

Tidy Towns Competition 2015

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Kilcurry** Ref: **1391**
County: **Louth** Mark: **261**
Category: **B** Date(s): **18/06/2015**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2014	Mark Awarded 2015
Community Involvement & Planning	60	46	48
Built Environment and Streetscape	50	29	30
Landscaping and Open Spaces	50	31	31
Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities	50	30	32
Sustainable Waste and Resource Management	50	12	13
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	54	55
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	25	26
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	25	26
TOTAL MARK	450	252	261

Community Involvement & Planning / Rannpháirtíocht an Phobail & Pleanáil:

Kilcurry is welcome to the 2015 Super Valu Tidy Towns competition

Thank you for the very comprehensive entry form, 3 year work plan and map of the village and its surrounds.

This was the adjudicator's first visit to the idyllic rural village of Kilcurry and one which did not disappoint.

It's pleasant to have the contrasting option of adjudicating a small village which has a different set of dynamics than a large town.

The adjudicator was pleased to note that the village was spared the legacy of the boom years that of unsuitable developments.

The committee of 12 is very active judging by the amount of ongoing work that is taking place under the categories of the competition.

Thank you for acting on last year's adjudicator's recommendation to submit copy of the actual plan as it was useful for reference purposes.

Strong links have been developed with the Louth County Council through both the various sections that you have recourse to as well as your local councillors.

Louth Tidy Towns Together which is facilitated by the County Council is indeed an excellent forum to be involved with for idea sharing and in certain instances access to valuable resources as well as creating a healthy rivalry among some neighbouring parishes!

The ever dependable TUS scheme has like in many other communities helped you to advance your work programme and on the day in question the two workers were engaged in a number of tasks around the village core area near the Church.

Most importantly you have gained the support of the local population who clearly value the work you are doing on their part.

Communication methods are varied mixing the tried and trusted like community notes to having a very active face book presence.

You're the first centre this adjudicator that has actually outlined the real value of social media and its impact in getting the message out there

Now one presumes you have gone on to what's app and viber for cheaper group texting.

Good to note that you have an interactive relationship with Scoil Phadraig Naofa and the schools activities will be addressed under the relevant section,

Thank you for your positive comments on how involvement the competition over the years has benefited your community.

Finally the adjudicator has taken note that you are working to the plan as per attached.

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

Finding ones way from the extreme north of the county through Forkhill was a little difficult but it ended well. The entrance from this end brings one on to a junction where there is a broken stone wall but this does not seem to be the one outlined in your plan at O Hagans pub. This section needs to be repaired as well to continue the complement of excellent stonewalls that village boasts of. The work on Kilcurry Bridge was in progress when the adjudicator went out the Armagh toad and what is done to date is fairly impressive. There is no indication of how this work has been funded but a plaque on the wall near the church suggests maybe it might be part of a legacy from one of Kicurry's most famous sons! The school is a credit to the community which of course includes teachers, school children and parents. Retention of its original character is a feature of this fine extension and well done to the architect and builder in question. O Hagans is indeed a fine old traditional pub with a very nice frontage embellished by hanging baskets. The adjudicator made the grave mistake of walking over there from the Church car park not realising that the particular road was busy and narrow! Other features that appealed to the adjudicator that fall with the built environment was the quality of the new stretches of footpath on the Dundalk Road. The road surfaces were good and road markings visible. St Brigids RC Church was in fine condition with ample parking and fine boundary wall and the adjoining graveyard can be easily accessed. The improvements here in the form of paths were noted. Scoil Hill is some transformation in a couple of years and much of this looks as if it happened since 2014. Whoever has the responsibility of maintaining the Parochial House and Grounds has a task in hand as this adjudicator hasn't come across too many of similar size. That whole area around the community/resource centre was being maintained on the day of the adjudication. The work done in the last year is deserving of an increase in marks.

Landscaping and Open Spaces / Tírdhreachú agus Spásanna Oscailte:

There has been a huge amount of good work done in this category since last year and the fruits of this work are very evident at various locations in around the focal point of the village. The adjudicator was hugely impressed with all the areas visited and the colour and indeed the selection of shrubs that will be sustainable and give all year round appeal. You have highlighted all these planting arrangements in your entry document and one is better than the other. A few suggestions that might be useful for the coming year; The area in front of the Grotto was a little bereft of colour and we all associate grottos with floral displays. A few more transportable planters like those on the foot path down the Dundalk side of the village might be sited in other un planted green verge areas. The planting scheme in the Church Ground has become a little imbalanced and needs to be examined to see if it can be improved upon. Some more saplings would be an addition to parts of the green verges. It might be an idea to get somebody from the county horticultural department to come and have a look at what's done and what more could be done. For the work done to date an increase in marks is warranted.

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

First off the adjudicator did not get the biodiversity survey that was undertaken by Breffini Martin and maybe it got mislaid in transit. Some excellent work has taken place during the last year including committee members going on various training courses that give proper direction in matters pertaining to the conservation and promotion of wildlife. One notices that the school has played a big role in this section and has been acknowledged for that in the submission. As regards the ubiquitous insect hotel/motels that one encounters on nearly every entry Scoil Phadraig Naofa pupils are only the second group that this adjudicator has come across that went to the trouble of explaining what the contents of these habitats do in terms of attracting varying species of insect life and larvae. Well done to them and for that and the other work you have earned yourself an additional 2 marks in this category. I would consult with the bio diversity officer for the county to see if the results of the Breffni Martin survey could be transposed into a visual format like an information panel or maybe two. Failing this can the bird survey be converted into a visual format and maybe there's a wildlife artist in your midst who might be able to put her/his particular stamp on it.

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

Well done to the school on its 4th Green flag award and the WOW programme which has a couple of objectives to it. Plenty of work and mini projects in this category most of which have been replicated in most centres adjudicated in the county. What makes them more interesting here is that this is a small community who would not have access to the mix of facilities other bigger centres have. The unusual one is the utilisation of crushed glass in the St Brigids Cross. The emphasis in this category is moving more to waste prevention and prior to next year the committee should, via a dedicated person who would take responsibility, examine www.localprevention.ie for new ideas on waste

prevention and also consult the EPA website on the latest update on the status of The National Strategy For the Prevention of Waste.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

One has to be impressed with the list of practical and simple measures that you have put in place to encourage the community population to practice good litter control and general tidiness.

The Village out to the boundaries was virtually litter free and while the place has some advantages that there is no shop or take away it was still an achievement.

Daily litter patrols are certainly having the desired effect and the TUS workers were actively engaged in grass cutting and bagging the cuttings on the day of the adjudication.

The bottle bank of 6 receptacles was nicely cordoned by permanent barrier and a notice making patrons aware of the conditions of use.

School involvement is a key component of this category and getting the message across to a wider audience via face book and maybe twitter also helps immensely.

General tidiness was very good but like most other rural places they are one or two side areas that could be better. One would hope that fly tipping is not a problem for Kilcurry but it's not that far from a couple of large centres of population.

Well done on your 2 day Spring Clean Up with an impressive 250 participants.

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

The Village is very lucky that it escaped the excess developments that went up during the boom years in some very similar sized places around the country.

Most of the properties and there were a few large ones were presented to a very high standard and one or two were in the throes of being painted and one undergoing some landscaping.

Well done to all the residents that have made the effort to have their properties and gardens looking so well.

One or two stood out but it would be remiss in such a small and tight knit community to sing anyone out.

One or two less than well presented homesteads were seen but hopefully they will make improvements over time.

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

Quite a lot of what would be considered in this category has been covered under other sections.

The entrance on from Dundalk was impressive with verges cut in accordance with good practice. The road out to O Hagans Pub while a little tight had banks maintained well and nice name sign which may be added to next year with a planting arrangement.

Well done to the volunteers who look after this.

The Armagh was very inviting and will be enhanced even more with the extended new stone wall.

The Forkhill and Church Road entrances were all acceptable.

Some very hard and committed work has gone into this category and you are deserving of an additional mark.

Concluding Remarks:

It was a pleasure to visit, for the first time, the idyllic rural village of Kilcurry and its surrounds.

The very active committee has set out a plan of work that is both realistic and achievable and the fruits of its labour are to be seen in the improvements that have taken place over the last number of years.

After the adjudication the adjudicator took time out to relax and stroll around the outskirts and enjoy the Louth countryside.

Continued success to Kilcurry in the years ahead.