

"Caring for our environment"

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

Results

Date of Adjudication : 16-06-2000

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2000	Mark Awarded 1999
Overall Developmental Approach	50	30	30
The Built Environment	40	26	26
Landscaping	40	27	26
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	16	16
Litter Control	40	24	23
Tidiness	20	14	14
Residential Areas	30	17	16
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	23	25
General Impression	10	7	7
TOTAL MARK	300	184	183

Balla, County Mayo

OVERALL DEVELOPMENTAL APPROACH

Many thanks for your completed application form and five year plan. Perhaps next year you could consider putting a timeframe against your proposals in relation to the latter. For next years submission perhaps you would also consider drawing a more up-to-date map of the village rather than using an ordnance survey map. Your plans in relation to a town study for the square and village centre is eagerly awaited. Proposals to integrate new housing are commendable ones. The midnight tree planting on Millennium Eve must have been a most exciting and significant one. Your plans for the further development of Tochar Phadraig, in order to entice visitors is indeed a commendable one.

THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

The standard in this category of the competition was quite inconsistent. The Bridge Inn looked attractive in orange with green trims and its hanging basket. Centra was very fresh as was the Rendezvous in pink, the Post Office and IFAC Accountants. John McEllin is an attractive traditional front with unusual plasterwork but the castellated building adjacent is in bad condition and should be painted up as it is quite unusual. O McNiocláis is another fine traditional front. The Bank of Ireland is a fine imposing building. The church in stone with its stone boundary wall and fence was well maintained. The school was quite fresh with its attractive landscaping and rose bushes – however, the boundary wall could be freshened up before next years competition. The Credit Union and Durkins on the square were fine. However, the predominance of dereliction in this location and indeed throughout Main Street could be improved upon even by painting up these buildings.

LANDSCAPING

There is scope for further development in this aspect of the competition. As mentioned by last years adjudicator the sheer scale of the town overshadows the landscaping within it. Perhaps more direct interventions in the streetscape are in order. The corner at Na Coillte with its pansies and roses was admired as indeed was the attractive stone walling throughout the town-in particular that at the Fair Green with its planted areas. The attractive bed to the side of the car park opposite the church was admired and the round tower and graveyard were well maintained. Attractive planting incorporating seating behind the Resource Centre on the square looked most attractive. There were colourful displays of bright red geraniums at the Post Office and to O McNiocláis adjacent.

WILDLIFE AND NATURAL AMENITIES

Your plans in relation to Tochar Phadraig are commendable. Perhaps you could get the local school children involved in putting together a map of areas of wildlife interest in and around the town.

LITTER CONTROL

The standard in this aspect of the competition appears to have been better than last year. First impressions of the town were of a virtually litter-free zone. However, closer inspection revealed quite a number of small scale outbreaks. These were on the Mayo Abbey Road, the road to the golf course, scattered along Main Street, on the road leading to the round tower and graveyard and a litter bin was overflowing at Market Square. The standard of maintenance of litter bins could be improved upon as, although in reasonably good condition, many were scratched with graffiti.

TIDINESS

Dereliction is a distinct problem, throughout the town, along Main Street and in particular on the square. An old derelict abandoned building would benefit even from a fresh coat of paint on the Claremorris Road. Grubby outbuildings on the road to the golf course created a bad impression. Do discourage advertising hoardings as they give approach roads a rather cluttered appearance. In relation to weed control the Claremorris Road had been sprayed but the dead weeds had yet to be removed. Weeds were also apparent to the gravelled area between the fence and the stone wall to the tennis courts.

RESIDENTIAL AREAS

The standard in this aspect of the competition was quite good. A house with an attractive rose garden on the Kiltimagh approach was greatly admired. Attractive planting extending to the roadside in front of a boundary wall created a good impression. Along the road to the round tower an attractive garden with snap dragons to the roads edge was greatly admired – it sported some attractive jaunty lupins visible in the garden beyond. One or two boundary walls were in need of attention.

ROADS, STREETS AND BACK AREAS

The standard in this category of the competition could have been improved upon. On the Kiltimagh Road the welcome sign was virtually obscured by overgrowth. Perhaps as mentioned by last years adjudicator a creeper could be grown up the fence to Balla Oil or indeed an indigenous hawthorn or beech hedge grown behind. This road was quite overgrown

with cow-parsley and nettles. On the Claremorris Road dead weeds were evident to the road side and the welcome sign here again was virtually obscured, although the wild daisies were admired. The Y- junction sign on this road was quite grubby. This approach affords the visitor a fine view to the church and graveyard across a wide green field. On the Mayo Abbey Road the Children Crossing sign was quite grubby – signage generally could have been improved upon. The Sharp Bends Ahead sign should be repainted before next years competition, this road was also quite overgrown with nettles etc. and the nameplate sign was virtually obscured. However, the new stone walling to the bridge was admired. In terms of street furniture the village pumps could be restored. Do try to strike a balance between achieving a natural appearance and the approach roads looking rather neglected.

GENERAL IMPRESSION

The fine wide Main Street of Balla is a fine example of a traditional Irish country market town. Do remember to paint gable walls when considering overall presentation as they are particularly prominent as one travels along Main Street.