

Tidy Towns 1996

"Caring for our environment"

Centre : **BALLON**
County : **CARLOW**
Category : **B**

Results

Date of Adjudication : 11-06-96

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded
Overall Developmental Approach	50	33
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	20
Landscaping	40	26
The Built Environment	40	27
Litter Control	40	28
Tidiness	20	12
Residential Areas	30	20
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	27
General Impression	10	7
TOTAL MARK	300	200

Adjudicator's Comments

OVERALL DEVELOPMENTAL APPROACH

Although you have not submitted a 3/5 year plan of action for Ballon, a strategy for developing the town's strong points and, indeed tackling problem areas is essential for next year's competition. This should be based on the constructive remarks made in this report and enlisting the help of a professional consultant to formulate a programme for the town. The enthusiasm is obviously there but perhaps establishing relationships with the relevant statutory bodies should be the next move. This will, hopefully, be of great benefit to the community as a whole.

WILDLIFE AND NATURAL AMENITIES

Perhaps the best approach to this issue of wildlife/natural amenities would be to contact local environmental groups and experts who could advise you and provide you with the information you need to tackle this broad-ranging issue. From there you can then identify the wildlife habitats of your area and see what varieties of animals, birds, fish and plantlife these attract. Involve the local schoolchildren in this project-they will hopefully bring a fresh enthusiasm for the wealth of wildlife in their locality.

LANDSCAPING

The standard in this category was quite good. The picnic area with the black and white planted tubs on the Bunclody approach looked a little bare and forlorn. The planting to the ball alley is to be commended, and will improve the appearance of this area. The colourful planted bed on the Carlow road was admired. As was another banked one by the Tullow/Carlow cross roads, although the weeds to the kerbside were unfortunate. The picnic area with the stone and timber benches and tables also on the Carlow approach was well presented. The new trees by the village name plate sign are coming along nicely, although some weeds were noted to the bases.

THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Both the public and commercial premises of the town were presented to a high standard on Adjudication Day. The school grounds were well presented. The charming stone Garda Station with its corner-turret and cottage garden, was very quaint. The metal railing to the front of the garden could be freshly painted, and the kerbside was quite weedy. The Post Office was also very charming and fresh. The Church is very distinctive in relation to its angled position to the street. It was quite fresh on the day, although some staining was apparent where the gutter is leaking. The grotto was neatly presented, but the silver railing, wall and gates could be freshened before next year. The graveyard was very well maintained, although some weeds were noted. The Community Centre was fresh but its forecourt area, which is shared with the Credit Union, looked quite bleak and weedy. The old National School was charming in granite with red brick surrounds to the windows and doors. Mc Henry's was well presented, as was Choice Fashions, although the latter should replace its curved canopy with a more traditional fabric awning.

LITTER CONTROL

The village of Ballon was generally litter free on Adjudication Day. However, a few papers were noted at the picnic area on the Carlow road and to the front of the shops.

TIDINESS

The initial impression of the village was a neat and tidy one on the day. However, closer inspection revealed a few problem areas. Weed control is an obvious issue. Some weeds were noted to the kerbside outside Lucy Nolan and Sons, to the front of Gerard Maher's shop and to the base of the old cracked plaster boundary wall to the graveyard. It was also very weedy at the tarmac area of the picnic space on the Carlow road, generally along Main Street, to the kerb in front of the school and to the base of the stone wall and forecourt area to the Credit Union. The telephone was missing from its box!

RESIDENTIAL AREAS

The standard in this category was good. Maple Lawn housing estate had the right level of detail in terms of its presentation. It struck the right balance between being neat, but not over-fussy. The new house will hopefully be finished to the same high standard. The open space to the housing estate on Ballon Hill was well maintained, although some gable and boundary walls needed freshening.

ROADS, STREETS AND BACK AREAS

The standard in this category was rather inconsistent. The Bunclody road was quite overgrown, as was the Tullow road. The new copper beech trees on the Carlow road were admired. The signage at the Feenagh junction was rather grubby. The planting, however, looked very well with the backdrop of trees to a permanent shrubbery with a stone surround. The road was also quite overgrown, and graffiti was noted to the junction sign. The road was also quite pot-holed, and some litter was apparent.

GENERAL IMPRESSION

Ballon is set against the marvellous backdrop of the hills . Care must be taken to ensure that the landscaping doesn't become too austere. Although litter control was very good, weed control was a problem on the day.