

Tidy Towns Competition 2023

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Kilkee - Cill Chaoi** Ref: **72**
County: **Clare** Mark: **330**
Category: **C** Date(s): **08/07/2023**

| | Maximum Mark | Mark Awarded 2023 |
|---|-----------------|----------------------|
| Community – Your Planning and Involvement | 80 | 48 |
| Streetscape & Public Places | 80 | 48 |
| Green Spaces and Landscaping | 80 | 44 |
| Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality | 55 | 37 |
| Sustainability – Doing more with less | 55 | 19 |
| Tidiness and Litter Control | 90 | 64 |
| Residential Streets & Housing Areas | 55 | 36 |
| Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes | 55 | 34 |
| TOTAL MARK | 550 | 330 |

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

Fáilte chuig Comórtas Na mBailte Slachtmhara Super Valu don bhliain 2023. Táimid buíoch daoibh as ucht na hiontrála a chur chugainn, agus guimíd gach rath ar bhúr gcuid oibre amach anseo. Adh Mór....

You are welcome to the 2023 SuperValu TidyTowns competition. We see that you haven't entered the competition since 2019 so you are welcome back. Thank you for your completed application form which included photos, and for your map and a list of actions under the various categories in the competition which you will undertake in the next 3-5 years. Put a date on each of these in the application form next year as dates help a group to focus. Your committee of 7 has the help of another 20 volunteers including 6 members of the Ukrainian community. You list state and semi-state agencies/bodies, community groups etc who support you. We like that you have a dedicated email address and a Facebook Page (2.1K followers) and you also use more traditional methods to inform the community of your activities - local newspapers and parish newsletter. You have participated in the Tidy Towns competition for over 30 years, which has resulted in developments and improvements around the town which has benefited the residents and visitors alike.

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

The great sweep of the sandy Kilkee beach is the center piece of your town. Facing this are the well- maintained Victorian single and two storey structures. Behind these the town rises and here we find rows of neatly-kept houses interspersed with businesses, commercial units and offices. Add to these

St. James's Cofl church, the RC church of the Immaculate Conception, the Methodist church, Kilkee Community College, Scoil Realt na Mara, etc to complete the architectural quality of the town. We noted that a number of shops have been converted to residences and while they have retained the fascia the name has been removed, which is a pity. The name is part of the history of the town so it would be good to see them reinstated. The new toilet facilities on the Promenade and at Diamond Rocks Café were noted, as were the new picnic benches. Dereliction is a problem for most rural towns and every Tidy Towns committee struggles trying to get the owners to carry out routine maintenance. All you can really do is keep trying and keep in contact with Clare Co Co. We read that to date progress has been made in the town with some derelict/unoccupied buildings having been renovated recently. We saw the outdoor games tables, table tennis and chess, at Kilkee Waterworld – hopefully this building will reopen soon as it's a pity to see such a large facility closed. The new facility for washing the feet of those leaving the beach has no water (we checked) – contact the area engineer. Beside Charlotte Bronte, are more murals to be added to the painted white panels on the seafront?

Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:

We should probably also add 'beach' into this category for your town, as the beach is such an important amenity for

the residents and visitors. You have quite a number of green spaces dotted around the town. The main green space must be the Promenade, with its bandstand as a central feature. This is an extremely pleasant area and the blue and white seats add to its attractiveness. Wellington Square high above the coast road had children safely playing while being supervised by adults. Mount Charles Park / Allenders Field to the north of the town, with the narrow water channel (the Victoria Stream) and shrub lined banks giving cover to small mammals, had dog walkers and people sitting chatting. Here too you have planted a mini orchard. Your planting regime has changed and you now choose more suitable pollinating plants for planters including bidens, verbena and bacopa. We strongly recommend that permanent beds be installed in as many places as you can where at present you have the four-tier planters. These planters need many more plants than what we saw – the black planter containers should be hidden by trailing plants/flowers. A stone surround planting bed could have perennial shrubs, grasses and flowers and will only need minor attention compared to these planters.

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

All around Kilkee are natural habitats for birds, mammals and insects – stone walls, hedges, grasslands, trees and of course your long coastal rocks and cliffs. St Senan's National School have undertaken a project at the 'Priests Graveyard' and have constructed bug hotels and wildflower beds. The secondary school too are helping by planting and maintaining the green area across from the school. Following a biodiversity training course, you put together a detailed three-year plan for Mount Charles Park/Allenders Field, which you have commenced. You will install a new perennial planting bed and a willow wind-break in 2023. Clare Co Co have adopted your suggestions regarding a mowing regime which will encourage wildflowers. This will take some time but the results can be better for biodiversity than sowing wild flower seeds. We liked the idea of the treasure hunt for flowers – unfortunately Waterworld is closed and so the leaflets should be placed elsewhere for the children. An SAC is always special and so we are delighted that you now have an interest in Kilkee Reefs SAC. It was fascinating reading about the beans, birds and particularly about the Basking Sharks – let's know if/when you make the scientific journals.

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

You have included a number of activities/projects in this category. We are delighted to read that you are working with a number of local gardeners who are helping you increase the flowers grown from seed which you plant around the town. You now use peat free compost in all your planters. Tell us more about Kilkee Sustainable Energy Community and about the Energy Master Plan for the town. We love the idea of a Farmer's market and Community Market and we see that some of the committee are involved in both. Many towns have water refill stations which are well used and we read that you will soon have one in Kilkee. We suggest you ask for one to be installed at each end of the Promenade as a lot of walkers and cyclists gather there. The new bike repair station and bike parking was noticed. ESB fast charge points for electric cars are becoming a normal sight in our towns and villages – we saw one at the west end parking area are there more? During Covid quite a number of state and semi-state organisation organised Webinars and many were on subjects which relate to this category. Did you take part in any? Some are still available on-line. We suggest that you contact your environmental officer and he/she will assist you.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

We assume that like most communities in Clare, you took part in the An Taisce Clean-Up in April. We recommend that a Tidy Towns group becomes involved and that as many volunteers as possible are asked to participate. This event focuses the attention of a community on the need to be vigilant on litter, fly-tipping and weed growth. When we visited it was a windy day and still the centre of the town was virtually litter free. Unfortunately weed growth was noticed at kerbs, base of walls giving an unkempt feel. Ask the litter pick-up volunteers to bring a hoe/spade with them and to remove the weed growth too. We see that you are also involved in beach clean-up along with Clean Coasts – well done. The 'Picker Pals' program is excellent as it gets parents involved with their children in the litter pick-up. We noted the new solar powered bins which are definitely needed in your town to cater for the large influx of visitors during the summer months. The seabed clean-up sounds interesting – tell us about it next year. We like the painted 'Bag it Bin in' dog litter sign on the pavement. Paint more of these in areas where dog fouling is a problem.

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

We loved the Victorian streetscape and see that the town had retained the special character of a 19th century bathing place. Quite a number of houses are listed on the Record of Protected Structures in addition to parts of the towns being an Architectural Conservation Area. Quite a number of the centre town houses had been recently painted and those with gardens were, in the main, neat. There are quite a few housing estates behind the curved main street which we visited - Well Field, Merton Square, Dún an Óir, Atlantic View, Cluain na Mara etc. Some had very pleasant communal spaces, while in others individual property owners had made great efforts to present their houses and gardens. Specimen trees made an impact in some areas which we admired. The Hare's Corner project in Dún an Óir estate is a project organised by the residents. The grotto at Marian Estate was well presented as were the individual houses but we suggest that a few coppices of trees would add greatly to the green space. We also visited Moore Bay holiday village – very pleasant and here too some trees in the communal green spaces would add to it. Are there residence associations in the estates? A Best Kept Estate competition is a way to involve individual house owners to maintain their property and we see that Marian Estate won it in 2015. Best of luck in your application to the Irish Architectural Foundation.

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

We entered from the south which gave us a great view over the town. We admired the Kilkee name sign telling us

we were entering a Victorian Seaside. The busy N67 skirts a portion of the town and it would be great if this was rerouted to the east to by-pass the town – are there any plans for this? We see that there are plans to redesign the road junction at Ministers Place which will give a larger green space which will add to the visual appearance of the streetscape. The walkability audit will make the town more accessible to those with mobility issues – when will the work commence? Some new concrete pavements were noticed which looked good. We also noted new dipped kerbs outside individual houses which we assumed were requested by the occupants. Road surfaces were extremely poor in some areas – edge breakup and ravelling. We suggest you do an audit and bring it to the area engineer for inclusion in the works programme. We admired that disability parking bays were clearly marked in public car parks. The bike parking area and safety barrier on the sea wall at the Diamond Rock café were noted.

Concluding Remarks:

We thoroughly enjoyed a return visit to Kilkee, a place we have visited as a tourist, so nice to see it under different circumstances. We had a look at Google maps and the last images they have of your town are from March 2011 – have a look and see the improvements that have been made since those images were captured! Thank you for entering the SuperValu Tidy Towns 2023 competition.