

# Tidy Towns Competition 2005

## Adjudication Report

Centre: **Ballintogher**

Ref: **657**

County: **Sligo**

Mark: **237**

Category: **A**

Date: **11/08/2005**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2005	Mark Awarded 2004
Overall Developmental Approach	50	41	40
The Built Environment	40	31	30
Landscaping	40	33	32
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	19	19
Litter Control	40	37	36
Tidiness	20	15	15
Residential Areas	30	23	22
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	30	29
General Impression	10	8	7
<b>TOTAL MARK</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>237</b>	<b>230</b>

### Overall Developmental Approach:

It was a great pleasure to carry out the adjudication of Ballintogher. You have a large committee of 25 people, and together with the cooperation of the Local Authority and other agencies you have achieved much good work. Well done to everyone involved. Thank you for the detailed documentation and especially the photographs which were of great help on adjudication day. This is a village with a great feeling of community spirit, of everyone working together for the good of everyone. Your Action Plan 2004 - 2008 is an extremely comprehensive document that sets out clearly your aims and objectives for each year. I am sure that you find this plan a great help.

### The Built Environment:

On the approach from Sligo, the Church at the road junction ahead dominates the view and sets up good expectations of the visit ahead to your village. Some attention is required to the old National School; the building itself needs painting and the area in front of it is a little untidy. Fine low stone walls are an outstanding feature of the village and the new footpaths are a fine addition to the street-scape. The recycling area so often an area that is untidy was in your case extremely well presented. The properties starting with Du More Embroidery are looking really well and complement the other buildings in the village. However the long white building just down the street needs to be re-painted. The Foroige building, though clean and neat, looked a little drab. This can be improved by painting the brown area around the door and windows a different colour. The rusty gate to the side should be painted a bright colour, perhaps blue or red - make a feature of this if possible. The

"M.Lane" building needs painting also. The sports field area is being well maintained and is an attractive feature of that part of the village. The Church, with the impressive flights of steps, is a key building and is very well presented and as has been indicated above occupies a key site. At the School the railings should be painted. Why is the bottom area of the car park blocked off by a pile of stones - is this the area for the new sculpture? 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 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. You have involved the School in various aspects of your work and this is commended.

### **Landscaping:**

Your work on landscaping is excellent and the planting of the 2,000 Beech trees at the green open space is already looking well. In a few years these trees will transform this part of the village. This is a big undertaking and well done for getting it done successfully. The cut grass at this area has not been removed. Can you make it a 'rule' for yourselves that cut grass will be removed on the same day that it is cut. The adjudicator looks forward to seeing the new sculpture now under way.

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

It is noted that you have already done some research on the wildlife in your area though a copy of this was not provided for the adjudicator. The next step is to implement the findings of this research. This may involve planting certain species of shrubs to attract wildlife to the area or the provision of nesting boxes. The provision of a series of wildlife plaques or information panels is a further important step.

### **Litter Control:**

Again this year you have achieved a high standard of litter control and the core of the village was litter free. This is not easy to achieve and do remember that litter free approach roads are much harder to achieve. Well done!

### **Tidiness:**

A pile of concrete blocks and sand was noted on the pavement near the long white building and hopefully this is associated with the development of your new footpaths - that is your adjudicator's interpretation anyway! On the Riverstown road some of the timber fencing is to be repaired. Throughout the village, try and have all Speed Limit Sign poles painted and also all other poles. Field gates can become a feature of your approach roads. It may be possible for you to get agreement from the relevant landowners that all damaged gates will be replaced, and that all gates will be painted to a common colour scheme. A plastic shop sign was noted in the village. The replacement of this sign with one made of more sympathetic materials would make a useful contribution to Tidy Towns in the village. A hand-lettered sign would look well. On the approach from Collooney an agricultural building on the right needs to be tidied up. Opposite the large green the low wall with the iron railings needs to be painted.

### **Residential Areas:**

The presentation of both the estate and the majority of private houses was really excellent. It is so encouraging to see private house owners taking the trouble to paint their property on a regular basis, and to develop such attractive landscaping.

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

The appearance of the Sligo approach road can be improved by more regular cutting, in contrast to the Dromahair road which was presented to a much higher standard as was the Riverstown road. The Collooney approach road also looked well. The approach roads are just as important as core areas in the village. Just a little more attention to the approach roads would really make a big difference. However the work that has been done on your approach roads to date is acknowledged.

### **General Impression:**

Your keen sense of community spirit will bring you even further in the Tidy Towns competition in the years ahead if you continue to work on such an organised basis.

### **Second Round Adjudication:**

It was good to see improvements in the presentation of Ballintogher since first adjudication by the time of our second visit, this is indicative of ongoing commitment to the environment. The use of stone as a building material for new developments complements the existing built environment. Encourage property owners to maintain the rear facades of their premises also especially where these are visible from approach roads.

Flower displays were in full bloom and the profusion of nasturtium against the stone wall of the church car-park was a visual treat. The proposed sculpture was not yet in place at second inspection, we look forward to seeing it next year. Litter control was excellent however some untidiness was apparent at the recycling centre. The sports grounds looked well and a row of newly constructed single storey dwellings was admired. The Ballygawley finger-post was in need of repair and realignment. The peacock spotted crossing the road adds a new dimension to judging criteria under Wild Life!