

Tidy Towns Competition 2019

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Killarney - Cill Airne** Ref: **340**
County: **Kerry** Mark: **342**
Category: **F** Date(s): **20/06/2019**
31/07/2019

| | Maximum Mark | Mark Awarded 2018 | Mark Awarded 2019 |
|---|-------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Community – Your Planning and Involvement | 60 | 49 | 50 |
| Streetscape & Public Places | 60 | 42 | 43 |
| Green Spaces and Landscaping | 60 | 47 | 48 |
| Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality | 50 | 40 | 41 |
| Sustainability – Doing more with less | 50 | 23 | 24 |
| Tidiness and Litter Control | 90 | 61 | 62 |
| Residential Streets & Housing Areas | 50 | 33 | 34 |
| Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes | 50 | 39 | 40 |
| TOTAL MARK | 470 | 334 | 342 |

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

Cuireann an moltóir seo fáilte roimh Killarney Cill Airne páirt a ghlacadh i gComórtas Náisiúnta SuperValu na mBailte Slachtmhara 2019.

Your committee with the title of Killarney Looking Good has a large core membership of 17 members and a staggering 500 volunteers who assist as needed. This is evidence of strong links with residents, voluntary groups and schools. You have an impressive record of achievement, having been a participant in the competition for 29 years and winning the overall award in 2011. You are well supported from local businesses and public bodies and make good use of Facebook, notice board newspaper etc., for communications. The Youth Co-ordinator Officer has a programme of visiting schools giving talks on topics relevant to Tidy Towns and developing a wide range of projects with them. The map which you attached has project locations marked for our attention. It was very good and made our job easier for getting around the busy town. One small tip, please improve on the number sequence, for example numbers 9 and 10 are not near each other. These are the type of problems that a person unfamiliar with Killarney will encounter, so please improve on it for next year. However, on a very positive note, we found your application superb. The document has clear details for each project and has the map reference as well. Then the map has a list of the map references with the project numbers for each identified. The cross reference works very well, and the project location was easy to find when it was part of the map with road names marked. A difficulty arose when we decided to visit the new cemetery at Knockeendubh. We could see that it was north of Killarney but had to ask several times for information. Then when we were following the signs for Killarney Burial Grounds, we found the old cemetery and thought we were lost until someone advised us where to go. The locals know where these places are, but not the adjudicators who are less familiar with your locality. Therefore, we advise that a local road map for the cemetery would help.

The Programme of Action is your long-term plan. However, we advise that including information such as bye laws just takes up the adjudicator's time in reading and is unnecessary for the competition. You should aim to reduce our time spent in reading the application to allow more time for visiting Killarney.

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

We were very impressed with Killarney, the many fine buildings, including hotels, offices and shops were a delight and everywhere is looking so well. The new cemetery is very well done with the large car park, entrance and boundary walls, but where is the landscaping? During our visits throughout the country, we see many cemeteries and very few have an appeal because the graves take up all the available space and landscaping is not considered. Cemeteries should be designed as parklands that provide a pleasing experience for visitors and for relatives of the deceased. Old cemeteries are less attractive when they lack trees. In Knockeendubh, there is now an opportunity to plant trees, not just in the car park, but also within the existing and proposed extension to the cemetery and we strongly advise that approach. There are a few trees around the boundary of the older cemetery which help to

enhance its appearance. Otherwise it is well-maintained.

We admired the improvement works completed at the car/bus park at Rock Road, the refurbishment of public conveniences at High Street and the Ploughing sculpture. Well done on the treatment of derelict sites and the railings at the Friary are looking very well. Monsignor O'Flaherty is well remembered in Killarney. He was mentioned on a plaque at the beautiful stone old monastery building set in a landscape of established trees, there is a large mural of him on a gable wall and there is the statue to him with several plaques at the entrance to Killarney House and Gardens. They made very interesting reading and are to a high standard. The magnificent cathedral is an iconic feature in Killarney. It is matched by the fine specimen of Sequoiadendron which is in perfect scale with the building. The GAA grounds have an elaborately designed entrance painted in brown and yellow. Buildings which caught our eye were the Fairview Hotel and The Care Plus Pharmacy on Park Road which also pleased. Killarney Outlet Centre is an attractive complex which is enhanced with a landscaped setting. The Fire Station is unusual because it looks more like a home than a station. We liked the design and the stone wall boundary. The photo displays in the windows of the vacant premises on High Street is an excellent way of turning a negative into a positive.

Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:

The main structural elements in the landscape are trees and in Killarney, you have many good examples. In fact, we were excited to see so many fine specimens of existing mature trees as well as successful planting from recent decades and recent years. Our observations are that either you have a good climate with good soil for trees or you have people who know how to care for them, but perhaps you have all of these. There are many excellent avenues of trees to be seen and they add significantly to the Killarney town landscape.

In planting new trees, it is best to use a single species on a road or street for uniformity and this is what you have done. Also, it is important to ensure that the base of new trees is maintained free of weeds, grass and flower beds to ensure early establishment and we are pleased to state that this good practice is the norm in Killarney. When trees are established it is important to remove the stakes as the stems can get damaged from the ties or stake. The only place we saw this problem was in the gardens at Killarney House, where we witnessed a man busily removing the stakes and ties. Well done.

Guideline for plant containers is to use them only where planting directly into the ground is not possible; they should not in themselves attract any notice. It is better to have fewer well planted containers than a large number in which the quality of plants is inferior. We are pleased to report that there is no over reliance on using plant containers in Killarney and in most cases, you have planted directly into the ground. We liked the way flowering plants were placed around the area for the Jarvies; it is well done. If considering more seasonal flowers the use of permanent planting including herbaceous perennials for floral displays is encouraged rather than relying on annuals which are more time consuming. We greatly enjoyed the range of perennial plants such as Lavender growing in beds placed at strategic locations throughout the town. This adjudicator had often visited Killarney as a tourist and taken in the Muckross House and Gardens which are always excellent. On this occasion, it was our first time to see the gardens at Killarney House and we were well pleased. In addition to the large specimens of Sweet Chestnut growing near the exhibition centre, there are now wonderful avenues of lime trees and flowering cherries which we understand are there for historical reasons. The Goose Foot section and the wilderness were admired but the very long herbaceous border is something very special. The central beds also pleased. This is a wonderful addition to the townscape.

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

Killarney is surrounded by important landscapes and habitats which are part of your tourism package. You are fortunate to have plenty of nature and biodiversity on your doorstep. Appreciating your local wildlife resources is vital in order to achieve under this category. In this regard researching and raising awareness is more important than 'doing' at the early stages. So, this criterion is about raising awareness of nature and promoting biodiversity and you have done this through walks and talks in the area, the wooden animal trail, the red deer sculpture, the bee friendly mural and talks on bees, the swift project and of course your protection of the important UNESCO Biosphere Reserve and the control of the invasive Rhododendrons, a continuous battle. The Green Schools Programme is a very positive movement and it is great that all your local primary and secondary schools have obtained Green Flags. Well done to the Youth Co-ordinator Officer for working with the schools and giving talks on relevant subjects as a way of getting them involved. We visited St. Oliver's School and were very impressed with the building and the treed landscape setting.

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

This category is about tackling the growing waste mountain that is creating problems of pollution, unwanted land use, and the use of dwindling resources. It is a global and a local problem. To save the Earth we need to move quickly to a zero-waste society. Your town is certainly playing its part with a list of 22 projects. These range from an upcycled furniture workshop to the recent construction of social housing with high standards of insulation, the stop food waste campaign, 5 days, 5 new challenges in finding alternative methods to get to school, walking, cycling and public transportation. Monitoring the use of water and energy at the Sports and Leisure Centre. Using "Grey" water for plants, encouraging businesses to adopt "Green Hospitality", upgrading recycling facilities. Re-use book stands, public water fountains, solar powered parking machines and several more initiatives. We visited the Kasi Garden which was delightful and so well-maintained. It is great to read of its success with migrant populations within your community,

The emphasis here really needs to be on reducing the volume of waste produced rather than recycling (which is taken for granted). At this level of the contest the adjudicator wants to see innovation in tackling bigger issues of food waste, plastic disposal and energy use.

Some more ideas for you to consider are....

- Avoiding collecting mown grass by more frequent cutting and using mulching mowers which shred the clippings and facilitate faster decomposition.
- Encouraging the re-use of water bottles and coffee mugs at school and at work.
- In response to an overuse of chemicals for weed control, many useful products of the past are no longer available and therefore communities are encouraged to use other means such as hoeing to maintain weeds. In some cases, allowing wildflowers to develop is an acceptable alternative.

These activities will highlight the fact that you are focussing on this category and when you develop more projects in the future your marks will increase.

For more helpful tips and case studies from other Tidy Towns entrants please take a look at <http://localprevention.ie/tidy-towns/>

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

The slogan "Killarney Looking Good" is very apt and we congratulate you on your success in the campaign against litter. The before and after pictures are a great help for the adjudicator to understand the extent of work you have done. The strategies of regular and seasonal litter clean-ups is working well; it is great to see the combined efforts of Council employees and volunteers working together and achieving so much. It is interesting to see the statistics for bags of litter and numbers of volunteers who have worked on this campaign over the years. Your success in controlling graffiti is admirable and we wish you well in working with art classes in schools. The various painting schemes also come under this heading and we see that this work includes painting bollards, bins, kerbs, railings and fences. The weed control programme is very important to limit the spread of Japanese Knotweed. Well done, Killarney was very clean on the day of our visit.

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

We visited Kilcoolaght Residential estate where we noted the houses were looking very well. It is great to see the combined efforts of residents from six estates being effective. We wondered why the street names were placed so close to the ground on the garden walls when in other estates they are more visible being placed on the sides of houses. Residents are taking good care through clean-ups and weed control. Arlington Estate was very good and Saill Ardan is a very pleasant estate and the established trees add enhancement. The estate is fortunate to have a good-sized open space but the front gardens in the estate are quite small. Perhaps the most impressive residential estate we saw was near the N22, with the sign, Oak, Elm, Beech estates and then later, Bruach na hAbhann. These estates had fine houses, open spaces and most of all some of the finest rows of trees we have seen on our visit to Kerry. Well worth a picture as an example to others in how it is done. No litter to be seen anywhere.

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

Approaches to Killarney are very pleasant, all have green routes to greet you and, in many cases, good quality trees. In general, roads and footpaths were in good condition and we admired the new improvement works done on Mission Road. What really impressed us were the roundabouts and we noted from before and after pictures how some were recently redeveloped. Park Road Roundabout is a great job with flowers all around the edge and taller planting towards the centre. This is high quality. The less sophisticated Cleeny Roundabout was also admired. The Ballydowney Roundabout was revamped from a rocky landscape to an oasis of colour that will attract pollinators as well as humans. All signs were clean and well done on planting 800 metres of new hedgerow from Lissivigeen School towards Pike Hill.

Concluding Remarks:

It was a pleasure to visit Killarney and see the many improvements that have taken place since our last visit. We were also pleased to see many tourists everywhere in the town.

Second Round Adjudication:

It gives this adjudicator pleasure to do the 2nd round adjudication on behalf of Killarney Looking Good Committee. The 1st adjudicator evaluated the Killarney Tidy Towns 2019, Killarney Tidy Towns Appendices – eight in total and two loose maps. The 1st adjudicator has commented on the documentation and, as 2nd round adjudicator, I fully support the 1st adjudicator's comments. A thorough appraisal of your projects category by category has been carried out by the 1st adjudicator. Thankfully, tourism is still increasing, and this adjudicator would like to delve into that aspect of Killarney's attraction and Tidy Towns roles or Killarney Looking Good's role. For ease of reference let us use your map and the legend attached to it. Although not numbered on your map Muckross House was visited and was very satisfying. It is always dependable. The Blue Pool Walk is a work in progress and will be adjudicated when the current upgrading has been completed. Killarney House and Gardens were enjoyed. Located at a key point in the town it has an additional benefit of free admission, not possible abroad to an attraction of its stature. It has a very good audio-visual introduction before one experiences the gardens. It was pleasing to see so many pollinators, particularly those with the colours blue, purple and yellow. Exiting onto Mission Road provided left or right options. Will visitors see the humour in the plough sculpture? Hilarious. Thanks to the donor of the plough. The tree planting behind the short terrace of houses on Lower New Street was admired.

Nearby is an alcove with a display of New Zealand and Australian ferns together with local Irish ferns. It also has a delicate sculpture. There are lots of information plaques which are badly in need of cleaning. Text not readable. The National Park beckons. Tempus fugit. The OPW and whoever else is involved in actively providing facilities for children is commended. Knockreer Education Centre, bird sculpture using fallen trees, a modern playground and he stag outside the National Park at the corner of Port Road/New Road. The new bus/car park on Rock Road was officially opened just last May. Usage is slow by observation, but it will increase.

On walk about this adjudicator spotted interesting murals i.e. a bee at each gable end of a white small structure (26 on map) and Brewery Lane – Fionn MacCummaill by Tina Reed 2018. The Town Hall looks very well. Nicely adorned with flower containers. Residential areas are an important part of Killarney's community and your map listed Kilcoolaght resident's association.

Off Upper Lewis Road, Dalton's Avenue is an attractive entrance. Marian Terrace and others contribute to the estate. Ballydribbeen or should it be Derreen has an attractive name sign at the entrance. A modern neighbourhood Bruach Na Habhann is rightly named because they are on a riverbank. Beside them is a new housing estate by Thermohouse for Cúid. Finally, a project that caught the eye is Kasi Garden. Very colourful and professional. A wide range of vegetables being grown. Well done to all concerned. As a 2nd round adjudicator I should like to thank you for your patience and to confirm that I uphold the decisions made by the 1st adjudicator. You will advance in this competition.