

Tidy Towns Competition 2010

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Killarney** Ref: **340**
County: **Kerry** Mark: **307**
Category: **F** Date(s): **05/07/2010**
22/07/2010

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2009	Mark Awarded 2010
Overall Development Approach	50	48	48
The Built Environment	50	37	37
Landscaping	50	42	43
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	33	33
Litter Control	50	35	36
Waste Minimisation	20	14	14
Tidiness	30	19	20
Residential Areas	40	30	31
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	36	36
General Impression	10	9	9
TOTAL MARK	400	303	307

Overall Development Approach:

Welcome to the 2010 National Tidy Towns Competition. Thank you for your very comprehensive submission, which included the completed application form, a detailed and interesting 'Walkabout Trail', a clear and illustrated map, the Killarney Masterplan, informative photographs and various reports. Your professional approach is to be commended and the documentation submitted with your entry was excellent and greatly enhanced this adjudicator's visit to your town.

The Built Environment:

Killarney showed great initiative in commissioning a Town Master Plan a number of years ago. This analysis of the town shows a clear understanding of its origins, present day status, and future vision. We read your structured outline which quickly gives a clear understanding of the context, and we like the breakdown 'Killarney Was', 'Killarney Is', and 'Imagine Killarney As'. We undertook the 'Walkabout' from the lower car park as suggested in your submission and found the trail interesting and illuminating. Kenmare Place, surrounded by a cluster of welcoming, well presented Hotels, is a nice introduction to the many facets of life in the town of interest to the visitor. The new award-winning toilets and jarvey store here are impressive and present an imaginative, contemporary interpretation of a functional building incorporating traditional materials and scale. The clever incorporation of the existing mature trees and Christ the King memorial statue is very successful. The presentation of the nearby Town Hall, adorned by some colourful window boxes, is a nice introduction to Main Street. The pedestrian-friendly treatment has given a new image to the older town centre containing some high-quality paving, street furniture and the well located white-tailed eagle sculpture. At College Street, it was disappointing to see the vista of the McGillicuddy Reeks being somewhat obscured by the ongoing construction of a new Mansard roof. This new horizontal, monolithic construction would have had a more pleasing visual effect had it been vertically fragmented. This is particularly true when one considers the vertical scale of the elegant spire of St Mary's Church behind this new development.

The Main Street and High Street contain an interesting collection of shops, pubs and restaurants, many attractive presentations too numerous to mention. A feature here is the improving quality of signage. Fascia boards, containing individually mounted gold leaf lettering, hand painted sign writing and numerous hanging signs, are presented to a high standard. Inappropriate plastic signs, once a feature here, are beginning to disappear. Foley's Restaurant complex is a fine example of how to retain vertical expression in a streetscape. A number of individual shopfronts, in the same ownership, are combined here by a co-ordinated colour scheme containing high quality signage on individual fascia boards. This provides a visual unity of ownership. It would have been easy to succumb to the temptation of providing a horizontal expression here. Well done on this presentation!

Your plans for further street and road junction developments at Rock Road and St Ann's Road were noted and look impressive. The new development of the contemporary Government Buildings at New Street has a high design standard and complements the older town here. The layout encloses a pleasing space incorporating some quality hard and soft landscaping finishes. This standard of new development augurs well for the future and gives the impression of a confident, forward-looking town.

The town has an impressive array of Green Flag schools and educational buildings and all were visited. On Mission Road, the mural is a delight and the presentation of the landscaped forecourt at the Kerry Parents and Friends Association School on Port Road was greatly admired. On Flesk Road, the presentation of the Kerry Mineral Water Company and adjacent site has improved but this adjudicator feels that the old window boxes should be removed. The presentation of the Railway Station, Killarney Outlet Centre and Malton Hotel creates a fine impression of the town at this busy arrival point. The car park at the Outlet Centre would benefit from perimeter tree and shrub planting to provide some screening to the large car park. This would have a more visually softening effect. The window box displays, at the station building, were colourful and welcoming, but some Railway signage, opposite the entrance to the Malton Hotel, needs to be improved.

Landscaping:

Your focus on sustainable planting will contribute enormously to ensuring the maturity of both older and newer roads. Focusing your efforts on objectives outlined in your excellent Town Plan gives a structured approach to your ongoing programme. Boulevard planting of trees, at Muckcross Road and Hans Leibherr Road, is impressive and you are to be commended on receiving appropriate advice from Mr. Cormac Foley, horticulturalist with the National Parks and Wildlife Services. The landscaped greens at the nearby Hotel Europe are unique and set a high standard for others to emulate.

We look forward to the fountain development at Cleeney Roundabout. The Port Road Walk had a series of interesting, wildlife display boards which added greatly to the enjoyment of the Walk. At the Park, the thatched Deenagh Lodge was being painted on the day of adjudication, and the tearoom was busy with many visitors enjoying the amenity here. The playground was packed to capacity with many children and parents enjoying the facilities. The new historical plaques are an attractive feature with interesting information and greatly add to the enjoyment of the visitor.

Tree planting, on the new access road at the recently constructed Council depot, was admired, although the embankments here had become a little weedy. Roundabouts throughout have a high standard of presentation and display an abundance of colour, the segmented flower beds on the Park Road Roundabout being a highlight. It was noted that you have now focused on permanent planting at the Cleeney and Woodlands Roundabouts. We again commend you on seeking professional advice to facilitate your ongoing landscaping programme. Your future plans on landscaping are impressive and well thought out. Well done on your partnership approach under this agenda!

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

Killarney has a wide range of well managed wildlife habitats and your co-operation with the National Park and Wildlife Service is fully evident. The Deenagh River walk is a fine, well presented amenity and had many visitors on the day of adjudication. The Deer Viewing Trail at Knockreen and the viewing points at Muckcross and Ross Castle make the visit accessible for tourists and animate the experience. The Black Kerry Cow and White-tailed Eagle projects are conservation programs of national importance and the introduction of the Eagle Sculpture at Main Street is a tasteful recognition of the Eagle program. Your ongoing educational program involving the community, and the promotion by Frank Lewis on Radio Kerry, will no doubt heighten public awareness of the importance of the wildlife agenda in the long-term. We wish you well on this agenda!

Litter Control:

Adjudication commenced on the Sunday of the Munster football final between Kerry and Limerick. After the match, streets were thronged with supporters, pubs were full to capacity and patrons overflowed out on to the streets. Within hours, the streets were littered with paper, plastic cups and bottles and broken glass everywhere. On Monday morning, adjudication commenced early and by 9:30 a.m., all these areas were cleared. This professional approach to the cleaning programme was impressive. There were two road sweepers in operation, a fleet of litter pickers, and the pedestrian zone at Main Street was being power hosed. It is obvious that this is a regular occurrence, following your many festivals and promotions, due to the large number of visitors gathering on such occasions. We commend you on successfully dealing with this challenge. Your submission on the Litter Programme was extensive and this is obviously proving successful. On Monday

afternoon, the town centre was clean but quantities of litter and a number of plastic bottles were in evidence at the Lewis Street car park and on Port Road. There were also a number of plastic bottles discarded into the Deenagh River and some older litter was visible in the woods close by the Knightsbridge park entrance.

Waste Minimisation:

Similar to other adjudication categories, you have a comprehensive list of initiatives for this year, all of which are excellent. We visited the Bring Centres and all were clean and certainly did not have any maintenance problem on this occasion. We are encouraged by the fact that you are monitoring the results of your surveys and responding to problems as they arise. Education is the key, relating to both old and young and indeed the business community. Once again we were very impressed with the achievement of your schools in having 11 National Schools and 2 Secondary Schools with Green Flags. Your planned projects are impressive and wide ranging and we hope you are successful with the implementation of these.

Tidiness:

The anti-graffiti campaign appears to have been very successful, as this adjudicator did not notice any graffiti on the day of adjudication. The footpaths were maintained to a high standard and generally weed free. We visited the Tiernabouly Industrial Estate and congratulate you on improvements here. We further commend you on your action relating to unauthorised signage, an ongoing problem generally in Ireland. Well done to the Killarney Planning Officer on her initiatives relating to decluttering of signage and a more organised approach. The new regime, in relation to horse droppings, is a wonderful success and the results are immediate. The adjudicator was highly impressed with the new clean image portrayed at Kenmare Place, Ross Road and Mission Road. Once again, this initiative illustrates the success of a partnership approach. Well done to all concerned, particularly the operating jarveys!

Residential Areas:

The town appears to have escaped the worst effects of the economic downturn especially in relation to its housing schemes. You have a large number of residential estates and we endeavoured to visit them all. The general standard was good and we note your organised programme for grass cutting of the communal green areas. Ardnabooly on Park Road has a fine unfussy presentation of a manicured green with mature trees surrounded by an attractive stone wall. Further along, Ceide na Pairce again contained some high quality landscaping, featuring fine mature hedging. Coolegreen Park boasted some magnificent individual garden displays but the shrubbery containing the name stone at the entrance was in need of weed control. The pride of residents in individual estates was very much in evidence and many colourful presentations of individuals front and side gardens were admired.

The new stone wall at the Muckcross and Woodlawn Road Junction looks well and landscaping here is very impressive. Further along Woodlawn Road, grass verges were somewhat unevenly maintained and were in need of weed control. The inner town contains a fine range of attractively presented terraces and the unique Monastery Gardens are a gem. Your annual competition is proving hugely successful and you are to be commended on expanding the award scheme this year to acknowledge individual efforts.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

The network of back lanes and smaller streets is extensive and many of these have great character, as witnessed by the inclusion of some of these streets and lanes in your suggested 'Walkabout' route. Your statutory development Master Plan 2009-2016 is strong and clear on objectives for regeneration areas and the role of these linkages connecting to future developments. This is a wonderful framework document and adherence to its guidelines and principles will augur well for the future. An interesting feature of the plan is the three-dimensional block form presentation which deals with specific action areas and their role in relation to scale and massing. You are to be congratulated on this forward thinking approach.

We note your comments on approach roads and the expansion of your maintenance regime, in partnership with Kerry County Council, out beyond the speed limit boundaries of your earlier endeavours. Approach roads are now impressive presentations and it is good to see you have engaged with the residents of individual areas. The program of ongoing works outlined was impressive and we endeavoured to visit all areas mentioned. The Lime Tree replacement on New Road is successful and restores the former elegance of this tree-lined avenue. In the inner town, surface finishes are generally good and the limestone paving at Main Street looks very well, as does the high quality street furniture, seating, bollards, and large scale, functional litter bin.

General Impression:

Your overall approach to the Tidy Towns competition and the future development of the town is strategically sound and your programmes are working extremely well. It was a pleasure to spend time in Killarney and this adjudicator enjoyed his time examining your work programme and its results in your wonderful town. Good luck with your ongoing projects. We look forward to future visits.

Second Round Adjudication:

Approaching Killarney from Tralee I observed a TidyTowns notice board giving the information that Cill Áirne won 9 gold medals from 2000 to 2009 so the expectations were high as I drove in to the town. Immediately a high standard was set at a lovely small stone bridge which has its own particular charm, but outstanding displays of shrubs and flowers caught the eye at Teagasc and this lovely scene was matched with great floral colour across the road at Killarney Garden Centre. Cleaney roundabout is well landscaped and I admired the unusual grass hill near Spar. On my right I noticed magnificent shrubs and flowers with the backdrop of St Columbanus House – a great traditional stone building. Mindful of the TidyTowns notice board I was already confident after this short trip into the town that more gold is surely on the way again this year. Further into the town the road side views change to great traditional stone walls, especially around the impressive John Paul Pastoral Centre. After arriving in Killarney we now know that a huge effort is made by the TidyTowns Committee, but it soon becomes evident that the local people are very proud of their place and present their houses and surrounds in great condition, and a good example of this is seen at Emmett Terrace where there are lovely cut stone built houses with flowers and shrubs adorning their surroundings. I studied the contents of an interesting notice board that gave good information on the different sites of interest in Killarney, and as my tour progressed I saw a couple of other such notice boards.

There are some fantastic shops in Killarney where Blarney Woollen Mills displayed great floral colour notably hydrangeas, SuperValu has a prominent position and looked supreme as did Christys in the town centre, but there are numerous beautiful shops with most attractive shop fronts. Of course there are beautiful hotels in many places notably the Malton with its old style portico. Park Lodge looked great but I also liked the small Sheehan's hotel which is a little gem. A small group of modern shops caught the eye at the Park Road Pharmacy. In this town there is a great diversity of mature and young trees and together with the large amounts of parks in Killarney they give life to the area, and provide extensive cover for the wildlife of the location, and a good example of this is on the Kenmare road where there is an extensive row of young trees on the right going out that compliment the older mature trees of this area. I stopped to admire the round Church of the Resurrection with fantastic landscaping. The Friary, Methodist Church and St Mary's Church of Ireland are very well presented. The town centre resembles Dublin's Grafton Street with street trading and traditional music played live in a very busy trading area, and the shops are presented in really beautiful condition. I admired the small signposting and the back streets link in well to other locations. The sight of the Jarveys is a reminder of a bygone and indeed romantic age and they are a wonderful spectacle to behold. There are many notable and unique features in Killarney and their splendour would rival similar developments in any other part of the world, with unexpected delights around almost every corner. There is continuity between the original, restored parts and new buildings that brings out the best in architecture and planning. Also there is something for everybody, old and young, to enjoy such as the lakes, parks and plenty sporting facilities. I note that the original adjudicator has increased your marks in recognition of your fine effort and this puts you in a great position to win the competition outright. It is my pleasure to confirm this situation. Congratulations on a supreme effort.