

*"Caring for our environment"*

Centre : **BELCARRA**  
County : **MAYO**  
Category : **A**

**Results**

Date of Adjudication : 18-06-2000

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2000	Mark Awarded 1999
Overall Developmental Approach	50	40	40
The Built Environment	40	31	32
Landscaping	40	33	32
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	19	19
Litter Control	40	34	34
Tidiness	20	15	16
Residential Areas	30	26	25
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	33	32
General Impression	10	7	8
<b>TOTAL MARK</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>238</b>	<b>238</b>

## **Belcarra, County Mayo**

### **OVERALL DEVELOPMENTAL APPROACH**

The restoration of the heritage/eviction cottage is certainly a fascinating idea and your photographs of the works in progress – before and after shots are a wonderful record to have. It was good to note its final completion and good luck with the official opening. Perhaps for next year you should consider a review section to your development plan in order to more clearly chart your progress on each topic over the past years. The distinct and comprehensive history of the village, available on the website, is a marvellous idea. The old ruined castle and interesting series of walks certainly make for many areas of interest for the visitor.

### **THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT**

The standard in this category of the competition could have been better on the day. The dance hall on the Castlebar Road was fine as was the National School. However, the gable wall to the latter needed painting. Its stone wall boundary was greatly admired. Buildings generally on the long Main Street looked quite neglected and not as bright as this adjudicator would usually expect from a visit to the village. Your plans for the future development of Hennigans are indeed commendable as they maintain its existing features and restore it to its former glory. Flukie's Bar and Lounge was fine as was Cunningham's. The community centre looked very well as did the church and car park with its most effective landscaping. The Post Office was fine but perhaps the shed in which it fits could be painted in a traditional red or green colour. There is a commendable use of stone walling throughout the village. The unoccupied buildings are detracting from your overall success in this category of the competition.

### **LANDSCAPING**

Landscaped areas throughout the village, as ever, looked extremely well. The planting at the crossroads / junctions was well maintained. The village park or common looked fine but the stone painted up at the cottage will need freshening before next year's competition. The recessed flower beds commemorating 1916 were well maintained as was An Grinán Walkway – however, some weeding was necessary here. These, butterflies and bird song were most evident on the day. The wall surrounding the village pump should be painted up before next year as it appears quite grubby. The tyres forming flower pots leading down to An Grinán have been cleverly constructed. And the daisies and snap dragons to the butterfly garden were greatly admired.

## **WILDLIFE AND NATURAL AMENITIES**

Your ongoing maintenance of Bat Roosts and the Butterfly Farm are to be highly commended. Your series of walks throughout the village are most interesting ones; perhaps they could be put together in booklet form for the benefit of non-residents.

## **LITTER CONTROL**

Generally, litter control in the village was very good on the day. Your daily litter pick is obviously paying off! One or two papers were evident in the following areas: on the Ballyglas Road; a single paper on the common and a couple of papers outside the church.

## **TIDINESS**

The standard in this category of the competition could have been better on the day. Weed control was a problem at the curb sides on the Castlebar Road and on the walkway down to An Grinán. The abandoned building opposite Hennigan's looked unfortunate. The rear and side of the building beside the community hall look rather stained. A number of outbuildings should be painted up, in particular their tin roofs. Those at the junction of Main Street and the road to the common were badly in need of new whitewashing. This was also a problem at the long length of road at the crossroads at Hennigan's which is suffering from severe green algae growth, as indeed is the adjacent yield sign due to the overhanging trees. This was a problem last year both at first and second adjudication stages.

## **RESIDENTIAL AREAS**

Houses in the village centre and along approach roads were well maintained. An attractive garden sloping up to a house on the Castlebar Road was admired and the new square house with its pyramid shaped roof and deep veranda on the far side of the village looked quite charming. Your work in regard to the restoration of the derelict house is to be commended. An attractive garden adjacent to a bungalow filled as it was with lupins and peony roses was greatly admired. A cottage on the road to the ruined castle sported some very cheerful and colourful hanging baskets and flower pots. A stone wall was in progress to a building site along this road on the day.

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

Along the Castlebar Road some weeding was necessary to curb sides. However, the new stone walling was admired and the new trees were coming along nicely. This forms a long entry into the village. The Ballyglas Road is an attractive entry

into the village with its mature trees overhanging the stone wall. One minor point would be to sharpen the edge of the verges on this approach. A stone wall was under construction along this road on the day and the wild daisies in the hedgerow were admired. Along the Balla Road the relatively new trees were coming along nicely and the grass verges were well cut back. Road surfaces throughout the village were in quite bad condition and potholed. The yellow and black warning colours to the curbs should be repainted. In terms of signage the children crossing sign on the Castlebar Road was facing the wrong way and should be put back in its rightful direction. The phone box was quite fresh.

## **GENERAL IMPRESSION**

The adjudicator felt that Belcarra was quite disappointing on this visit. Although improvements seemed to have been made in some areas this was balanced by dis-improvement in others. Hopefully a certain level of complacency isn't setting in as certainly to judge from your very full and comprehensive submission there is much civic pride in the village. Hopefully standards will improve in next year's competition.

## **SECOND ADJUDICATION (06/08/00)**

Huge Ash, Sycamore and Chestnut trees form an integral part of Belcarra village – including the very large tree by the community centre. It is great to have such trees within the village. These were planted by previous generations that could never have hoped to see them to maturity. It is important now to plant trees of a similar kind for the next few generations. There are many opportunities for planting – notably on the inside of walls at the periphery of fields along the roadside. The ornamental “garden” trees will not have the same effect as the “real” trees. The golden yew trees in the church grounds are wonderful. There is a great amount of wall building in and around the village, which is very commendable. Care needs to be taken that the roadsides do not become too clinical with vegetation free walls and very rigidly curtailed roadside verges. Uneven road surfaces especially at the village junction need priority treatment, as does the white wall as mentioned above. The circular walk idea is a wonderful project to approach and hopefully it will get under way soon. The shoemaker's shop is a gem. The state of Heneghans premises is of concern. The Eviction Cottage is a very good project. It would be nice to have some vegetation growing nearby adding to the authenticity. Some litter was noted at the Leisure Park behind the grotto.