

Tidy Towns Competition 2004

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Ballyhaunis**

Ref: **622**

County: **Mayo**

Mark: **192**

Category: **C**

Date: **23/06/2004**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2004	Mark Awarded 2003
Overall Developmental Approach	50	39	39
The Built Environment	40	28	27
Landscaping	40	28	28
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	15	15
Litter Control	40	24	23
Tidiness	20	10	9
Residential Areas	30	20	20
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	22	23
General Impression	10	6	6
TOTAL MARK	300	192	190

Overall Developmental Approach:

The adjudicator would like to welcome you to the 2004 Tidy Towns Competition. Thank you for the very comprehensive documentation submitted with your Entry Form. The photographs were most useful, especially the beautiful colour map. The Plan for 2003 - 2006 is a very comprehensive document and you certainly have an encouraging vision for the future of Ballyhaunis. It would be worthwhile to break down your proposed objectives by year.

The adjudicator is of the view that it may be worthwhile in cooperation with Mayo County Council to try and have some professional environmental study work done on Ballyhaunis. This might address the issues of developing the existing street-scapes, dealing with advertising signs, derelict buildings and traffic circulation. This Study might also look at the approach roads in terms of their improvement in environmental terms. Studies such as these can be highly useful and this has been done by other towns in Ireland known to your adjudicator.

The Built Environment:

The problem of derelict buildings in Ballyhaunis is as you say a serious one. There is also a difficulty with a number of older buildings that are in need of external refurbishment. It would be useful if there could be a meeting of minds in Ballyhaunis in terms of getting a campaign underway to refurbish/repaint a number of the buildings that fall into the above categories. Indeed this issue would be a critical part of the Study recommended above. Among a number of well presented

buildings is the Funeral Home and the Catholic Church. The facade of the AIB premises is in need of painting and this building is located at a critical sight-line in the town. The old Barracks building is a fine stone building that is being well maintained. What about an information plaque to illustrate the history of this building? The road boundary walls of many buildings need to be repainted. These walls need attention much more frequently than the main buildings. From some of the side streets there are very untidy views of the backs of buildings located on the main streets. These views should not be forgotten in your forward planning for Ballyhaunis. The Mid West Radio building is an attractive premises of modern design. However it fits into the street-scape fabric rather well.

Landscaping:

A considerable amount of new tree planting has been noted and this is a great visual investment in the future. On the main streets the trees look quite effective and in time will mature. Perhaps in time it may be possible to develop further landscaped areas in the four main streets. An input of strong colour is generally needed here.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

The new Town Park and River Walk are excellent amenities for the town. Was the Bat Survey carried out as the adjudicator did not receive a copy? Have you considered having a Survey carried out of the flora and fauna in the town area? The results of such a Survey would help your Committee to focus on planting that will encourage wildlife to the area. The erection of wildlife plaques in the area at some of the parking locations would be an excellent project. These plaques could also be provided within the town centre at a suitable location.

Litter Control:

The lack of a Sunday morning litter service is noted and perhaps this can be reexamined by Mayo County Council. It is great to see that you are participating in the County Council Litter Action League and that you have had some success. The Children's Art Competition and the Poster campaign are excellent ways of getting children involved in your campaigns. Do you have a student representative on your Tidy Towns Committee? Litter was noted in a number of locations throughout the town including the car park at the Bottle Bank.

Tidiness:

Weed growth at the base of walls is a problem area, for example at the Charlestown road. A very untidy garage area was noted on the Claremorris road. Perhaps some screening here would be an improvement. An abandoned white van was noted beside the car park also on this road. Projecting signs are a difficulty in Ballyhaunis and generally few of them are probably necessary for true commercial reasons. Plastic fascia signs were also noted and these might be replaced by traditional hand painted signs. The display of retail goods on pavements was noted. This must be discouraged as it can cause difficulties for people in wheel-chairs and for those with impaired vision.

Residential Areas:

There is a major level of new housing development in and around the town and it is accepted that this is causing difficulty for you. In regard to new estates under development, it is vital that your committee seeks to have some influence to make sure that landscaping is carried out before builders depart the site. Likewise it is essential that all new estates are finished off properly as quickly as possible. Beech Park and Hazel Hill Downs are two developments that caught the adjudicator's attention.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

Generally approach roads to the town were disappointing in terms of presentation. In some cases

parts of the verges have been cut and others not. Where verges have been cut the cut grass has not been removed and that looks quite untidy. Verges need to be cut on a very regular basis, perhaps at least every three weeks in the growing season. This will help to achieve a lush green effect that can look so spectacular. However on some of the approach roads very good displays of trees were noted, some of them were recently planted.

General Impression:

Ballyhaunis needs a community wide "buy-in" to an action plan that will give a direction for the town in terms of environmental improvement over the next few years. This is a big task and would require the commitment of the Local Authority, FAS and other agencies. However congratulations on the results achieved to date and the hard work that was required along the way.