

"Caring for our environment"

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

Results

Date of Adjudication : 14-06-2001

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2001	Mark Awarded 2000
Overall Developmental Approach	50	32	32
The Built Environment	40	28	28
Landscaping	40	28	28
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	19	19
Litter Control	40	29	28
Tidiness	20	12	12
Residential Areas	30	23	23
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	28	28
General Impression	10	7	7
TOTAL MARK	300	206	205

Ballon, County Carlow

OVERALL DEVELOPMENTAL APPROACH

Thank you for your map included with your Tidy Towns 2001 entry form. It was most useful on the day of adjudication. Perhaps this year you will draw up a three to five year plan which would help enormously in guiding your activities. Your plan should be a simple one clearly setting out your objectives for each year. It would be advisable to adopt a limited number of yearly achievable tasks. It can also be built on over the coming years. You already work in co-operation with the Local Authority, FAS and the Enterprise Board. They no doubt have been able to give you very useful help and assistance. Ballon is located on a very busy main route, which is used by commercial and visitor traffic. It has great potential to do better in the Competition and also to have a pleasant place for its people. You have a big Committee and with the involvement of all the community throughout the village it will make the workload easier and achieve results.

THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

The commercial buildings throughout are reasonably good but attention is needed to signage and maintenance. Perhaps a colour scheme could be devised for the village which would give it a clean and co-ordinated look. Advice is available from paint manufacturers and they would be pleased to give any assistance they can. The School and Church are well maintained as in previous years. The Community Centre and Credit Union buildings did look well, unfortunately there were weeds on the ground in some areas. The Millennium Memorial is maintained in pristine condition and is an asset to the village. Again the area of the Grotto was clean and tidy. There is great potential to improve the built environment throughout the village.

LANDSCAPING

The area around the Millennium Memorial was maintained in excellent condition and the shrubs were well cared for and free of weeds. The green area on the Carlow Road was kept reasonably well but a large commercial "For Sale" sign there did not help the overall appearance. The trees planted throughout continue to mature and do add to the overall affect. The bank of plants on the Carlow Road continues to be well maintained. As indicated in last year's report more regular maintenance of the open green spaces on the Carlow and Bunclody roads is necessary.

WILDLIFE AND NATURAL AMENITIES

You have an important role as Tidy Towns Committee to play in protecting and increasing the appreciation of wildlife in your village. Streams and hedgerows are important habitats for wildlife. A useful information leaflet can be had

from the Environmental Information Service, 17 St Andrews Street, Dublin 2 which is very informative and is a good starting point. Also do not overlook the community where you may have a local environmental expert. It is also an ideal way to get the Schools involved in the Competition.

LITTER CONTROL

The overall control of litter in the village is good and I note from your form that you have a litter awareness campaign in place. There were small pieces of litter to be found throughout the village. The approach roads do need some more attention in this area. The ongoing arrangement for litter control has helped. However constant vigilance is necessary. The community have to be made aware constantly of the importance in controlling litter throughout the village.

TIDINESS

More work is necessary in this area so that Ballon will have an overall tidy and neat appearance. The recycling facilities will certainly help in this area. I note from your form that you have a street sweeping arrangement in place and this does help. The control of weeds at kerbs and walls does need attention. Individual property owners and business persons should take ownership of this task in their own areas. It is one of the areas which you will need to give consideration to when drawing up your plans.

RESIDENTIAL AREAS

The new houses past the Community Centre when completed should look very well. No doubt a landscaping plan will be put in place when completed. The housing estate in the village continues to be maintained to a very high standard. Well done to all the residents in this area. Individual properties in the village area make a very good effort but others do need more attention. In the housing estate by the Church – again most residents take great pride in their place and the open space there was tidy.

ROADS, STREETS AND BACK AREAS

The approach roads from Carlow and Bunclody do need attention. In some areas the surface is uneven and does need to be replaced. The black and amber markings on the bend is damaged and does need attention. I would suggest that you liaise with the Local Authority and discuss ways and means of improving the approaches to the town. Most of the signs are clean but the poles on some need painting.

GENERAL IMPRESSION

You do need to draw up a plan to make progress and improve the overall appearance of the village. A very good effort is being made with many areas throughout the village looking very good. However, as indicated in last year's report, there is more room for improvement in the

presentation of business properties, approach roads and open green spaces on the Carlow and Bunclody roads. Ballon has great potential to do well in the Competition and also the improvements made will contribute to helping the economy of the village.