

Tidy Towns Competition 2005

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Ballybofey-Stranorlar**

Ref: **438**

County: **Donegal**

Mark: **214**

Category: **D**

Date: **23/06/2005**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2005	Mark Awarded 2004
Overall Developmental Approach	50	37	36
The Built Environment	40	30	29
Landscaping	40	26	26
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	24	24
Litter Control	40	26	26
Tidiness	20	15	15
Residential Areas	30	25	24
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	25	24
General Impression	10	6	6
TOTAL MARK	300	214	210

Overall Developmental Approach:

Many thanks for your detailed map and support documentation which the adjudicator found very helpful. It is clear to see that your committee has the support of Donegal County Council, Chamber of Commerce, Schools and other groups. In light of our changing environment and the new challenges that Ballybofey Stranorlar face as a busy commercial town, it is now important to review your 3/5 year Tidy Towns Plan to ensure it is addressing current issues. A few sub committees supported by local expertise and advised by regional and national bodies would greatly benefit your efforts under headings such as built environment, wildlife etc.

The Built Environment:

In Stranorlar bins and bollards along the street need to be upgraded or replaced. Some road signs are rusted and dirty. Harley's Pub is nicely presented and freshly painted. Building work is ongoing at Gallery Court which when completed will enhance the built environment of Ballybofey. The bottle bank at side of car park was tidy but is possibly not the most suitable location for this facility. Seating in front of car park is in need of painting. Some tree guards particularly in the area of the bridge need to be removed as a matter of urgency as they are cutting into the bark. The Garda Station would look better if painted and weeds removed from gutters. Villa Rose, Jackson's and Kee's Hotels are to be congratulated on their hanging baskets, ivy and window boxes. A number of derelict buildings have been removed and development is planned for other derelict sites, however, do continue to work with property owners, local authority and other agencies to try and resolve this

issue. There is enormous potential under this section for Ballybofey Stranorlar.

Landscaping:

Some tree guards need to be removed as they are cutting into the now mature trees. Ballybofey and Stranorlar Golf Club located on the edge of Stranorlar is well maintained and cared for with planters, stone trimmed walls pillars and ivy. Some tree planting would be welcomed to enhance the presentation further. The landscaping and tree planting at the McElhinney Car Park is very well done. St. Joseph's Hospital with it's trees, mature lawns, planted containers and great use of colour is very welcoming. Containers were also noted along the Lifford road. Verges on this Road were untidy however. Sponsored landscaped area on Donegal Road was looking well on adjudication day. It is important that the surrounding area is also maintained to an acceptable standard.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

Drumboe woods with it's extensive wildlife habitat, river side walk and Nature Trail is an excellent local amenity. While the additional signpost at the traffic lights is helpful, I feel many people are unaware when driving through these busy twin towns that such an amenity is nearby. Advance amenity signage on all approaches would address this. Verges along the road at Drumboe Woods should be trimmed regularly to facilitate walkers. The wild life brochure now under consideration would be very welcome. If possible this brochure should also be laminated and framed as an information board located at strategic locations throughout Ballybofey Stranorlar. The proposed new walk from Dreenan Bridge over past the GAA grounds would be an excellent amenity which locals and visitors would enjoy.

Litter Control:

Litter was quite evident on adjudication day particularly in the area of Main Street Ballybofey and along the side of the Roman Catholic Church at the bridge. As a busy shopping town litter control poses a particular challenge and needs to be addressed through awareness from an early age through the schools and then through community groups and special interest groups. It is essential that all commercial and private premises ensure that their forecourts are always litter free. The local authority and Fás workers can then make the general public areas their priority. Your "Clean up Days" are a great way to involve the local community and influence the young. An action plan to address this problem should be a priority in 2006.

Tidiness:

Ballybofey Stranorlar have a generally tidy appearance. The areas of road works on the Letterkenny approach and environmental improvements from the bridge towards Ballybofey currently look untidy but will, when completed and landscaped be a great asset to your Tidy Towns efforts. Seating and landscaping at the entrance to Ard MacCool is in need of upgrading. The back of the Shopping Centre and the Back Road are still an issue, although some possible development adjacent might at least resolve the Shopping Centre situation. The debris and stones in Navenny car park as mentioned last year have been removed and the seating and bins there greatly improve the presentation of the car park. Some unkept open spaces, road verges on some approach roads, and green areas in some housing estates need to be addressed.

Residential Areas:

There are some fine examples of beautifully maintained and presented residential areas in and on approach roads to Ballybofey Stranorlar. A dead tree, some broken railings and a rusted bin creates a bad impression at Millbrook Close. Stone walls, nicely painted fences and well presented boundary walls were noted throughout the twin towns. However, some property owners still need to invest some time painting, cutting grass, removing weeds and upgrading their landscaping with indigenous trees, shrubs and flowers for all year round effect. The "Most Improved Area Competition" is an

excellent opportunity for new, developing and existing housing estates to support the Tidy Towns effort and improve their own environment. Well done to all concerned. Glebe Hallow, Woodlawn, Town View Heights and Black Rock Drive to mention but a few have beautifully presented gardens, open spaces, mature trees and good use of colour.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

Road surfaces are generally of an acceptable standard. Back streets and back areas, however, are in need of some attention with uneven surfaces, pot holes and untidy overgrown verges. Ongoing works on the Letterkenny approach and at the Bridge, as already mentioned will greatly enhance the overall streetscape when completed. The support of the local authority is essential if issues under this heading are to be addressed. Landscaping on the Lifford and Donegal Town approaches were again very welcoming. Commercial businesses and private residents have a responsibility to screen or present appropriately back areas, out buildings and yards.

General Impression:

Ballybofey Stranorlar continue to make steady progress. Key issues such as litter control, derelict buildings/sites, the condition of roads, street and back areas need a focused and sustained approach involving all stakeholders to make any significant progress in the years ahead. Well done on achievements to date and every good wish for the future.