

Tidy Towns Competition 2022

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Kilcock - Cill Choca** Ref: **748**
County: **Kildare** Mark: **303**
Category: **E** Date(s): **13/06/2022**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2021	Mark Awarded 2022
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	80	45	47
Streetscape & Public Places	80	34	35
Green Spaces and Landscaping	80	39	41
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	55	34	37
Sustainability – Doing more with less	55	23	25
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	50	51
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	55	34	35
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	55	31	32
TOTAL MARK	550	290	303

Community – Your Planning and Involvement / An Pobal - Pleanáil agus Rannpháirtíocht:

Fáilte chuig Comórtas Na mBailte Slachtmhara Super Valu don bhliain 2022. Táimid buíoch daoibh as ucht na hiontrála a chur chugainn, agus guimíd gach rath ar bhúr gcuid oibre amach anseo.

Thank you for your suggested route to follow around Kilcock, this was useful and ensured we were orientated to view your projects. We did also veer off-piste to visit a few other places! You have great support from local action groups, schools, sports groups, community organisations, businesses, and authorities.

Communication is important – and you have a lovely Facebook page and website where you share news and photos of your work. The news items on the latter were a little out of date – maybe the news section can be linked to your social media, so you don't have to double-post.

Kilcock's population has grown so the focus of the work of Kilcock TidyTowns has changed accordingly with more emphasis on residential areas and working with people. The Covid-19 lockdown allowed for time to research and review your previous work, and to collate a long-term plan. Whilst still under review, we think that your long-term plan is excellent – well structured, considered, contains actions across all the adjudication categories and links with other relevant plans such as the Local Area Plan for Kilcock. Actions have timeframes and you have noted when actions are completed.

Over the last 12 months tremendous work has been achieved on Community Gardens and Forests engaging the Kilcock communities on a wide variety of work in this area. And judging by the photos submitted – you seemed to have enjoyed it.

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

The Church was nicely presented and the grounds here were lovely with the bog oak sculpture and the grass here was a little longer in selected areas allowing clover and butter cups to grow. The attractive raised flower bed at the entrance to Scoil Dara looked well.

Gills Bistro and the Credit Union looked well. Could a screen be erected for discreet storage of the commercial bins on School Street? Murphy's by the river caught the eye especially with its traditional signage.

Corscaddens is for sale, and it is hoped that this is quickly reused as it is in a commanding position and impacts the appearance of the area. Nearby you have some lovely murals at The Old Lion House – could the upper window boards be painted or have some details added here? The painting of the concrete surround on the façade is

needed – can the owners be persuaded to do this – or donate some paint for this?

The new Primary Health Care campus has scope for wildlife friendly planting in its landscaping. The new playground nearby was very busy which was lovely to see.

Another wonderful amenity for the community was the GAA facilities with its nice outdoor seating area and the clever use of planters to separate the car park. Sanitising stations, solar panels, recycling, and bike parking were all noted here. Perhaps some push-button taps outdoors could be provided to save water? We also liked the fact that users were asked to consider residents when leaving.

A lot of the community were cycling or using e-scooters around these residential areas. Have you carried out a permeability survey to see how easy and safe it is for pedestrians and non-car users to get around Kilcock?

Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:

This was your adjudicators first time in Kilcock and the mention of a harbour was confusing. We were not expecting the wonderful amenities of the harbour, river, canal, and the Greenway. From now on instead of passing on the M4 we will detour to take time out to have a coffee, or even a cycle ride, around Kilcock.

The Community Garden was another lovely place to explore with its sculptures, trails through the long grass and strawberries that had to be taste-tested! Raised vegetable beds and compost bins all looked great – and the beans had been harvested before we arrived. It was great to read that you organise a lot of open events here and have regular meets every Saturday. Here, and at Chambers Park, you have worked with the community to do some great work on creating a continued ring of native trees all around Kilcock. Best of luck with your special award entries for this work – whilst we not involved with the judging of the Special Awards, we were very impressed with this entry.

The planters and street trees around the refurbished Town Square looked really well. Planters take effort not just to fill and position, but to maintain. The position of each should be carefully considered – place them where they can make an impact and be appreciated by slow-passing traffic. If you cannot easily service them in one position – remove them from here. You have taken time to consider them this year- it is felt that some still could be relocated to make greater impact. The ones at the pedestrian crossing by the harbour perhaps didn't make the impact that you would have hoped.

The newly planted floral bed at the entrance to SuperValu, and the lovely mural behind for the Rye Rive Café was very attractive. Street trees in boxes are not recommended as the trees fare much better planted into the ground. But as a temporary measure we can understand why they can work well.

Enhancement works of the raised wooden beds at The Square Garden were admired...it is suggested that some hand weeding is carried out here as there was a lot of growth between the gravel here. The wire security fencing at the back and broken planks of wood here detracted a little from this area.

You ran an art competition relating to tree management – and we loved the one showing how straps linking trees to stakes, can actually damage the tree they are aiming to support. THANK YOU! This adjudicator says this in nearly every report and with every group we meet, so we were delighted to read this.

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

Gathering professional advice is important to ensure well-meaning volunteers do not unintentionally damage the fauna and flora of their community. This year alone you have commissioned bat surveys and river surveys; attending workshops and conferences and obtained specific advice from many relevant bodies to direct your work. You have carried out a scoping survey of the River Rye and will use this to identify areas where further information is needed to then inform your biodiversity action plan. Well done and we look forward to seeing your Biodiversity Action Plan.

You have also raised awareness of wonders of the wildlife and habitats on your doorstep: guided summer bat walks; making bat boxes and attending training on hedge laying are just some of the activities over the last 12 months. During the open days for your community gardens, magnifying glasses meant attendees became Nature Detectives! You cleverly incorporated a 'Culture Night' performance into your gardens – what an innovative way to attract more to this public space.

You have sponsored swift boxes at Scoil Choca Naofa so hopefully they will start nesting here. Pictures shared of the wildlife found at Chambers Park looked lovely – maybe have the community vote for their favourite species. Would it be the amazing swifts that fly non-stop from when they leave the nest until they breed up to two years later?

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

Kilcock Sustainable Energy Community (KSEC) was established in Autumn 2021. KSEC in a few short months has been promoting sustainable ideas and designing climate actions projects for the Kilcock community. Climate concerns, and actions we can take at home are of interest. Alongside rising fuel and home heating costs this is very relevant to homes and businesses and sharing tips and organising activities would be most welcome. Share some

of the statistics once you have collated some data.

Projects included a toy-exchange, lesson toolkits, plastic surveys by TY students; food-mile projects and the purchase of reusable cups which have already been used at various events.

One entrance gate caught the eye near Braytown Park / Courtown Road with its artistic re-use of bike parts.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

Thanks to the hundreds of volunteers across Kilcock who have taken part in various litter picking activities. This has included the 'Adopt an Area' campaign, the 5km clean-up of the Sli na Slainte and the National Spring Clean. GAA, Scouts, Canoe Polo club and many individuals took part in the latter and 100 bags of rubbish were collected!

Think about the wording of public signs – if people are to enjoy a picnic area perhaps a sign welcoming them to enjoy the area and leave it for others to appreciate might be better than a command to bring home your rubbish.

A residential house facing into the west of The Square, had had a lot of ivy removed. But most of the debris was piled up adjacent here and should be mulched or recycled.

There were a lot of streetlights with overhead wires attached on Church Street and also on Commons East. Have you plans to underground these at some stage? This should be an action in your long-term plan. Watch out for cable ties on telegraph poles around Church Street and The Square. The post box at the post office needs some attention. Watch out for old flags and some graffiti tags on utility boxes. Have you considered some paintings/stickers/inspirational message on utility boxes? You have removed old poles, and this is commended. The existing signage may need a good clean where possible (e.g. swimming prohibited sign).

You have considered litter spots and have carefully positioned street bins at places where they would be most needed. They were also clean and in use so again well done.

One possible project to consider would be to help residents to remove redundant satellite dishes – a number of rusty ones were noted on the front of homes and their removal would greatly enhance some areas.

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

Over the last 12 months you have seen the completion of a lot of public and residential building schemes. This brings more opportunities for the TidyTowns volunteers of Kilcock especially with new residents. Do you have links with all estates to allow for two-way communications?

It is important to plan well and ensure that residential estates have safe access to amenities. As such we were pleased to read of the completion of the riverside walk from Ryebridge Estate to the back of SuperValu.

Likewise we were pleased to read of your outreach actions. For example you are working with Rycroft Homes and local residents since September 2021 to try preserve boundary and on-site hedgerows in the development at Brayton Park. This proactive work is to be applauded. Four estates have requested that they also have fruit gardens planted in their areas for the residents to tend and enjoy the harvest!

There were lovely mature trees at Abbeyfields including horse chestnuts, silver birch and beech trees. Could the seeds be collected for germination and growing so you can distribute home-grown trees from Kilcock?

It was good to see the solar panels on the homes at Millerstown and ox-eye daisies along the fence line here. Could some ivy or honeysuckle be planed on the bare concrete wall of Rye Abbey estate? There were some nice silver birch trees at the entrance.

Congratulations to Marie O'Keeffe on Courtown Road who won the Tidy Towns Garden for sustainability and biodiversity! Share details of her actions across the community and maybe in the National TidyTowns newsletter too.

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

We saw the new expansion of the Musgraves's depot and it was a shame that the hedge all along this length of approach road was pulled out and replaced with a wire fence. There is a wide pavement here – is this for both pedestrians and cyclist? You hope to work with them to improve their ecological footprint and this is to be welcomed.

The nearby picnic area at the railway bridge is a nice place to rest, the lavender planted here is good for wildlife. The stonework on the bridge appears to have been painted at some time in club colours and is very faded – we would suggest you allow this to fade so the natural stone is appreciated.

It was lovely to see the roses planted on the walls along Church Lane. Trees at Royal Meadow looked well as did the managed for wildlife signs here.

Concrete blocks edging a car park on the Dublin Road are ugly. What is the plan here? Hopefully this is a

temporary measure, but can they be painted bright colours in the interim?

Concluding Remarks:

Your entry eloquently sums up your work 'Despite all the changes Kilcock has retained its character, community spirit and rural charm'.

Kilcock Tidy Towns has been active in the town for over 50 years and have a strong commitment to continue improving our environment ensuring that it is inclusive, welcoming, and sustainable for all'. Kilcock has lovely amenities in the centre of the town. It was a delight to explore these and also the many wonderful planting schemes and community gardens in development across the town.