

Tidy Towns Competition 2004

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Balla**

Ref: **40**

County: **Mayo**

Mark: **197**

Category: **B**

Date: **22/06/2004**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2004	Mark Awarded 2003
Overall Developmental Approach	50	33	33
The Built Environment	40	29	29
Landscaping	40	28	28
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	16	16
Litter Control	40	28	26
Tidiness	20	14	14
Residential Areas	30	18	18
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	24	25
General Impression	10	7	7
TOTAL MARK	300	197	196

Overall Developmental Approach:

Welcome to the 2004 Tidy Towns Competition. Thank you for your documentation and helpful maps. The Plan for 2000 - 2005 is a useful document. However the adjudicator recommends strongly that you restructure this Plan slightly to show your objectives clearly for each year. Perhaps you can get your Plan circulated through the Parish Newsletter so that all residents of Balla will be aware of the overall strategy for the town.

The Built Environment:

New housing was noted and hopefully such developments will be fully and appropriately landscaped before builders depart. The Tennis Courts are an important local amenity but dead grass here needs to be removed. The school and grounds was neatly presented. The Catholic Church is a fine grey limestone building, the surrounds of which are maintained to an excellent standard. Nearby the Community Centre was attractively presented also. Projecting advertising signs were noted on a number of commercial properties in the town centre and this needs attention. Can you plan a strategy to have these gradually removed in cooperation with the property owners. The castellated building near the Square is an interesting building and one wonders what its history is? A number of buildings in Balla caught the eye including The Shebeen, a simple traditional frontage which is very effective. It is unfortunate that the roof line on one side of the town is broken by one flat roofed building, that does not seem to fit the street-scape. It would be good to have some information available on the Round Tower.

Landscaping:

On the approach to the Square from the Mayo Abbey side there is potential to plant a row of semi-mature trees to delineate the left hand edge of the roadway. In time these trees would begin to screen the parking area on the left hand side. The Square needs strict planning to make the maximum visual attraction of this area. There is some low key landscaping but much more is required. Any plan for the Square should reflect it's amenity potential for the town and more reduced car parking facilities at the Square. Above all the Square should not be allowed to become a general car and truck parking area. The landscaped area opposite the Texaco Garage was looking well. Perhaps this area needs some more trees?

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

The Town Park and Nature Trail are excellent amenities. The road to the GAA Club and Golf Club is very untidy due to a lot of dead grass that has not been removed following spraying. The overall result here is really disappointing. The Fair Green is a fine open space and a large area for your committee to maintain on an on-going basis. It was well presented on the day of adjudication.

Litter Control:

Your involvement in the Mayo County Council Litter League is a logical development. The adjudicator understand that you have handed out flyers to all houses in Balla highlighting the issue of litter. Do you also involve the school in your anti litter campaigns? On adjudication day litter control was generally quite good.

Tidiness:

At the small car park near the school the low wall here needs to be painted and the surface weeded. Dead weeds were noted in the Tennis Court area, presumably after spraying. At the Resource Centre the rusty flagpole needs to be treated. The re-cycling area was extremely well presented with a proper cobble-lock paved area for the various containers.

Residential Areas:

Some fine mature gardens were noted on the Mayo Abbey approach road. Watch out for road boundary walls in Balla as a number are in need of painting. The new Ardcranon estate would be greatly improved by the planting of some semi-mature trees. An attractive landscaped area was noted at the entrance to Churchview estate.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

Some road / street name plaques in Irish were noted and this is an excellent project. On the Mayo Abbey approach road banks and verges were uncut. Dead weeds were noted at the roadside following spraying. A similar problem was noted on the road to the GAA and Golf Club facilities. On the Castlebar approach verges were also uncut.

General Impression:

The development of the Balla by-pass will obviously be very important for you town. Now is the time to start planning for the new opportunities that that development may allow. Well done to everyone who has worked to bring Balla to its' present stage of development.

