

"Caring for our environment"

Centre : **BALLYBUNION**
County : **KERRY**
Category : **C**

Results

Date of Adjudication : 17-06-99

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 1999	Mark Awarded 1998
Overall Developmental Approach	50	39	39
The Built Environment	40	30	30
Landscaping	40	32	31
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	21	20
Litter Control	40	29	29
Tidiness	20	12	12
Residential Areas	30	22	21
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	27	28
General Impression	10	7	7
TOTAL MARK	300	219	217

Ballybunion, County Kerry

OVERALL DEVELOPMENTAL APPROACH

Thank you for all the additional information supplied with your entry form and excellent map setting out the areas where work had been undertaken during the year. The list of thirty nine projects is impressive and shows the great commitment of the people of Ballybunion to the town's enhancement and proper development. In last year's report mention was made of a plan drawn up by Ann O'Leary. Has this now come to the end of its term? If so, we would suggest that a further plan should be drawn up in order to take stock of what has been achieved, the problems still remaining and the action needed to rectify these. We would refer you to the excellent Tidy Towns Handbook brought out by the Department of the Environment and Local Government in which the Department advises that a survey be undertaken of an area before a plan is drawn up. In view of the many changes which have taken place in Ballybunion and which are still in progress, this would seem a logical step. The Committee have done tremendous work over the years, but some of the problems that remain such as a lack of adequate off street parking leading to traffic congestion, poor road surfaces and paths in a number of areas together with a plethora of poles and ESB cables are not in the control of the Committee to solve. There must be a partnership approach with the Local Authority and other Agencies on the future development of Ballybunion.

THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

At the entrance to the town from Listowel, the Garda Barracks is an excellent ambassador for the rest of the town. Here of course, there is the additional interest of the statue erected to commemorate President Clinton's historic golfing visit to Ballybunion in 1998. The main street is full of colour and 90% of the shopfronts are very well kept including Centra, the Post Office and the Railway Bar. However, there is one notable exception of a vacant premises opposite the Post Office, unfortunately spoiling the efforts of others on this street. Hopefully, by next year this will have been purchased and refurbished. On the Doon approach again we would mention the old creamery on the Beal road and Doon Church. In the case of the former we would suggest that you look at the Derelict Sites Act. In the case of the Church we note that to date you have not received funding for same and have put in one unsuccessful application. Perhaps one of the Award schemes as set out on page 21 of the Tidy Towns Handbook such as the AIB Better Ireland Awards would see this project as worthy of support. Most of the B & Bs including the "Links" are very well presented but more attention to the surrounds and areas outside boundary walls

would be required in a number of instances. The Foodstore on the left which is colourful and neat and the School on the right hand side on this road are well presented. The Cliff House Hotel with its colourful window boxes is also attractive. On the Tralee approach the new apartments near the Golf Links entrance look interesting and no doubt will be completed with a landscaping project. In this regard, all new buildings should be encouraged to complete their development with landscaping. The Library in the old Church is well maintained and all the Hotels, with their attractive conservatories, and also B&B's are contributing to the Tidy Towns efforts. The new canopy was noted at the Community Hall. However, the rear of this building and the car park are very stark and uninviting and could do with some attention. On the Listowel road the Ballyunion Holiday Cottages are extremely well kept and the GAA Hall with its nice planting is attractive. The new signage at the Golf Hotel, Post Office, Buckleys Garage, Geansai, the Ormond and new shopfront and signage at Bunyans was noted. As was also, Lartigue Railway information plaque. Your work in respect of certain derelict buildings was noted. In regard to access for wheelchairs we note your work on the paths - we also saw people in wheelchairs at the Lady's strand where they can obtain access very close to the beach. However, the toilets here also need to be accessible for wheelchairs.

LANDSCAPING

The many planted and grassed areas including their excellent ongoing maintenance are a credit to the Tidy Towns Committee. On the Doon road the planting at the housing estate is very attractive as indeed are all the flower beds and flower tubs distributed throughout the town. We noted that the Cashen River area has been further developed with the erection of two new stone plaques commemorating the kitchen middens and faction fighting. On this road also, we must mention the grassed area near the Golf Links which was immaculate on the day of adjudication. The grassed area and flower bed adjacent to the Community Hall was admired. The green near the Castle area is well landscaped and maintained. Nineteen of your action items refer to planting, mowing, refurbishing and maintaining all your landscaped sites around the town - this entails a lot of hard work and the Committee are to be commended for their ongoing commitment and management in this regard. Your Ballyunion in Bloom competition sounds like a very good way to motivate people.

WILDLIFE AND NATURAL AMENITIES

The management of grassed areas and the various plantings around the town all contribute to this category. We also note that you have erected an information plaque

re the Cliff Path Walk and this is to be welcomed. However, the Adjudicator entered the walk further up on the Doon road and work is still needed in this area as it is rather neglected looking with old signs and signposts in evidence and poor standard fencing in some places. This is such a wonderful resource it would be good to see it looking its best whilst, of course, leaving it as natural as possible.

LITTER CONTROL

On the day of the Adjudicators visit to Ballybunion it was a quiet weekday and no evidence of litter was visible. Litter bins were strategically placed around the town, at the beach and at the Cashen River development. However, we note from your application that litter is a problem in the summer months. Constant vigilance, regular emptying of bins and the involvement of all the traders in the town in your efforts is essential. Involvement of young people in this regard is also recommended, not just to assist you in your efforts, but to give a sense of civic spirit for the future.

TIDINESS

The town was mostly tidy and kerb side weeds were not a problem. However, a few areas did need attention such as the very visible rear grounds of the Atlantic Hotel which needed tidying and would also benefit from some planting for screenage. Also, the scrapped cars should be removed from the rear of the GAA Hall on the Listowel approach. The Link Road at present, with a considerable amount of building going on, has an untidy appearance, especially as travellers have taken up residence here. The two car parks which are closed down, and will be mentioned later, also have an untidy appearance.

RESIDENTIAL AREAS

Private houses throughout the town and on approach roads are very well kept in the main and contribute fully to the Tidy Towns effort. The estate on the Doon road with its planted area and very good use of colour on the houses and surrounding walls is to be commended. It is hoped that all new buildings and their surrounds, as mentioned, will be landscaped at their completion.

ROADS, STREETS AND BACK AREAS

The side streets and back areas of Ballybunion are now becoming more important as the town develops further. In a number of instances throughout the town and surrounds the road surfaces are poor and need attention. Off street car parking is a major issue. At present one of the existing car parks is for sale and the other one is closed. In view of the traffic congestion already in existence in Ballybunion on a fine day this is a major problem for the town and must be

addressed. On the two road which lead down to the beaches there is a difficulty in turning at the end of these roads. Signage is well maintained throughout the town and your "Welcome to Ballybunion" signs are to be commended. Of the approach roads, the Listowel approach was the best on the day of adjudication.

GENERAL IMPRESSION

A town still in a transitional phase which needs to retain its tradition and character but must also be willing to face the challenges created by a changing world. However, in view of the commitment and dedication of the Committee to-date we would feel that this challenge will be met and look forward to further achievements in the years ahead.

SECOND ADJUDICATION (14/09/99)

Congratulations on reaching the high point in the competition where a second adjudication is arranged. The relatively small increase in marks is very significant at this critical level. The comments of the first adjudicator should be carefully considered if there is to be a further important advance. In general, business premises and private houses are exceptionally well presented, especially in regard to painting. Some areas did not seem to be well cared for at the time of second adjudication, especially the environs of the Atlantic Hotel, the Community Hall, the Play Park and the Link Road - these let the town down, but it would not need an enormous effort to improve them. More off-street parking spaces are needed if the main streets are to be fully enjoyed by visitors and residents. Congratulations to those who produced the publications Rambles Around Ballybunion, Close To Heaven, and the Memories of Ballybunion calendar.