

Tidy Towns Competition 2023

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Kilmaine - Cill Mheáin** Ref: **1094**
County: **Mayo** Mark: **330**
Category: **A** Date(s): **05/07/2023**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2022	Mark Awarded 2023
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	80	41	42
Streetscape & Public Places	80	40	41
Green Spaces and Landscaping	80	41	42
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	55	42	43
Sustainability – Doing more with less	55	21	23
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	67	69
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	55	31	32
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	55	36	38
TOTAL MARK	550	319	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.

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.

Kilmaine - Cill Mheáin, a small village with a population of less than 200 people – has entered the competition for the 13th time this year and has a committee of 5 members with support of another 9 volunteers.

- Your committee organises an annual AGM and holds monthly committee meetings and gatherings for weekly litter picking.
- Support is received from a range of national and local agencies and businesses including Mayo County Council, Southwest Mayo Development Co., the Rural Social Scheme (RSS), St. Patrick's Day Committee, Community Centre Committee, Kilmaine Historical Society, Kilmaine G.A.A. The Ploughing Committee, local shops, pubs, businesses, O.P.W. and the Foróige Club.
- You communicate with the public via Weekly community newsletter, Facebook (over 700 followers), community news in local paper, Local radio, website www.mayo.ie, and fundraising using local church gate collection
- You engage with local schools and young people through the primary school Eco Committee and you involve Primary school in National Spring Clean.

- The voluntary work undertaken by Kilmaine Village Enhancement Group and participation in the Tidy Towns competition has led to a greater public awareness of your environment, with an increased pride of place, which has given rise to an excellent community spirit and sense of local cooperation. Your main project this year has been the relocation of the Community Garden.

The coloured map provided with your Entry Form showing the main features of the village was of good quality. The adjudicator was pleased that you were able to show the precise location of this year's projects on the map with a description in each case. 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 very good with a good use of photos and images.

The adjudicator's assessment is based on a recent site visit and the contents of the application form, which at 42 pages could be more concise a lot shorter, for a village the size of Kilmaine. The text inserted on the form is also quite easy to read. The use of bullet points worked well.

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

- Your main areas of activity this year under this category include the painting of premises and perimeter walls, maintenance of street furniture and the ongoing maintenance of the Abbey Graveyard and your nature walk.
- The adjudicator called to Kilmaine on a cloudy and rather wet day in early July. Despite the weather it was an absolute delight to visit your beautiful village. We commenced our visit on the Ballinrobe approach Road and were struck by the beautiful name sign with a message, 'protecting our precious pollinators' together with the wonderful array of colour along the road margin.
- In the village centre the freshly painted Garda station was noted together with the attractively presented terraced dwellings opposite, St Patrick's Terrace. Maloney's bar looked well and the stone wall frontage along the McHale premises enhanced the streetscape here. Road surfaces and markings in the centre of the village were to a very high standard. The adjudicator noted the traditional lamp standards which had been freshly painted. Murphy's bar was admired, as were the John Walsh premises. The central car parking area is enhanced with planters, floral displays, and trees. Consider introducing planting features here and a stone planting bed along the wall of the building facing the road. This would significantly enhance the presentation of this area.
- We called to the Abbey Graveyard and noted the sign on the gate requesting that herbicide not be used within the site. It was interesting to learn about the Church ruin on the site, the information sign is well placed. The wonderful historic wall along the road frontage added to the presentation of the streetscape. There is potential to develop a village park on lands between the Abbey and the car park. Perhaps this could be considered as part of the future development for Kilmaine. The Kilmaine community centre and village library is a most welcoming amenity, with its freshly painted and colourful exterior with floral displays.
- Significant traffic volumes were evident travelling through the village on the day of adjudication. As a result of this the core of the village is more vehicle than pedestrian friendly. Sections of footpaths were found to be very narrow. It may be desirable to consider an overall traffic calming scheme to improve safety for the pedestrian, reduce traffic noise and promote the general walkability of the village. Such a scheme may also provide an opportunity to enhance the streetscape.
- St Patricks Church enjoys an elevated site just outside the centre of the village. The carpark area looked well with exquisite stone wall surround in keeping with the Church and general area which is overlooked by a large imposing fir tree. The attractive entrance piers and gates and tree planting enhance this area, together with the sponsored seating and colourful planting. The boundary wall opposite the Church is visually prominent at this location and does not integrate well with the natural stone boundaries found in the general area. It is suggested that the wall be screened with a native hedge, planted on the road side of the wall.

Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:

- The planting of trees in the village and along approach roads has been a focus of your attention under this category this year. Grass maintenance is also very important and tidy towns committees are encouraged to let certain areas grow, to encourage biodiversity and provide habitats for pollinators. It is important however, to keep road and footpath edges neat and a well maintained, so a closely mown strip 2/3 m wide close to roads and footpath edges, cut once per week during the summer months, is recommended. Well done on the use of water butt rainwater harvesting for you watering of plantings. The erection of an information sign at Killernan Castle is a great addition, as so many similar castles in ruins around the country lack any suitable historical information for the benefit of the public.
- The planting beds containing colourful herbaceous perennials on the neatly well-tended margins on the Galway approach, are presented to an excellent standard. Well done to all involved in the creation and ongoing maintenance of these beds.

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

- Included under this category are a number of interesting and essential projects including the planting of native and fruit trees in the village, relocation of the community garden, and sensitive maintenance of the Abbey Graveyard which is a haven for insect and other wildlife in the area. The use of the relocated polytunnel is a great asset for your community, allowing you to propagate plants sustainably for later use in the wider Kilmaine area.
- The nature walk was visited and provided a wonderful off road restful experience where nature can be enjoyed first hand. The planting of a native hedge along the visually prominent boundary palisade fencing at the waste water treatment plant, could be considered here.

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

- Your focus this year under this category has been on the sustainability of the existing gardening practices in the village and the major undertaking which was the successful relocation of the community garden. All activities in these areas and across the community follow good sustainability principles, to ensure optimum use of resources whilst minimizing the impact on the environment.
- We called to the relocated community garden. The relocation of this facility was a major undertaking for you this year. The white fence at the entrance adorned with floral display and signage is a welcoming feature. The abundance of vegetables and other cultivated plants in the raised beds and polytunnel greatly impressed the adjudicator.
- Other areas worthy of consideration by Kilmaine Village Enhancement Group 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 perhaps at the community garden area - these may attract suitable SEAI or Leader funding.
- You might consult further with Mayo County Council in relation to the provision of public e-car charge points and bicycle parking/off road cycle routes in the village, and where there are deficiencies, suggest suitable locations where these could be provided in the short term.

- 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 / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

- On the day of adjudication, the village and approach roads were found to be litter free. It is noted that you encounter litter issues from passing traffic. The great efforts of your group and volunteers certainly keep Kilmaine village and environs in the pristine condition we encountered.

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

- Your activities under this category this year include the painting of residences and garden walls and installation of window boxes for the summer, painting of street furniture and playground maintenance. It is good to note you are not using herbicides for weed control as physical/mechanical control is much better for the environment.
- The adjudicator called to An Cluain housing estate and the tree planting on the boundary of the open space was positively noted. Riverside Close was visited and this is an attractive infill housing scheme with a pedestrian walkway to the village. The line of trees on the open space at the entrance to this estate greatly enhanced this area.
- Many private residences were presented to an excellent standard including those at St Patrick's Terrace. The private dwelling located beside Burke's Garage premises was also noted for its charm and overall presentation.

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

- Kilmaine Village Enhancement Group carries out grass and flowerbed maintenance along all approach roads into the village. It is a pity that the bollards on the Galway Road cannot be replaced, as these features are more typical of an urban landscape. Such bollards are therefore, unsuitable for placing in a rural area. Perhaps you might discuss this matter further with Mayo Co.Co. to see if an alternative solution can be found.
- Overall, the approach roads to the village of Kilmaine are maintained to an excellent standard, with attractive stone walls, wide neatly-tended margins with wildflower areas, floral schemes and high-quality tree planting.
- The Kilmaine Community Grounds are linked to the village by a new roadside footpath providing enhanced safety for all users, including the pupils from the St Patrick's NS.

Concluding Remarks:

It was a great pleasure to visit Kilmaine village. The adjudicator was impressed by the quality of the village and wider landscape, characterised by traditional stone walls along field boundaries. The commitment of the Kilmaine Village Enhancement Group produces positive outcomes for your community. We wish you continued success with your future endeavours and that the comments in this report are found to be of assistance.