

"Caring for our environment"

Centre : **BALLACOLLA**
County : **LAOIS**
Category : **A**

Results

Date of Adjudication : 17-06-96

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded
Overall Developmental Approach	50	40
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	15
Landscaping	40	30
The Built Environment	40	30
Litter Control	40	34
Tidiness	20	16
Residential Areas	30	24
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	34
General Impression	10	8
TOTAL MARK	300	231

Adjudicator's Comments

OVERALL DEVELOPMENTAL APPROACH

The co-operative effort described in the questionnaire is quite remarkable - many other centres would be highly envious. Good and helpful relations with the official bodies is a matter for some celebration. The rate at which improvements have been made since this adjudicator was in Ballacolla is well ahead of the ordinary - it is only three years since this adjudicator was in Ballacolla, and yet the progress looks as if it should have taken much longer. Beware of an inclination to urbanise: the charm of the village derives from its rural situation, and the aim should be to blend the pastoral scene with development appropriate to village life. Thank you for the photographs of recent developments; they are impressive, but not as impressive as the developments themselves when seen at close hand.

WILDLIFE AND NATURAL AMENITIES

Perhaps the hawthorn hedge on the furthest side of the appropriately named Hawthorn Community Building should be allowed to grow and regain its natural stage? This is only an opinion, but this hedge is not a road frontage of a house, for instance, where neatness would be expected. In your future planning, consider if some of the headings under "wildlife" in the "Caring for our Environment" booklet issued to Tidy Towns committees might be extended to your community.

LANDSCAPING

The maintenance of older flowerbeds, trees planted in the past and roadside amenities like the excellent planting and picnic area on the Borris Road, has been continued to a very high standard indeed. The new landscaped area on the main road has been finished to an exceptionally high standard as well. Encourage plants to grow over the kerbstones to soften the rather harsh straight line. If a sculpture is to be included as in the architect's drawing, be sure it blends with the surroundings. The new planting at the Hawthorn Community Centre is delightful and a credit to those who devised it and worked on laying it and planting it. This landscaping was photographed and will be entered for the Landscape Award, as suggested.

THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

The Church and School are very well presented as usual and the Garda Station is further enhanced by the excellent stone wall. The business premises are also maintained to a high quality, but they are not remarkable enough to be entered for a national award, principally because standards have risen all over the country and there are several hundred excellent shopfronts now.

LITTER CONTROL

There was no discernible litter on adjudication day.

TIDINESS

Absence of litter, weedy areas and unsightly signage all contribute to a very tidy village. Some instances of brown patches of poisoned weeds, which can often look as bad as the weeds themselves - but this was very minor.

ROADS, STREETS AND BACK AREAS

Surfaces are good and paving at the newly developed area excellent. Traditional lamp-standard most effective. Wire fence near the Dangerous Junction sign on the Borris Road is not of the quality of other boundaries, but this too is minor. All approach roads, with their trim verges, very impressive.

RESIDENTIAL AREAS

Ballacolla is almost entirely residential. Private homes are well looked after. It is no wonder people are building new houses as the village has become a most desirable place to live, due to the efforts of this committee.

GENERAL IMPRESSION

A truly well-kept village. Just be careful of over-stepping the line between village and trendy suburb. Suburbs can be found everywhere, but Ballacolla is unique.

SECOND ADJUDICATION (14/08/96)

The stone walls are a most welcome feature. The GAA pitch requires attention - e.g. the thornquick hedge at chainlink fence (is the barbed wire on top of this fence necessary?); team washing was evident on adjudication day. The roads should be surfaced as funds become available. It is also recommended that the hawthorn hedge at the rear of the school is attended to. Excellent progress was noted - removal of overhead wires, litter free zones. It is evident that solid developments are taking place. It is recommended that the runnel feature be activated. It was dry on adjudication day. The overall impression given is one of a community dedicated to continuous environmental improvements.