

Tidy Towns Competition 2021

Adjudication Report

Centre: Killarney - Cill Airne	Ref: 340
County: Kerry	Mark: 352
Category: F	Date(s): 30/07/2021 08/09/2021

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2021
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	60	51
Streetscape & Public Places	60	44
Green Spaces and Landscaping	60	50
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	50	42
Sustainability – Doing more with less	50	25
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	64
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	35
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	41
TOTAL MARK	470	352

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

Fáilte Chuig Comórtas na mBailte Slachtmhara Super Valu 2021. Táimid buíoch daoibh as ucht na hiontrála a chur chugainn. Go raibh maith agaibh as ucht bhur dtacaíocht le linn na paindéime. Lean leis an dea-obair. Welcome to the 2021 SuperValu TidyTowns competition. Thank you for your entry and for your commitment to your place in these difficult times. Keep up the great work.

- With a population of 14,219, you a large town in category F.
- The Killarney Looking Good group has 17 core members representative of the main organisation in the town, and you have over 500 volunteers in a network with various skills who can work on a range of projects.
- Your meetings vary from summer to winter and with Covid restrictions you have moved to Zoom and phones.
- Well done on the Diversity and Inclusion project which entailed an antiracist poster in 13 languages being presented to a representative from the immigration support centre. That seems to have led to other initiatives such as the rugby club diversity programme, the KASI Women's shed group and the International Choir.
- You have a wide network of agencies that support your efforts, and it is not practical to relist them in this report.
- Projects mentioned include tourism surveys and the shop local campaign.
- For communications you make good use of local and social media, and we noted the Killarney Looking Good competition.
- You have a busy programme working with primary and secondary schools in Killarney which includes many initiatives. Well done on achieving Green Flags.
- Specific projects since 2019 include biodiversity promotion and streetscape audit.
- In the 31 years since first participating in the competition, you have excelled and had many achievements including winning the overall award in 2011. Well done.
- We recognise that since you are a large town you have much information to tell us in your application. However, an 86 page application is too big, and we ask if you would in future limit the amount of information on each item. Please remember that 'less is more'. This matter was also mentioned in the 2019 report.
- In regard to the quality of your application, we wish to compliment you on the high standard of design and layout, especially the use of good quality photographs throughout the criteria, rather than at the end.
- We also realise that being a large town, it is not possible to include everything on one map and therefore several maps were submitted.
- The long term action plan is very well done and we liked the way each action has a person or persons responsible for delivery.
- The Tidy Towns Handbook has been revised and you can download it from the website. It includes plenty of suggestions for suitable projects to consider.
- We note that you have applied the relevant sustainable development goals in your projects. Well done.

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

- Projects detailed under this heading include the sculpture of the monk which looks very well, the ANAM Art and Cultural Centre (reopened in Dec 2019), Safe Streets and Safe Destination programme.
- Others included the micro athletic track, improved Christmas decorations, the tree of light in the grounds of St Mary's Cathedral which remained lit until the end of January. That tree was mentioned in the 2019 report.
- Age-friendly parking spaces and the shop front guidelines are noted. The restoration of Healy Insurances was well done as was the Columbarium Wall in Knockeendubh burial grounds.
- The upgraded playground looks very well. Please note that the modern trend is to focus on natural play using less sophisticated and expensive equipment. Playgrounds are places where children enjoy playing with other children and that is becoming more important – a place to play.
- Accessible tourism destination and the audit of streetscape business initiatives are also noted, and you have considered people with disabilities in the Make Way Day initiative.
- Ongoing projects include looking after derelict sites and the Laneway Revitalisation scheme. Before and after pictures tell the story very well.
- You have an upgraded Historical Buildings and Sculpture Trail.
- Redundant phone boxes are being removed. In other communities, these have been repurposed to include promotional information on the community.
- Future projects include a public realm design for the streetscape, upgrading the Fire Station and new cycle paths. We hope the design team includes street trees in their proposals.

Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:

- A new project is the fairy trail at Knockreer. These are a distinctively Irish initiative which has taken off in all parts of the country. They look great and attract children to parks and forests.
- We hope the 80 trees planted adjacent to MD O'Shea roundabout have survived. May is very late for planting unless the trees were grown in containers.
- Also at Knockreer, a wildflower meadow is managed using traditional farm machinery pulled by horses.
- The Blue Pool Walk at Muckross was improved by cleaning fallen branches and debris and removing some Rhododendrons. It includes an audio route for the visually impaired.
- The Bee friendly signage looks well and will help to raise awareness.
- Additional plant containers in the streetscape because of Covid restrictions.
- We note the changed grass mowing regime which encourages wildflowers to develop and well done on having them identified and listed in the common, Latin and Irish name in the table. One of these, ragwort (*Jacobaea vulgaris*) is a noxious weed which means it is illegal to allow it to grow, however, it is well liked by bees and other insects.
- You have also planted 60,000 bulbs on Mission Road including bluebells, snowdrops and wild garlic. No doubt they looked well in springtime as did the Crocus at St Mary's cathedral.
- The before and after pictures of Japanese knotweed demonstrate success. We assumed this was done by chemical means.
- Ongoing projects include the KASI Community Garden, maintaining permanent display beds,
- Well done on the tree planting programme which will provide long term benefits for Killarney.

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

- We learned in the News about the fire last April which is reported to have damaged about half of the land mass of Killarney National Park and hope it recovers quickly in the coming years.
- The Falconry display of Sept 2019 is noted.
- Congrats to KCC for the new brochure on Kerry's Parks and Gardens.
- Workshops at Killarney House and Gardens in Sept. 2019 also noted.
- The 2.4 m swift box at Killarney House, installed in the summer of 2019 is impressive.
- Plans for a new access walkway to O'Sullivan's Cascade are noted.
- The information board for Deenagh will add to the attractiveness of the wooden carved animals and birds.
- The biodiversity bulb planting on Mission Road is noted above and the Sophie Lodge workshop and the skills course (level 5) in Ecology and Practical Fieldwork.
- You are working on a biodiversity plan for Killarney and the annual autumn talk series have been popular.
- The control of Rhododendrons in Killarney is ongoing helped by 50 members of men's shed in Ireland in November 2019. Did the fire last April destroy any Rhododendrons?

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

- Projects mentioned here include the Café going green, the climate crisis initiative by the Kerry Diocese, new bicycle stands, solar powered parking machines, the global climate protest by students, the hotel sustainability pact of cutting emissions by 25%, the water refill station, the drive to win a grant by students from St Brendan's Secondary School for solar panels to reduce heating costs. The students have also made it to the final of the ECO-UNESCO Young Environmentalists Award.
- KCC operated a shredding system for Christmas trees.
- Recycling banks managed by KCC, and the KWD recycling initiative.
- A cycling skills workshop for girls and a covered area for parking bicycles in St Brigid's Secondary School and the cycle without age campaign is noted.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

- For a third year the staff of Marks and Spencers have joined your volunteers in cleaning street furniture and collecting litter.
- The new signage at the car parks is a great idea.
- Painting railings at the courthouse makes them look very smart.
- Pooper scoopers are erected as well as signs advising dog owners to be responsible for cleaning up after them.
- You were raked in 2nd place in the IBAL survey.
- You hope to have more service cables laid underground in future and the removal of redundant cables.
- In your litter control efforts, you have schemes such as 'Adopt a Road', Wednesday clean-ups and the Council employs litter pickers in the summer months. All schools take part in the spring clean.
- Weed control is done by the Council and they use weedkillers and road sweepers. Has consideration been given to the use of attaching special heavy duty wire brushes to tractors/small vehicles as is done in some European countries.
- The number of bags of rubbish collected during the county clean-up is amazing and we note the Tanaiste also donned a yellow jacket.
- You are vigilant in taking care of graffiti which is helping to reduce its impact on the town.
- Works such as painting bollards, railings and kerbs is noted.
- Our congratulations to Killarney Town Meitheal for their range of works undertaken throughout each year since they were formed 11 years ago.

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

- We note that houses in the new social housing scheme have very small gardens. Have you considered giving them some ideas on how to landscape them?
- It is great to see Armagh House redeveloped. The new build looks very different from the old style.
- Well done to the Ballydribeen Resident's Association for their works programme which is very impressive.
- New footpaths in some estates were provided and others upgraded, and all estate name signs are completed and are bilingual.
- You have successful competitions that helps to maintain high standards within each estate.
- A list of projects for improvement in the Ballyspillane estate were noted.

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

- Mentioned under this heading is the Ceramic Tile Project in Chapel Lane, road resurfacing works in College Street, restoration of Well Lane South and the mural at the entrance to St Anthony's Place.
- Other schemes include Flesk walkway, the car bus park at Rock Road where cables were placed underground, a mural at Glebe car park and extra parking on the Kenmare Road.
- Main Street was upgraded, and many footpath improvements were done in and around the town.
- More road improvements are planned.

Concluding Remarks:

Killarney is a busy place, and your group are very active in developing and promoting projects that enhance the townscape. Well done on progressing with these especially during the past two years of the Covid pandemic.

Second Round Adjudication:

The adjudicator is delighted to be back in Killarney for second round adjudication. It has been a difficult two years so its great to be back out and, on the ground experiencing in person, the excellent work that has been taking place for Tidy Towns. Well done on your continued commitment to Killarney and to the competition. Killarney on the day was busy, with many people experiencing outdoor dining in some autumn sunshine. The inclusion of outdoor dining has in some places being difficult with limited space, but it great to see that footpaths in places have been extended and re-surfaced, and where outdoor dining is taking place they have been enhanced with planters. Such examples were noted at the area of the Ross Hotel, The Fairview and Milano. Other buildings that caught the adjudicators eye were The Laurels, The Town Hall, Killarney Royal and the Churches. The businesses of Killarney are to be complimented on their presentation. Street furniture was also admired, most notable the unique bicycle stands at different locations around the town. New seating was noted and admired. The Old Milk Market was a hive of activity, the inclusion of the murals on the walls as a throwback to years ago is a nice addition. The area at the junction of Muckross Park road was admired, this area including the public toilets were spotless. The gardens at Killarney House, are beautiful and maintained to an exceptional high standard, what a beautiful area to unwind and relax and was been suitably used on the day. Muckross House and gardens as always didn't disappoint and it is great to see visitors back experiencing the splendour of these areas. Landscaping is at the usual high standard in Killarney. The addition of tiered planting at locations around the town was admired and this was used effectively to soften the urban backdrop. Muckross road was admired, now with grass verges left for wildlife. The inclusion of the signage at these areas was noted and admired. It is important to inform locals and visitors of the reasons for why the verges are left. As mentioned previously, Killarney House gardens are a joy, and the sign about the bees of Ireland was admired. Signage and the use of information boards in these areas is of importance, given the number of people you can reach with this information. Killarney are lucky to have these wonderful areas and natural habitats, well done on your work in these categories. The Killarney Urban farm is an interesting project and the adjudicator looks forward to seeing how this develops in the future and the outcomes.

Litter control and tidiness is always a concern with high levels of footfall, and on the day of adjudication the town was generally free from litter, which is a credit to all involved. Footpaths were clean and the addition of some re-surfacing has made a difference to busy areas. The many residential houses and estates were all presented to a high standard and a credit to the residents. A few vacant premises have undergone freshening and brightening. Approach roads were good and well presented with trees and landscaping, with areas left for wildlife. Traffic was heavy and congested in areas. Well done on this year's entry and presentation.