

*"Caring for our environment"*

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

**Results**

Date of Adjudication : 26-06-2002

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2002	Mark Awarded 2001
Overall Developmental Approach	50	33	31
The Built Environment	40	29	27
Landscaping	40	28	27
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	16	16
Litter Control	40	26	24
Tidiness	20	14	14
Residential Areas	30	17	17
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	23	24
General Impression	10	7	7
<b>TOTAL MARK</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>193</b>	<b>187</b>

## **Balla, Co. Mayo**

### **OVERALL DEVELOPMENTAL APPROACH**

The amended plan for Balla contains a realistic and achievable list of objectives. A number of projects outlined in the plan have been completed. The visit of Uachtaran na hEireann provided an extra incentive. To do the work the plan could also include a description of the involvement of other agencies. Information in the application form could be adopted in the plan. Due to the impending development of the Balla bypass, a number of projects have been put on hold. Existing schemes should therefore gain additional maintenance and management.

### **THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT**

The recently painted Resource Centre and its environs forms the nucleus of this effervescent community. An increasing number of our towns and villages are improving their appearance by the use of colour. A number of neglected, unpainted buildings along the left hand side of the main street coming from Claremorris mar the appearance of an otherwise attractive street. The use of a large flag-like sign on the gable end of commercial premises should be discouraged. Windowless gable ends can be covered with a mural or self clinging plants. Only one or two business premises appear to have adopted window boxes which is at odds with other commercial properties. The grounds of the primary school need painting. The Bank of Ireland is one of the more attractive buildings.

### **LANDSCAPING**

The grass verge at the approach road from Claremorris was closely mowed thus creating a good first impression. A well-weeded bed at the top of the town is visually cheering. Grass spaces, however, at the lower end of the town were most disappointing – overgrown and unkempt. The green opposite the Texaco station was overgrown. Some impressive housing developments namely ‘ Churchfields’ and ‘Ashleigh Manor’ had their entrances impeded by weeds and rubble. Balla Oil Company needs to pay more attention to its surroundings. On the Western end of the town, the grounds of the church were immaculate. The car park opposite the church was impeccably maintained. The wide main street could accommodate more ornamental type trees to enhance its street-scape.

### **WILDLIFE AND NATURAL AMENITIES**

Whilst an extensive tree planting scheme has been implemented, existing areas of wildlife habitat need to be exploited. The abundance of pasture and woodland need to be interpreted and fully embraced by the community. A habitat survey is essential before any practical work begins. Perhaps the Committee could initiate this survey in the coming year.

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## **LITTER CONTROL**

Due to the combined efforts of FAS and the local community, litter is well controlled.

## **TIDINESS**

The approach road from Claremorris appears to have improved significantly. However, many lanes and side-roads in the town make a poor impression. A major clean-up is necessary along the route to the golf club where a number of disused cars are abandoned. Paving must be improved using materials and styles that are characteristic of the area in preference to modern materials. The boundaries and entrances of most housing estates were untidy. Improvements could include the repair of stone walls, the removal of construction debris, trimming grass verges and tree planting.

## **RESIDENTIAL AREAS**

Several of the private houses in the area have beautifully presented gardens. Private estates could benefit from residents' groups maintaining communal areas themselves.

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

As previously mentioned, the by-roads appear to have been neglected. An extra-special effort should be made in conjunction with the owners of premises on these particular routes and with the Local Authority to bring about major improvements. The Secondary School Avenue was attractive. Bins are located at strategic points along the route thus generating support for the Project amongst the youth.

## **GENERAL**

Balla is indeed 'alainn', basking in an area of natural beauty. Considerable efforts are being made to enhance the community and provide valuable amenities for its residents i.e. tennis courts, golf and Gaelic football. The area lends itself to further improvements in the form of picnic areas and children's playgrounds.