

"Caring for our environment"

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

Results

Date of Adjudication : 23-06-2000

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2000	Mark Awarded 1999
Overall Developmental Approach	50	32	32
The Built Environment	40	28	28
Landscaping	40	28	27
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	19	19
Litter Control	40	28	28
Tidiness	20	12	12
Residential Areas	30	23	22
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	28	27
General Impression	10	7	7
TOTAL MARK	300	205	202

Ballon, County Carlow

OVERALL DEVELOPMENTAL APPROACH

Thank you for your map attached to the Tidy Towns 2000 entry form. You advised on your application form that the Three to Five Year Plan would be sent under separate cover, but it had not been received by the adjudicator to date. This plan will help you enormously in setting out your goals for achievement in the next three to five years. A simple plan is required and one that will clearly set out your objectives and progress for each year. As indicated in last year's report, the heavy traffic going through Ballon presents its own problems. You state in your form that the entrance from the Bunclody Road is a particular difficulty for you. However, you should liaise with the County Council who will be able to give you some direction in tackling this problem. I note that you already co-operate with FÁS and the County Council. Perhaps you might also seek the assistance of your local tourism officer, the ESB and Eircom who all have valuable information and advice to give you.

THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

The built environment is well presented throughout and that includes the old school, the Credit Union, the school and church. The building which houses the playgroup at the rear of the old school and community hall is again, well presented and when the car park is completed it should enhance it further. The graveyard was very well presented. It was tidy and the grass was cut. The area of the grotto, which is a simple structure, was well presented. The commercial buildings, for the most part, are presented well but attention needs to be paid to the removal of whatever plastic canopies and signage there is over shopfronts. Providing some bi-lingual signage is another aspect that the committee might encourage. You have provided access to the church for persons with disabilities and this is most welcome.

LANDSCAPING

The landscaping in many areas is very good, in particular, the bed at the Bunclody/Fenagh Road junctions where the shrub bed was weed free. The landscaping at the Community Hall-Old School is very good and well presented with some lovely displays of flowers and plants. The bank of plants in front on the Carlow Road is maturing very nicely and again, was well maintained. The little island up near the church contained a lovely selection of plants which were well cared for. There is scope for improvement in regard maintenance of the open green spaces on the Carlow Road and the Bunclody Road where, perhaps, the planting of more trees might be considered.

WILDLIFE AND NATURAL AMENITIES

No doubt you have included this in your plan. There are suitable areas in your village which should be developed. The stream on the Carlow Road is a possibility to be investigated for the wetland habitat. Other areas are the open spaces and the graveyard which, more than likely, provide a home to a host of plants, birds and wildlife. Talk to somebody in the community who has expertise in this area. They will be glad to give whatever advice and assistance they can. The Conservation Volunteers of Ireland have a leaflet which contains a lot of useful information which should be of great assistance to you.

LITTER CONTROL

The control of litter in the village is reasonably good. There are some small amounts to be seen at the Bunclody-Fenagh junction and also on the Carlow Road. Liaise with the local authority which will help you to put a litter management plan in place. As indicated in last year's report, constant vigilance is needed and it is most desirable that the school be involved. Litter control is a very important aspect of the competition and it will, no doubt, receive serious consideration in your plan.

TIDINESS

Great efforts are made by the committee and community to present Ballon in the tidiest manner possible. However, the fencing on both sides of the Bunclody Road needs attention. Perhaps some suitable screen planting could be done if no other solution can be found. The verges and green spaces on the approach road need maintenance on a more regular basis. The control of weeds on the kerbs throughout needs work. Individual property owners should be encouraged to control weeds at kerbs and the base of buildings, on a co-ordinated basis. The large green bin in the Community Centre area should be relocated. When the surfacing of the car park has been completed and the surface material removed from the clothing bin, it will help matters here. A suitable location for recycling bins is essential and consideration should also be given to suitable screening of same.

RESIDENTIAL AREAS

The householders in the housing estate present their properties very well and the open green spaces are neat with the grass cut. Most properties in the village area have a cared for appearance but some need more attention than others. In the housing estate up from the church, most are presented very well and the open space had the grass cut and presented in a tidy appearance.

ROADS, STREETS AND BACK AREAS

The new pathway linking the church and community centre area looks very well. Well done to all those who put time and effort into this. The stones with the Ballon name on it continue to be maintained in good condition and other signs are also good. However, the 30mph signs need cleaning and painting. The Carlow and Bunclody approach roads, as already mentioned, need attention.

GENERAL IMPRESSION

The committee and its community endeavour to keep the village as tidy as possible. You have difficulties and, no doubt, these will be addressed in your plan. A very good effort has been made with the Community Centre area and also the pathway to the church. As already indicated there is room for improvement in the presentation of business properties and the verges of green spaces on the Bunclody and Carlow Road. Keep up the good work. Well done to the committee for its commitment and hard work.