

Tidy Towns Competition 2012

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Milltown** Ref: **868**
County: **Kerry** Mark: **251**
Category: **C** Date(s): **21/06/2012**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2011	Mark Awarded 2012
Overall Development Approach	50	35	35
The Built Environment	50	34	35
Landscaping	50	36	37
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	26	27
Litter Control	50	36	36
Tidiness	30	14	15
Waste Minimisation	20	7	7
Residential Areas	40	23	24
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	28	29
General Impression	10	6	6
TOTAL MARK	400	245	251

Overall Development Approach:

Milltown is welcome to the 2012 TidyTowns competition and thank you for your application along with helpful sketch map. The photos were well labelled and most helpful.

You have a relatively small committee of 6 members with a few additional volunteers helping you out. It sounds like your committee is going through a period of transition but hopefully this will bring new ideas and momentum. It is good that you have had increased involvement recently and also that the residents groups are being set up/getting involved. This is crucial. You might try and get new members onto your committee for next year. This will also help you with fresh ideas. Also it is a good idea to ask people to help out in specific projects, depending on their skills and time available. Some TidyTown groups have run 'get to know your neighbour' evenings or fun social gatherings after a big village clean up as a means of recruiting new members.

Well done on relaunching your facebook page – this is important in trying to engage with the younger people. You can have online discussion, raise awareness and change habits even though they might not want to be directly involved. You also communicate through local papers, parish newsletter, flyers, posters and public meetings.

You have good links with Kerry Co Co, South Kerry Development Partnership and the Rural Social Scheme. It is great to hear you have such a good relationship with your local schools. Your efforts to stay in touch with neighbouring TidyTowns groups is to be commended and this should give you ideas and support going forward.

As mentioned last year, preparing a 3-5 year plan is also part of this category so that you can set out all your actions under each TidyTowns category, delegate them to a group/individual and put a timeframe on them. This working plan is for your own benefit and will help you monitor and review your progress going forward.

Even a couple of pages would get you started. Visit the TidyTowns website at www.enviro.ie for helpful information on preparing a plan or see your TidyTowns handbook.

The Built Environment:

It is good to see that the owners have painted the old petrol pump. Is it possible to paint the shed behind in one colour, which would improve its appearance? The community centre looks great and the hanging baskets add a splash of colour.

The school in Nicholas place looks well apart from the gate, which would benefit from a coat of paint. The gardens and mural were admired. Many properties were looking well on the day including Burke's Butchers, O' Doherty Pharmacy, Larkin's Pub, Credit Union, Alma's Takeaway and the Milltown Dental Practice.

Cosgrove's pub is looking well after recent refurbishments and this really gives a lift to that prominent corner. The sign over the pub looks historical but very weathered - are there any plans for it?

Spout Lane has a lovely feel to it, with the colourful stone cottage businesses. The old church was admired; it would be nice if there was a little information about it near the entrance. Is this where the advertised farmers market is held? The gates need attention. The secondary school looks well apart from being very overgrown on the left-hand side. Is there a reason for this? The church, grounds and grotto were neatly presented, as was the Londis shop/petrol station nearby. The flowerbed in front just needs to be monitored for weeds. Like many other towns, you have the challenge of derelict properties. Well done on your efforts to approach the owners. The GAA field looks great with its newly painted wall. The Hanafin Brothers monument in the square was admired. An information panel for tourists is a very good idea, we look forward to hearing more next time.

Landscaping:

Well done on your continued landscaping efforts despite cutbacks in resources. Nicholas Place is lovely with its tree lined square layout complimented by the colourful hanging baskets at the community centre. The landscaping on the Castlemaine approach road is very impressive and really gives a good first impression. Some enhancement of the Killorglin Road could be done in time. There are lovely mature trees on this side of town however and some fine stone walls. On the opposite side of the road, there are some well maintained, colourful flower beds and some newer tree planting. The housing estates are well landscaped in general. Some areas would benefit from further tree planting, it was good to note new trees planted in Kilcolman. The flowerbed outside the GAA pitch is most impressive. It is very positive to note that you are keeping wildlife in mind when choosing your plants.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

Well done on your efforts to create a butterfly patch and to the Beavers for assisting you in this project. The plaques were noted in the church grounds. The schools are to be commended for assisting you with compiling a 'Wildlife Plan'. We look forward to hearing about it next time. Are any of the green schools working on their 'biodiversity' green flag?

Your plans to provide walking/heritage information is very good, this will encourage people to stay longer in Milltown but will also give a sense of its history and heritage.

Your efforts to tidy up the Presbytery wall are to be commended – just keep in mind that ivy is an important habitat for wildlife so always get proper advice before you do large scale removal.

Your local Heritage Officer may have further information to guide you. Lots of information in your TidyTowns handbook. From time to time Kerry County Council run TidyTowns information events focussing on this category so look out for those.

Litter Control:

The litter situation is fairly good in Milltown. Well done on your weekly clean ups and litter patrols. Your large clean up that resulted in 60 bags of collected litter is impressive. Well done on your awareness raising with the local businesses. This is an important element of this category. Do you segregate the litter for recycling? Please mention this next time.

There were a few cardboard boxes left at the Bring Centre and Mytes Lane was disappointing. Well done to the Scouts and Transition Years for assisting with litter patrols and we look forward to hearing about the new youth club's involvement next time.

Remember that awareness raising is an important part of this category so be sure to include information on how you communicate your litter awareness message to the wider community. Maybe you can identify the main sources of litter and try to tackle the root cause so that you have less need for clean ups/patrols.

Tidiness:

Well done on your ongoing efforts to tidy up the town generally (weed control, strimming verges etc)
The surfacing outside the burial ground is poor and takes from this otherwise pleasant approach. There is a 'headless' pole on the Main Street near the Spout Lane junction. The 'Children Crossing' road sign further up towards the schools needs straightening.
The fence surrounding the bottle banks is in need of repair. The area surrounding the mart has an untidy appearance although the newly painted 'cottages' look wonderful here.

Waste Minimisation:

Both primary schools were proudly flying their green flag – well done to all involved in such a fantastic environmental programme! You seem to have a very good working relationship with the school. They are an important link for the above category as well as 'Litter' and 'Wildlife'.

Well done on segregating your clean-up litter for recycling. Keep in mind however that the main aim of this category is about more than just recycling. It's about reducing the amount of waste created in the first place. Kerry County Council often run events on waste prevention, home composting etc. You could attend one or offer to host one. Be sure to put it in your application next time. Is there any local reuse schemes (schoolbooks, clothes etc) that you could mention? I'm sure there is a lot going on in the community to Reduce, Reuse and Recycle. Have any of the businesses come up with innovative ways to reuse packaging or make it less wasteful? There is also some good information in your TidyTowns handbook.

Residential Areas:

The residential areas were generally presented to a high standard. It is great to hear that you have links between the residents groups and the TidyTowns committee. It is important that each area looks after its own patch but is aware of and supporting the overall TidyTown effort.

The row of bungalows on the Killarney Road were neatly presented, as were estates off this road. The worst thing about the unfinished 'Ard na Gréine' development is the garish hoarding on the roadside. Can they be removed or simplified? The unusual entrance at Carraig an Dúin was admired with the wall mural and religious statues. It would be great if there was an explanation of their significance in this area. There is an untidy area behind the Londis petrol station, which is highly visible as you enter this estate. The 'Old Monastery' was admired and there is an attractive entrance to Millbrook Village. The use of both Irish and English on name signs is encouraged in this competition. Like many other villages, you have the challenge of unoccupied residences. Well done on your efforts to paint the ones on the Castlemaine Road. The painted cottages on the way to the mart look great – well done to all involved. Kilcolman is a lovely estate behind gates with large green areas and some new tree planting. There was a nicely landscaped entrance to Monastery Gardens – could the plastered wall be painted here in the future? There were some neatly presented houses along the Main Street areas. All residential areas were free of litter.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

Approach roads are very important as they give the visitor a first and last impression of your town. Well done on all the work carried out on the Castlemaine Road. This area was most impressive with the large 'St Nicholas' flowerbed outside the GAA pitch, well-maintained grass verges and flowerbeds. There is a lovely stone wall with overhanging mature trees as you come down the hill into Milltown from the Killorglin side.

The fingerboard sign at Nicholas Place needs straightening. There is a lovely leafy laneway from here over the footbridge (this bridge could be enhanced but you have mentioned this in your future plans) to the attractive Bleachfield holiday cottages. The fencing around the green here is of poor quality and it would be great if it could be removed/replaced. Could the gate be painted?

The mart occupies a vast area but the roads surrounding it have a somewhat untidy appearance. Mytes Lane has lovely hedgerows but many untidy entrances and quite a lot of litter.

General Impression:

You have many challenges in Milltown but are tackling them in a positive and structured manner. Having a 3-year work plan will really help you with this. You have huge potential to 'sell' your lovely town more as you are situated on the busy 'ring of Kerry' tourist route. Your challenge is to keep your core committee strong but have strong support from all sectors of the community so you are not doing every piece of work. Well done on all your recent efforts and we look forward to hearing of your further progress next time.