

Tidy Towns Competition 2018

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Killenard** Ref: **1990**
County: **Laois** Mark: **301**
Category: **B** Date(s): **25/06/2018**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2017	Mark Awarded 2018
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	60	36	36
Streetscape & Public Places	50	37	37
Green Spaces and Landscaping	50	43	45
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	50	28	29
Sustainability – Doing more with less	50	20	22
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	59	60
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	37	38
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	33	34
TOTAL MARK	450	293	301

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

Cuireann an moltóir seo fáilte roimh Killenard (Cill an Aird) chuig Comórtas na mBailte Slachtmhara SuperValu 2018 agus chuig Ceiliúradh 60 Bliain an Chomórtais.

Welcome back to the competition. We noticed that you were disappointed by the reduction in a few key members on the committee. Like all committees, the path rarely runs smoothly. Sometimes people don't realise that they can dip in and out of the committee. Maybe break down tasks into bullet points to show what people could volunteer for. Do you have a secondary school student in transition year who could take over the Facebook page? We notice that you have 2 Facebook pages. Having only one is probably better to ensure that communication is not lost. We note your use of WhatsApp. This is a great way to remind people in a gentle way of upcoming events and encouraging them.

You are to be commended on the way you view newcomers to your small village, regarding them as a "fantastic addition". As you articulated, you have brought a road and green field sites into beautiful appointed housing estates. But equally, what makes somewhere a great place to live is the community spirit.

It is unfortunate that the Heritage Hotel & golf club have stepped away from assisting you while the business is being sold. Surely they have to realise that they gain so much from your involvement in the improvements to the area around their business area. Hopefully the next owners will see this as the Win-Win partnership it is.

Your list of other voluntary groups from such a small community is heartening to see.

The map provided with your application form needs to be improved. We realise you had a loss of personnel and we are not trying to create more work for you. There is an excellent map on the entrance to your village. Is it possible to get a copy of this? Each year you could simply add stickers onto the map to highlight the projects, as all of the areas of your village are visible clearly here.

Be careful with cutting and pasting onto the application form. The same set of projects was entered under a few categories.

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

It is really wonderful to read that your community centre is an extension of the old school building. This use of the old to support the present is always a welcome feature. The new, more modern part blends in sympathetically. The information sign outside of it was very informative. Some cutting back is due here, but in this summer of amazing sunshine there was probably more growth than usual. While this building is impressive, what is even more impressive is the home it provides for community spirit.

The current school, although bright and modern, fits in well with your historic village.

You mention in your report that you are looking to paint the school. While there was some flaking on the tower part, in general the school looked well and shows the high standard that you are at that this is to be taken on as a project. The flower box next to the poster box needs to be updated here.

The pedestrian crossing between the community centre and the school gives a great sense of continuity. The black bollards and railings were in good order. The pedestrian crossing up from the housing estate needs to be resurfaced.

The post-box needs a lick of paint on the rusting part of the sign to keep it at the same standard it appears on your website page!

The lampposts are beautiful. The trees are nicely spaced and while relatively new compared to some of your mature trees (which in Killenard case could be hundreds of years old) they are maturing nicely and add to your rich heritage of trees.

We cannot mention your built environment with mentioning your wonderful church. The green door could do with painting.

You are so fortunate to have a building of such historical importance to your area as Mount St. Anne's, which is not only refurbished to such a high standard, but also available for two evenings per week to your community.

Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:

The 1916 garden is continuing to provide your area with a stunning place of reflection. You describe it as "breath-taking"; we concur.

The Graveyard Embankment Project. We can see why this was a project that helped revitalise your Tidy Towns. The setting overlooking the countryside is quite simply stunning. It is enhanced by a lovely seating area. We really liked the seat with the WB Yeats quote "there are no strangers here only friends we haven't met". The seat probably could do with a varnish but that's really nit-picking in this amazing area. You mentioned in your submission that this graveyard is maintained with little funds by a graveyard committee. They are to be commended on the job they are doing. On day of adjudication, there was a very hardworking gentleman cleaning up this area on one of the hottest days of the year.

Walking down from the main street, the grass edging on the sides was just being finished off. The standard here was extremely impressive given that the length of the road was about half a mile.

The wide paths from the estate all the way up to the school are great to see. It is something that is sorely lacking in a lot of areas both large and small in Ireland. The pedestrian access from the estate in the grounds of the Heritage Hotel makes walking to school even easier. Some of the hedging here was encroaching onto the path where the cars were parked. It was not very significant, but ensure that it is kept in check in this area.

The flowers throughout the village are very tastefully maintained. The landscaping at the bus stop area is kept very well and provides a welcome on this approach road to your village.

As is to be expected from a 5 star hotel, the Heritage Hotel maintain their grounds to a very high standard.

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

Well done on your "Let's Bee Friendly" project and good luck in the Local Authority Competition. Although your Bee Pollinator Corridor was last year's project, expanding its maintenance should still be included here. The fact that this started in 2014, when a Biodiversity plan was produced for your village, demonstrates the living nature of these plans.

Continuation of these plans is vital. Well done to the local land owner who continues to leave a strip of the field along the edges.

Fortuitously, your idea to celebrate your GAA win by doing more planting in your colours coincides with blue and yellow pollinator friendly colours!

You are right to rate the Graveyard area as one of your key biodiversity focal points of your village. We found this place alive with animal life, from the cows in the field, to the many birds finding solace in the shade of the trees, not to mention the smaller animal life. We liked the fact that there was wood left the bottom of the trees. Some people can think that this looks untidy, but it provides a fantastic habitat and makes the area come alive with nature. While the bug hotel is great to get the children's attention, more attention should be paid to the many natural habitats that abound in this area.

Its location must aid the school, who you say use this area as part of its programme to educate students on the environment. Please include some more information on this programme in next year's submission.

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

The bring bank area is a nice, functional, well kept area behind the community centre. This was in use on day of adjudication. You mentioned these are so much in use you have to get them emptied more frequently. We noted 2 of the 3 actions you say resulted from your Waste Awareness Survey.

Along with some others at Mount St. Anne's, the Heritage Hotel and golf club list some impressive energy saving projects. Thank you for including these as Tidy Towns groups are given marks not just for the projects they do themselves, but for those that are carried out in their area. Being environmentally friendly doesn't have to always be a cost for businesses; it can be directly beneficial to the bottom line, as well as to the environment.

Cycling to school must be encouraged as about 6 bikes were spotted in the schoolyard. The walking buses to school on Friday initiative is productive on so many levels: social, environmental, and health.

We would love to hear more details of the Arts & Craft evenings at Mount St. Anne's, where participants are encouraged to use recycled materials.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

Traditionally the Tidy Towns competition was all about having a litter-free area. More and more in the past 60 years of the competition, it has evolved into a greater environmental awareness competition, part of which is trying to prevent littering in the first place. It is always encouraging to read when a group notices a trend towards less littering occurring. You mention that due to your work carried out on Awareness, Control and Removal, that the

Removal element is becoming less frequent.

The notice board for posters is something to be encouraged. The community can be updated by events coming in (in this case a circus coming to a nearby town), without the littering of the whole area. A larger notice board at the school should probably be considered, or an additional one.

Well done on engaging with Portarlinton Tidy Towns on their "No Signage Zone" campaign for No Posters. In Tidy Towns is not always necessary to "reinvent the wheel". Sometimes solutions/good ideas are already there; we just need to implement them.

The notice "please keep the cemetery clean and tidy by bringing home old wreaths, flowers, bottles" etc. was a good idea. Sometimes because people want to leave mementos without intending to litter, doesn't always mean that these items never become litter. You have provided a nice gentle reminder.

Dog fouling must be an issue. There were 3 posters on a 3 lampposts in a row reminding people to pick up after their dogs. There was some noted on the stretch outside the Carriglea housing estate.

Small bit of weeding is need around the shopping area. Although these are not very noticeable with all the shrubbery – it almost blends in!

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

You have particularly well kept housing estates in Killenard.

The long white fence on the outside of the Carriglea housing estate looks in good repair and provides an appropriate frontage for this impressive estate. Each house seems as well kept as the next. The landscaping here is very of a very high standard.

The landscaping at Killenard Lodge was particularly impressive. It is good to see the biodiversity plan in action here.

The Heritage housing area was equally well maintained. A child's slide on one of the green areas was in use. We would suggest that some of the container planting is removed here as there is ample space for direct planting.

The house beside the graveyard is currently undergoing renovations. If it is done up anyway as well as the one next door to it, it will be a great asset to your community.

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

The stone wall on the main approach road gives a beautiful authentic traditional village "feel" to the visitor. Arriving at your impressive old county church and graveyard you can see why a 5 star hotel chose to locate here.

The verges are well cut back and thanks to your litter patrol they were almost litter free on day of adjudication.

The GAA pitches were well maintained, however the area outside was in need of weeding. It was the only area where there were more than a few pieces of litter. We note your plans to create a walkway from the village to this sports facility and would support this.

We applaud those who maintain the planting on the bridge side approach. The bridge itself is a lovely feature (as long as another car isn't approaching in the opposite direction).

Concluding Remarks:

We note your observation in your submission that there is a huge increase in the number of people living in this area. You have created a wonderful village that is obviously well cared for, with excellent landscaping. We can see why people would be attracted to moving into this area. We hope that more in your community realise the value of this, and working together continue to support you in the year and years ahead. Go n-éirí libh.