

Tidy Towns Competition 2023

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Kilkeeran - Cill Chiaráin** Ref: **562**
County: **Mayo** Mark: **329**
Category: **A** Date(s): **07/07/2023**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2022	Mark Awarded 2023
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	80	43	44
Streetscape & Public Places	80	40	41
Green Spaces and Landscaping	80	46	46
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	55	38	39
Sustainability – Doing more with less	55	21	22
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	66	67
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	55	33	35
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	55	34	35
TOTAL MARK	550	321	329

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.

Welcome to the Super Valu Tidy Towns Competition for 2023. We thank you for your entry, and wish you all the best in all your future work. Good luck.

Kilkeeran - Cill Chiaráin, a small village with a population of less than 200 people – has entered the competition for the last 33 years and has a committee of 6 members with support of another 25 volunteers.

- Support is received from a range of local and national agencies and businesses including Mayo County Council, locally elected representatives, Partry Community Council, South West Mayo Development Company (LEADER), Pobal, Public Participation Network (PPN), Food Cloud, Active Retirement Ireland, Network Mayo, Local Enterprise Office, Gnó Mhaigh Eo, Local Link Community Transport, Community Alert, Hawthorn Handmade Skincare, and Green Submarine.
 - You communicate with the public via a WhatsApp group, village newsletter, email, phone calls and regular in-person meetings. Committee members take part in PPN workshops and training sessions. Community members contribute to strategic plans for the future for the South West Mayo Development Company (LEADER) at a local workshop. One of your committee members also spoke on the panel at an event for International Women's Day, hosted by Network Ireland and Local Enterprise Office
 - Your adjudicator is pleased to read that every household in Kilkeeran takes great pride in your beautiful village and that your young people are involved in activities from a young age. It augers well for the future when local children grow up with a respect and love for their area and the biodiversity surrounding it. You are commended for promoting this great community spirit locally and for the volunteerism of so many within your community. The celebration of individual contributions to Tidy Towns is important and the acknowledgement of people's efforts both young and old is applauded.
 - The success of Kilkeeran Tidy Towns over the years has encouraged you to enter other competitions and you have been very successful in these. It is good to read that from the start, Tidy Towns has inspired your community to protect and preserve your beautiful village.
- The black and white map provided with your Entry Form showing the main features of the village was clear and of good quality. This makes it easier for the adjudicator to navigate around the village and aids the overall assessment process.

The quality of the application form was good. The 3-year Tidy Towns plan has been noted including the many photographs included, and you are wished well with its implementation – it would also be beneficial to add specific target dates which can be used as a measure and monitoring of progress.

The adjudicator's assessment is based on a recent site visit and the contents of the application form, which is suitably concise at 13 pages long - well done. The text inserted on the form which is in italics is concise and quite

easy to read.

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

- The projects listed under this category this year include the replacement of signs at the Village Green and the installation of an information panel on a stone pillar to showcase your achievements, the installation of book exchange made from recycled materials, the ongoing maintenance of graveyard and progressing of plans are in place to extend your parking area at the graveyard.
- The adjudicator called to Kilkeeran village on a cloudy but warm day in early July. The initial impression is of a village steeped in history. The adjudicator was struck by the quality of the stone walls, and well-presented private residences set in a landscape which is teeming with wildflowers and biodiversity. The roads to and within the village are narrow with a grass strip running down the middle, which encourages the visitor to drive slowly and admire the wonderful natural vegetation which is evident at every turn. The village is fortunate to be located on the banks of Lough Carra, which provides extensive wetlands and wildlife retreat areas which have been protected and conserved by your community over the years. The consistent quality of the traditional style stone wall construction is excellent.
- We called to Balovey Graveyard and admired the overall presentation of the graveyard with its wonderful views across Lough Carra. The old Church ruin is in very good condition and has not been affected by the ubiquitous ivy growth, which is rampant in many parts of the country. The entire graveyard is carpeted with a gravel surface which helps with maintenance, but is of very little wildlife value. The castellated stone wall on the frontage of the graveyard adjacent to the car park area looked very well, as did the Grotto. For the future you might consider erecting an information sign with details of the Church's history and that of the surrounding area.

Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:

- The projects included under this category this year included the updating of wildlife panels, continued maintenance of dry-stone walls, clearance of scrub area for sowing of native wildflower and wild grass, mulching of grass on road sides and in gardens, and redeveloping of Harbour area.
- The green area in the centre of the village was visited and the plaque for the Tidy Towns endeavour award was suitably situated on the stone plinth. The stone wall boundary was admired as were the flag poles and attractive cherry blossom tree. The presentation of this area could be enhanced by cutting the grass and surrounding vegetation which is overgrown in places. It was noted that pruning material remained on site. This should be removed at the time of cutting. It is also suggested that a sign denoting the area as the Village Green could be erected, as the area was not immediately identified as such.
- Maggee's Boreen which is accessed via stone steps is somewhat overgrown and it would be desirable for the walkway to be opened up, if this is possible. A small planter at the village green and stone steps, could be upgraded with the removal of overgrowth.
- The upgraded natural heritage signs, seen at two locations are a positive addition and worthy of special mention.

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

- It is noted that there are a range of different and important habitats located in the vicinity of Kilkeeran which are to be protected and enhanced. In this regard you are conscious of the need to increase the number of wildflower areas in and around your village, in the interest of biodiversity and you are taking steps to achieve this. Your foraging walks no doubt take full advantage of the wild edible plants, fruits, nuts, and seeds on offer in the area.
- Your adjudicator is very pleased to read that innovative local farmers are using biological control techniques to control docks and are taking steps to improve local water quality.

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

- Your approach to improving the sustainability of your village includes the harvesting of an apple orchard by a local resident and sharing of surplus products with the local community. Carpooling continues to be used for school runs and shopping trips and residents also use the Local Link bus service which significantly reduces carbon emissions. The use of polytunnels to grow plants for sharing locally and your sustainability workshops, are also a great initiative to be developed further in your community.
- When considering new projects under this category it is worthwhile firstly to consider how the proposed project will align with the UN Sustainable Development Goals. The information provided in the Tidy Towns newsletters is very informative in this regard.
- You might in the future consider installing a community composter in the village. These are useful and provide a quantity of mulch to use on your planted areas, which will ensure rapid establishment of the plantings.
- Other areas worthy of consideration by Kilkeeran Tidy Towns for the future under this category, which is in keeping with the Sustainable Development Goals, include the development of small electric microgeneration schemes for Wind, Solar and Hydro in partnership with the Local Authority - these may also attract suitable SEAI or Leader funding.
- The Committee might also consider in the future initiating membership of the Sustainable Energy Communities programme run by the SEAI which includes engaging in learning networks, preparation of energy masterplans and local energy action plans etc. The following are useful links in this regard.
<https://www.seai.ie/community-energy/sustainable-energy-communities/><https://www.codema.ie/sec>

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhairacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

- Your Annual Spring Clean is ongoing and litter patrols are carried out during your daily walks. A Junior litter patrol on the way to and from school and bus runs remains in place and thanks to all the children and parents for their efforts in this regard. Well done to your village for winning your category in previous Mayo County Council Litter Leagues, which confirms your community's dedication to keeping Kilkeeran litter free.
- On the day of adjudication, the village area was found to be tidy and litter free - well done.

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

- The projects undertaken by your committee in Kilkeeran this year included the construction of new dry-stone wall to replace old wall in disrepair opposite Green and Graveyard, improvements to a blind turn junction to make it safer for road users by cutting back a hedge, re-roofing of historic farm building and use of donated pollinator friendly plants for a local garden development.
- The adjudicator recognizes the great efforts made by residents to ensure that new development is well integrated into the adjoining landscape, and close attention is paid to traditional style stone walls, the preservation of trees and other vegetation.

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

- You continue to undertake the maintenance of grass verges on the approaches to Kilkeeran and take steps to ensure the condition of roadside hedges do not compromise the safety of roads users.

Concluding Remarks:

It was a great pleasure to visit Kilkeeran for the first time this Summer. It is a unique and charming place steeped in history and very respectful of its local biodiversity. The concise Entry Form and clear information under each category and map references etc. made the adjudication of your village a real pleasure. Your committee is working very well with the entire Community under all the competition category headings. We wish you well with the further implementation of your 3-Year Plan (2021-24) and every success in the competition.