

# Tidy Towns Competition 2005

## Adjudication Report

Centre: **Ballinode**

Ref: **497**

County: **Monaghan**

Mark: **210**

Category: **B**

Date: **04/07/2005**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2005	Mark Awarded 2004
Overall Developmental Approach	50	32	31
The Built Environment	40	28	27
Landscaping	40	29	28
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	17	16
Litter Control	40	31	30
Tidiness	20	16	15
Residential Areas	30	26	26
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	24	25
General Impression	10	7	7
<b>TOTAL MARK</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>205</b>

### Overall Developmental Approach:

The adjudicator would like to thank you for the village map and details of the 2005 / 2006 Tidy Towns work programme. This is a straight forward work programme that clearly states your objectives for each year. Before the end of this year the programme should be advanced to cover the years 2006 - 2008. Your fund raising activities seem to have been quite successful. A drop in the size of the Tidy owns Committee down to 10 this year was noted. However there does not appear to be any decrease in the village to the commitment to environmental improvement.

### The Built Environment:

Generally throughout the village road re-surfacing was required and hopefully this is on the County Council's agenda for the village this year or early in 2006. At the Community Centre the large roof was in need of re-painting, though this is a difficult task. The work on new stone walls, seating and the footbridge were all examined on adjudication day and good work was done on these projects. In regard to the new stone walls at the footbridge the adjudicator was of the view that the pointing of the stone work here did not fit well with that of the old stone bridge and a different stone colour would have produced a different result. However with time this wall will tone in better with the stonework of the bridge. The new footbridge is an attractive construction. Nearby the Sports area at the end of Stage 1 of development looked impressive. There is strong potential to landscape the areas around this facility with grass and planted areas. The village area has such an attractive location and will be a lovely feature when finished. The adjudicator wondered about the Fir Tree

planted near one corner. It looks rather out of place and does not represent the type of tree typically found in Irish village centres. The proposal for the working waterwheel is an interesting one. If this project goes ahead, make sure that a suitable permanent plaque is provided to give some information about the Wrights Mills. The old stone bridge is a fine feature and the view from the weir to the bridge is most attractive. A few derelict buildings were noted that detract from the overall appearance of the built environment of your village. However there is a way in which perhaps you can make a feature of these buildings pending their removal or restoration. Try and get the owners to agree that they will blank out the window and door openings with heavy waterproof Marine plywood. This should then be painted matt black, and window bars and door panels painted in white. This approach as a temporary measure can look quite effective. The re-located pump looked quite well in it's new landscaped location. Have you considered providing a plaque of a permanent nature to record where it was moved from and when?

### **Landscaping:**

The seat and the landscaped area on the Scotstown road looked quite attractive and welcoming on adjudication day. On the Tydavnet approach a fine landscaped area was noted on the left hand side at a housing estate entrance. This added so much colour to that area of the village. The hanging baskets provided at some locations in the village added further colour. You have taken the correct approach in not providing too many hanging baskets, window boxes and flower tubs. The central amenity area by the bridge was not completed on adjudication day and this was obviously pending the resurfacing of the village streets. The tree planting here with the exception of the Fir Tree looked well.

### **Wildlife and Natural Amenities:**

The access road to the lake needed some surfacing work and some quite untidy areas were noted on the drive down to the gates by the lake. 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 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 will probably take a year so that all habitats can be assessed at different times. Using the results of the Wildlife Survey your next step should be do draft a straight forward Plan to preserve the identified habitats in your area, and investigate the possibility of creating new ones. For example perhaps there is an old Pond in your area that is disused, but with a little work could be an important area for wildfowl. It is most important to try and involve your local school children in this project, and in many Schools there are teachers who would be willing to get involved.

### **Litter Control:**

Litter control on the day of adjudication was quite good both on approach roads and in the village centre. You have maintained the standard noted by the adjudicator in June 2004.

### **Tidiness:**

The road to the lake had some quite untidy areas. On the road from the turn to the lake to the river

bridge, untidy areas were noted on the right that need attention. In the village centre a large concrete water pipe was noted at the back of a small grassed and timber fenced area. The suggestion of the future undergrounding of cables would be a significant development for the village and hopefully this aim will be achieved.

### **Residential Areas:**

New housing development was noted at the old Mill site area and this is to be welcomed, however the provision of appropriate landscaping by the developer is of crucial importance. If you have not already done so your Committee might talk to your Local Authority to discuss the issue of landscaping by future builders. Perhaps this can best be delivered through the Planning Conditions process. The housing estates were attractively presented and good work was carried out by many of the residents. The majority of private properties were well presented and a number were obviously freshly painted recently. Some attractive gardens were also noted, and the landscaping work by property owners contributes in an important way to the overall character of your village. Some properties stood out including the ivy covered property with the small stone head, and the thatched house. The Tydavnet side of the village had many attractively landscaped houses.

### **Roads, Streets and Back Areas:**

On the Monaghan approach road some good work had been done in terms of presentation, but this was reduced in overall impact by some roughly cut verges. On the Point road, the Roslea road, and the Tydavnet approach road little if any recent work appeared to have been done. Indeed on the Tydavnet approach road the Speed Limit signs appeared to be covered in hedging. The overall presentation of all approach roads is of critical importance. It is this that gives the first impression of your town or village. Attractive well presented approach roads give a great impression of a community that cares about how others see them. Can you make a rule for yourselves and your helpers that all cut grass must be taken away on the day that it is cut. Do remember also that verges will need to be cut on quite a regular basis if you are to achieve a lush green well-kept appearance of banks and roadside verges. A tractor and mower will not give the neat well kept appearance that can be achieved by a motor mower.

### **General Impression:**

Ballinode is an attractive village with a beautiful river and a Tidy Towns Committee that is committed to improving the village for everyone. Good luck with your future projects!

### **Second Round Adjudication:**