

Tidy Towns Competition 2003

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Ballon**

Ref: **1**

County: **Carlow**

Mark: **214**

Category: **B**

Date: **26/06/2003**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2003	Mark Awarded 2002
Overall Developmental Approach	50	36	35
The Built Environment	40	29	28
Landscaping	40	28	28
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	19	19
Litter Control	40	30	30
Tidiness	20	13	13
Residential Areas	30	23	23
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	29	28
General Impression	10	7	7
TOTAL MARK	300	214	211

Overall Developmental Approach:

Thank you indeed for all the information sent with the entry form and for the map which was most useful on adjudication day. It is gratifying to read that you continue to have the support of Carlow County Council and, of course, your local community for your efforts and they are to be commended for it. Your plan is excellent and sets out clearly what you are doing and what you propose to do. Ballon has reached a very good mark in the competition and further success will come about through careful planning and attention to detail. Try to identify what you can realistically do on a year-to-year basis within your physical and financial resources. Do not try to do too much at the same time as, if you fail to do so, it can lead to frustration. It is interesting to read that you have received sponsorship through your village website. Perhaps this is something other centres could copy to their benefit. You received an in-depth report from the Adjudicator last year. The following therefore is by way of comment on further progress to date and should be read in tandem with that report.

The Built Environment:

The Church, the Community Centre, School, Garda Station and Credit Union building are being well maintained. The pump, Millennium Monument and the magnificent Grotto also enhance the appearance of the village. The Cemetery too is being very well cared for. Commercial premises looked well and have obviously benefited from the refurbishment programme. The name stones are also a very nice feature.

Landscaping:

The landscaping at Maple Lawn is again very nice this year. Containerised planting, hanging baskets and window boxes, where presented, also looked very well and created a lovely atmosphere throughout the village. Trees and shrubs planted in the past are now maturing nicely and part of your planning should be to identify where further planting can take place which will give you some colour on an all year round basis. In the event you should consult with Carlow County Council who have expertise in the matter. The planting of flowers along Main Street creates a nice ambience. There is however some weeding in gutters which could easily be cleared. The planting of flowers around the lampposts also looks very nice as are the flowerbeds at the speed limit signs. All-in-all your work under this heading has been quite good and the village looks the better of it.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

You do not appear to have carried out a project under this heading. As mentioned last year the river offers interesting possibilities in this regard. Perhaps initially you might initiate something with your school children by way of the provision of feeding tables and nesting boxes for birds and perhaps a wildlife sign showing what wild birds and animals can be seen in the locality. Perhaps there is someone in the Ballon area who would be knowledgeable on this. Please also talk to Duchas. In the meantime you will continue to receive the same nominal mark as last year.

Litter Control:

Ballon was practically litter free on adjudication day. There was however some litter to be seen in the housing estate at Ballon Hill and at odd spots on the approach roads. This is an important part of the competition which needs constant monitoring but, generally speaking, the work of your committee under this heading is being very beneficial.

Tidiness:

Work on the Oak Estate is continuing and lends itself to a certain amount of untidiness. This however will pass and hopefully it will be all completed by next year. Allowances have been made for it. While some of the comments made under this heading last year are still applicable the village was, nevertheless, presented in a neat and tidy manner and it reflects greatly the interest which your business community and your residents have in their environment.

Residential Areas:

The Maple Lawn Estate is very nice as indeed are the vast majority of the houses in Ballon who are being well maintained and had some lovely gardens in full bloom on adjudication day which were a joy to see. In a small centre this type of individual effort is most important. You cannot succeed without it. Well done to all concerned.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

The throughput of traffic is a major problem but, nevertheless, road surfaces are being well maintained as are footpaths. Approach roads looked nice particularly where landscaping was to be seen. Adjudication normally takes place from the speed limit signs or the village nameplate signs, whichever you opt for. Grass verges from thereon in should ideally be trimmed on a regular basis but bearing in mind the comments in the Tidy Towns Handbook regarding the preservation of wild flowers. Walls, railings and fences throughout the village are also being well maintained and added greatly towards its overall appearance.

General Impression:

Ballon is a very nice village and has the ability to do well in the competition. Until such time that it is bypassed heavy traffic there will be problems but nevertheless good work can be done through careful planning and attention to detail and identifying under the different headings new areas where work can be carried out which will further enhance the village and gain you extra marks in the competition. The Adjudicator looks forward to returning to Ballon again next year to see further progress made.