

*"Caring for our environment"*

Centre : **BALLYCUMBER**  
County : **OFFALY**  
Category : **B**

**Results**

Date of Adjudication : 05-07-2000

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2000	Mark Awarded 1999
Overall Developmental Approach	50	27	26
The Built Environment	40	22	22
Landscaping	40	28	23
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	18	18
Litter Control	40	25	30
Tidiness	20	10	8
Residential Areas	30	18	18
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	30	30
General Impression	10	6	6
<b>TOTAL MARK</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>184</b>	<b>181</b>

## **Ballycumber, County Offaly**

### **OVERALL DEVELOPMENTAL APPROACH**

Thank you for your completed application. You make no reference to having a development plan or work programme covering the next few years. It is important that you send a copy or a summary of this in each year. The village enjoys a scenic setting on the banks of the River Brosna in beautiful countryside. Its layout is interesting and the gentle curves of the main street and entrances to the village add interest. It is unfortunate, of course, that you have to put up with the ugly open storage of old tyres and other materials just before your nameplate on the Clara road. No doubt you have made efforts in the past to resolve this problem and hopefully something will happen in this respect soon. Congratulations on the commitment from two housing estates to landscaping their green areas.

### **THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT**

Gavins could do with a facelift and the old petrol pumps here should be refurbished, its dated plastic neon sign should, of course, be removed. The old free standing sign at the corner house (Gavin's) could be refurbished and feature an attractive sign or removed altogether. The carpark to Heaneys could be made a lot more attractive with landscaping and with cleaning or painting the perimeter walls. The building itself could be improved if shutters and their boxes were inside rather than outside of the window and the canopy replaced by the more traditional type of canopies. The plastic neon box sign (Huzzar Vodka) should be removed altogether to highlight the quoins which feature on the corners of the building. This is an important building as it marks the entrance to the village centre.

### **LANDSCAPING**

Landscaping at the Athlone entrance to the village is most impressive and overrides the poor Clara entrance caused by the untidy storage yards. The 'thatched well' on the picnic site is appealing. The expanse of green areas here at this entrance is elegant in their simplicity, well done! Well done also on the Offaly Heritage sign. It is not always a good idea to put litter bins beside public seating as, on warm days, this can be quite unpleasant with bees, flies, wasps, etc. attacking the bins and the occupants of the seat. The incidental kerbed space at the roadside boundary to the entrance to the river walk should be planted. Well done on the development and maintenance of the river walk.

## **WILDLIFE AND NATURAL AMENITIES**

A first step in this part of the competition would be to identify habitats and species present. Later threats and protection measure can be identified and planned followed by promotion of awareness. Refer to your Tidy Towns Handbook for ideas.

## **LITTER CONTROL**

Litter control was not good, there were pieces of litter near the 'Takeaway' van and also some outside of Egan's and the Tavern. Litter was also trapped in the newly planted hedgerow behind the wooden fencing leading up to Sycamore Place residential estate. Well done on the 'Stop It, Don't Drop It' litter signs. A serious litter outbreak was noted on the green verge on the housing estate on the Moate road.

## **TIDINESS**

The kerb of the footpath on the Athlone entrance to the village looked very bad with sprayed weeds. The wire and post fencing to a drain here was also in a very bad state of repair. The old wall / outbuilding in the carpark area adjacent to Egan's could be planted with a climbing plant to 'soften' its appearance. The back lane and rear wall and entrances of houses in the estate on the Moate road which can be seen from the public road (located behind the seat and the litter bin) could be upgraded by appropriate plastering and painting or planting walls with climbing plants. The road itself, of course, will need to be resurfaced and building materials removed. The kerb along the green area must be kept free of weed growth.

## **RESIDENTIAL AREAS**

The shrubbery to the private dwelling at the amenity area on the Athlone road junction is most colourful and pleasing to the eye and complements the expanse of green areas at this road junction. Some residential properties have yet to develop their gardens and others roadside areas to their boundary walls in the side road off the Athlone road. Residential properties along the Athlone entrance for the most part are well presented. Sycamore Drive looked well and trees are maturing nicely on its green verge marking the entrance. The hawthorn trees were particularly admired. No doubt the new infill development here will be finished to a high standard. Do encourage people here to keep their roadside boundary walls cleaned or well painted. Seating in this development needs to be re-varnished.

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

Verges had been recently trimmed for adjudication and all looked well. Some of the points made in last year's report are applicable again this year.

## **GENERAL IMPRESSION**

The overall impression of Ballycumber is one of a pleasant village with some fine natural features, i.e. river, street layout, stone work bridge, etc. There is obvious commitment to the environment as is evidenced by the river development and the picnic site on the Athlone road but one in which there is a lack of involvement by some members of the community. Good luck for the future.