

*"Caring for our environment"*

Centre : **BALTINGLASS**  
County : **WICKLOW**  
Category : **C**

**Results**

Date of Adjudication : 11-07-1999

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 1999	Mark Awarded 1998
Overall Developmental Approach	50	28	26
The Built Environment	40	26	23
Landscaping	40	24	22
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	16	16
Litter Control	40	20	20
Tidiness	20	11	10
Residential Areas	30	18	18
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	27	23
General Impression	10	6	4
<b>TOTAL MARK</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>176</b>	<b>162</b>

## **Baltinglass, County Wicklow**

### **OVERALL DEVELOPMENTAL APPROACH**

Thank you for your very neat, completed questionnaire and map which is very helpful during the course of adjudication. Thank you also for the outline 3 year work plan that you submitted for 1999 - 2001 which appears to incorporate a large number of objectives and priorities. The adjudicator was very impressed with the significant improvements that have taken place in Baltinglass. Over the last number of years, you are to be congratulated for the tremendous obstacles you have overcome. The improvements, for example, the approach roads, were noted. Within the Market Square, the main centre of the town, you are to be commended for considerable large scale improvements. You have unique town with many excellent features. There is no reason why Baltinglass cannot win the National Tidy Towns Competition with efforts like these over the last twelve to twenty four months. The number of unique features you have including Baltinglass Abbey, the River Slaney, the unique layout of the town and the lovely vistas on the approach roads provides you with an opportunity to create something very special in years to come. These features are ones which other towns would be envious of.

### **THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT**

The adjudicator was extremely impressed with the work that is taking place in the development of the new Heritage Centre and Library Building and the cobble locking that is taking place both to the side and front of this building. The many other fine examples of attractive buildings which are as always well maintained, including the Church, the Lawlor Centre, the Schools. The Credit Union was also noted as a modern building. The butchers near Quinns is a nice attractive building. Kinsella Estates is also well presented as was the Garda Station and the Resource Centre. Try to continue your efforts to improve and encourage improvements of shop fronts and use the resources of the Local authority, in terms of shop front design. Also seek help from perhaps professionals. The Tidy Towns Handbook provides practical guidelines which potential developers and owners of premises should also be made aware of. Encourage further improvements such as painting of the Dutch Mans Pub and removal of the plastic canopies. McDonaghs, would benefit from a wash because dust is evident on the building. The Bean Café would benefit from painting. One area that deserves particularly to be singled out, unfortunately is Quinns shop on the corner which was particularly bad. It should be the main priority if nothing else is done for next year because of the importance this building has in terms of its position. While there were other negative points, there are also additional

positive ones in terms of the presentation of Baltinglass Abbey, the Church of Ireland and school nearby. Other additional cobble locking was noted outside SuperValu. Finally there is room for other premises to improve for example, Germaines, which had dead flowers in the flower boxes while Innisfall B&B could also be improved. Try to encourage owners to approach improving their premises, which will bring benefits long term to the town of Baltinglass through an improved appearance and will encourage visitors to stop.

## **LANDSCAPING**

The adjudicator was particularly impressed with the approach to Baltinglass from the South which was a major improvement on previous years, where grassed areas had been neatly maintained. The park by the river was a joy to see with families enjoying the sun and lazing by the river. However, the bins were overflowing. More regular maintenance is needed. There is probably scope to introduce flora into the main town area around the Market Square because it is such a wide open space. Consultation with landscape experts might result in selected tree planting to break the vista of buildings and considerable cobble locking which has taken place. There is perhaps additional scope for premises to play their part in the use of flower boxes etc., to enhance buildings. Good luck in the development to the proposed town park.

## **WILDLIFE AND NATURAL AMENITIES**

There is great scope to develop the wildlife natural/amenities in Baltinglass, in light of the fact that the town is blessed with a number of unique features including the River Slaney running through the town. The town is also blessed with mountain features in the background and mature trees for example, the area out near the entrance to Baltinglass Golf Course. Try to get the schools involved in your efforts to develop your natural amenities and also the proposed wildlife sanctuary.

## **LITTER CONTROL**

Generally litter control was quite good throughout Baltinglass this year. The one area that continues to be bad and was quite bad on the day of adjudication is the road leading out to Kiltegan. Try to look for appropriate siting of litter bins in this area as well as a litter education programme aimed at both residents and school children. Also try to replace the litter bin outside Fatima Hall. Otherwise around the main Market Square area and other approach roads were quite good.

## **TIDINESS**

Weeds were particularly bad by kerbs on the Kiltegan road. This really did take from the appearance here. Another area in terms of key long term objectives is the reduction of the wire scape from the south where there is a lot of overhead wiring. Try to work on this. Otherwise there is a good tidy appearance helped by improved approach roads and cobble locking throughout the main town.

## **RESIDENTIAL AREAS**

Parkmore had been resurfaced which had improved its appearance and good individual efforts were noted. At the park with the yield sign (no name plate), sprinklings of litter were noted and several parts of this area would also benefit from the introduction of nameplates. At the estate on the Kiltegan road out towards the industrial area, weeds were evident along kerbs at the back. Try to replace the broken seat. Closer in, good individual efforts were noted.

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

On the approach road from Kiltegan, partial cutting had taken place which is a good step in that it creates a tidy appearance while at the same time allowing for wider stretches to develop wild flowers etc. The approach road from the south was excellent, with major improvement. Congratulations and well done to all those involved in bringing this about. The road being resurfaced was neat and had a tidy appearance. New signs were noted on new footpath and the vista of the mountains to the right created a nice impression. Mature trees were noted also. Traffic calming measures also helped to slow down traffic. Try to replace the wire fencing on the right hand side, but maintain the vista. Cobble locking was noted further in which helped to create, a good impression. The approach road from Blessington, was excellent with the same things noted, i.e., well maintained grassed areas suggesting local efforts, cobble locking, proper car parking spaces and again good vista to the left with the river park area and the Baltinglass Abbey. The area to the right continues to be a problem, i.e., the Mart, and perhaps will take a considerable number of years to overcome. Try to ensure that this is part of your long term plans for improvements. Overall an excellent effort here.

## **GENERAL IMPRESSION**

The adjudicator was impressed with the large infrastructural improvements that have taken place in Baltinglass over the last year or two, including roads, Heritage Centre Development, and village improvement scheme. There is an opportunity now for the residents and businesses of Baltinglass to build on these improvements and to make further improvements in their own way which collectively could have a huge impact. The adjudicator looks forward to

the visit next year to see continued improvements. Good luck with the development of your Heritage Centre and try to encourage businesses to upgrade their premises to ensure that visitors to the Heritage Centre will spend greater time in the village. Good luck for next year.