

# Tidy Towns Competition 2022

## Adjudication Report

Centre: **Kilcullen - Cill Chuillinn** Ref: **371**  
County: **Kildare** Mark: **338**  
Category: **D** Date(s): **01/07/2022**

	<b>Maximum Mark</b>	<b>Mark Awarded 2021</b>	<b>Mark Awarded 2022</b>
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	80	52	55
Streetscape & Public Places	80	41	42
Green Spaces and Landscaping	80	50	53
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	55	40	42
Sustainability – Doing more with less	55	19	21
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	52	53
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	55	33	34
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	55	37	38
<b>TOTAL MARK</b>	<b>550</b>	<b>324</b>	<b>338</b>

### **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.

It was heartening to read of the great community support you have for your work. Your committee of 20 includes different generations, and long-term and new residents bringing together a healthy mix of personalities into the committee. If others wanted to join, do they know where/how to do this? Businesses, community groups and schools all help you in your work.

.You have an active Facebook page and communicate in a variety of ways which is important to be seen to be open and transparent. Well done on securing funding to develop a Design Statement for the Village. It is an important process to involve the wider community in the future design of Kilcullen. We wish you well with this work and we were delighted to read you had 300 responses to the on-line survey.

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

You are great at working with the community, and relevant authorities to develop and enhance Kilcullen in ways that suit the community. So again you are applauded – this time for your consultations in the re-design of the Markey Square. An attractive public realm has many social and economic benefits, and it is hoped that the completed work will be enjoyed by all.

There are many older buildings. Indeed when we looked at the interactive map at [www.archaeology.ie](http://www.archaeology.ie) we saw many notable heritage features and buildings in the centre of Kilcullen. Is the community aware of the merit of these buildings? Are they in good order or should you have discussions on the status of some with the Council's Heritage Officer?

Premises around the crossroads were nicely presented, including The Spout Public House and The Optometrist painted in a nice dark grey. The clever extension to the Credit Union caught the eye and fits in nicely to this area. Other new shop fronts presented nicely such as Murphy Design - new windows, changed entrances and a new façade bring symmetry to this property. Many more premises on the Dunlavin Road look well, including The Saddlery and also the Tennis Club.

### **Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:**

The garden at the library was delightful and your adjudicator was thrilled to meet Russell Crowe, who would have

thought it? We liked the plastic edging that helped clearly define the paths. This was one of your priority projects in 2022 and it was lovely to explore. You have done a lot of work in this category of the competition.

Elsewhere you have maintained the walks around Kilcullen especially the Pinkeen Stream and the Valley Riverside Park. Weeding, tidying, and clearing all takes a lot of volunteer effort. You also use your own shredded to convert trimmings into a mulch used in the area. New picnic benches freshly painted looked great.

Hanging baskets and window boxes all along the Main Street looked well so congratulations to the many businesses that have managed these, especially on the upper floors. This, and the associated irrigation system would have taken a lot of effort.

In this category you have helped other businesses and groups. For example, you helped the Pitch & Putt, and the Community Childcare create pollinator-friendly attractive flower beds.

Your volunteers also help maintain Newabbey Cemetery. The Heritage Council have recently published a handy guide to the care and maintenance of these available free to download at <https://www.heritagecouncil.ie/content/files/Top-Tips-for-Caring-for-Historic-Graveyards.pdf>

What a pity to read on Facebook that some of your planters on the bridge were destroyed but don't despair as you have such a strong community, with so many volunteers helping particularly in this category of the competition, you will brush this off and move on quickly.

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

You have put a lot of effort also into this category of the competition also this year. You have had professional advice and developed a Biodiversity Action Plan. This includes actions to benefits wildlife and habitats in the area. Floodwater has been diverted to create a natural wet area with yellow iris and marigold. We loved reading that the school pupils have collected acorns and chestnuts. They have started to grow these on as saplings. These will be lovely to eventually plant across the wider area of Kilcullen. Other TY students made bird and bat boxes. It is so great to read that younger member of your community have lead in these activities. The schools are very forward thinking - in 1986 CPC Forest - Coill na Scoile was planted, and an orchard has been planted too.

Creating a wildflower meadow is gratifying, but managing it is much harder. It is important to cut and then remove all strimmings. So we were impressed to see your volunteers attending a workshop on scything!

New wildlife information signs on the mammals and aquatic life were erected earlier this year. 25,000 spring bulbs were planted too.

Native trees were beautiful in the college grounds, and maybe some smaller replacement ones could be planted. The HSC building has large leylandii growing in the front boundary which offer little for wildlife and it's suggested these are replaced with native trees.

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

This category is about focusing on the circular economy and reducing our consumption. You held a 'Community4 Climate Action' in May with bike and clothes repair workshops, and swaps for toys, clothes and even seeds. You talked about food waste - maybe you can share recipes for using left-overs?

You are developing a Sustainable Energy Community and some local premises were audited for their energy usage. This is a useful first step and you are keen to get direction for future action. Perhaps staff in the Climate Action Office of the Council can provide some advice on your next steps?

A major project this year was the building of your community polytunnel and associated rainwater collection service. Can you share seeds/cuttings? Compost has been supplemented with the coffee grounds -thanks to donations from The Rover Café & The Coffee Hatch!

### **Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:**

It was also great to read that litter picking by your volunteers more or less runs itself. How is your street sweeper working out?

Cable ties were noticed on a few telegraph poles, so do watch out for these. It was good to see the public litter bin with separate compartments to facilitate recycling. With regards to tidiness to take care with the use of Christmas lights that are up all year around. Thanks to the TY volunteers for painting the bollards.

The trees along the inside wall of The Mart nicely define the boundary wall. Ox eye daisies and other native naturally growing flowers here look well. The large bottle banks are regularly used and there's a nice clean sign here. The directional sign for the recycling banks had been twisted in the wrong direction and needs a clean. It is great that such a large amount of recycling containers are made available for the community by The Mart. Perhaps some planters or honeysuckle could be encouraged to grow on the green wire fencing behind and at the sides of the row of bottle banks?

Does your long-term plan include actions to encourage the placing of overhead wires underground, as they are quite distracting and not very attractive on the main street?

The crossroads has lovely public seating and planters, enhancing the entrance gates to the Cross and Passion College. The railings here still look great. What a pity there's quite a prominent security notice on the wrought iron gates. A similar notice is also displayed on the wrought iron gates at the library. In the Church car park, there was an ugly rusty security barrier in place that is no longer used. If it cannot be removed, could an attractive plant be trained to grow along it or maybe it could be painted? It was nice to see the old foot scraper in place outside the chapel doors.

Some old cable ties were noticed on a streetlight outside the chapel. This is also on the electricity pipe across the road, but this time used deliberately by workers to secure wires. Black cable ties would have been more discreet and cutting the ends would have looked neater – sadly this is poor workmanship.

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

Conroy Park was clean and tidy with nicely presented homes. The entrance sign is nicely surrounded by attractive flowers, and all were encouraged to keep the place tidy, which it was during adjudication. Three trees at the entrance to this estate have been drastically cut back resulting in loss of form. It is suggested that these are best replaced with e.g. attractive silver birch trees which allow light through, provide dappled shade, and benefit wildlife as well. Everyone should visit this area to enjoy the lovely landscaping at the rear of the area with lovely perennials and the attractive planters including an upcycled bicycle.

Nicholstown Estate is a fantastic example of how a green area can be managed for wildlife and still provide an amenity area for local residents. This adjudicator plans to share pictures of this area to lots of TidyTowns communities. Another clever idea is the partial mowing of the grass verges which helps separate the pavement from the busy approach roads.

Elsewhere there was an attractive pink cottage on the R412 on leaving the town. Overall there is a very high standard of homes throughout Kilcullen.

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

The attractive 'please keep Kilcullen tidy' signs using local pictures is a clever promotional idea.

The name sign for Kilcullen when you drive into the town from Newbridge direction is located nearly 500m before the speed limit signs. It is recommended that the sign be relocated to the actual edge of the village where the pavement ends.

It was lovely to see swimming lessons going on in the river. Being so far inland it is great to develop safe swimming areas inland and should be supported where safe to do so.

On the approach road from Newbridge a lovely red painted wrought iron gate is nicely refurbished and this could be being turned into a lovely feature by adding a raised bed.

### **Concluding Remarks:**

For 25 years the Kilcullen TidyTowns volunteers have worked to transform the town. With growth in your population, you have ensured new residents have integrated smoothly into the community. Together with other groups you have improved the quality of life in the town. We enjoyed exploring the many wonderful pockets from the library to the fairy trail. Premises looked well and you are applauded for your efforts over the last 12 months, especially in the newer categories of this competition.