

*"Caring for our environment"*

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

**Results**

Date of Adjudication : 20-06-98

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 1998	Mark Awarded 1997
Overall Developmental Approach	50	32	33
The Built Environment	40	29	28
Landscaping	40	26	25
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	19	20
Litter Control	40	28	27
Tidiness	20	12	12
Residential Areas	30	21	21
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	27	27
General Impression	10	7	7
<b>TOTAL MARK</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>201</b>	<b>200</b>

## **Ballon, County Carlow**

### **OVERALL DEVELOPMENTAL APPROACH**

Ballon is welcome to the 1998 Tidy Towns competition. Although it is clear that a lot of hard work has gone into the presentation of the village again this year, it is unfortunate that you have been unable to include a plan for the next three to five years for the village's development. This plan would be most helpful in setting out your objectives over the coming years and also as a way of reviewing your work and identifying weaknesses and strengths that there are for the village. Do try and prepare one before you enter the competition next year and it is advisable to liaise with some of the other bodies like the tourism board and the County Council and FAS before you prepare it. It is a necessary requirement in the competition these days, so do try to do it. You will find it will help you (and the adjudicators) in the presentation and assessment of the village.

### **THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT**

The standard and presentation of almost all of the public and commercial buildings in Ballon was very good again this year. The building beside the Community Center with its flower boxes and its stone facing looked extremely well and those responsible are to be commended for this work. The grotto looks well but next year it would benefit from a facelift. The handball alley is also extremely well presented and the flowers that are growing there are very appropriate for this location. As stated last year, the graveyard looks very well but the wall outside does need weed clearance. There is a site just opposite the graveyard which is a bit of an eyesore. Is there a possibility of even clearing the roadside outside this site? Well done on your good overall presentation again this year.

### **LANDSCAPING**

A lot of work has gone into the presentation of the village in terms of landscaping. There is a lot of planting along the roadside edges which is quite attractive. There are one or two places which would also benefit from planting, such as the traffic island just at the entrance to the small housing estate up the hill beyond the graveyard and the area where the crash barrier is located at the Bunclody end of the town. The problem of weeds from the farms appearing through the fences into the view of the street still persists this year. Hopefully in years to come, these areas will be totally screened by your planting. The picnic areas are useful resources for visitors passing through the village but it is important that they be completely finished off with resurfacing and the provision of litter bins as well.

### **WILDLIFE AND NATURAL AMENITIES**

It is not totally clear from your submission what your plans are as regards this new category in the competition. If you get a chance to prepare a plan for the coming years, do contact an expert in this regard in identifying the places where this work should be carried out. Involve the local school children who usually enjoy this work, it is a useful learning exercise for them and for the community of the village alike. You might like to start with developing a wildlife garden. Enfo publish a sheet on how to do this.

## **LITTER CONTROL**

The standard overall this year was good. There was a small scattering of litter along the main street on adjudication day and along approach roads. The presence of bins around the town is noted and this obviously contributes to the generally good standard as regards litter in Ballon. The perpetrators of this problem are quite possibly people who are not residents of the village but passing through. Continue the good work with awareness and cleaning up. Well done!

## **TIDINESS**

The standard of presentation in general is high this year but some of the problems mentioned in last year's report persist. The roadside edges were quite weedy in some spots and the area at the laybys and picnic areas do need to be fully surfaced and finished off. This will make a remarkable difference to the overall standard of presentation. Try to encourage businesses not to display goods on the roadside edges in front the premises. This is not a serious problem in Ballon but where it does exist it takes from the overall good impression of tidiness. Sand and blocks had been left on the roadside, these should be removed as it detracts from the overall tidy impression of the village.

## **RESIDENTIAL AREAS**

The small estate on the main street looks very well and the proposal to erect a low wall along this boundary is to be welcomed. It had not yet been constructed on adjudication day and we look forward to seeing it next year. The second estate at the top of the road past the graveyard and grotto also is quite tidily and well presented. The gardens of these houses are attractive. Some front boundaries needed freshening up. While the open space was fairly well maintained, it would look a lot better with additional planting. Perhaps some trees or maybe a rockery or shrubbery. As mentioned elsewhere, the traffic island at the entrance to this estate at least needs to be resoiled and seeded but would look more attractive as an entrance feature if it were planted. Many of the individual houses around the village and along the approach roads looked very well with only one to two minor exceptions. A good standard of presentation overall, well done!

## **ROADS, STREETS AND BACK AREAS**

The standard of presentation is a little bit mixed. It is unfortunate that the minor approach roads do not have name-signs on approach to the village. This would make a lot of difference. There are areas where the roadside edges have been neglected and it is unfortunate that the overall standard is not consistently high for all the approach roads. As stated elsewhere the laybys and picnic areas are very welcome but they do need to be finished off as regards surfacing etc. The pavement along the Bunclody road was somewhat neglected and needed to be cleaned. There is a small amount of litter along most of the roads but this problem is not serious. The problem of weeds showing through fencing persists this year as stated elsewhere in this report. Do attend to these details and the standard of presentation will progress even further next year.

### **GENERAL IMPRESSION**

Overall the impression of Ballon is good. It would be enhanced with the benefit of name-signs stating the entrance to the village on all approach roads. Do try and look into this matter for next year. It is also considered that if you can manage to put together a rolling plan for the next three to five years with the liaison of the agencies and individuals with which you work, that it would be easier to plan and evaluate and to monitor your work. Such a plan is an aid and is not as difficult as it sounds. Do also, if you have an opportunity next year, enclose a rough map of Ballon on which you can show the particular features that you want to draw the adjudicators attention to, be they additional works that you have undertaken since the previous year, or problem sites that you want to draw to the attention of the adjudicators. Overall the standard of presentation and the general impression is good. There is a lot of scope, however, for further improvement and a consistently higher standard of entry for Ballon. Good luck in future years.