

"Caring for our environment"

Centre : **BALLA**
County : **MAYO**
Category : **B**

Results

Date of Adjudication : 23-06-1999

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 1999	Mark Awarded 1998
Overall Developmental Approach	50	30	28
The Built Environment	40	26	24
Landscaping	40	26	24
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	16	16
Litter Control	40	23	33
Tidiness	20	14	14
Residential Areas	30	16	15
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	25	24
General Impression	10	7	7
TOTAL MARK	300	183	185

Balla, County Mayo

OVERALL DEVELOPMENTAL APPROACH

Balla is welcome to the 1999 Tidy Towns Competition. Thank you for your completed application and other information. It is good to note the level of co-operation the committee enjoy with the local community and statutory bodies.

Are there plans to incorporate the old railway station into the amenity of the town.

THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

The spacious town square and wide streets of Balla present a wonderful opportunity for urban design in the town centre. A design study should be undertaken to avail of this opportunity. The existing features in the town square are too small and the small flower displays are almost lost. Both the church and school look quite splendid. Buildings along the main street are nicely painted. A number of outbuildings near the cul-de-sac on the Kiltimach entrance could be either cleaned, painted or planted with a climbing plant. The wirescape free main street looks well and street lighting is attractive.

LANDSCAPING

The green area on which the Balla nameplate is displayed is underdeveloped. It could feature shrubs, seating, sculpture and other visual amenity artifacts. The view of the church and other parts of the town from this site on the Claremorris road is most pleasant, so it is important to capitalize on this asset. The flower tubs on the traffic island at the junction with the Fair Green are too small for their location. This site deserves some sculpture and some seating. The derelict building behind a newly constructed residential property at the junction with the Fair Green should either be removed or planted with climbing plants to soften its appearance. Green areas marking the entrance to the town from the Castlebar road are being nicely maintained and have been well landscaped. The railings to the roadside of the Balla Oil Company could be planted with a climbing plant. Your millennium project is ambitious and very worthwhile.

WILDLIFE AND NATURAL AMENITIES

Perhaps a wildlife project based on the woodland trail might be considered for presentation in the competition. Your plan to link with the Tóchar Phadraig walk is appropriate and will enhance the amenity value of the town significantly. Good luck in your endeavours here. Do refer to the Tidy Towns Handbook for ideas and advice under this heading.

TIDINESS

The curtilage area to the old building on the Claremorris road is untidy as is the appearance of the old building itself. Are there plans for its redevelopment? Sprayed weeds which have become discoloured undo the good work which has been done at the tennis courts in terms of seeding and flower displays. Other green areas featured discoloured grass cuttings also, for example the area across from the Fair Green. These should be removed immediately after cutting. Well done on your programme of 'Awareness' for schools and households.

LITTER CONTROL

Litter control is quite weak along the kerb up near the Catholic church and tennis courts. There is a fair amount of litter along the main street. Your litter management strategy will have to be reviewed for next year. Hopefully marks lost under this heading will be regained by next year.

RESIDENTIAL AREAS

A number of boundary walls inside the speed limit signs on the Mayo Abbey entrance to the town need to be cleaned and / or painted. A build-up of old discoloured green cuttings along the kerbs of the large green area with the mature trees in the residential development at the Kiltimach end of the town looks unsightly. Town houses look well. The talk by a colour consultant given to the womens group is a good idea.

ROADS, STREETS AND BACK AREAS

The entrance to the town from the Mayo Abbey road looks quite poor with the poor and rusted railway bridge and rails and overgrown stone walls. The church car park looks well. New stretches of footpath are welcome and integrate the various sections of the town. The old water pumps around the town should be refurbished and featured and the picnic table in the middle of the square removed altogether as, in its present state, it is next to useless. The entrance from the Kiltimach road is overgrown to the extent that the 'Fáilte' nameplate here is almost hidden. It is good to note plans to provide place names 'as gaelige'.

GENERAL IMPRESSION

The overall impression of Balla is favourable. The town is pleasant and has some very nice features, however there is plenty of scope to do more with the main street and the square and this should be incorporated into your five year plan. There has been a gain in marks under some headings and a loss for litter control. It is hoped that marks lost will be regained next year.