

"Caring for our environment"

Centre : **BALLYSHANNON**
County : **DONEGAL**
Category : **D**

Results

Date of Adjudication : 03-07-2001

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2001	Mark Awarded 2000
Overall Developmental Approach	50	26	--
The Built Environment	40	26	--
Landscaping	40	23	--
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	18	--
Litter Control	40	20	--
Tidiness	20	10	--
Residential Areas	30	19	--
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	24	--
General Impression	10	5	--
TOTAL MARK	300	171	--

Ballyshannon, County Donegal

OVERALL DEVELOPMENTAL APPROACH

Thank you for your very detailed and informative maps and supporting material. The committee have a very considered, inclusive and practical approach to the town's entry in the competition. Since you last submitted an entry, these are an additional requirement under this heading. As part of the competition you are requested to include a proposed long-term work programme, incorporating the various aspects of the competition headings for the town. A clear and simple 3/5 year plan, outlining achievable targets for the committee, this will help focus your work in the future, and also helps the adjudicator to measure your progress. Your fund raising ventures and community involvement, along with your continued co-operation with the County Council, other interested bodies was again noted, and the benefits of these partnerships will continue to enhance and enrich the village and its community. The committee is to be commended for their fruitful working relationships with school children, local bodies and so many organisations, including the very novel Garda Fines system. Similarly your community questionnaire was a very novel and inclusive idea generating positive P.R for your work.

THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Ballyshannon is fortunate to have such a fine collection of historical premises scattered throughout the town. These houses and premises reflect the long and varied heritage of the town and some unfortunately are derelict, while others are well maintained with many fine features preserved, including original sash windows, doors, railings, roofs and structural features. The beautiful St. Annes Church and its lovely railings is a very focal building in the town. Almost opposite the entrance lies a fine old but derelict house, vandalised and losing its original features, and a 3-storey town house at the entrance here also contributes to the air of neglect in this area. The Abbey Mill was a worthy project for restoration and is a lovely asset to have in the town. Older storage buildings in this area just need their paintwork refreshed. The graveyard with its interesting gate would look even better if the stonewalls surrounding it were tidied. The Resource Centre, Church, Garda Station and old Church Vet Centre with its fine rails all looked well. The buildings on either side of Assaroe premises need attention. Lakeside is a very fine amenity area. Some lovely planting was noticed at the tidy school on the Belleek road. The lovely Church, Graveyard and adjoining school on the Rock all looked very well presented. The "Work House" is one of the many fine old historical buildings worthy of preservation. Fr. Tierney Park could refresh the paintwork on their large walls. The new convent looked very well but the school hall looks neglected with rubbish, graffiti and poor presentation.

Doran's thatched Pub looked well but the beer barrels in front need to be removed. (unless delivery was expected at time adjudication!)

LANDSCAPING

The perennial beds on the Sligo road, at the IDA sign and china factory need attention, although work has started on some areas. The sculpture at the quay is lovely and a pump spotted under the boatyard sign is worthy of your attention. The benches here and along the Mall need their paintwork refreshed. The picnic area on the Donegal road with its nice tree planting and the open area before it looks slightly neglected, bollards need painting and beds need attention. The welcome signposts are a further opportunity for a welcoming landscape feature.

The trees at the bus station have failed and the seats need attention here also. Some lovely planting was noted at the Northern Reg. Fisheries office and some lovely window boxes at Shannon's Corner B&B and Josie's Bar.

WILDLIFE AND NATURAL AMENITIES

It is good to see that the Tidy Towns Committee are very aware of their rich natural heritage in the Estuary and town, and are already conscious of preserving and enhancing it appropriately. Unfortunately I did not receive a copy of your Nature Trail booklet. There are also other opportunities for enhancing and conserving wildlife habitats and the environment within the village. Wild flower meadows / grass areas, nesting boxes, pond/water features, trees and hedgerows offer additional opportunities. The local children and their school and grounds are an option for developing some of these opportunities. When choosing appropriate signs for projects ensure they enhance rather than detract from the environment you are promoting and preserving. Work in conjunction with relevant local bodies, ENFO, or a local wildlife expert to develop this area. The riverside area at the Port Na Marbh information plaque is an ideal area for enhancement under this heading.

LITTER CONTROL

Litter was evident around the town sign on the Sligo approach road, and the approach roads at The China Factory and IDA Estate road. Litter was also evident in some estates, on approach roads and was very noticeable at the Bus Eireann Car Park particularly around the recycle bins. Litter Awareness programmes and the location and maintenance of your bins all contribute to marks in this section.

TIDINESS

The lane up to St. Anne's needs to be tidied as this approaches one of your main attractions. An abandoned car and poor road surface does not help here either. Some pallets tied around a sub station in Saimer Court Car park need to be removed and the gas tank in the corner could be

simply screened with shrubbery. Open areas, car parks, side lanes and back yards all need to be kept tidy and appropriately screened to avoid dumping and litter. The area at the back of the Fire Station needs some attention.

RESIDENTIAL AREAS

The majority of houses throughout the town and on the approach roads, were generally well presented. The attractive hedges, lawns and colourful flowers in some individual gardens were noted, as were some attractive tubs and window boxes, and hanging baskets, in some of the town houses. This splash of colour is very welcoming and always brightens up a streetscape, well done for the hard work to those responsible. However the nicely maintained homes highlight those that need attention or their paint work refreshed both in the town, housing developments and on the approach roads. Some beautiful flower beds, trees and a sculpture - the most attractive I have seen in a residential area, was noted in Saimer Drive. Some lovely planting was noted at Erndale with planters, tidy beds, trees and an attractive nameplate. A tidy open grass area at Upper Erndale was noted thanks to the effective goats (although this is not ideal) hopefully the road resurfacing will continue around the back to Cluain Barron, where an untidy grass corner was noted. A house with some lovely flowers was noted on the lane of the mall to Dorian's.

ROADS, STREETS AND BACK AREAS

Approach roads often create the first impression. Generally your roads and footpaths are in good order and the two main streets look very well with fine paths and fittings, trees and unusual bins. The approach lane to St. Annes needs some attention to its surface. The Rossnowlagh road and Abbey road could have their verges tidied without compromising the fauna. Many fine stonewalls throughout the town and on the approach road looked well but there are some still remaining that need attention. Some signs at the Abbey also need attention. The lane from the Mall to the back of Dorian's Hotel is in bad repair and looks very untidy with abandoned car and debris. Directional signs outside Spar, finger post sign on the Knader road and 30mph signs on the Rock approach road need attention as do the railings on the main street cinema side. Some further weed control was needed at the ball alley car park and roadside. The handball alley area looked tidy. It was good to see the original cobblestones at the quay but the road surface here needs attention.

GENERAL IMPRESSION

Ballyshannon has so many natural and structural features that enhance it. These features combined with the obvious enthusiasm of the committee should go a long way in optimising the full potential of your attractive and historical town. Well done, build on your success's to date to develop and fulfil your plan for the future.