

Tidy Towns Competition 2015

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Killarney** Ref: **340**
County: **Kerry** Mark: **321**
Category: **F** Date(s): **20/07/2015**
16/08/2015

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2014	Mark Awarded 2015
Community Involvement & Planning	60	48	48
Built Environment and Streetscape	50	38	39
Landscaping and Open Spaces	50	46	46
Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities	50	37	37
Sustainable Waste and Resource Management	50	17	21
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	60	60
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	33	33
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	38	37
TOTAL MARK	450	317	321

Community Involvement & Planning / Rannpháirtíocht an Phobail & Pleanáil:

Congratulations to Killarney Looking Good Committee for entering the 2015 SuperValu TidyTowns Competition. Thank you for your colourful entry form, your 3/5 Year Plan, the booklet of appendices. It is wonderful to read a submission that exudes self belief and believes deeply that a culture of togetherness between all town stakeholders leads to successful outcomes. You have embraced all of the residents of the town in your activities and they in turn seem to have embraced all aspects of the TidyTowns ideals. The involvement of the younger children and the youth is taken on board naturally by you as part of your philosophy: Ní neart go cur le chéile. Of particular interest is that you reach out to other TidyTowns groups to share with them the approaches that have brought your plans to fruition. While the entry form was manageable the adjudicator felt that there was little of immediate interest to the adjudication in the appendices. There are a couple of copies of posters on litter picks and involvement of residents that would have been better accommodated in the their relevant sections and maybe be more likely to make an impact if included with their sections. The emphasis in the submission for the past few years has been on reducing time, labour and print in compiling the submission.

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

It is obvious from the list of projects in your submission that days of standing still and being satisfied with what has been inherited in the built environment are past, that you hope to stimulate interest in that inheritance through your cultural trail, that you intend refurbishing areas where necessary and making the town more attractive to your many visitors. As the adjudicator wanders round the town it is obvious that those visitors are content in their surroundings as they stroll around from street to street, shop to shop. Main Street is now a joy to wander in, the ceaseless traffic controlled and reduced to meandering along in order to create the ambience suitable to ambling. All of the main streets are vibrant with colour and the attractive appearance of businesses attempting to tempt one inside. All of the main buildings of the streets are beautifully presented. There are special treats if one looks up to the upper storeys in many cases as at Caragh restaurant 1796 and the ornamentation at Danny Mann Inn. It is obvious that there has been much renewal of the town centre in recent years as new building blocks and car parks are to be seen on all sides, residential blocks in the back lanes. Killarney is a built mix of fine modern design and traditional older stone and brick buildings, each complimenting the other. The size of the tourist office reflects the importance of tourism to the well being of the economy of the town. One finds pieces of sculpture all over, all creating interest as the stags, another creating memories of the past in legend or the stone that remembers your Famine dead or honouring unsung heroes like missionaries abroad. Street art enlivens surroundings as on the Port Road. Monsignor Hugh is the subject of both art and sculpture. Bóthar na Nead marked a delightful highlight of the Gaeilge that peers through frequently throughout the town. The Baile Stairiúil plates add to the experience of wandering round Killarney. Creative art is used on old buildings that are awaiting the next step in their development. The adjudicator does not want to start listing buildings as it would take all day and you know them by

heart. But a building and environs that stood out for its design, for the attention to the open space, for the tree planting is the Cheshire Home creating a welcome and a serenity. .

Landscaping and Open Spaces / Tírdhreachú agus Spásanna Oscailte:

Landscaping at the various hotels is delightful . The first experience was at the Killarney Hotel but almost all others maintained that standard. All along the Muckcross Road one feels that they would be well catered for in any of the accommodations if one were to judge from the colour and flair of the outside. Out on the road there are raised beds of flowers and plants that create that welcoming atmosphere. Every road junction is landscaped. The jarveys are neatly confined by an imaginatively created sleepered boundary that is full of colour. The playground at Knockreer is a wonderful amenity and in full swing. As one drives along Woodland Road one realises that every opportunity to plant roses or whatever is taken making colourful use of the grass margin. The entrance to this road is a delight. The adjudicator decided to have a look at the Maurice O'Donoghue Memorial Park and apart from finding much too much older litter, felt this is as enjoyable an experience as he has had all day among the more lofty town surroundings. What a relaxing joy down by the river. In town there are planters and containers all over adding to the chorus of colour of the buildings, sometimes defining car parking areas and non parking spots. Grass verges, planted with trees or adorned with rose beds feature throughout but are a special feature at the High Street Junction. Tree planting hides a high wall in a car park, great. Kenmare Place represented what Killarney is about for this adjudicator, the landscaping, the jarveys, the older buildings, the modern buzz, the sculpture, the statue from 1935. If one stands at the top of the hill off the Tralee road on the road to Aghadoe and looks down on Killarney one sees a carpet of trees as a canopy covering the town, the only sign of human occupation is the cathedral. A lovely memory as one bids farewell.

Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities / Fíadhúlra, Gnáthóga agus Taitneamhachtaí Nádurtha:

Killarney people are blessed with the natural amenities that are on their doorstep and also by the easy access that is provided to those amenities. To add to the natural elements there has been add-on value over the years. So one does not just enjoy the riverside walk in the Park but one is informed that this is an area of wild flower growth or one is challenged to the outdoor gym equipment or for the kids the lure of the playground in these exotic surroundings. One can walk, cycle, jog or laze but the buzz of the bees are a constant companion anyway. Though the adjudicator did not come across any hives he is pleased to read of the cooperation between yourselves and the Beaufort bee-keepers. One also reads of your liaisons with many other groups in the areas so that spawning pools are replenished or those persons with a disability can access the river tours or that suitable plants are available locally. You mention the Killarney Deer Society and the adjudicator was happy to come on the deer grazing peacefully, the antlers one associates with Christmas Eve. Your determination to rid yourselves of the Japanese Knotweed is evident from the public notice. The infestations in the park are a menace. The adjudicator felt that there is even a piece sneaking through the John's wort near your eagle stone on the N22. Well done to the members of Meitheal for their concern for and their work in the Park.

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

Many of the laudable projects that are mentioned in this section of your submission are projects that one would expect from all towns that are attempting to reduce the carbon footprint of that town. So one is not surprised to hear that there are E-Car charging points in Killarney or that LED lights are now being introduced or that the schools are involved in the Green Flag programme or that there are so many Bring Centres are dotted all over town. But all of these and others mentioned are highly commendable. What interests this adjudicator is your mention of Green Hospitality, as we are in Killarney. One would like to get a more detailed account of the excellent improvements mentioned. The adjudicator made a point of visiting Knockreer House and while most of the activities were hidden away the sight of the Green Flag made the search and the walk worthwhile. The Eco-Centre Green Flag confers a status on the activities in Knockreer that must surely inspire those who are responsible with confidence that will urge them on in the future. Many of the projects listed with Knockreer under wildlife belong also in the sustainable living section of the competition.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

The adjudicator enjoyed the witty approach in your posters to bringing the residents on board for the litter picks. Finger sign posting is not just helpful, it is a delightful piece of street furniture. Even the height barriers noticed are fresh and sharp looking. In general most businesses are restrained in their roadside advertising but there are a number of postings that are garish and too frequent. The next comment expresses the adjudicator's viewpoint and may be wide of the mark. There are concrete bollards in a few locations that seem out of fashion and seem almost to express menace. There are other more trendy alternatives which could be used. Traffic through a farm gate impacts on its surroundings but maybe the farmer does not have a choice. One hotel on the Muckcross Road looked down at heel. A directional sign at the exit from Scrahan Court is completely out of character with those in the rest of the town. The appearance of the base on Ballycasheen Road is rough enough, the road surface also in some need. The landscaped area of the car park at High Street Junction needs attention. The main streets are remarkably litter free for such a busy place. The amount of litter seen in estates is a tribute to the residents with one unfortunate exception. But the littered, graffitied areas of the towns are along the lanes. One felt that more attention needs to be paid to certain areas off the main streets. There is a part of New Market Lane that needs to be tidied. The adjudicator also visited St Mary's Well. No comment. The degradable bags for the dog fouling are magic. Dog fouling seems to be under control.

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

Residents can claim with justification that they play their part in having Killarney at its 'pristine best'. You mention your engagement with the residents' associations suggesting that trust and regard are mutual and mutually beneficial. Many estates were visited, clearly residents are meticulous in their maintenance of their shrubberies, their floral displays, their open space in the public realm as well as keeping their private gardens beautiful and their houses fresh and attractive. Arbutus Drive is highly residential and little linear estates shooting off the main road bring individual personalities to the area. One is pleased that each is given a name as a stamp of identity, as in Deerpark Crescent. The loop off of Muckross Road, along Woodland Road to Countess Road is highly residential also and again a lovely, pleasant drive, the older houses keeping appearance pace with their more youthful neighbours. The trees dominate, no matter which turn one takes in these residential areas as along April Avenue or out the Ross Road. When one arrives at the end of Flesk Grove the majestic trees greet one and dominate the sky line. In Millwood we see that a hedge has been planted to screen an ugly site. In Ardshanavooley you will see what attention to painting ones front can do to brighten up a whole area and you will also see how residents tend with care to their back entrances. But there is one estate that needs your attention, your focus. A most beautiful group of cottages were spotted along Park Road or thereabouts. One loved the boulders on a steep grassed slope at the turn table in one of those estates. The grass at the entrance to Scrahan Court needs more regular attention. One must not neglect to mention the residential areas of the centre of town. Mangerton View is in the heart of the town with easy connectivity to the town core. These terraces are exhibits for the terrace building style of earlier times. Steps led down to lovely painted pebble dash houses but the steps need cleaning. In town the lanes are highly residential but present a much different appearance to the residential areas in lanes of old with balconies on An Bóithrín Caol, pointed stone facing in Pawn Office Lane, hanging baskets adorn another residential block in a lane without a name sign.

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

When travelling to Killarney take any other approach road save the Farranfore road as this approach, even when one gets onto the start of the N22, gives no idea of the gems that can be experienced on the other roads into town. Yes the Cleeny Roundabout is as delightfully treated as all others, yes there is that special grassed roof that certainly sparks an interest, but the attention to detail as in the appearance of the fence does not reach the standard of other approach roads. Continue towards town to St Annes Road and that will lead to Lewis Road and York Terrace and you will experience the real Killarney heartbeat. But if you arrive from Cork the N22 is a wonderful treat, the three heights of landscaping that cover the wall starting with the thick John's wort at the base of the hedge and then on the other side of the road the usual forest, a contrast, combine to greet you. Later after the roundabout the residential takes over and keeps interest all the way to town. On the Muckross road there is so much to admire that the cyclists are fortunate that they have their dedicated lane for most of the journey because the motorist is distracted by the landscaping at the fronts of hotels and lodges, by the designs of those establishments and by the delights of the private housing. There is an air of welcome created by the fine surfacing, the road markings and the safe pathways for pedestrian and cyclist. When one reaches town make sure to treat yourself to the Mission and Port Roads towards Fossa. If you have been fortunate to arrive from that Fossa side the sweeping, winding roadway accommodates all types of traffic, the definition of grass verge, pathway and the road markings create a sense of order despite the rush. The trees from the Killarney Park contrast with the residential and the enterprise buildings across the road. While the Park walls are admired so too is the fact that the trees provide their own boundary for part of the way. Another feature of the welcome is that the namestones have their own individuality from road to road.

The adjudicator found it strange that there is very little mention of the lanes in your submission. The lanes of Killarney have formed part of the Killarney character traditionally. The names of those lanes must feature on any heritage trail of the town. Names like Well Lane, An Bóithrín Caol, Old Market lane, The Old Milk Market, Pawn Office Lane, Chapel Place conjure images of life in the town in recent enough times. Visit the back areas to discover the remnants of the old walls that once characterised living conditions in the heart of the town. Contrast the old with the new Scotts Street with al fresco dining, street entertainment and delightful street furniture. Two eras within yards of one another. Brewery Lane also benefits from revitalisation.

Concluding Remarks:

The adjudicator hopes that the marks awarded are a fair reward for the wonderful experience that is Killarney. Even for the hard pressed adjudicator Killarney becomes a holiday destination as one imbibes the delights that have been created for the visitor, and the adjudicator means for the visitor. For the resident this is the lovely home that the residents have created for the visitor to share in and for themselves to enjoy.

Second Round Adjudication:

Killarney Tidy Towns do great work focussing on specifics, getting the job done and done well! What impressed your second adjudicator was the efforts of street workers observed early on a Sunday morning and reading of your strong community links with bodies such as the GAA and the Angling Club.

Wonderful sculptures were enjoyed and the landscaping on open spaces worked very nicely. You have cleverly positioned containers full of flowers where they can make a great impact – such as around the nicely designed toilets and jaunting car waiting area below Kenmare Place. Overhead decorations on the main streets were noted and the bicycles on Plunkett Street looked wonderful and were really imaginative. The flags were a bit more vulnerable to the wind though and many had caught up on the lines. Individual premises have all made an effort such as the striking window boxes on the upper floors of O'Sullivan's cycles.

The number of tourists in Killarney even surprised your adjudicator. Different languages were heard all along the

thoroughfares and side-alleys. So it is important that the passageways are kept to a high standard also and it was good to read of your works in this regard. Be careful of the commercial bins at the rear of premises as some were overflowing. Whilst there was no litter at Glebe carpark bottle banks, this corner could benefit from the provision of a portaloo here as the need was observed twice during adjudication in daylight hours.

Street bins on the Main Street were full by late afternoon on a Saturday but impressively by 8am on Sunday the streets were clean again and all bins were empty. Chewing gum is an issue but it is not as obvious on the new canterra slabs. The road improvements at the junction of Main Street and New Street were allowing all traffic, pedestrian and coaches alike, to navigate safely here. A small amount of dog waste was noted around New Road but the wide availability of dog waste bags is commended.

The car park at rear of the Outlet Store had a lot of signage and was quite stark. The one part of Killarney that disappointed your adjudicator was ironically the area where the Tourist Office was located. It was felt that the large expanse of a very utilitarian car park and the standard design of buildings here was disappointing. Indeed it was felt to be one of the weakest areas of Killarney. The tourist office was clean and nicely presented inside, as were the static window displays, but it is recommended that periodic inspections are carried out as posters erected on the doors were slightly crooked and a lovely white t-shirt here was covered in flies.

The wonderful presentation of period buildings such as The Cathedral and The Mercy Convent are a great asset to Killarney and the ability to enjoy walks directly through the woodlands and park just off Mission Road was wonderful. Your adjudicator only encountered locals walking here - could more tourists be directed to these parts of the town to enhance their experience also?

Ringroads were nicely managed and the large mature trees screened off the traffic very nicely whilst providing more wildlife habitats. Roundabouts were particularly pleasantly landscaped. Arriving into Killarney from the beautiful natural setting of Muckross, you encounter a long line of commercial premises. Whilst each is nicely presented they could be anywhere and there is little link between these and the natural heritage of the area. Indeed false hedging on one hotel jarred as inappropriate. An opportunity here to graduate the transition from countryside to town is possible with the large expanse of road-side grassland that was tightly mown on second adjudication day. Between the footpaths and roads you could allow the grass to grow longer to give native flowers and seed the chance to germinate and explain to your visitors that this is deliberate management plan.

It was good to see so many cyclists using cycle paths throughout Killarney and also the businesses that support this recreation. Your tree planting schemes, in particular the indigenous stock of arbutus is complimented. You have worked hard on biodiversity and the information boards all along Mission Road looked well and helped to keep you in touch with the proximity of your natural heritage. Well done on your sustained efforts over the decades Killarney TidyTowns.