

Tidy Towns Competition 2023

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Kilfinane - Cill Fhionáin** Ref: **277**
County: **Limerick** Mark: **323**
Category: **B** Date(s): **03/08/2023**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2022	Mark Awarded 2023
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	80	43	44
Streetscape & Public Places	80	45	47
Green Spaces and Landscaping	80	43	44
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	55	35	36
Sustainability – Doing more with less	55	21	22
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	56	58
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	55	34	36
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	55	34	36
TOTAL MARK	550	311	323

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....

Kilfinane is welcome to the competition for its tenth year with the current committee. We liked your story about the generosity of a visiting couple from overseas who were so impressed with your work that they funded a lunch for the Tidy Town group. Your committee of 10 members have another 7 volunteers who help as needed. You have set out in tabular format a list of 7 agencies which support your work by various means. They include Limerick Co. Co., the GAA. Social media is the main form of communication used, as well as church announcements, notices in shops and schools. Links with the local secondary school are very good and the students often pick litter and pull weeds. Youths volunteer in the Team Limerick Clean-up. You sponsored an art competition in the primary school this year and have been involved in planting initiatives at the school.

The specific project for our attention this year is the gravel flowerbed, behind the fountain in the centre of the town where you planted 3 Scot's pine trees and placed a seat and an old water pump as well as some plants. Many thanks for the map of Kilfinane with projects marked for our attention. We liked the inclusion of before and after pictures in your application form. It is a great idea and helps us to understand the extent of work done in developing projects or restoring shopfronts such as Healy's. We read through your 5-year plan and noted how it was prepared. It is great that you have that element of planning considered. We also note the Community Plan 2022-2027 – well done. We are pleased that you have followed up on the advice of last year's adjudicator – it is much appreciated. In fact, we suggest that several years reports will be from a range of professionals and if taken together, will include advice for most of the criteria.

We recommend that you read the revised handbook which has guidance and project ideas on all eight criteria. It is available at the following link. <https://www.tidytowns.ie/competition/handbook/>

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

Well done on the improvement of the Marian Shrine. It is a distinctive feature of Kilfinane and while it was planned from 1954, work commenced in April 1957. It was great that you have pictures taken of the men while they were working on the project. It looks very well now.

The ruins of the Market House are a dominant part of the streetscape and no doubt you are anxious to have it improved. If that can be done, it might be a catalyst to having other buildings in the town centre improved. The fountain area is a major feature of Kilfinane and is very well done. It is nice to see the same stone in its construction as is in the Market House – it will be a lovely backdrop to the fountain when viewed from the lower level. We noted that the fountain project was completed in 2007 – according to a stainless-steel sign that presumably was a requirement of the funding agency. The sign is very difficult to read, so we suggest it be replaced with some plaque indicating the source of funding and design for the fountain area. Regarding the backs of signs that were mentioned in last year's report, you are right to pursue some

form of art that would be appropriate. Remember, the signs are too high of the ground to read, so using the blank space for art should work well. The refurbished seats in the fountain area look well. We noted the sandstone formed flower beds at the base of the Sacred Heart statue – it looks well, but the statue is almost hidden behind the growth of sweet peas!! Some of the commercial premises in the town centre which looked well include Ballyhoura Centre, Healy's Bar, O'Ceilleabhair's pub, O'Seachnasaigh 's pub, McGrath's, Doherty House, Centra, Power's Pharmacy and Molly's Restaurant, where we had an enjoyable lunch. Our compliments to those businesses which enhanced their premises with floral displays – makes quite a difference.

As mentioned in your application, some shopfronts need attention, and you are working toward improving that situation. The three sculptures on Main Street are unique attractions and looked very well. We look forward to an update on planting trees in the graveyard. The car park in front of the cemetery is well done by planting lines of trees to help regulate the parking arrangement. Work done on improving the old St Andrew's church and graveyard is most impressive – our compliments to all involved. You are fortunate to have two fine buildings designed by George Coppinger Ashlin, the magnificent St Andrew's church RC designed in 1878. We note that the adjacent parochial house (also by Ashlin), was sold last year, so hopefully, the new owner will carry out refurbishment work. Major construction work is underway at the rear of Scoil Pól. Sunshine Kids pre school building beside the park is well landscaped. It would be nice to have the concrete block wall facing the school, softened with climbing plants.

Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:

Our compliments to you for redeveloping the corner site at Captain's Lane. The choice of planting is much better – we look forward to seeing the Scot's pine establish and grow with each year. The seat and pump are added attractions. We are pleased to see that you have followed suggestions in last year's report to remove the stakes and ties on street trees in Main Street. The organic feed must have stimulated growth because they looked well on the day of our visit. However, you now have another problem – at least two trees were planted too close to street lights and the canopy has now reached the lights. It is not recommended to plant trees under street lights, so we advise that these trees be considered for removal for public safety reasons. In case you ask the question about transplanting these trees – don't – they would not survive. The alternative to removing the trees is to have them pruned by a tree surgeon who can direct the growth away from the street light. In any case, all these trees now require formative pruning to ensure that they develop a healthy stem and branch structure and a suitable shape for the street and prevent the formation of hazard branches at some future date.

Scoil Fhionain is a modern building on landscaped grounds that looks well. There is a big contrast between the grounds of this school and Scoil Pól where landscape treatment is non-existent. We assume there would have been a landscape plan submitted as part of the planning application and which should have been complied with before the school was opened. We are aware that last year's adjudicator raised this matter and are pleased to read in your application that Scoil Pól is currently agreeing the scope of a contract to landscape the school grounds. Likewise, we are pleased to note that you have brought to the attention of the GAA, the need to improve the boundary of their grounds and look forward to visiting the site again next year. Perhaps in their deliberations, they might like to visit some other GAA sites where simple and inexpensive landscape treatment has made a significant difference to their grounds, especially the frontage. Well done on the planting and maintenance of what you call public beds in Kilfinnane – we noted the use of herbaceous perennial plants. Congratulations to the Ukrainian volunteers for making a difference in helping you weed

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

Well done on winning €3000 in the Limerick "Bee Friendly in Bloom" category in the 'Going for Gold' competition. You are continuing to make progress in the community orchard, having added blackcurrants, gooseberries, and a quince tree. The 'flax to linen' project in the herb garden should be interesting. It is easy to forget how such things were done in the past. The 'dead hedge' project is noted as is the garden bird survey which is now in its third year. The inclusion of pollinator friendly plants in your planting schemes will make a difference. The main bed at the fountain is lacking in diversity. Scoil Pól is mentioned here again in the context of growing vegetables and herbs as part of the horticulture module for Leaving Cert applied – very good. Art competitions are another way of promoting biodiversity, so well done for sponsoring Scoil Fhionáin. Regarding the three oak saplings obtained from Coillte – we suggest picking a spot in Scoil Pól and plant them about 10 metres apart.

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

In Scoil Pól, the use of paper is minimised by making better use of digital technology and in other cases, they reuse envelopes where possible. Paper waste is used for animal bedding. Solar panels reduce their dependency on mains electricity. Well done to the school authorities for these innovations and others mentioned in your application. Junk couture is another initiative of Scoil Pól for recycling material through fashion. You are becoming more conscious of recycling materials where possible, such as the wooden sculpture of the owl and the use of recycled plastic in the boundary for the bed at Captain's Lane. Facilities for recycling batteries are in schools and shops and recycling banks are in front of the cemetery. You have made an organic fertiliser from nettles and a wormery and you collect rainwater for plant containers.

Under this criterion, there are several more projects that if undertaken could gain more marks. Therefore, we suggest you consult the handbook on the following link for more ideas on projects under this criterion.

<https://www.tidytowns.ie/competition/handbook/>

For more helpful tips and case studies from other Tidy Towns entrants please look at <http://localprevention.ie/tidy-towns/>

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

The annual Team Limerick Clean-up (TLC) initiative on Good Friday was a great success with over fifty participants, including the Community Council, the schools, the GAA, Ukrainian visitors and many others. In addition, you have regular litter picks during the year assisted by these groups as well. The audit of signing and poles that needed cleaning was sent to Limerick Co. Co. for attention. The dirty signs we found are already mentioned. At the base of street trees, we noted the development of weeds, and in parts of the paving in the fountain area. We note you are investigating the use of improved methods of weed control for footpaths and paved areas. We are pleased to record that we found hardly any litter in Kilfinnane.

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

Vale View housing estate has colourful terraced housing fronted by a sloping triangular shaped well-maintained open space. The bilingual estate name is well placed in the side of a circular bed built with stones and planted with herbaceous perennial plants. Several established trees, including maples, mountain ash, purple leaved plum are planted on the open space and greatly enhance the estate. There are seats here and there for residents to relax and socialise and we noted the bug hotel for visitors! This open space is fine with just the elements mentioned, but there is a danger of adding more elements that will not enhance its appearance. These include the several white urn shaped plant containers sitting on grass that are unnecessary and only serve to impede grass cutting. Also, new trees that were planted are fine, but the tyres placed around the stems do not enhance and in fact will serve to interfere with their establishment. When trees are planted, it is important that they be planted at the same level as when they were growing in the nursery. If that was done, then adding tyres and filling the space with soil will essentially have them planted too low and if they survive, they will fill that space with roots. So, please, cut the tyres and remove them for recycling elsewhere. In Forest View estate, residents were busy freshening the plant containers. The established trees along the roadside there were well placed - in some distance from the footpath, allowing them space to develop and enhance the streetscape as well as the estate. In Treadh na Ri estate, we liked the planting of birch trees on both sides of the entrance – in a few years' time they will impact positively on this estate. There is scope for further tree planting on the open spaces within the estate. The time to plant is now and as they grow, the estate will be improved. The entrance to Radharc Cillin has a nice stone wall, but after that, the estate is much in need of softening. The large open space could provide a great location for a few groups of trees. The small estate of Cois an Sruthain has large houses and garden – houses and gardens look well. Your comments regarding the fenced in area of Mountain View estate are noted and we wonder why there is a fence there at all. We saw children having fun in that area socialising with each other and playing. Perhaps some items that would interest children could be provided on an open space nearby.

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

Our approach was on the L1511 from Garryspillane direction and as we crossed over the bridge, we noted that one of the 50kph signs was very dirty and further on some finger post signs also needed cleaning. However, we were very impressed with the triangular shaped bed at the road junction which had lavender, phlox, oxeye daisies and some other flowers to greet us. We liked the way that Kilfinnane was written on a stone in front of the bed – we knew we had arrived. Some road kerbs here needed resetting.

On the Mill Road, we liked the 'Tranquility' stone and across from it, the vertical 'new decorative stone' with Cill Fionáin – both looked very well. We suggest that the latter stone might enhance other approaches – the name in Irish is clear and at a level where it can be easily read. At the junction of the R517 and the 1532 (Ardpatrick Road), there is another stone with some Celtic symbols. Its symbolism is not very clear and the name being at the bottom is hidden by the colourful Begonias. While the display of Begonias is high quality, we wonder about having them at this rural location. Such strong displays are more appropriate for the town centre. We are pleased to learn that you are planning to rearrange the sign at the motte and make it easier to read. We note you have completed an audit of 'welcome' stones and look forward to changes in the years to come.

Concluding Remarks:

We appreciate that many changes are taking place in Kilfinane, and you are dealing with the challenge of empty premises in the town centre – as is the case in many rural towns and villages. We commend you for the huge effort of your committee and volunteers in having your community looking its best. We hope that you find our comments and suggestions helpful in your endeavour and for future projects.