

# Tidy Towns Competition 2003

## Adjudication Report

Centre: **Ballacolla**

Ref: **313**

County: **Laois**

Mark: **253**

Category: **A**

Date: **04/08/2003**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2003	Mark Awarded 2002
Overall Developmental Approach	50	43	43
The Built Environment	40	33	33
Landscaping	40	35	34
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	23	22
Litter Control	40	34	34
Tidiness	20	17	17
Residential Areas	30	24	24
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	36	36
General Impression	10	8	8
<b>TOTAL MARK</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>253</b>	<b>251</b>

### Overall Developmental Approach:

Thank you for your 'Scenes from Ballacolla' photographic album and 5 year development plan. Together they provide a fine record of what you have , and have yet to achieve. With 20 active members on your committee, Ballacolla Tidy Towns Committee is one of the most representative in the county. This is reflected in many ways; most residential and business premises are maintained to a high level and public landscaping at the cross roads and approaches are exceptional. The continued interest in your wildlife park is a very welcome extension of your work.

### The Built Environment:

Within the general area of the village centrepiece - the cross roads and colourful landscaping - are are a number of differing house styles from old to modern and of varying attractiveness. The older buildings maintain their intrinsic village style, the newer perhaps not so well. These could benefit from the addition of trees along the street frontage. The old schoolhouse looks very well with its window boxes. There are a couple of instances of dereliction on the left beside the thatched house. The church looks clean and tidy with good wall along its front. The house adjacent to the church displays a fine array of colourful plants, etc. The school looks fine, as does the garda station, Hawthorn pub and Katies Corner. There is excellent signposting for the community centre and wildlife park.

## **Landscaping:**

The village cross roads provide a very colourful centrepiece for the village. Delightfully presented planters of colourful flowers on the three corners set the scene, with a water pump feature adding interest. Entrance to GAA Park is good with its flower boxes and plants opposite the gate. Flowers set into the house wall next to the school looks interesting. The planter, which runs up towards the Glanbia Yard, looked somewhat uninteresting but the line of trees on the right are excellent. Hayes Pub with its hanging baskets and window boxes looked quite well. The new Fáilte flower bed on the Durrow Road is maturing nicely.

## **Wildlife and Natural Amenities:**

Access to the wildlife park is good, as is the car park in front of the community hall. Trees have been planted to screen the school play area. Hawthorn Wildlife Sanctuary is outstanding. Trees and wild grasses and shrubs are maturing and are encouraging the arrival of a variety of wildlife. Wheelchair accessible pathways are highly commended.

## **Litter Control:**

Your litter control programme is working well, the result, no doubt, of education, raising awareness and maintaining pride in your village.

## **Tidiness:**

Apart from a couple of instances of dereliction and an unfinished building site, Ballacolla has no serious problem with tidiness. Recycling bins were noted at side of community centre. There was some uncertain signage hanging from overhead cables close to the church.

## **Residential Areas:**

Residences surrounding the village are generally presented to a high level. St. Fergals Park was clean and tidy. As indicated on the entry form, work was ongoing in the park where septic tank problems are being addressed.

## **Roads, Streets and Back Areas:**

The four approaches to Ballacolla give a fine impression with its Tidy Town Signs set in a planter of colourful flowers. These are very well maintained open green areas which feature maturing trees and cut banks leading towards picnic areas with stone table and seats and floral displays. The connection to the village cross roads is effected by footpath, well maintained private gardens and wall frontages. Each is very well maintained and raises interest levels in the village itself.

## **General Impression:**

The evident active participation by the community in raising the standards in both private and public village facilities is commended. In particular, the ongoing development of the Hawthorn Wildlife Park is very welcome indeed.

## **Second Round Adjudication:**

Ballacolla is a delightful small village developed around the crossroads of the R434 and the R433. The committee's membership of twenty, in a population of 189, is to be highly commended. There is a wonderful feeling of community in the village. The committee's dedicated work can be seen in both the extent of projects and the care and detail given to each. Well done. The bronze medal award in 2000 on the stone plaque at the entrance to the village was noted. The village centre at

the crossroads was simple but very attractive, with its flower pots, planters, seats and even a pump. The entry roads into the village all had very well maintained verges and the adjudicator noted, in particular, the stone name signs on all the roads - a nice detail. The one on the Abbeyleix road would need some attention as it is being covered with tall grasses and brambles. There was no litter seen on the day of adjudication and the reason can be seen, with the daily trawl by the school children. Congratulations to both the committee and the pupils. The adjudicator considered the overhead cables in places most obtrusive and their under-grounding should be a project by the committee, in co-operation with the ESB and the county council. The stone wall of the Hawthorn Lodge was noted with its delightful semi-circular recesses with planters. The Wild Life Park is to be highly commended; the entire village seems to be included in its development, but especially the pupils of the adjoining school. The recycling unit and the wormery are outstanding community efforts. It is hoped that the leaking septic tank and filtration bed will be repaired soon and possibly its siting replanned. The church grounds were well kept. The cottage opposite the church has now been re-thatched and painted. The committee should now consider the adjoining house. The Five-Year Development Plan is remarkable for the extent of work envisaged. Take it step by step and not overextend the wonderful committee members.