

Tidy Towns Competition 2005

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Ballinamore**

Ref: **146**

County: **Leitrim**

Mark: **228**

Category: **B**

Date: **10/08/2005**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2005	Mark Awarded 2004
Overall Developmental Approach	50	35	33
The Built Environment	40	32	31
Landscaping	40	34	34
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	24	24
Litter Control	40	31	31
Tidiness	20	13	13
Residential Areas	30	25	25
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	26	26
General Impression	10	8	8
TOTAL MARK	300	228	225

Overall Developmental Approach:

The adjudicator would like to thank the Chairman and the committee for the extremely detailed documentation submitted with the entry form. That together with the large map was most useful on adjudication day; and all documentation was consulted. You will by now be finding that the Tidy Towns Action Plan is of great help to you in planning the implementation of your vision for Ballinamore in the years ahead. You are to be congratulated on the highly organised way that you are approaching the competition and the the strategic approach that you are following. The local brochures were most interesting and well prepared. Hopefully your discussions with the Local Authority on the future for the town are going well.

The Built Environment:

The adjudicator was most anxious to see the Library building with the suggestion that there was some local discussion on the design. The building does fit with the existing street-scape and the roof line follows the old roof lines of Ballinamore. Inside it is a very bright and airy building - staffed by pleasant and most efficient staff. At the canal bridge, do try and have the gates to the lock painted matt black. Again on the issue of colour some additional flowers and landscaping would help to brighten up the area of the Catholic Church which is a little dull. Have you considered replacing some of the shop front signs in the town with signs that use more traditional materials such as timber and hand-painted lettering. This could be approached on a co-operative basis. Projecting advertising signs were noted in a number of back lanes in the town centre and this needs attention.

The issue is how many of these signs are really essential from a commercial point of view? The Credit Union building is a building that readily caught the eye, with its simple straight forward lettering. A few properties remain with tiled frontages from an earlier time. These are really out of keeping with the street-scape plans that you have for Ballinamore and perhaps the owners can consider some improvements here. Some good in-fill development was noted, especially that opposite the SuperValu property. The cobble lock pavements are effective visually and hopefully they will be extended to other areas in the years ahead. Another impressive building is the old stone property now put to new use at the beginning of The Line. The area of the Lock was neatly presented - important because so many cruising visitors come through here each year.

Landscaping:

The landscaping below the bridge was really excellent and the adjudicator nominated this area for a National Waterside Award. Extensive landscaping was noted on the roadway into the Marina area and the standard of maintenance here is high. Another good landscaped area that caught the eye was at the Courthouse, together with the angling information board and the flowers. Opposite Kavanagh's the raised landscaped area here adds some good colour to that part of the street. The small canal or stream area at the Telephone Box was presented in an extremely poor condition. In the river bed crockery, blocks, tins cans and litter were all noted. This small waterway could be most attractive with a little amount of work. A week would transform this town centre feature.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

It is noted that you are using some local and national expertise. In many towns and villages this is an aspect of the Tidy Towns Competition where there can be significant potential for development. All towns and villages have the presence of wildlife to some degree. It is important that your Tidy Towns Committee would examine further the wildlife potential and see what you can achieve in terms of making your area even more wildlife friendly. If you have not already done so, the starting point is to have a habitat Survey carried out of the wildlife in your area. Suggested habitats to be considered include the following –

- Urban habitats – gardens, waste ground, walls, graveyards, hedges
- Wetland habitats – rivers, ponds, lakes, canals, reed marsh, bogs
- Woodland habitats – forests, hedgerows, plantations, parks
- Grassland habitats – roadside verges, parks, wet meadows, dry grasslands

The Survey should produce a species list for each of the habitats relevant to your area. This need not be an expensive survey. Perhaps there is a knowledgeable local person who might undertake this task for you. It should be remembered that to carry out the survey properly, it will probably take a year so that all habitats can be assessed at different times. Using the results of the survey, your next step should be to draft a straight forward Plan to preserve the identified habitats and investigate the possibility of creating new ones. It is most important to try and involve your local school children in this project, and in many schools there are teachers who may have an interest in this area willing to get involved. As part of the actions to be undertaken in your Wildlife Plan you might like to consider the provision of some weather proof and vandal proof display panels, illustrating and explaining the wildlife in your area. This has been done very successfully in many towns and villages in Ireland. The river in your town has excellent potential to become a really important natural amenity.

Litter Control:

The clean-up by the Scouts twice weekly is most useful; it is good to get children involved in Tidy Towns activities at a young age. Unfortunately litter was noted in quite a number of areas in and around Ballinamore. These areas included the Recycling Centre, the harbour area at the picnic table, the entrance gates to the Lock walk, Convent road and on the lower end of Main Street.

Tidiness:

The area near Lakeland Dairy needed some tidying up, although the property involved may not belong to them. The presentation of the area approaching the Community Sports Hall was quite terrible. Here the grass was uncut and extremely high and the area has obviously received little recent attention. There was no evidence of a community caring for a great community facility. The adjudicator is not in favour of the display of retail goods on the pavement as was noted here. Apart from looking rather untidy such displays can cause major difficulties for people in wheelchairs or the visually disabled. On the road to the Car Park (no sign-posting once you leave the Main Street) an abandoned car was noted on the left hand side.

Residential Areas:

The major development plans for the Cannaboe were examined in the Library. This will be a great development when completed provided that both development and landscaping standards are the highest possible. The adjudicator was pleased to visit the Lahard estate to see the good work of the Lahard Residents Association. They are doing some great work here. On entering the estate the first impression was that of a great sense of colour and a community at work. Well done to all involved. The standard generally of estate and other private housing was quite high as it is now in many towns and villages in the county. Effective landscaping was noted in many areas.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

The new road signs, where provided, look to be quite effective. On the Mohill approach road the verges could be maintained a little further out from town. The verges that have been developed along here look really well with the long length of lush green verge on the right hand side. The entrance to the Enniskillen road has the most attractive fountain area. Some of the verges on this road as you move out towards the Recycling Centre had not been cut recently. On the Lahard road approach, good green verges are a feature here. Along Willowfield Road mature trees look very well and help to anchor this part of the village in the surrounding countryside. However the growth along the path on the right should be trimmed back a little. Beyond the 50 KPH sign no work had been done on any of the verges.

General Impression:

Given the highly structured approach that your Committee is adopting to their Tidy Towns task and their good relationship with the Local Authority, the adjudicator expects great progress in the years ahead. Well done to everyone involved!

Second Round Adjudication:

Ballinamore is an attractive town with a handsome built environment of single, two and three storey buildings some of which still retain their traditional features; the town enjoys an excellent location on a busy canal with access to the River Shannon and related Waterways of Ireland: it is a pleasure to experience a standard of maintenance and presentation which complements all that the town has to offer. New developments appear to be promising in respect to their standard of finish and the mixed use riverside development in the town centre was admired; hopefully the timber-post fencing at the river bank will be repaired soon. Litter control could have been better on the day of second adjudication however allowances have been made for the large number of visitors in attendance at the festival; bottles were noted in the river bed at the bridge which is a problem which must not be allowed to grow. The new bilingual street name plates have been noted and admired; some items of street furniture are in need of further maintenance, seating near the fountain being one example. The entrance to the sports grounds is unattractive. Your town publications are an excellent initiative; we wish you well in the resolution of vehicular traffic related problems.

