

Tidy Towns Competition 2005

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Baltinglass**

Ref: **566**

County: **Wicklow**

Mark: **196**

Category: **C**

Date: **06/07/2005**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2005	Mark Awarded 2004
Overall Developmental Approach	50	29	29
The Built Environment	40	30	29
Landscaping	40	26	26
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	19	19
Litter Control	40	22	20
Tidiness	20	14	14
Residential Areas	30	20	20
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	31	31
General Impression	10	5	6
TOTAL MARK	300	196	194

Overall Developmental Approach:

Baltinglass appears to be on the verge of major developments with a huge apartment block heralding the way. This is an extensive development unrelated to the traditional structure of the town. The tidy towns committee of three is an extremely small number for such a large town and a major recruitment drive should be undertaken. There is an urgent need for a plan – to really make progress in the competition this is a requirement under this heading - but that aside, considering the changes ahead for the town a plan is vitally needed to list all the aims of the committee, to decide on priorities and to plan to implement these over a five-year time scale.

The Built Environment:

There are a number of landmark buildings that appear well. The courthouse appears to have been painted and looks bright. The credit union looks well. The Catholic Church is a very prominent building and appears well in the profile of the town. The Church of Ireland and the Abbey Ruins are important landmarks particularly on account of their position by the waterside. The old commercial premises alongside the river near the new apartment development appear very grim and hopefully this will have better future. The Garda station, Schools and Lalor centre all are well presented and make a good impact. The outdoor education center, adult learning centre and the restored national schools are attractive. The many business premises through the town are of very varied condition. While some are very well painted and presented there is a very large number of derelict and buildings in need of rejuvenation and these detract from those that look well. A major drive to uplift

the standards is needed.

Landscaping:

The Catholic Church grounds and the adjoining Lalor center are very well landscaped and give a lovely roadside image. The landscaping at the adult learning and Teagasc buildings look very well also. The large trees at the entrance to Ballylanders Factory shop and Wamphler look impressive – tree planting along the entrance from the corner at the main road at this point would be helpful for the future. The entrance to housing estates and the greens within these provide good landscaping within the town. Containers giving some colour through the town are helpful. Individual gardens contribute well to the appearance of the town. The cemetery is nicely cared for and the wonderful copper beech trees close by make a lovely picture. The walkway by these trees is very pleasant.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

The riverside offers great potential for wildlife observation and projects in conjunction with the school could be very useful. The area in the vicinity of the Abbey is a very pleasant location and provides interesting strolling. An entrance to a riverside walkway by the bridge in the town was blocked off – this would make a very attractive walking place by the bank of the river.

Litter Control:

There has been an improvement over the years in the litter management situation. There is still some litter in the carparks and on the streets and constant vigilance is needed. The recycle bins are very centrally located.

Tidiness:

The number of derelict buildings and those needing attention to paint and decor hamper the tidiness aspect of the town. There are also numbers of very gaudy advertisement signs and shop signs. The traffic-parking situation results in a very cluttered appearance and if traffic were restricted more seriously there would be a much better appearance. The current building programme causes disruption– but this is only temporary.

Residential Areas:

There is a considerable amount of residential property on the street sides and close to the centre of the town which helps to create a good community spirit. The housing estates are generally well cared for, however, local competitions within and between estates would encourage people even further. The new estates tend to have better landscaped entrances and open greens. The Allendale Avenue estate is a good example of this. The new buildings - for example at Ard Glass - have good space surrounding them thereby offering potential for well-landscaped entrance and open spaces.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

The entrance roads to Baltinglass display attractive roadside verges and the richness of the tree planting in the region makes for a lovely setting. The approach roads avail of this very well. Road surfaces are fine on entrance roads but there is some patchiness on road surfaces within the town.

General Impression:

Baltinglass has great potential for improvement and could really excel in Tidy Towns. The beautiful surrounds and the riverside location offer the perfect natural setting to present the town. However, building developments will bring change and an increase in traffic problems unless action is taken very soon. A major drive to recruit new members, prepare a plan and work on highlighting the

issues raised above would go a long way towards making substantial progress in this regard.