

Tidy Towns Competition 2009

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Killaloe** Ref: **73**
County: **Clare** Mark: **259**
Category: **C** Date(s): **12/06/2009**

| | Maximum Mark | Mark Awarded 2009 |
|--------------------------------|-----------------|----------------------|
| Overall Development Approach | 50 | 41 |
| The Built Environment | 50 | 35 |
| Landscaping | 50 | 34 |
| Wildlife and Natural Amenities | 50 | 26 |
| Litter Control | 50 | 30 |
| Waste Minimisation | 20 | 10 |
| Tidiness | 30 | 17 |
| Residential Areas | 40 | 28 |
| Roads, Streets and Back Areas | 50 | 30 |
| General Impression | 10 | 8 |
| TOTAL MARK | 400 | 259 |

Overall Development Approach:

We are delighted to welcome Killaloe Tidy Towns Committee to the 2009 Tidy Towns Competition. Your completed entry form, updated 3 Year Plan, schedule of planting projects and maps of Killaloe were well prepared, well done. Thank you for taking on board the suggestion of marking street names and the locations of your projects on the map, we found this very helpful during our tour of your lovely town.

It was very promising to note that your Committee has managed to gain additional members this year and we are sure all 12 members will be kept very busy throughout the year. Your monthly meetings and regular activities over the autumn and winter; fortnightly cleanups and planting sessions obviously require considerable commitment and enthusiasm from your members but all the hard work is paying dividends.

Killaloe is obviously benefiting from your close co-operation and working relationship with the County Council, Waterways Ireland, Shannon Development and the various businesses and organisations within the town. Congratulations on succeeding to link all these key players into a cohesive action group.

Communication with the wider community is vital and your use of a dedicated Tidy Towns mobile phone, Tidy Towns notice board and public address announcements in Super Valu, community notes in local press and your blog are all excellent methods of achieving that link.

It is vital that the younger members of any community learn to appreciate and protect their environment and the continuing involvement of your schools with Green Flag projects and the success of the Boys National School are very reassuring indicators that Killaloe will continue to be a wonderful location in which to live, learn and work. We hope that the Community College will take up your invitation to participate in Tidy Towns.

Well done on your promotion of Tidy Towns in the Ballina-Killaloe St Patrick's Day Parade. Killaloe certainly

has many interesting Events throughout the year and its heritage, natural beauty and superb lakeside location attract many visitors. Tidy Towns is an important vehicle to ensure that visitors and local residents enjoy an attractive and welcoming town.

The Built Environment:

Killaloe has a wonderful mix of ecclesiastic, commercial and tourism related buildings which manage to complement each other. The Cathedral Church of St Flannan is a superb 13th Century structure which still manages to play a very active role in the town. During our visit it was preparing to welcome a wedding group. The Catholic Church at the top of the town was well presented and St Lua's Oratory, located within the grounds, was a very interesting feature.

The Garda Station, Florist and Heaney's Supermarket nearby were well presented. We also admired several business premises including Walsh's, Reddan's and Brendan Grace's bars, Wood Brothers restaurant, Crotty's/Italian Warehouse/Clare-Tipp Properties (Agents for W & A Gilbey) with the lovely old style lettering. The building housing the Tourist Office/Brian Boru Centre and Library was well designed and suited to its high profile location at The Bridge.

We were impressed to note that several properties were undergoing renovation and redecoration during our visit. New businesses which we admired included The Wooden Spoon Bakery and Gourmet Store, J'Adore and 27 Church Street Brasserie. The Convent Hill Shopping Centre, including Super Valu, Spirit, Cerise, Formé and Kel-c Kidz, was well presented.

The new children's playground was very well equipped and is an excellent addition to the facilities of Killaloe. It was certainly getting plenty of use by its young guests during our visit, congratulations on a superb project. We also admired the Tennis Club nearby with its lovely stone walled entrance.

Your plans for a signposted Heritage Trail, based on the survey you completed, is an excellent project and we look forward to enjoying the Heritage Trail on a future visit. We would also advise you to tackle the lack of street names, as recommended in the previous report.

We note your concern about derelict sites. This can be an extremely difficult problem to tackle, however, your contact with the County Council and property owners is the correct way to proceed and if you are successful in obtaining grant aid, this would help considerably.

The Harbour Village, Kincora Hall Hotel and Harbourside Kincora Marina developments were very well presented with good parking, attractive open green areas with appropriate trees and lovely views of the Marina. Signage within the Harbourside Kincora Marina area was particularly good.

Landscaping:

The co-operation of businesses and residents throughout the town has certainly paid off and resulted in an excellent display of hanging baskets, window boxes and planted containers.

Landscaped green areas which were admired included the lovely Riverside Walk; the cut greens with planted containers on the Limerick approach; green verge and trees across the road from the Boys School, and the green with bench seating opposite Tobermurragh. Several residential developments had fine examples of well tended landscaping including St Lua's Villas and Millstream Estate.

We would suggest that the parking area immediately outside the entrance to the Community College would benefit from some landscaping; a shrubbery with some perennial planting could greatly enhance the area.

Many towns provide summer flowering plants but forget the need to create all year round displays so well done on your initiative to provide winter and spring plants. The display of daffodils outside the Catholic Church must have been beautiful.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

We noted the comment in last year's report that the adjudicator failed to find Tobermurragh so we were determined to succeed during our visit. It was well worth the effort, however we would reiterate the need for a suitable neat sign near the entrance at both ends of the Park. Although there is an informative display board at the town end, this could be missed by someone walking or driving by, so good signage (visible from the road) would encourage more visitors. Do check with the County Council for approval before erecting any signs.

Tobermurragh is the ideal natural location to encourage wildlife and if you are having difficulty in identifying someone to advise on the project, the County Council may be able to provide some contacts.

Once you have an advisor on board, it might be a good idea to involve local schoolchildren in a survey of existing wildlife and birds in the area as this would help you to establish what plants and facilities are needed to ensure the appropriate food chain and environment for the various species. As the project progresses, display panels could be erected to provide information for visitors.

We wish you every success with the wild park in the future.

Litter Control:

Congratulations to all in Killaloe, Ballina and the local Scouts on your continuing tradition of an Annual Spring Clean Day. Apart from being a very sociable event it is an excellent way of kick-starting the Tidy Towns endeavours. The regular litter patrols are definitely important to ensure that litter black spots are not allowed to develop.

There was a very good supply of litterbins throughout the town and they were generally coping well within their capacity. A few pieces of litter were spotted on the ground in Main Street but there didn't seem to be any major problem areas. There was a small problem with cigarette butts on the pavement – installation of suitable receptacles should help to resolve the matter.

Although it is outside the town, we could not overlook Ballycuggeran Beach which is an excellent facility on the doorstep. This area was immaculately presented with plenty of litterbins and not one piece of litter spotted on the ground. Considering how busy the area was during our visit, we were delighted to note that people were taking great care of this wonderful amenity.

This category is not only marked on the absence of litter during the inspection but it also includes the planning process for litter control. Valuable additional marks can be achieved by submitting a litter control plan as part of your entry submission. Areas to be considered under such a plan would include a survey of problem areas, key litter generators, number and locations of litter bins and schedule of litter collections. Suggestions for resolution of problems, clear targets as the plan is rolled out and a clear method of monitoring progress should also be included.

Waste Minimisation:

We were impressed to note that your schools are working on Green Flag Projects and that the Boys National School has achieved a Green Flag. This is an excellent way of ensuring that the children will appreciate the need to protect their environment and hopefully, it will encourage the wider community to get involved in suitable projects.

It is good to know that you are continuing to get funding under the Bottle Bank Stewardship Scheme and the area was a credit to all concerned. Recycling is one important aspect of waste minimisation but it is also vital that waste is reduced as much as possible. There are several projects which you might consider undertaking:

- Obtain copies of the Race against Waste booklet, which should be available from the Tidy Towns Unit
- Undertake a Waste Audit
- Individual households could be encouraged to compost grass cuttings and leaves.
- Leaflets with advice on waste minimisation could be circulated to homes, shops and businesses in the town
- A waste minimisation workshop could be organised, with the involvement of the County Council, and this could take place as part of a public Tidy Towns Meeting

Tidiness:

The recycling area located Between the Waters was well maintained and clear of litter. The public toilet nearby was well presented and display maps were in good condition. There were some weeds at the base of the canal walls which should be removed. Other weeds were observed at the base on the brown Killaloe/Ballina Heritage Town sign on the Ogonnelloe approach. This might be a good spot to locate a suitable planted container.

A bench, located at the green area across the road from Tobermurragh, was in need of repair and a nearby sign for the hotel was almost obscured by tree branches. As part of your plans for Tobermurragh, we recommend that you consider replacing the old green litterbin and providing some additional bins, particularly near the display board and benches.

We were surprised to notice a Fashion Weekend sign still on display although the event had taken place in May.

School premises throughout the town were clean and well maintained and we particularly admired the colourful mural and painted hands at the Boys National School, well done to the artists.

Killaloe and Ballina have to cope with a very heavy throughput of traffic, particularly near the Bridge, and we noticed that delays can be considerable at certain times but it is unlikely that any alternative traffic management system would work better.

Residential Areas:

Killaloe is a magnificently located town which offers residents excellent facilities and a good blend of mature and new residential developments. Millstream was a welcoming sight with its stonemounted nameplate, neat open areas and individual gardens which were a credit to the owners. Some well cared for homes and gardens were noticed at the road opposite the Boys School (Crossroads?) and further along the Bridgetown Road. As we walked through the town, it was good to see that some older houses were receiving facelifts, this augurs well for the future of the town.

Béal Ború estate, with its well cut green area and sapling trees, was an appealing example of more recent developments in the town. Ballyview had some pretty shrubberies and bedding plants with clean parking areas outside the homes.

As mentioned earlier, the Harbour Village and Harbourside Kincora Marina holiday homes were lovely developments which enhance the residential stock of Killaloe.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

We approached the town initially from the Ogonneloe direction and found the drive breathtaking. The lovely views, amenity area at Ballycuggeran Beach, Brian Boru's Fort and the riverside walk all created an exciting introduction to Killaloe.

The approach roads to the town were generally in fairly good condition but the little slip road leading to the Community College had several potholes which needed attention. It was good to see renovation work taking place at some properties on John's Street.

While the derelict sites and some litter on Carrick's Lane certainly do detract from the overall appearance of the area, we commend you on your positive approach to resolving the issues and we are confident that your active communication with the County Council and site owners will achieve a positive outcome.

Killaloe's appeal as an heritage town, tourist destination and business centre means that there is always likely to be an uneasy relationship regarding signage but it would be important to ensure that all interests work together to ensure that signage is co-ordinated and effective without being too intrusive.

Directional signs and bilingual welcoming signs were mainly clean and in good condition but we did notice a small 'litter free' sign on the Ogonneloe approach which needed to be cleaned. It was good to see Lough Derg Way and East Clare Way signage promoting the walking routes.

General Impression:

We suggest that, for your next entry, you focus on progressing work at the excellent Tobermurragh Wild Park project and select a suitable project under the Waste Minimisation category.

Well done on your excellent success in achieving the Tidy Towns Endeavour Award (County Clare) and the Clare Tourism Award for your hard work in 2008. Your Tidy Towns Committee has demonstrated a very serious commitment to the enhancement of Killaloe for the benefit of the community and we congratulate you on the work undertaken to date and look forward to following your progress in the future.

