

Tidy Towns Competition 2005

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Ballymote**

Ref: **20**

County: **Sligo**

Mark: **197**

Category: **C**

Date: **23/06/2005**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2005	Mark Awarded 2004
Overall Developmental Approach	50	35	34
The Built Environment	40	29	28
Landscaping	40	32	31
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	23	23
Litter Control	40	22	24
Tidiness	20	10	11
Residential Areas	30	23	22
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	17	17
General Impression	10	6	6
TOTAL MARK	300	197	196

Overall Developmental Approach:

The adjudicator would like to thank you for the map, photographs and detailed Report on the 2005 Tidy Towns activities Unfortunately that report seemed to build up expectations of excellence that were not always obvious on the ground. It is an excellent idea to have a Local Area Plan prepared and this is exactly what is required to give the forward vision for the next five years or so that Ballymote needs. The adjudicator notes that a Tidy Towns Work Programme or Plan was not submitted with the entry documentation. All towns and villages are required to have a simple straight forward 3 –5 Year Tidy Towns Plan for their area. This Plan is prepared by your Committee in consultation with the appropriate local organisations. It should be no more than seven to ten pages long. The purpose of the Plan is to guide the work of your Tidy Towns Committee and others over the short to medium term.

The Built Environment:

The Castle is a focal point of the town and your recent work here looks well. The new building developments within the core of the town have help to improve the landscape and it is good to see new shop and other developments. The Catholic Church is an impressive building but the large car park is somewhat bare. It would benefit from some additional landscape to add some colour. The badly rusting gates here also need urgent attention. Across the road the Abbey Pastoral Centre uses a good colour scheme but the railings here need to be painted. The Playground is a superb well used development and it is good to see that a good standard of equipment is used here. A number of

buildings need to be painted including the Connacht Hotel property, and the Drapery. The National School building caught the eye with the very attractive colour scheme, but the railings are in a terrible condition. The large car park at the Bring Centre was very untidy. A few derelict buildings were noted that detract from the overall appearance of the built environment of the town. 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.

Landscaping:

Some good landscaping was noted in Ballymote and pride of place must go to the Town Park which is superb. The new trees here look well. The standard of maintenance is also very high. The river here adds so much to the park. Excellent landscaping was also examined at the Railway Station. The range of colours here is very wide and the overall effect is most impressive.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

The provision of bird and bat boxes is a good start under this category. 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
- 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 that it 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 to draft a straight forward Plan to preserve the identified habitats 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 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. You should start by organising a major river clean up. Landscaping of the river bank areas should then follow, with the provision perhaps of appropriate seating.

Litter Control:

A poor standard of litter control was noted in quite a number of places in Ballymote. These areas included just inside the entrance to the Town Park, Loftus Hall area, at the National School and the nearby Technical School, the Bring Centre car park and the large Car Park opposite the Coach House Hotel. In many parts of the town's core areas casual litter was also noted. Your Schools litter programme is a great way to get children actively involved in anti litter activities.

Tidiness:

Near the Railway Bridge some of the brown timber fencing needs to be replaced and the weed

growth in this area removed. The general area of the Enterprise development on the Sligo road was very untidy with long grass and indeed some litter here also. Weed and grass growth in roadside / street-side gutters was also seen in several places. There are a number of overgrown casual open spaces that need to be cut and well maintained pending development. The adjudicator is not in favour of the display of retail goods on the pavement as was noted in at least two places in Ballymote. Apart from looking rather untidy such displays can cause major difficulties for people in wheelchairs or the visually disabled.

Residential Areas:

Generally a very high standard was noted under this category. Stonepark on the Sligo approach road with the new trees and stone wall provides a great introduction to the town from that side. Other estates were equally well presented. The majority of private houses demonstrated the pride of their owner through the many fine examples of good landscaping. Ongoing works at Hillview Drive and Marren Park estates was also noted. Indeed Ballymote is rather unusual in the standard of estate landscaping that has generally been achieved.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

Parts of the Sligo approach road were quite impressive especially the area near Stonepark. Good work is being done on the verges further out. The area across the road from the equipment hire premises needs urgent attention as it is quite untidy. On the Tobercurry approach road, some banks and verges were uncut., and no recent work was evident on the approach road by the National School. Likewise there was no evidence of any work done on the approach roads beyond the Coach House Hotel.

General Impression:

Some aspects of the overall presentation in Ballymote are quite good but others like litter control and some approach roads leave much work to be done.

Second Round Adjudication: