

"Caring for our environment"

Centre : **BEAL ATHAN GHAORTHAIDH**
County : **CORK**
Category : **A**

Results

Date of Adjudication : 07-07-97

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 1997	Mark Awarded 1996
Overall Developmental Approach	50	30	26
The Built Environment	40	23	22
Landscaping	40	19	18
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	15	13
Litter Control	40	21	22
Tidiness	20	11	11
Residential Areas	30	17	16
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	22	21
General Impression	10	6	5
TOTAL MARK	300	164	154

Ballingeary, Co Cork

OVERALL DEVELOPMENTAL APPROACH

Thank you for the very impressive 1997-1999 Development Plan. The Introduction is unusually informative. This adjudicator has been through Ballingeary many times over 30 years and was always surprised that such an exceptionally interesting place, both culturally and historically, was not better cared for in the environmental sense; now it looks as if positive action is being taken in this regard. The committee is also to be congratulated on the candid way in which problems have been identified and exposed. The Plan could only be improved upon if you were to set annual targets as to which projects should be completed in which year, rather than attempting (as it appears) to deal with every thing simultaneously. Thank you for the very clear and instructive map, and the photographs which demonstrated progress under this heading.

THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Colaiste na Mumhan and An Ceard Scoil are nicely painted and looked well at the time of adjudication. The Church, with its splendid floral displays, was first class. (It is also unnecessary to encourage the committee about the need to preserve buildings such as this, but too many handsome village churches have been demolished and inappropriately replaced). When the Garda Station is painted, the roadside boundary walls should be painted to match. An unsightly premises opposite An t-sean Bothar needs attention. Shopfronts were photographed for entry in the competition.

LANDSCAPING

Delay in dealing with the problems of the half-moon park are understood, but it still might have been possible to trim the grass - it is the only natural area in Ballingeary which could effectively sustain an urbanised look, and benefit from it. It might also be possible to commission a memorial for the park, giving the names of the writers and other celebrated people who were born in the neighbourhood. Plenty of delightful window boxes and roadside planting was very favourably noted throughout the village.

WILDLIFE AND NATURAL AMENITIES

Your plans show that the river should be made more visible and improved by planting of wild flowers, and that An Cosan will also be developed: it is probably unnecessary to warn that when undertaking such valuable work you do not interfere overmuch with nature itself. An Cosan and the Clocha Cora are truly remarkable survivals - the connection with the past is tangible, and the peaceful feeling quite remarkable: every good wish for this marvellous project. (Incidentally, they would have a much better chance of an award if entry were delayed until completion of the work). A hedge in whatever grows well in the neighbourhood - hawthorn perhaps - might be planted to replace the fence along An Cosan, preferably complementing the meandering of the path rather than in a straight

line. The plans for an information point are also excellent - this might include a board illustrating local bird and animal life.

LITTER CONTROL

There was quite a sprinkling of litter at the east end of the village on adjudication day, and in the grounds of Colaiste na Mumhan. More bins may be needed, or more frequent emptying of bins, as the one in the village centre was overflowing.

TIDINESS

There was kerbside weed along the boundary walls of the park and in front of An Halla, and weed growth at the entrance to the tennis courts of An Colaiste. A commercial site opposite an Linn Snamha needs attention. A pity about the untidy open site opposite the 30 MPH sign coming from Baile Mhuirne. The useful bottle banks might be placed in a less prominent position, as suggested last year. None of these are major problems, but they combine to give a poor impression.

RESIDENTIAL AREAS

Older painted street houses looked extremely well; the creeper-covered house near the eastern bridge has probably been praised many times, as the stone house beside the western bridge will be. Newer housing, such as the terrace of four in the village centre, houses on the Baile Mhuirne road, at the park and on the Macroom road, are all well kept.

ROADS, STREETS AND BACK AREAS

New fencing on the main road looks very promising; the stone pillars already in place are excellent. The only place where road surfacing is poor is in front of An Halla. The two stone bridges are superb. The WC (gents) was not entirely hygienic on adjudication day. The car park at An Linn Snamha is well kept. As a general rule, post-and-wire fences should be gradually replaced by wooden fencing, hedges or stone walls, as their life-span is short and they are a magnet for weeds.

GENERAL IMPRESSION

A well tended village, where the next three years will undoubtedly show even more notable improvements.