

Tidy Towns Competition 2022

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Kildare - Cill Dara** Ref: **100**
County: **Kildare** Mark: **308**
Category: **E** Date(s): **14/07/2022**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2021	Mark Awarded 2022
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	80	50	51
Streetscape & Public Places	80	39	41
Green Spaces and Landscaping	80	42	44
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	55	31	32
Sustainability – Doing more with less	55	20	21
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	50	52
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	55	35	36
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	55	29	31
TOTAL MARK	550	296	308

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.

You work with many different community groups, agencies, and businesses in Kildare town. We would like to commend you in particular for your work last year with schools as it was one area you wanted to support. And congratulations to your green student of the year. You have a dedicated Junior TidyTowns who won a Sustainability Award for their work.

Thanks also for reducing in size your entry form – pictures say 1000 words and your entry form was suitably packed with them. No doubt that helped reduce the size of your entry. But you still managed to detail all 48 of your projects, and your long-term plan. The latter helps focus your efforts and track your work.

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

Shops and premises in and around the central square all were presented very nicely. This and the wonderful landscaping, meant that many were enjoying the area on a summer's evening. We appreciated the bunting made of jockey silks! The Museum and Tourist office were wonderfully maintained heritage buildings. Flanagan and Harhen, and Roche's Barbershop and Seanchai Books were some of many businesses that stood out for their window displays, fresh paint and looked good both when open and closed.

Street furniture sometimes gets overlooked so it was lovely to see the photograph of your artists enhancing these utility boxes into works of art. We loved the pictures provided of the artists in action – what infectious smiles they have.

The entrance into the round towers GAA facility had some lovely mature trees and nice planting in the inside walls were gorgeous. Unfortunately one of the mature trees just at the entrance is dead. Can this be taken down and a new tree be planted to help make a really strong entrance? However, the area right beside the entrance where there's a small utility building was very poor. Signs stating 'Managed for Wildlife' doesn't really carry here as we don't really believe it was!

The artwork on the fencing at 'M&C Joinery' was lovely and it's in such an excellent position for people coming out of Old Road to enjoy and appreciate.

Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:

We loved the landscaping in and around Kildare. Raised plant beds in the town centre just looked lovely on the evenings of adjudication and helped define and add colour and softness to the public space. The choice of flowers and foliage here is to be highly commended as not only did they look great, but they are also good for pollinators. You should submit pictures for a feature in the Tidy Towns newsletter.

The narrow-gauge railway carriage recommissioned into a planter is an excellent idea and we were surprised at how narrow it was (despite the clue in the name)!

The proposed garden design for Chapel Hill will be a lovely formal design for this area.

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

Well done to all of those who've helped plant new trees, in particular the younger people and local schools, and your Junior Tidy Towns. Trees need a lot of attention in their early years, including watering in the Summer, mulching to add nutrients, and protection from strimmers. It is suggested that maybe you assign volunteers to certain trees to help them in the next couple of years.

We applaud your project 'God's Acre', working in old churchyards and graveyards to enhance biodiversity. You are probably aware, but the Heritage Council have recently produced top tips for graveyards which is a handy document for all volunteers to know about. <https://www.heritagecouncil.ie/content/files/Top-Tips-for-Caring-for-Historic-Graveyards.pdf>

It was lovely to read in your entry form that you give away pollinator friendly bulbs on St Brigid's day - this is very apt. How many did you distribute, and do you know if they've gone to many places around Kildare to form a strong network for pollinators?

Wildflower planting at Lidl has been a great success and helps to raise awareness of the All-Ireland pollinator plan. Wildflower meadows are difficult and expensive to manage but there is information on cost-effective ways to simply change how you mow grass to create and enhance these. Check out www.pollinators.ie. Does the council have a cut and lift machine that you can borrow?

It was lovely to read that you are involved with the National Swift Project and that your artificial swift nests have been populated. Declining bird species are amazing and once the young leave the nest, they continue to fly non-stop for 2 years, eating and sleeping whilst flying.

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

As mentioned, your Junior Tidy Towns won an Award for Sustainability. They made simple changes to their everyday actions such as being mindful of how they spend their money, use energy, dispose of waste and the foods they eat.

It was lovely to read for example that you organised a plant and seed swap in the square last August. How many seeds and plants are swapped? Again, list a few more details if you can as it would be great to share with other communities.

You support the made second-hand shops in Kildare such as the NCBI.

Walking around it was interesting to see some of the activities to enjoy including the shop 'Un Packed' which promotes zero waste shopping. Well done.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

You have a lot of volunteers who help with regular litter picks. One man was observed arriving by himself at St Brigid's square, getting out of his car, putting on his hi-vis vest and started picking litter all by himself. He struck a chord as he was obviously there because of his pride in Kildare and wanting to make sure it looked tidy. As an adjudicator it is humbling to witness and read about the amazing voluntary effort put into communities across Ireland.

Your entry was full of photographs showing the great numbers of volunteers you have out for activities, such as the litter pick of The Curragh Plains. A big shout out to the scouts and the schools, and your junior tidy towns for all their hard work picking up litter around the community.

We were intrigued to read about the scheme to recycle sweet wrappers and would love more information on this in next year submission please? How does that work, where do you recycle your wrappers, quantities that have been recycled etc.?

Interestingly one of the photographs in your submission was of the spotlessly clean letterboxes but on adjudication day it was quite dirty again, so perhaps you could give a little bit more attention here.

Some pieces of graffiti were noticed on street signs, in car parks, and on equipment and signs at the playground. We were going to suggest you get some graffiti wipes from the council but then we saw on your Facebook page recent posts after our visit of two young volunteers who cleaned up these signs – well done to them!!

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

We were also delighted to read that the 2022 Estates Competition theme will be Gardening for Biodiversity and prizes will be awarded based on actions for wildlife and habitats. People with gardens and even with small balconies can all make small difference to help wildlife and improve and enhance habitats, do send details of the winners to the TidyTowns newsletter also.

Well done to Kildare TidyTowns for your input to have new residential estates named with names that reflect the history and locality. We have not read of this with other TidyTowns, and this is important and appropriate .

We were delighted to read of the training and seminars provided by the council with ideas on how to manage your estates for biodiversity and encouraging to leave behind old out-dated ideas such as spraying weedkiller around the base of trees.

There are many other homes on Chapel Lane, and it was wonderful to see mature gardens where people put a lot of effort and love into these.

The area of Castle Lane was nice to walk through though there was some graffiti here. Perhaps an artist could address the utility boxes here? There is great potential to really brighten up this area but then we read of your formal garden plans for this area which is applauded. With new residents in the area, it would be good to involve them in the planting where possible.

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

Your adjudicator loved the wild horses and the wildflower planting nearly made them look alive! Then the series of pictures provided in your entry showed how this changed through the seasons. What a lovely approach into Kildare. You have put a lot of effort into the long line of mostly geraniums along the Newbridge Road. The colour and formality of this looks well but we wonder if in future years more bee-friendly flowers could be planted here, or flowers that are higher that more passing traffic can view and appreciate these. Other approaches had nice bi-lingual name signs, underplanted with flowers that also looked well.

Concluding Remarks:

2022 marks your 20th year of entering the national competition. You are warmly applauded for your endeavours over the last 12 months, and indeed the two decades. Kildare was full of tourists and the town was a delight. Your mission is to make Kildare a better place to live, work and visit. We can confirm that it's definitely a lovely place to visit.