

# Tidy Towns Competition 2015

## Adjudication Report

Centre: **Kenmare** Ref: **339**  
County: **Kerry** Mark: **320**  
Category: **D** Date(s): **18/07/2015**  
**15/08/2015**

	<b>Maximum Mark</b>	<b>Mark Awarded 2014</b>	<b>Mark Awarded 2015</b>
Community Involvement & Planning	60	49	49
Built Environment and Streetscape	50	43	43
Landscaping and Open Spaces	50	39	39
Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities	50	32	32
Sustainable Waste and Resource Management	50	15	20
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	64	64
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	32	33
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	41	40
<b>TOTAL MARK</b>	<b>450</b>	<b>315</b>	<b>320</b>

### **Community Involvement & Planning / Rannpháirtíocht an Phobail & Pleanáil:**

Kenmare TidyTowns are heartily welcome to the SuperValu TidyTowns competition for 2015. Thank you for: your entry form; your beautifully presented map which was most effective in guiding the adjudicator through the inspection; your 4 Year Plan which luckily was first item in the folder; the folder of material, most of which was of little use in the adjudication process except for some photos. You have a long and worthy history of participation in the TidyTowns competition, a tribute to many generations of committees in Kenmare and a tribute to you for maintaining that involvement. It is obvious from the many activities that you mention that yours is a pro-active group which has a lot of support in the community. Local businesses evidently value your contribution to town life and your list of supporting businesses must include all of the business interests in the town. Well done. While the adjudicator feels the bullet points are most effective in presenting your activities he feels that a short narrative paragraph would be more appropriate when describing how your community has benefited from involvement in this competition and also how your group has contributed to the development of your community. The adjudicator has to say that he found the instruction to 'See Folder' frustrating to follow and had to give up on it. Your map references compensated for that frustration and are sufficient direction for the adjudicator. Sorry about that as someone spent many hours compiling that folder and deserves great credit.

### **Built Environment and Streetscape / An Timpeallacht Thógtha agus Sráid-dreacha:**

TidyTowns enthusiasts from around the country who visit Kenmare out of curiosity must be green with envy when they see the design of your lovely town. Tourists wish to return to this idyllic spot or stay the extra night as they feel transported into another age and into their Alice in Wonderland fairyland. And the adjudicator indulges himself by soaking up the atmosphere all about. No doubt you have been handed a full deck but it is how you have played your hand that earns you your distinguished status in this competition. Your streets are a frenzy of colour because you have ensured that painting suitably is a continuous exercise, that decaying buildings are given a new lease of life and a make-over. The authentic Kenmare survives by attention to a chimney or by ensuring that the market clock keeps time. Those visitors have not read your TidyTowns submission which shows your attention to detail, your hard winter toil in presenting your town for the summer or your 4 Year Plan which illustrates clearly that you do not intend to let your standards drop when dealing with your built inheritance but are determined that the next generation will be handed on a gem which they too will polish. This visitor enthused over your heritage trail. He did not follow a set trail but came on the well or the stone circle or Cromwells' Bridge and read your delightfully presented information plates which informed and added interest to the visit. The walls at the pier also deserve a heritage plate. Were it not for beautiful last year's adjudicator constructed pedestrian bridges one would be most restricted in their enjoyment of many delights. Hopefully that rubble stone kerbing down at the pier will not be bulldozed away for land fill in an attempt at modernising.

### **Landscaping and Open Spaces / Tírdhreachú agus Spásanna Oscailte:**

And when this village was being planned the need for a fair green was a priority. Kenmare got its fair green in the convenient location that befitted its importance at the time. That fair green is now a centre piece of the landscaped Kenmare. Even the railings seem appropriate, the fresh painting a delight. The heritage panel tells the story of Reenagross which is now a wonderful natural amenity right there in the heart of the town. Your planting there shows your desire for renewal and replenishment whether in landscaping or in the built environment section. Then there is the pier which offers a different perspective on landscaping. A pier can be a dour, dirty experience unless shown a little support. But the adjudicator also feasted at other tables: the beech hedging at a derelict site on the way to the Stone Circe; the cat mint in the car park; the holly hedge; the devotion so obvious at the Well. The outcropping limestone is a natural feature that adds to the landscaping of the town. There is an opportunity to grow climbers along that wall opposite Finnegan's.

### **Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities / Fiadhúlra, Gnáthóga agus Taitneamhachtaí Nádúrtha:**

You must be blue in the face from people letting you know that there are such a variety of habitats in Kenmare between sea and land, river and trees. It seems that you are fully aware of this rich biodiversity and are ensuring there is no depletion in the richness on your watch. Your family tree adoption planting seems to be an inspired idea as it not only replenishes your tree stock but introduces the community to planting in a fun manner. The insect hotel also creates awareness of the natural surroundings. The adjudicator loved the catch cry: Don't get rid of your Deadwood. Well done on the encouragement of wild flowers for wildlife promotion. Because it is called Butterfly Walk the adjudicator had to experience it. Lovely walk, creating pedestrian connectivity between the Sneem Road and the town but making the adjudicator aware of the size of the Japanese Knotweed problem. Japanese Knotweed seems to be a companion throughout the town whether it be down at the pier or in the neighbourhood of a car park near Finnegan's. Your submission shows that you are informed on this matter but one did not know where to look for the eradication work on the knotweed and the Rhododendron. Gunnera may need to be dealt with also. The Butterfly Walk did not fulfil the promise of a butterfly. Reengross did. And its wildlife information panels adds to one's store of knowledge.

### **Sustainable Waste and Resource Management / Bainistiú Acmhainní agus Dramhaíola Inbhuanaithe:**

The contribution of the schools is obvious and all involved, especially the willing hands of the pupils, deserve special mention and acknowledgement. Your group has developed an understanding of what sustainable living in a town means and an understanding of the adjustments in behaviour that are required whether in the home, in business, in the school or in our attitudes to physical well-being. Your analysis of your energy, water, waste and transport surveys is painstaking and an appropriate follow-up action to the surveys you have undertaken. What has happened with these surveys? How has the information gathered helped you to alter some wasteful behaviours? The fact that you have undertaken a household waste survey is also impressive and it was helpful that you included the details with your submission. You seem to have made dramatic improvements in this category since last year.

### **Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:**

It is difficult to present a town as being tidy if there are many vacant buildings, if there are derelict sites growing buachalláns, if paint is peeling off prominent buildings. So attack the tidiness issue at source seems to be the modus operandi of your group. The approach road with the schools and the Church sum up the presentation of Kenmare as a tidy town for this adjudicator. Add to this the general condition of road surface, the maintenance of stone walls, the absence of weeds on kerbs and at the base of walls, the upkeep of landscaped areas and the result is the delightful town you get in Kenmare. You use timber fencing to great advantage as a screen or whatever throughout the town. But there are areas that do challenge the overall tidy appearance. A collapsed wall, poor screening, barbed wire stapled onto a timber fence all detract from their respective surroundings. The adjudicator felt that Rock Street is beginning to lose some of its charm. Maybe an adjudicator should be confined to a spell in the Smachtlann for saying that in a busy congested area litter is inevitable. But litter is a consequence, very often, of inviting throngs into one's town. It is how we handle this problem that counts. There is a protected structure up at the Hillock that sums up your approach to litter for this adjudicator. The protected structure is a bin. This bin will not be attacked by marauding crows who will scatter its contents in this lovely Hillock and allow the wind to complete the job. This bin will not be overturned when the last of a bottle's contents have been drained. This bin is impregnable. Sadly the adjudicator did come across the inevitable litter on the Butterfly Walk. The adjudicator loved: Cosc ar Bhrúscar adeirimd anseo.

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

It is in the residential section that the adjudicator fell in love with the town. Not only were the tradesmen of the nineteenth century presented with a branded architectural style, that style is now being replicated in many of the terraced blocks of recent years. The only frustration for the adjudicator is that those delightful terraces down around Pound Lane have not been adorned with name plates. There must have been a decision in this regard at some time but were it not for the most informative heritage plate the adjudicator would have missed the background to these town wonders. The residential areas are still being retained in the town centre and are not being deported to the countryside, as is the case with that fine development near Finnegans, maybe called Finnaghy Court. Neidín View is an example of attractive house design in the housing estates visited in various places and also of the appearance of the public realm of these estates. Great to see its name stone. The houses perched on the hill overlooking this estate is also a joy. But again the adjudicator cannot name this development and feels that is an insult to the residents who keep their area so well. This is certainly a tourist town and the fine, elegant dwellings on the Kilgarvan Road attest to this as do others on other approaches to Kenmare. But it is also a residential town with fine houses

along the Butterfly Walk or on some of the approach roads.

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

First impressions count and no matter from which direction one arrives the first impressions are positive. The more modern suspended bridges that are constructed the more the Kenmare concrete bridge will be a notoriety. It is an eye catching construction. But the sweeping avenues into Kenmare are natural notorieties in their own sense. For the tourist who has been gasping at the beauty up at Moll's gap the winding way into Kenmare must be about as much as they can bear. If by chance the visitor coming from Cork decides to drive down to the pier then the contrast between the delightful wall and the sea on one side and the wilderness on the other will have their appetite for more gems whetted. The less travelled areas of the town were also appreciated. While the adjudicator enjoyed a magical time when taking the New Road he also felt that a concerted effort had been made some years ago to paint shed and garage doors and to make corrugated structures as pleasing as possible. Now another concerted effort is required as some of the garage doors also need to be straightened up. Even if no visitor ventures in here the residents deserve the same weed free zone that the rest of town enjoys.

### **Concluding Remarks:**

Both the appearance of the town and the experience of being in Kenmare compliment one another as if the experience would not be half the event were it not for the manner in which Kenmare is presented. This is despite all of the wonders that Kenmare naturally provides for resident and visitor. So your existence is worthwhile, your planning, planting and painting make a real, tangible difference to what Kenmare offers. Well done.

### **Second Round Adjudication:**

Your adjudicator travelled to Kenmare on the same as the rest of the country - 15 August! Whilst this unexpected twist made second adjudication interesting it was a wonderful experience. Convinced littering would be an issue on such a day, it was surprisingly disciplined as was carparking. Everyone and everything seemed to be in its place and all were respecting the environment of Kenmare. Back alleys such as Rock Lane and around Cromwell's (or is it moustache?) bridge were all litter free. Gum litter is an issue in places and could be seen on the newly resurfaced road surfaces. The insect hotel was inspected and the wildlife information boards, bins and the paths through the grass provided a lovely amenity just off the busy thoroughfares. Reenagross Woods was great to explore and so peaceful despite the proximity of the fair nearby. You say that Japanese knotweed is being treated but it was all growing along the manmade river bank edges in the centre of the town. Your Biodiversity Officer would be able to advise on appropriate management here, possibly injection of herbicide or leaf painting, to avoid any chemicals enter the watercourse. Your informal education programme to promote understanding of biodiversity is to be commended. Your adjudicator was very impressed with the policy of not having bins in the school classroom to discourage unnecessary dumping.

Our Lady's well was a lovely oasis also and busy with pilgrims on her feast day. The blue gates looked lovely but the painter was over enthusiastic and painted a lot of the pavement here also. The timer lights were out here as they were on at midday.

You have reacted to last year's adjudication report remarked quickly, addressing many of the issues raised. The new fencing around the garage on the Bantry Road manages to reduce the negative impact of this site. The landscaping and works at the pier all presented very nicely.

All approach roads were very nicely presented. PR flags on some premises at the Killarney (N71) approach road were tattered. The views down the Main Street considering all the buildings together presented very lovely. The chimney painting project is progressing well and it was great to see the upper floors of premises being so cared for appropriately.

Kenmare is in a beautiful setting. The respect shown on what is probably one of your busiest days is testament to the high standards you have set as a community. Locals and visitors alike all were enjoying a wonderful day and the gold medals on display were well earned over your 25 years in the national Tidy Towns competition.