

Tidy Towns Competition 2022

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Killarney - Cill Airne** Ref: **340**
County: **Kerry** Mark: **361**
Category: **F** Date(s): **15/06/2022**
03/08/2022

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2021	Mark Awarded 2022
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	80	51	52
Streetscape & Public Places	80	44	45
Green Spaces and Landscaping	80	50	51
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	55	42	42
Sustainability – Doing more with less	55	25	27
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	64	66
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	55	35	36
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	55	41	42
TOTAL MARK	550	352	361

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

Fáilte chuig Comórtas Na mBailte Slachtmhara Super Valu don bhliain 2022. Táimid buíoch daoibh as ucht na hiontrála a chur chugainn, agus guimíd gach rath ar bhúr gcuid oibre amach anseo.

Adh Mór...

Welcome to the 2022 SuperValu TidyTowns competition. Your committee of 18 has a recent addition from the Ukrainian Support Group and with a volunteer cohort of over 400 you are certainly an active group. Having members of new immigrant communities as part of your team will bring additional skills to your already talented group – a Horticulturalist, Photographer, Social Media Expert, Conservationist, Artists & Building Contractors. We are delighted to see that in addition to Facebook and Twitter you also have an Instagram account as this will target the younger generation in Killarney. We love the idea of the Killarney Looking Good Competition – always room for healthy competition! Hopefully in time you'll get to have your Junior TidyTowns Committee as with three Secondary Schools and the many Primary Schools there is certainly the numbers who would be interested. You were asked to briefly identify one project and yet you gave us four pages on this project. Please please be BRIEF next year. We will read about the project in detail later in the relevant Category. Well done on your many awards both in national and international competitions. Being a representative for Ireland in the International competitions is some accolade! St Patrick's Day Festival and Christmas in Killarney culminate in parades which are extremely popular – are these organised by you or by Killarney Municipal District?

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

Killarney's centre is quite compact and we enjoyed walking around the many streets with their back lane links. You have some very impressive buildings – the Pugin designed St. Mary's RC Cathedral and St. Mary's CofI church both set in parkland, the Town Hall, the Great Southern Hotel, the Bishop's Palace, the Presentation Convent etc. There are also many fine hotel buildings which are well maintained and add to the streetscape – the Arbutus, the Fairview, Killarney Royal, Killarney Towers etc. We noted an ER postbox at Kenmare Place and also the Edward VII ones at the railway station and on College Street– perhaps there are more? Have you a survey of these as they are quite special? The Killarney Trails which we downloaded from the internet is excellent and we complement the creators. Hopefully a wall or some shrubbery will block those planning to sit at the new works undertaken in College Street as otherwise they will be sitting in between car exhaust fumes from the road and from the carpark behind. The location of seating should be carefully selected so as to give those using the seats a pleasant experience. Perhaps the seating in College Street might get a rethink? The mural on the Flesk Cycleway and Walkway is quite beautiful. Is it planned to continue the mural along the remainder of the wall? If not, we recommend that you plant ivy or some other self-climbing plant along this high blank wall which will not only green up the space but also be a haven for insect life. We read that your new upgraded playground has some equipment which allows space for assisted devices and wheelchairs – why oh why did we not always do this? The upgrade and painting of premises in the

town has certainly added to the streetscape. Were the painting scheme colours advised by the Killarney Municipal District? You mention an audit of the streetscape – what is the next step for your committee? Have you considered approaching the Utility providers and asking permission to paint those in strategic locations which detract from the streetscape? The discrete signs relating to the history of the streets are very interesting e.g. Gléib an Bhóithrín Chaoil, Lána and tSeanmharoidh etc. The ladies at ‘Dúirt bean liom go ndúirt bean léi’ were noted hopefully the fun doesn’t go unnoticed. There are many pieces of sculpture dotted around the town - including one which reminds us of World Ploughing Killarney 1954.

Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:

It’s always encouraging when trees are planted and we read that the Rotary Club planted quite a number at Killarney Burial Ground selecting a Weeping Mulberry to be planted in the mediation area beside the Columbarium wall. We look forward to seeing photos of the crocuses planted by the students and also of the biodiversity planting at Mission Road in next year’s application form. Throughout the town and particularly in residential estates suckers were noted on trees. These should be removed from the base and anywhere they appear along the trunk. Using a sharp knife or pruners, these can be removed while they are young. Is there a tree management programme for Killarney? The planting in the central traffic islands at some pedestrian crossings is particularly pleasant with low level pollinator friendly shrubs and plants. Could this be continued on other central traffic islands? New trees have been planted in recent years which are maturing well – we make particular reference to those beside the bike racks and seating area near the Courthouse. One of the trees at the 1916 garden has failed – this should be replaced. There are some locations where we feel ‘town’ trees would be of benefit e.g. on the pavement buildouts at the junction of the R876 and College Street. There are probably other locations such as these where the streetscape needs some greening – have a walk around and bring suggestions to the area engineer. Many of your planters were in full bloom and we also like the grasses which give additional interest. We noted however that some planters were empty – ask for these to be removed as they detract from the streetscape.

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

The proximity of the town to Killarney National Park is of unquestionable benefit to the inhabitants of the town as well as to the visitors. What an amazing natural facility to have right on your doorstep! There are numerous guided walking tours – who organises these? The release of white-tailed eagles sounds interesting and that they now have successfully bred in the wild is wonderful. Have you any idea when the Killarney Biodiversity Plan will be finalised? Put a link up on your website when the Municipal District says it is the final version. What a pity that the rhododendron is so invasive – it really is quite a pretty flower! Will the Kerry Mousetail Fern become the next invasive species? Hopefully not! We read with interest that the Killarney Park Hotel had an ‘Eat like a Local’ menu for Earth Day 2022 – this is something we should all be doing daily. You mention the swift boxes but didn’t tell if they have as yet attracted breeding swifts. Let us know of their success next year. Is there a ‘Friends of the National Park’ group where volunteers help in the gardens and in return learn from the experts who work the gardens and parkland? This is something we’ve seen elsewhere and everyone benefits. Are any of the guided walks aimed at the Primary or Secondary school children in the town? This is something you could encourage/ organise.

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

An interesting project is being undertaken by Tricel – it will be thought-provoking to chart this progress. Killarney Urban Farm is an exciting concept – unfortunately access was not permitted so we couldn’t see all it has to offer. We did, however, spend some time in the KASI community garden which is very impressive and where great crops of vegetables, fruit trees and fruit bushes are grown beside stunning floral displays. We also popped into the Going Green café for a cuppa to have a break in our visit to your town. The installation of the water station at the Courthouse was noted and hopefully you plan to install others around the town. The sheltered bus stand at the Secondary School was noted – have they embarked on ‘Cycle on Wednesdays’ yet? This programme is quite common and is extremely successful as groups of students cycle together making it safer on the public roads where there aren’t designated cycle lanes. Have you undertaken any webinars on suitable subjects in this category? We suggest you make contact with the Environmental Officer in Kerry County Council who will assist you. Webinars can be recorded and then a link put onto your Facebook page so that those not available on the day to attend can access them at a later stage. Probably one positive outcome from Covid!!

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

Clean up Kerry is going from strength to strength and this year the date was April 2nd when 5,000 volunteers took to the streets in their communities. A busy town like Killarney with its many daily visitors is difficult to keep clean and so we were very impressed at the small volume of fresh litter that we saw. Compliments to the many volunteers who obviously work hard to keep it litter free. Weed growth is a problem for all communities and in Killarney it is no different. We recommend that your many volunteers are asked to not only litter-pick but also to removed weed growth – along wall edges, kerbs, pavements etc. You have installed addition ‘Bee Friendly’ signs throughout the towndon’t overdo the installation of signage as remember it’s the streetscape or natural area we want to see not signage and their associated poles! The Fáinne Geal an Lae sculpture is very discoloured and it is virtually impossible to make out the poem. Maybe the discolouration is intentional – corten steel? We doubt however that the stone plinth under is supposed to be so discoloured. The bin storage units at Chapel Lane with the colourful murals make the area bright and inviting. You mention that dog fouling is a problem. In other communities we have seen ‘Clean up After your Dog’ signs painted on footpaths in areas where it is a problem and we have been told that this work better than signs on poles. They have the added advantage of not cluttering the streetscape or natural area. Electric cables were always unsightly and detracted from our villages and towns and we are delighted to read that little by little those in Killarney will be put underground when road works are undertaken. A fresh coat of paint

was applied to bollards, bins, railings and kerbs and as a result all were very presentable.

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

Close to the main shopping streets of the town we find two and three storey residential streets interspersed with local shops and businesses. This makes for a vibrant town in the evening when the main shops and businesses have closed their doors for the day. We met family groups, groups of teenagers, dog walkers and joggers along these streets as we wandered around in the evening. Some of these houses had hanging baskets or window boxes which made a huge contribution to the streetscape – we would encourage others to do likewise. We admired the nameplate for Cahernane Meadows beautifully set in a high random stone wall. Take care not to let the ivy encroach on the wall. You mention that Killarney District Council provide a grass cutting service for all public green areas including residential communal areas. Is this done using a grass cutting machine with a muncher? We are delighted to see that you give plants to residential areas as this will ensure pollinator friendly plants are used. Do many estates take up this offer? The new simple and clear bilingual signs are excellent. We need to be able to clearly read the name of an estate and these new signs are perfect. The Best Estates competition is an excellent idea – are there different categories? Small medium and large? This would probably be fairer. We admired the row of dormer cottages of St. Mary's Road and particularly the one with the beautiful yellow roses in full bloom. Holy Cross Gardens have great displays of colourful pollinator friendly flowers – please compliment the residents. The new social housing schemes are almost devoid of planting and are badly in need of comprehensive planting schemes. Some individuals have made wonder attempts and have evergreens and pollinators friendly flowers planted. More, however, is required and we must assume that landscape plans exist which will be implemented shortly. Ballyspillane resident's association is extremely active and is a positive influence on the community.

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

The approach road from the south which skirts Killarney National Park is extremely pleasant with its great canopy of trees. As with all towns, your streets, roads and pavements are well used and need constant maintenance and upgrade. Killarney needs work undertaken throughout the town and in residential estates where edge breakup, uneven footpaths, damaged kerbs etc are evident. We note that you have additional damage to your streets that is unique to your town. Long deep ruts are evident in many of the roads around the town caused by the jaunting carts which are a feature of Killarney. We have no doubt that the area engineer has a propriety list of all of these works. We note that already footpaths have been upgraded so work is progressing. Is it planned to widen the footpath at St. Mary's Cofl church? We note the road has been narrowed and planters placed between the footpath and pavement. This seems like an ideal place to have a pedestrian zone with seats and raised planting beds. We admired the black and yellow painted kerbs around the traffic islands which clearly define the road edge for the motorists. Many of these had low level planting which made them extremely attractive. The median on the R876 near the courthouse would benefit from some similar low-level planting. There are Age Friendly and Disability car parking spaces located around the town which were noted – some of the disability parking spaces need to be repainted. We noted quite a number of bike racks but didn't see any cycle lanes (with the exception of the Cycleway) – are there any? Or are there alternative routes for cyclists? Road markings are in need of repainting in many areas and in some of the carparks.

Concluding Remarks:

It was a pleasure to visit Killarney and stroll around your very busy streets and back lanes. We were delighted that you made reference to the Sustainable Development Goals in the various categories in your application. Thank you for entering the SuperValu Tidy Towns 2021 competition.

Second Round Adjudication:

It was great to be back in Killarney for the first time in several years and it was good to see so many visitors enjoying the bustle of the town on a sunny day. Approaching the town centre, the Cleeny roundabout looked very well and an area of grass managed for pollinators was noted nearby. Some lovely landscape planting was noted during the visit with a lovely display gracing College Street that included *Aliums* and *Agapanthus*.

While not strictly litter-free on adjudication day Killarney came very close to being so, with only a few stray items noted (e.g. in car park near tourist office). Indeed, staff were seen busy keeping the town centre scrupulously clean in a number of areas during the visit. Our thanks to them. A few tidiness issues remain for your attention. Watch out for signs and sign poles that need cleaning or painting. The sign frame in front of the Methodist Church is looking care-worn at this stage. On the plus side, the bottle banks at the Mission Road car park were spotless. So too were the public conveniences at the other large car park off St Anne's Road. The GAA grounds could be better presented, it is felt. Would the club consider murals for the extensive walls here?

Well done to the many businesses that have once again come up to the high standard of upkeep and presentation. There are too many to list here but suffice it to say that all of the hotels looked splendid on the day with some great efforts from hanging baskets to exacting landscape planting at entrances. The Anam Centre looked really well with gorgeous wooden planters and an adjacent planted area complemented. On the planting and other floral decorations, again there are too many examples to describe here. However, some stand-outs were the oval bed on the green in front of the Avenue Hotel which had super variety, the display of annuals at the Ha-Ha and the monument to the Munster Fusiliers. Superb work was as ever on show at Killarney House Gardens. This spectacular and pollinator-friendly display is really remarkable.

Overall, the presentation and maintenance of Killarney given such visitor numbers and footfall was really impressive. Congratulations to all involved.