

# Tidy Towns Competition 2011

## Adjudication Report

Centre: **Killarney** Ref: **340**  
County: **Kerry** Mark: **310**  
Category: **F** Date(s): **17/06/2011**  
**31/07/2011**

	<b>Maximum Mark</b>	<b>Mark Awarded 2010</b>	<b>Mark Awarded 2011</b>
Overall Development Approach	50	48	48
The Built Environment	50	37	38
Landscaping	50	43	44
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	33	34
Litter Control	50	36	36
Waste Minimisation	20	14	14
Tidiness	30	20	20
Residential Areas	40	31	31
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	36	36
General Impression	10	9	9
<b>TOTAL MARK</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>307</b>	<b>310</b>

### Overall Development Approach:

Killarney is very welcome to the 2011 National Tidy Towns Competition. Thank you for your comprehensive and informative submission, and accompanying maps. It is clear the effort and energy that has been put into developing the extensive and active network of volunteers representing your whole community. Your 'Adopt an area/road' initiative has now become widely accepted and is a very positive development, with individuals and organisations taking clear responsibility for clean-ups in particular areas. You have built up strong links with stakeholders and various agencies including Killarney Town Council, Kerry County Council, Killarney Chamber of Commerce and Tourism, the National Parks and Wildlife Service, local businesses and voluntary and sporting organisations. The impressive array of tourism events stretching from January to December underscores the importance and value of the immense work that you and your many collaborating agencies undertake. A consistent theme running through your submission is an emphasis on forward-planning and careful thought. Compliments on the manner in which virtually all roads have been signposted. The staging of the Street Fair by the Town Hall gives a delightful air of colour and movement to this section of the town.

### The Built Environment:

The splendid development of High Street to facilitate pedestrian traffic is admired. We wonder whether any programme is envisaged to further enhance the attractiveness of the small lanes off Main Street - Fleming's, Barry's and Pawn Office Lane for example? These locations have the potential to add greatly to the enjoyment of this bustling area. The Court House improvement with its well set-off planters in the foreground is admired. The new access ramp is pleasantly neutral in terms of its visual impact. Killarney is well served with a range of significant buildings, civic, ecclesiastical and mercantile. St. Mary's Cathedral of course, but equally the modern Church of the Resurrection. The Railway is very well presented and carries agreeable echoes of times past when it helped establish Killarney as a national visitor destination. The sizeable new building housing the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht is suitably sited as is the splendid Tourist

Information Office surrounded by convenient car parking. The colourful Library also catches the eye. The individual Hotels all make great efforts to present themselves as colourful and welcoming destinations. The Friary Church in its extensive grounds is admired. Ross Castle in its dramatic waterside location is as always imposing and impressive. The significant and sizeable Blarney Woollen Mills features delightful planting to its foreground. Most stores present themselves in an exemplary manner as they compete for business from the strolling visitors. The Innisfallen Shopping Mall has been substantially enhanced and it was a hive of activity during our visit. The eradication of a former derelict property with the development of the Penneys store has enhanced the streetscape. What is common to many of the buildings is the readability of their signage, all achieved without gaudy or questionable protruding signs.

### **Landscaping:**

The charming success of Killarney under this heading is outstanding. The ethos of the Killarney National Park seems to have migrated to many locations within the town itself. Extensive pleasant grassed areas, suitable planting, together with mature trees adorn many locations. Mission Road achieves an almost sylvan atmosphere uncommon in a busy urban situation. The wide grassed verge and many well tended trees are a delight. The colourful mural and the more sober memorial to the local missionaries are added interest items on this splendid route. The trees in the central car park serve to break up the space and soften the visual impact of it. The War Memorials on St. Anne's Road benefit from pleasant landscaping; again the car park here is divided by suitable trees. The Sports and Leisure Centre is housed in a fine premises where again the grounds are delightfully laid out and enhanced by trees. The white tailed eagle sculpture in Main Street is a most interesting installation. Some explanation of the significance of this newly reintroduced bird would enhance it further. The work done on the roundabouts, Cleeney, Michael O'Shea and at the commencement of Dr Hans Liebherr Road is a real delight. The display of flags on the latter road catches the eye.

### **Wildlife and Natural Amenities:**

The focus on wild flower meadows and the development of the vital food chain on which birdlife necessarily depend is admirable. The encouragement given to voluntary groups to explore options for enhancing birds and wildlife in their own areas is a successful policy. The resource at Knockreer House, The National Park Education Centre, is a valuable additional asset in this task. Additional advice and help can be secured by groups from the very active Killarney Nature Conservation Group which has recently completed its first quarter century of useful activities. Other active groups include the Lough Léin Catchment and Conservation Group and the Kerry Deer Society. The long established Deenagh River Project, now enhanced by the adjacent playground, has given this walkway a wider popular appeal.

### **Litter Control:**

While the enormous throughput of visitors to Killarney does generate litter, you successfully deal with this and the results of your endeavours are there for all to see on a daily basis - areas are largely litter-free thanks to continuous and diligent effort. On the day of adjudication we noted young people picking up litter as a full time activity, in and around the town car parks and the Railway Station; others were noted at work in the Library car park. Some litter had become caught underneath the trees and shrubs in the large car park by the Tourist Information Office. Minor amounts were noted in Kenmare Place. Working together with event organisers enables you to anticipate the trouble spots and put in place the necessary resources to effect speedy remedial treatment of any affected area. We noted the increasing presence of cigarette receptacles, a welcome step in dealing with litter from cigarette butts - the support of the Chamber of Commerce in encouraging businesses to make these available is welcome. Compliments to you on devising the brilliant Team Killarney Campaign supported by many sports clubs and leading personalities who pledged to support your clean-up drives and to play their part in keeping Killarney tidy. This is a very splendid idea, cleverly executed.

### **Waste Minimisation:**

The three pronged approach - Reduce, Reuse and Recycle - is at the core of Waste Minimisation. While you demonstrate significant recycling, perhaps your approach may need to give some further emphasis to the reduction of waste. A slight change in lifestyle and enhanced attention to purchasing decisions can help to reduce waste and at the same time have the added benefit of financial savings at the individual household level. The many Recycle facilities and charity shops continue to do an excellent job in ensuring that the least possible material is sent to landfill sites. All of your national schools and two of your secondary schools have already acquired Green Flags. The Best Environmental Project Award is an impressive extension of this activity. The existence and presentation of the cycling route is applauded as a practical alternative to motor transport.

### **Tidiness:**

The town council's policy of actively pursuing derelict sites is clearly beneficial. Our compliments on the efforts being made, to rationalise the display of amenity sign-posting; we welcome for example the arranging of the signs from the largest at the top in descending order at Ross Road. Similarly the unified design of all signs at

Fleming's Lane is admired. While in general the streets are well swept and tidy, aspiration should be to ensure that all verges are similarly treated for best effect. Some spoil was noticed on the otherwise splendid Dr Hans Liebherr Road. Graffiti is certainly not the problem it was some years ago but some small amounts were noted. With minor exceptions, around rush hour, traffic flows seem to be quite good throughout Killarney. Has any thought been given to further pedestrianisation? The famous jarvies continue to be a great attraction in Killarney, and the introduction of the equine hygiene devices has proved very successful in eliminating another source of road pollution.

### **Residential Areas:**

The traditional houses on Rock Road are all pleasantly presented, reflecting the pride and the charm of authenticity associated with artisan's dwellings. The newly established Demesey on Ross Road was a joy to visit. Friary Hall, Friary Court and Fair Hill Cottage are well presented and the sizable development at Oak Dale off Park Road features many splendid gardens and well painted houses. The Monastery gardens, New Road, are a delight and are very well presented. Dalton's Avenue leading to St. Brendan's Place features many well presented houses. Coolgrean Park features a pleasant air of maturity especially the gardens and hedging. The contribution of individual householders in respect of their fine garden displays is acknowledged and appreciated. The increase in numbers of Resident's Associations is a welcome indeed desirable development. These will quickly generate ideas for themselves, a practice which is already occurring and these groups can contribute to the overall TidyTown effort through maintaining their own estates and developments.

### **Roads, Streets and Back Areas:**

Approach roads have often been described as a town's 'shop-window'; Killarney has paid great attention to its 'shop-window' and the results are hugely beneficial. The traffic volumes on the Ring Road and on the by-passes have served to remove from the core town a great deal of unnecessary through-traffic. A visit to Killarney is now far less fraught than before. The nine car parks, strategically located, offer a total of almost 1,500 space ensuring that there is adequate space in normal circumstances. The extent of street signs is also applauded. The planting of boulevard trees on Muckcross Road greatly enhances this area. The major works in progress on the left hand side on the approach along the Tralee Road will, when completed, make this one of the more agreeable entry points. The existing picnic area is admired. The Park Road Roundabout is very well planted with bedding plants and permanent planting at its core. The Ross Castle Road had a disappointing extent of spoil on both sides. The fine sizable Ballydowney roundabout features a different presentation, all of interest, colourful and successful. Inevitably because of the traffic volumes some of the signage and especially the speed limit signage would benefit from more frequent washing. The practice of providing information displays in most of the car parks is commendable; the range of circular historic signs in many locations are a distinct advantage. Their brief facts are succinct but welcome and they add greatly to the pleasure of walking around the town. The walking routes 1 & 2 are full of interest, however, can the necessity to backtrack on the route be avoided?

### **General Impression:**

To visit Killarney is a great joy - there is so much to enjoy and admire. Killarney has indeed shown what can be achieved by creative and active volunteers working closely with local authorities, businesses and voluntary and sporting organisations. The presentation of your natural amenities, the wonder of Killarney National Park, the contribution of your well-maintained roads are all factors which make for a delightful visit to this splendid town. Sincere best wishes are warmly extended to the organising committee and to all of those who, individually or as a member of a group, have contributed to a splendid outcome.

### **Second Round Adjudication:**

Approach roads and entrances to Killarney enjoyed excellent maintenance and presentation on the day of our second visit, roundabouts in particular looked most attractive. Any litter that was noted was minimal and consisted mainly of cigarette ends with the exception of the bottle banks in a car-park off High Street where a little more litter was in evidence. The Bottle Bank containers here were quite inaccessible due to parked cars, if this happens regularly it would be difficult to maintain them to the standard required. The car-park itself is in need of resurfacing and visual enhancement. The built environment is handsome in general with good maintenance and very few inappropriate fascia signs. In a few instances the gutters and chimney stacks of buildings were affected by weed growth and upper stories were in need of attention. Laneways off High Street have been improved since this adjudicator's last visit. Some roadside boundary walls to dwellings need refurbishment. Overall Killarney enjoys excellent maintenance and presentation and has much to offer residents and visitors in recreational and visual amenity; this is a fine achievement considering the large number of people out and about on the day of second adjudication which was also the last day of the Irish Open Golf Championship. Well done.