

# Tidy Towns Competition 2015

## Adjudication Report

Centre: **Kenagh** Ref: **909**  
County: **Longford** Mark: **271**  
Category: **B** Date(s): **11/07/2015**

	<b>Maximum Mark</b>	<b>Mark Awarded 2014</b>	<b>Mark Awarded 2015</b>
Community Involvement & Planning	60	39	39
Built Environment and Streetscape	50	39	39
Landscaping and Open Spaces	50	36	37
Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities	50	24	26
Sustainable Waste and Resource Management	50	12	14
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	53	53
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	29	29
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	34	34
<b>TOTAL MARK</b>	<b>450</b>	<b>266</b>	<b>271</b>

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

Ta Fáilte Romhat Caonach! Welcome Kenagh to the Super Valu 2015 National Tidy Towns competition. You have 13 members on your committee. This is good representation from a relatively small community. You hold monthly meetings and several other events to engage with the community whilst at the same time in many cases working on your projects. You are assisted by a good number of agencies, bodies and businesses. Your communication methods are many and include traditional and up-to-date methods. This is good as it means you are engaging with all age groups within the community. You work very well with the local school. We are delighted to know that the work of the Kenagh and District Development Association has contributed greatly to the development of your village both aesthetically and also – importantly - in terms of community spirit.

Thank you for your comprehensive entry including the village area enhancement plan for your village. However this is dated 2012. Some of the projects suggested have been carried out, but there are others still awaiting execution. The action plan for delivery does not appear to put a date on any of the projects time scale. It is time now to draw up a new focused Tidy Towns plan for the village. We would suggest that you use the category headings in the entry form/adjudication report as the basis for this plan - to be focused on your Tidy Towns work. A three or five-year plan will focus your mind on what you can hope to achieve - no matter how simple a plan it is. Only include what you feel you can achieve in the time scale chosen for this plan. A plan need not be prepared professionally, but you should consult locally in preparing such a plan. You should also consider any statutory and non-statutory plans applicable to Kenagh in drawing up your work programme. Please refer to the Tidy Towns Handbook for advice in relation to the preparation of a plan. You can also glean much advice from the 2012 plan in your possession! It is essential to progress in the competition and to gain extra marks under this particular category that you submit such a plan in 2016. In fact not having a plan leads to loss of marks in this category.

Your map is somewhat minimalistic. You show seven key landmarks. The map does not show the Catholic Church nor the school nor does it extend to the canal bank. You do not show any housing estates, nor name them. You do not name any approach roads. Most importantly you do not show any of this year's projects numbered as requested in the 'guidelines to completing the entry form.' We would refer you to the 'How to complete your super Valu Tidy Towns Entry Form (part 6). In the entry guidelines for the competition you are asked to sequentially number each ('mappable') project undertaken for this year 2015 and to carry this numbering system through to the village map. You have not numbered your projects on either the entry form nor on the map. Please remember to read the Guidelines carefully before submitting next year's Entry Form and map. We liked the use of Irish in estate names.

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

You have succeeded in getting some minor painting works carried out through engagement with some of the local

business owners. You offer to assist. St. George's Church looked well but there is still a considerable amount of painting of the railings to be completed. We assume that you and the church bodies are liaising with the Architectural Conservation Officer of your local authority in relation to any works to the church. You do not mention your Catholic Church, but we were most impressed by this most interesting piece of ecclesiastical architecture. It is unusual and striking. It is maintained well. We had to revert to the National Inventory of Architectural Buildings to find out more about it. Perhaps it would be an idea to present this information on a notice board near the church. There is also the background to the stone carving from the original Dominican Abbey. Although we do not adjudicate on building interiors we visited this church, but as it was nearly closing time we had little time to dally. There are some interesting presentations with regard to local parish history including some information about the tradition of the local stations within the church. The church is an important piece of modern 20th century design within your community. The school was very neatly presented. However, the barrier along the road looks rather raw and overpowering. Is it necessary or can it be upgraded in any way? The mural at the end of the school boundary looked well. The Irish Wheelchair Association Resource Centre was very neat to the front and at the back, and is a credit to the Association and the users.

The Clock Tower looked well with a functioning clock!

We very much admired the presentation of Mac's Shack. The cream house downhill of Mac's was presented in excellent fashion also. Frayne's Corner with its 'to let' property looked a little run-down. Hopefully it will find new use. The gable area of Newman's needs tidying - but we loved the marble name lettering on the gable - which should be professionally repaired and conserved. Such marbled shop name lettering is now rare.

We fully appreciate your concern with the thatched cottage. Perhaps you can let us have an update on the situation for 2016. Please let us know what your discussions with the local authority lead to. You could also give us some more information about the historic and evening and walking tours insofar as they relate to this category next year. We would recommend the use of traditional lime mortar if possible when building stonewalls - which need to be mortared - instead of using cement. The pump at the pedestrian crossing looked well in its hedged recess, but the very narrow plinth elevation facing the footpath needs finishing as half of it was broken. The green pump on the footpath was well presented also. 'Boyle's shed wall boundary looked poorly. O' Boyle's shop and Post Office were neat. A 2007 torn planning notice should be removed. The Dovecote looks very much in need of conservation. We saw the Kenagh schoolhouse plaque which appears to have been inserted on top of an older stone plaque (?). Construction work was ongoing at St. Dominic's Community Centre site. Here we spotted your 1994 Endeavour Award plaque. What are the plans for the church on the Cartron Road? Some data which you insert under this category heading is more relevant to other categories where we credit it. An example of this is - details of the bug hotel.

We wonder if you are aware of a most unusual aspect of your built heritage – one which we have never seen anywhere else That is the particular design of the redundant 'P agus T' green post-box beside Brookfield House. It is in a very poor state of repair. Please talk to your County Architectural Conservation Officer about this before it is too late!

If you are erecting wildlife signs in the future please ensure that they include the Irish names.

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

We were delighted to read that you are 'taking on board' the move to more sustainable planting. How right you are in saying that you have numerous natural amenities in Kenagh! We loved the final works to the river inlet project. The area looked very well, appealing, and restful. It is a lovely small amenity to have for people who may not have transport or mobility capacity to access the canal side area. Thank you for submitting the photographs which let this adjudicator see the 'before' situation. You are correct in continuing to maintain the canal area nonetheless, as it is within walking distance and is obviously used by your population.

Well done on the development of the sensory garden for the Irish Wheelchair Association. To the best of our knowledge this is the only sensory garden project for this year in your county. We congratulate you - and all involved on this. The sensory garden provides a dual function of good landscaping and community enhancement. We admired the small fountain, window boxes and other planting. Well done to the national school on their productive garden! We hope that the pupils enjoy its produce! There is no need for flower troughs along the nice stone wall between the village and the church. The existing good trees and stone walls are enough. Along here we admired the beautiful stone raised bank near the bus stop with its delightful shrubs. The vast surfaced space near Gav's is an area which would benefit from the relocation of many of the planters from areas where they are not necessary because of natural planting/trees and hedging. The Kenagh /Co. Longford generic information board in the village centre is nicely set off by its landscaped raised bed, but, as with these entire signs county wide - it is fading. The playground gate is a lovely piece of woodwork.

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

Well done on continuing the survey of the Royal Canal. You do not say what expert advice you had on this day survey, but we assume that you did have such. (You indicated that you did take an expert on the second walk in July). Well done on sending the records of your sightings to the National Biodiversity centre. This shows genuine interest and will be useful to the national surveys. You have been busy also surveying your bat population, and we are sure you found this to be most interesting. Thank you for letting us have the results. We note also that you are in contact with your National Parks and Wildlife Ranger in relation to invasive species. You are helping to try to stop the spread of the New Zealand flat worm, Have you been in contact with your County Heritage Officer in relation to

these surveys? And when - or where - or how do you propose to present this information to the public? Be careful with the introduction of the duck population as we understand from wildlife experts that introducing ducks into an environment requires research and care. Thank you for the wildlife photographs.

We would love to hear more about the planned natural bog wetlands walking project which you are going to develop in conjunction with the County Council and Wetlands Heritage Ireland. Hopefully by 2016 this may have passed the planning stage and have become a phase 1 entity on the ground.

You are certainly making progress in your survey and analysis aspects of this category. It is critical to conduct professional research before conveying information to the public in brochure / information boards or through phone apps. The Tidy Towns Handbook is there as a relevant helpful publication. The Heritage Council's 'Wildlife in Towns and Villages' booklet is also a useful resource. We observed some hedge cutting on the Longford approach. Remember that it is permissible to trim hedging along cultivated ground (e.g. gardens) throughout the year. However with regard to hedge trimming bordering non cultivated land - you are reminded that it is an offence under the Wildlife Act 1976 and Wildlife (Amendment) Act 2006 to cut vegetation in a hedge or ditch on lands not cultivated between 1st March and 31st August annually - this is for the protection of nesting birds. Before considering trimming any such hedges please consult with your local authority who will deal with this issue if there is a safety aspect

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

Following on from your waste minimisation survey of two years ago you hosted an information meeting with the local authority's Environmental Awareness Officer at the Community Centre. You are going to conduct follow-on surveys, but before doing this you are going to distribute advisory leaflets in relation to 'doable' projects under this category heading. You are aware of the potential paper wastage and will use e-mails where possible. A lot of your advice relates to food purchasing and preparation/usage. This is an aspect of sustainable waste and resource management that every household can contribute to. Thank you for the copy of the survey form. However such forms should be attached to and not form part of your entry form. We notice also that you have begun water conservation work this year and have installed a water butt at the Health Centre. You are keeping an eye on this, and are going to find out exactly how much water can be harvested over a particular period. You will use results to encourage others to do likewise. Have you made any inroads with the business community in relation to their function with regard to the issue of sustainable waste and resource management? You are aware that sustainable waste and resource management is about more than recycling. Do continue to refer to the Tidy Towns publication in relation to Sustainable Waste and Resource Management - the updated version sent to you as updated handbook extract.

Well done to the school on achieving two green flags. On adjudication day we just sold one flag flying at the school. Perhaps they have just received the second one and are awaiting its delivery. The school also has a composting area and mulching mower. The schoolchildren will be well grounded in the principles of resource management and can be a great source of advice and encouragement to the older community in this regard.

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

You look after the village road and the approach roads. This includes washing and clearing around signage. Well done on your Spring Clean. We appreciate that the main Longford to Ballymahon road can prove challenging but you are endeavouring to keep up with work there. You say that you conduct regular litter runs. Could you perhaps next year give us some more detail in relation to what exactly you call 'regular?' They are obviously having effect as the village was litter free - apart from the canal amenity area. You say that this year your focus is on derelict sites and this really is a Built Environment issue - as well as affecting the tidiness of your village. As well as the thatched cottage you have the unfinished estate boundary to contend with. Although you mention it under the Built Environment - we credit the cleaning and painting of the flower tubs and troughs under this category heading.

Undergrounding of cables is an expensive project, and it is difficult to achieve this in the absence of funding - which has been in short supply in recent years. We would encourage you - when you do obtain the funds to look for professional architectural/landscape architecture advice in the choice of lighting fittings and standards. There is a wonderful array of modern architecturally designed lighting available. We noticed a white- like broken board on the footpath outside the school barrier. Capping on the wall between the old schoolhouse and the IWA needs painting. A red footpath-side petrol pump was rusty.

There was a scattering of litter at the canal amenity area and also an out-of-date Part 8 Planning Notice. The wildlife signs were very faded. Otherwise the area was well maintained.

The bring banks were disappointing as the receptacles were very dirty. The surrounds were litter free - although the immediate area around the bins needed sweeping. The signage was also bent and damaged. This looked poorly in the beautifully presented church grounds area.

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

You have quite a number of new residents and new areas to look after through the development of so many housing estates in your village. We hope that the huge increase in population has meant an equal increase in hands to help you. You work with the estates during the Spring Clean project. Although you mention it under Built Environment

you indicate that you offer to assist residential property owners to paint and tidy their property. Casey Court continues to receive prizes in the local authority awards. We noted the hanging baskets at entry to the estate and the entire estate was very neat. However, some on-footpath parking detracted a little. The estate would benefit from some additional trees planted in the open space. Well done to the Deerpark residents on being the 'leading lights' in volunteerism. We commend the eco-garden.

Mac Hugh Park was neat and had good planting along the road edge, but the lateral boundary wall on the left-hand side entering the estate needs paint. The grass was well trimmed here and there was no litter. The block wall surrounding the green space would benefit from planting. Not all houses that have brackets for hanging baskets had baskets attached. Such should be either removed or used. A gated new estate had a weedy road frontage. Pairc na bhFiadh has a lovely planted access splay and gravelled area. It is very well presented.

Cluain Caonach has no name sign obvious from the roadside, but the name can be seen on house number signs inside the estate. It is a pity that the wall does not match the local stone walls. There were four empty flagpoles at this estate. Internal boundary walls need plastering at the town end. The kerbed edging to the open space was weedy in places. Trimming along the footpath edges is also required. The bare open space needs reseeding and tree planting. Crannach opposite the church looked neat - apart from the two boarded-up houses. We loved the simple yet effective roadside planting in front of this estate. Cloghree has nice planting at the entrance. There was no name on the estate opposite St. Georges Church and this estate was weedy at the unfinished end. We admired the stone wall and wooden gates to the houses opposite the national school. A grey 5 bay two storey house opposite Mac's Shack (at the edge of the village street) was very well presented. The standard of house presentation in the village is generally good.

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

We are sorry to say that we noticed no significant improvement at the fencing area to the unfinished estate on the Cartron Rd. approach. Our photographs on adjudication day look like the 'before' photographs which you included. Otherwise the CE scheme and yourselves are to be complimented on the care of approach roads. We can see that some footpaths need improvement and hope that your continuing to lobby for same will bring you good results. We noted that the footpath on the village side of Casey Court needs surfacing.

A school sign between the village and the Catholic Church was partially covered by foliage. Perhaps you would consider painting all the traffic sign upright poles like the St Dominic's Community Centre/Jim McGann sign. Remember that it is possible to purchase striped plastic sleeves for these signs which minimise on maintenance. Some signage was covered by foliage on the right-hand side as one approaches the village from the Longford direction. Some signs needed cleaning. Near the village sign on this approach the fence needs repair - and opposite the sign a boundary/gate pier needs paint. The approach was well trimmed inside the 60 K pH. Opposite Deerpark housing estate we noticed evidence of some recent hedge trimming. Please see our comments under Wildlife above. A junction sign near 50 K pH and close to the Pairc na bhFiadh estate is a little bent. On entering the village a 50 K pH sign is hidden partially by a public light standard and on exiting the village a sign is partially obscured by vegetation. Good simple gardens and stone walls create a 'sweep' into the village along this final approach.

On the Cartron Road approach one 50 K pH was leaning at an angle, and some trimming is required. Some field gates needed straightening and painting. A terrace of cream houses approaching the Clock Tower would benefit from painting, and a wall opposite could be freshly plastered. The 'stop' sign needs cleaning, but the flower bed it is set in - looked lovely. There is a nice view of the Clock Tower on this immediate approach.

On the Ballymahon road there were some weeds at the corner of the estate (village side corner) opposite St. George's Church the 60 K pH sign is in need of repainting in part. The junction sign as one enters the village was partially obscured by vegetation. We admired the pump and the Kenagh sign on the two triangular green spaces. This approach is very neatly trimmed. We observed fly posting/signage to wish the local team luck - as on the Longford approach road also.

On the approach from the canal we admired the well painted black and white 80 K pH sign is but as one exits the village was obscured by vegetation. We also noted two traffic poles without signs. What are the red containers in the field inside the cut-off pedestrian bridge? This is a lovely approach with the footpath on one side and good trimmed edges to the stone wall and trees on the other side. We also admired the nicely painted green gates.

The approach from the Mill has weedy verges near the town. Field gates would benefit from painting along this approach road, and stone walls in places needs repair near the junction. We did not observe any speed limit sign here. Are the wide footpaths in the village meant to provide parking? Will not the paving deteriorate as a result?

### **Concluding Remarks:**

Kenagh is a village with a good vernacular street and well-absorbed multi-site residential estates. You obviously have managed to integrate the new and the old well - both visually and socially. This is to your credit. We enjoyed our visit despite poor weather! We wish you continued success! Go n-éirí libh!

