

Tidy Towns Competition 2004

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Ballinrobe**

Ref: **708**

County: **Mayo**

Mark: **172**

Category: **D**

Date: **22/06/2004**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2004	Mark Awarded 2003
Overall Developmental Approach	50	31	30
The Built Environment	40	25	25
Landscaping	40	29	28
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	15	15
Litter Control	40	15	17
Tidiness	20	12	12
Residential Areas	30	15	15
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	24	25
General Impression	10	6	7
TOTAL MARK	300	172	174

Overall Developmental Approach:

Welcome to the 2004 competition. Thank you for the documentation submitted with your Application Form. It is noted that you have a committee of just ten people and that you appear to have good luck support for your work for Tidy towns. For your 2005 entry can you make sure to submit a map of Ballinrobe on which you might mark all the locations that you would wish the adjudicator to visit. It would be a great help. The Parish Newsletter is an excellent way to publicise your activities and perhaps the Tidy Towns Report could be included in that publication. The adjudicator shares your concern about the lack of involvement of the under 25s. Their support is critical as some of them will hopefully become the Tidy Towns supporters in the future. Thank you for the 2004 Action Plan. The adjudicator suggests that it might be better to use a series of short bullet points in your Action plan to indicate clearly each action to be undertaken. The detailed description could perhaps be an appendix to the overall Plan. The aerial mast seems to dominate the town but the adjudicator accepts that little can be done about this.

The Built Environment:

Generally Ballinrobe seems to lack many buildings or street-scapes of significant architectural quality; this is not intended as a criticism. The new Community Centre development is noted and hopefully the Planning Permission for the new hotel on the Convent site allows for appropriate design and landscaping. There is indeed a significant problem with disused properties in Ballinrobe. The action that you have taken is indeed appropriate. Hopefully some of these properties can be

re-developed with appropriate uses in the near future. Your work on the Robe Bridge stonework looks well. In the main street it is good to see an old stone building (O2 and others) with new appropriate uses.

Landscaping:

You have done good work on the development of flower beds, baskets, planters. The watering rota that you have developed is essential and this is sometimes forgotten. The appearance of the Mart area has improved following your work programme there. On the Ballyglass Road grass on some of the landscaped areas here has been cut but has not been raked and taken away. There appears to be an over use of weed killer here.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

The Bowers River Walk project is a very ambitious and exciting one. Thank you for the copy of the very detailed proposals document. Do make sure that you involve the appropriate expertise before you finalise your plans and start work. Overall the project is most interesting. The adjudicator walked a lot of this walk and it has indeed much potential. Does the old Mill building have any restoration potential as part of this project? The adjudicator looks forward to hearing of positive progress on the Bowers River Walk project.

Litter Control:

The anti-litter awareness campaign is welcomed and hopefully this will continue into next year. There is a serious litter problem in Ballinrobe. Areas of concern identified by the adjudicator include the Ballyglass Road and especially on the river walk. Large quantities of litter were noted on the footbridge here and especially on the laneway that leads up to the street. Really the situation is quite serious. Quantities of litter were seen also in the small car-park at the start of the walk. While the adjudicator agrees that the River Walk project is an excellent one, perhaps further attention should be given to the litter problem before undertaking the very large river walk project. Your committee should discuss the various priorities. The litter picking rota is a great idea - decide on priority areas for litter and tackle these first on your rota. In the main street litter was noted in some of the raised flower display containers.

Tidiness:

A damaged sign was noted at the recycling area in the car park. Projecting advertising signs were noted in a number of streets and back lanes in the town centre and this needs attention. Projecting signs do little to advertise a premises and the projecting signs in Ballinrobe appear to be of an older design. The tackling of this problem is a project for your committee in consultation with the town traders and residents. Various untidy sites were noted in the town centre and these will require attention.

Residential Areas:

The bedding plant purchase is an idea that the adjudicator has not come across before and the concept is excellent. The issue of derelict property has been mentioned above. Watch out for road boundary walls - in quite a number of cases they need to be repainted, and some gable walls also. In some estates there is an over use of weed killer that leaves large patches of dead brown grass. Selective use is what is required. Attractive older houses were noted on the Knock-Claremorris road.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

The approach road from the Co-Operative side of Ballinrobe needs much attention. The town sign (green) needs to be erected and verges in general need much work as in some areas long grass has taken over. Weed and long grass was noted at the foot of the low stone wall. Similar work is also

need on parts of the Knock-Claremorris approach road. The Galway approach road was very different. Here well kept grass verges and semi-mature trees provide a great welcome in to town. Have you considered putting in some low maintenance raised flower beds on this approach. Well done to all involved in this work.

General Impression:

Ballinrobe has good potential but there are a number of problems of which your committee are fully aware. As the adjudicator sees they are as follows (1) uneven approach road presentation (2) derelict properties and (3) a bad litter problem in certain areas. Good luck with all your projects especially the Bowers River Walk.