

Tidy Towns Competition 2005

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Ballina-Tipperary Nth**

Ref: **361**

County: **Tipperary North**

Mark: **198**

Category: **C**

Date: **02/07/2005**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2005	Mark Awarded 2004
Overall Developmental Approach	50	28	
The Built Environment	40	29	
Landscaping	40	32	
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	15	
Litter Control	40	29	
Tidiness	20	13	
Residential Areas	30	22	
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	23	
General Impression	10	7	
TOTAL MARK	300	198	

Overall Developmental Approach:

Ballina is, indeed, welcome back to competition after so many years absence! The village must have seen many changes taking place over that period of time, especially in the residential category of competition given the enormous expansion of the village in that time. Your plans to keep up a maintenance programme this year in relation to derelict buildings, walls, fences, weeds, signage etc. it is highly admirable. The newly formed group has strong ideas of the sort of links it wants to forge with Race Against Waste and North Riding County Council. Your plans in relation to providing a Sli na Slainte and working in conjunction with Waterways Ireland are all good strong aspirations. Your race-night fund-raiser appears to have been a success, as has your work in relation to sponsorship and practical help with planting. A committee membership of ten seems rather small for a village of Ballina's population, so do try to encourage more people to join - perhaps get in contact with the residents of the numerous new housing estates around the village? Your observation that the village is in need of infrastructure is indeed a sensible one. You will need to keep a sharp eye out in order to make sure that it works and that there is a cohesive development of Ballina - particularly the village centre. Before next year's competition, you should formulate a three or five year work programme, outlining your plans and proposals over the next few years and setting a time-frame against their achievement. This document need only be two or three pages long and should tackle each category of the competition. You could even use this document as a starting point.

The Built Environment:

The buildings of the town were generally a little inconsistent in terms of their presentation. The school was well maintained in pale yellow, although the coping of its boundary wall will need to be re-painted before next year's competition. Its well maintained grounds were admired. The shopping centre looked fine, although some landscaping could be considered to its car park area. In terms of commercial premises, the Studio looked fresh in white with red windows and the Framing Gallery near the bridge was also very fresh. Molly's on the waterside looked fresh in yellow with well used open spaces, although its rear area should be screened from public view. Galloping Hogan's in stone in this location was admired. The modern church looked well, although its railings will need repainting before next year's competition. There are a number of neglected looking properties in the village centre - some of which appear to be abandoned. Your work in regard to painting these will, no doubt, make a huge difference. The boundary wall of the hotel on the Portroe side of the village will need painting before next year. The retention of the old stepped gabled garage is most laudable. Do try to encourage people to retain their original up and down sash windows in timber. Discourage the removal of render from traditional vernacular buildings to reveal stonework below. These properties were intended to be plastered and therefore the quality of the stonework is not good. This can lead to problems with water penetration, as well as being incorrect from a conservation point of view. Encourage the removal of curved plastic canopies and encourage their replacement with ones of a more traditional fabric awning type.

Landscaping:

This is an area of the competition which you obviously enjoy. The attractive planted area opposite the Community Hall at the school road junction was well maintained, although its bench will need repainting before next year's competition. The planted bed at the bridge appeared to be incomplete, as it was quite bare on the day - presumably this was due to the fact that footpath is still under construction in this location? The attractive hard landscaped area at the viewing point to the bridge looked well with its tubs of flowers, although the benches appeared quite patchy in their finish - they may require repainting. The information board needs some attention also, as the perspex has yellowed with age. This is a well used area and therefore a good indication that it works from a design point of view! The grotto area was fine and the attractive gravelled area opposite Molly's on the waterside was admired for its new trees. Do ensure that you don't plant flowers at the base of trees as this can be bad for them as they can take nutrients from the soil. Your plans to improve the Riverside Park area with walkways, lighting, barbecue areas, picnic areas and a marina etc. is to your credit and the adjudicators look forward to seeing it in the years to come. The area in the immediate vicinity of the marina at the moment looks well. The swimming pool area was well maintained at the riverside.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

A bird table was noted at the school. You are in an ideal position to work in conjunction with the school on a number of wildlife projects. These could include the building of bird tables, bird boxes, bat boxes etc. The sowing of a wildflower garden or the conducting of a wildlife survey would also be possibilities. Since the school has received its green flag it can be of enormous benefit to you in this regard. Perhaps one of your committee could liaise with the local school teachers in order to initiate these or similar projects?

Litter Control:

The standard of litter control on the day could have been better. It is a busy village with numerous visitors and intense traffic levels. A light scattering was apparent throughout. Problem areas were spotted at the well area by the Community Centre and to the stream on the opposite side of the road. Perhaps this stream could be incorporated into the proposal for this site, if planning permission has not already been granted. The modern stainless steel litter bins throughout were admired, although a number of them should be wiped down as they looked quite grubby.

Tidiness:

The village generally had a neat and ordered appearance, apart from the issues raised elsewhere in this report. Do discourage advertising hoardings as these can give approach roads a rather cluttered appearance. Fly posting should also be discouraged.

Residential Areas:

There certainly has been a lot of development over recent years in the village in terms of housing estates. The vernacular style of the street houses at the Fountain Apartments and the Smithy were admired. Caherelly's Close was admired for its attractive paved area leading down to riverside - however, the timber decking and railings leading to the stone steps will need painting before next year's competition as they appeared quite flaky. The open space to Shannon View would benefit from more landscaping. That at Ashgrove Meadows with its stone wall base to raised grass area was greatly admired. A marvellous landscaped garden stepping up to the graveyard on the Limerick Road looked quite magnificent. This road sports many fine houses and gardens.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

The adjudicator failed to notice a nameplate on the Portroe Road - perhaps this was due to the roadworks taking place? Signage could have been in better condition. Directional signage at the bridge was rather flaky. Road signs on the Limerick Road were also rather grubby. Maintenance to this road was ongoing on the day and the retention of the square welcome sign in this location is to be commended.

General Impression:

Ballina is an attractive village which has undergone major expansion in recent years. The formulation of a new committee is the first step in achieving the aims and objectives you have outlined in your application. Good luck to all concerned with your future proposals and plans.