in Kildare Town which might be suitable for developing a wildflower meadow, installing bee hotels, providing pollinator-friendly planting, woodland or naturalised bulb planting?

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

Your submission would indicate that the upcycling workshops with local schools in conjunction with Kildare Town's Men's Shed and the Scout's Upcycling project were very successful. The creation of the spring animal figurines from waste timber is a wonderful way to get the message across to children about the value of minimising waste and making greater use of their creative abilities. It is heartening to see the development of a cottage market in the Town which takes place on a monthly basis, where locally produced artisan products are sold. Perhaps this can be expanded to a weekly market in due course. Your engagement with the SEAI in the context of establishing a Sustainable Energy Community is worthy of great praise. Climate Change is a serious issue for our generation and the more we can reduce our dependence on fossil fuels for our energy requirements, the less CO2 will be emitted to the environment. We wish you well with your endeavours in relation to this project and in installing the necessary infrastructure to improve renewable energy usage in the Community. The reuse of bins from the Kildare Village Retail Outlet to provide planters throughout The Town is a wonderfully creative initiative and helps to generate an awareness locally of the importance and value of doing more with less. Your engagement with the Kildare Cycling Forum with a view to increasing cycling facilities and infrastructure in the Town and in the surrounding area including the Curragh Plains, is laudable.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

The Kildare Town Centre area was found to be very clean on the day of adjudication despite the fact that it was a Friday after the Market day. There was a very small amount of cigarette butts in places on footpaths but it was noted that these were almost immediately picked up by a Kildare County Council member of staff who was diligently patrolling the Town's footpaths looking for any offending items of litter. The Green Machine was also in operation during the visit and this adds to the efficiency of street cleaning operations. Street name signage seems to be an issue in Kildare Town. Perhaps a scheme to improve street name signage can be initiated in consultation with Kildare County Council. Congratulations on your nomination as Ireland's second most clean town for 2017- a great achievement and due no doubt to the ongoing efforts of the Tidy Towns Committee and other stakeholders.

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

It is noted that the Tidy Towns Committee provides a bespoke consultancy service to various Residents Associations in relation to landscaping and planting schemes and has an input into proposals for landscaping and naming of new developments as in Cunnaberry Hill. Your annual Awards Night and Best Estate/ Best Gardens Competition provides the impetus for local estates to improve the physical appearance and landscaping of their areas for the benefit of the whole community. The Repair and Leasing scheme aimed at bringing unoccupied properties in the Town Centre such as at Fairgreen back into use is a very worthwhile initiative and it is hoped that this will reduce the amount of empty properties in the Town in the short to medium term. Farrenberg Glebe estate was visited and found to be well presented and maintained. Some hedge planting could be carried out around the perimeter walls facing the open space. Dunmurry Court was also well presented with an attractive tree-lined entrance. North Glebe was particularly enjoyed with superbly maintained open spaces, roadside margins and private gardens – a credit to the residents living in this estate. Beech Grove was admired and in particular the wonderful St Brigid's Cross placed on the Gable of a property located at the entrance to the estate and new tree planting. There was a well - maintained open space here but some green waste was noted to the rear of the open space area. Rowanville estate was admired particularly for the presentation of the estate and the many floral displays. One wondered about the current status of the possible restoration of Fairview Cottages located on Shraud Street. These historic cottages are now in poor repair and would benefit from a sensitive restoration project, perhaps as part of the new Repair and Leasing Scheme? There was a heavy growth of ragwort in the front gardens here.

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

You are right to be very proud of your new Heritage Signs in recognition of your previous IBAL successes, which together with the associated floral displays, do much to enhance the approaches to the Town. Kildare House Hotel and Garda Station have a positive impact on the approach to the Town from the Dublin Road/Hospital Street direction. The Tesco building is a very good example of modern architecture which improves it's surroundings with superb tree planting along the frontage of this building and this greatly enhances the approach to the Town along the Monasterevin Road. It is good to note that plans are in now place for resurfacing works on the roads in the Town Centre area.

Concluding Remarks:

The visit to Kildare Town this Summer was a very enjoyable experience. The Town has great potential to progress in the competition. Your Multi-Annual Development Plan is essential in guiding your activities in the coming years and particularly in terms of setting priorities and objectives with an emphasis on making the most of your significant heritage assets and natural features and also dealing with sustainable transport issues and the use of energy and resources. You are wished well for the future.