

Tidy Towns Competition 2006

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Ballinode** Ref: **585**
County: **Monaghan** Mark: **226**
Category: **B** Date(s): **13/07/2006**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2006
Overall Development Approach	50	33
The Built Environment	50	29
Landscaping	50	32
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	18
Litter Control	50	31
Waste Minimisation	20	8
Tidiness	30	15
Residential Areas	40	27
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	26
General Impression	10	7
TOTAL MARK	400	226

Overall Development Approach:

A busy programme involving continuous effort throughout the year characterises the work of this committee. The additional marks allocated refer to the visible accomplishment of this work as well as to the information contained on your well-prepared entry form. (Please differentiate between projects in progress/completed over the past year, and those which are proposed for the future.) Your schematic map was found to be a little bit hard to comprehend at first, but once understood it demonstrated what an extensive tract of country you cover in your activities, going well outside the immediate confines of the village. This is admirable; too few committees take account of the approaches to their village and the impact which such approaches have on the appreciation of the village itself.

The Built Environment:

To the visitor, the central focus of Ballinode is immediately seen to be the area round the bridge and footbridge, the park and waterside, and the meeting of three roads. Immense work has been done in recent years to improve this precinct, and very successfully so. It is unfortunate that a handsome vacant house with its extensive neglected grounds also borders on this area and draws the eye away from the excellence of the greater portion; undoubtedly you are making efforts to redress this anomaly. The chief building of architectural interest is the handsome church with its landmark tower, set among fine trees (including superb yews) and a well maintained churchyard. The Community Hall was seen to be awaiting renovation, and will be commented upon next year. Maggie's Bar was nicely painted, and painting work was in progress on the 'Shop to Let'.

Landscaping:

All 'Welcome to Ballinode' features were neat and colourful. First class floral displays - and in particular the roses - were seen in the attractive park, in beds on the Monaghan road and also in other salient and well spaced out locations. The landscaped seating backing onto the church was particularly admired, but perhaps

the greatest innovation under this heading has been the relocation of the pump and ancillary roadside improvements including the herbaceous plants, shrubs and tubs. The sports court looked very smart; a pity that the essential fencing and netting is so visually obtrusive at this specially picturesque spot. The rockery described at the Cappoge senior-citizens' residence was not seen but will be looked forward to. It is very good to learn from your support material that you plant bulbs for Spring flowering.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

Tree planting comes under this heading - the additional mark is in recognition of this. You do not list other endeavours under this heading - Wild Life projects are notoriously difficult to assess because, of their nature, they blend with the environment, so we depend very much upon your pointing out what has been achieved over the past year. Clearly, the riverside is an important natural amenity, and also the woods and hedgerows which abound in the vicinity.

Litter Control:

Your litter control programme has worked very well throughout most of the village and your mark remains above average, though on the date of the visit the car park next to Maggie's Bar was badly litter-strewn and there was also some disposable litter in the vicinity of the community hall. It is up to each business house as much as to each householder to ensure that their immediate precincts are kept clear of litter.

Waste Minimisation:

This is an average mark given in the first year of this category - a category that will assume greater importance as time goes on. There is no bring bank in Ballinode - perhaps you are awaiting delivery. It seems a hard task to have to go to neighbouring centres, but it is clear from your notes that you are very much aware of the issues.

Tidiness:

Maguire's yard was tidy and well screened from the street, and McAree's Engineering was reasonably well screened. The forecourt of what was probably the former creamery was seen to be very weedy. The disguising of dereliction - such as the art project - is a fair enough way to overcome an unsightly building in a creative manner. A small building near Maggie's Bar was in need of attention. A rusty corrugated roof off the road between the main village and the community hall, and a cluster of unsightly structures close by, gave a poor impression that was surprising in what is otherwise a tidy village. (On the same road there was much construction work in progress causing considerable dirt, but this was inevitable, will certainly conclude when the houses are finished, and has not affected the marking.)

Residential Areas:

It was very encouraging to see such good work being done on cottages near the bridge. A roof being repaired nearby was also favourably noted. It is the older houses that give this, and most other villages, their special quality. The thatched house at the top of the hill makes a picturesque prospect; do encourage owners of older houses not to replace timber framed windows with PVC. It was equally encouraging to note new housing in the village centre, rather than on a remote site, giving an added sense of community. The Cappoge estate and the one next to it were very well maintained with smart frontages and excellent wooden fencing in places.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

Considerable improvements were seen to be taking place on the Monaghan road, with the widening of a corner and bridge. Road surfaces were good in the centre of the village. The remarkable work on the central bridge, with its imaginative stonework and elegant footbridge alongside, has been a real success. New lighting standards of attractive design were seen. A little bit of the footpath near the pump still needed to be completed - when done, this will have been a major achievement. Stone wall building and wooden fencing in several places - among the latter, on the corner of the alternative Scotstown road - combine to give a sense of completeness.

General Impression:

This has been a very pleasant village to visit, especially as it was clear that so much energy and imagination was being called upon, and that so many worthwhile projects were ongoing. Some of these latter will undoubtedly be completed next year and will be eagerly looked forward to.