

Tidy Towns Competition 2007

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Ballyconnell** Ref: **947**
County: **Cavan** Mark: **199**
Category: **B** Date(s): **11/07/2007**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2007
Overall Development Approach	50	25
The Built Environment	50	25
Landscaping	50	25
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	25
Litter Control	50	25
Waste Minimisation	20	8
Tidiness	30	15
Residential Areas	40	20
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	25
General Impression	10	6
TOTAL MARK	400	199

Overall Development Approach:

Ballyconnell was entered as part of the drive by SuperValu to work with communities to approve the environmental standards of their areas through participation in the National TidyTowns Competition. Areas were entered on the basis that they fall within the catchment area of the nearest SuperValu store and this 'baseline assessment' is intended to provide a basis on which progress could be made over the coming years through partnership with residents, businesses and local agencies. As such it should not be interpreted as a critique of the area but rather an opportunity for everybody to work together to make their hometown a better place to work, live and visit. As part of SuperValu's strategic approach to sustainable development in the area, a nominal mark has been given to reflect this. Further marks will be awarded in future years where more tangible TidyTowns structures are developed and local environmental plans prepared and implemented.

The Built Environment:

This is a very busy town that gives an air of prosperity. There is a very large volume of traffic, particularly heavy lorries, travelling through the main street and heading in various directions from the local cement factory.

The area is mainly serviced in two ways, firstly by a selection of busy shops on both sides of the main street, and by two large shopping outlets, Kennedy's Londis and Donohue's Super Valu, which are situated adjacent to the main street. Both Super Valu and Londis have substantial parking facilities, and both are kept spotlessly clean, very tastefully decorated and give a commanding visual impact. Kennedy's are operating some other businesses from their secluded yard, notably a garden centre and a large hardware / DIY. Most of the shops in the main street are of traditional shop front style and maintained in good condition, but two buildings stood out as being different, the first is the old large cut stone building that was once owned by the Department of Defence. I was told it is now owned by Ballyconnell Development Association, but it looked run down and in need of attention and there is a derelict building attached to the back like an old dance hall.

The second building that stood out was the elegant large two storey complex of modern design with solicitor's offices on top and Donohue estate agents on the ground floor.

Some of the shops in the main street that caught my eye were Lee's bar, The Angler's rest, Gala supermarket, FG Property Sales, The Pharmacy and Ulster Bank. The Post Office could do with a freshening up. The Methodist Church is a small plain old church in good condition. Ballyconnell Community Centre (1990) has some defining architectural characteristics and is maintained in a neat and tidy fashion.

Moving out from the main street both the Catholic and Church of Ireland churches are two elegant buildings of character, they were landscaped in a picturesque fashion and adorned with displays of seasonal flowers. The School was well presented. The Courthouse is a fine two storey building of unique character and sported spectacular climbing plants and a spread of suitable shrubs. The Parish Hall (1949) is neatly maintained. The Credit Union is a substantial modern building with spacious car park.

There is a great historical stone constructed bridge over the Woodford river, and a really modern footbridge erected beside the old bridge which makes it safe for pedestrians to cross the river.

Landscaping:

There are established grass margins on most roads, but they are cut in an irregular fashion. The landscaping on the Killeshandra road is of a high quality with an assortment of picturesque individual shrubberies. The Eugene O'Reilly Park is landscaped well with some nice trees and shrubs with a fine large lawn. It contains an impressive memorial to Kieran Doherty TD who died 2nd October 1981.

The Moorings are landscaped nicely with a good amenity area. Outside the Church of Ireland the place is expertly landscaped. The Catholic Church sported some spectacular arrangements of roses. A striking feature of Ballyconnell is the high quality of the landscaping of the new housing estates.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

Ballyconnell Public Moorings on the river has an advertisement for 18 new berths and has an amenity area that is nicely landscaped with spacious car parking facilities. The Eugene O'Reilly park is surrounded by a tarmac footpath that continues on to become a good river walk, beside the Woodford river.

Litter Control:

Litter was a problem in some areas, in particular in the Eugene O'Reilly Park where an assortment of litter was present and there were black plastic bags thrown there full of bottles etc. In around the centre of the town there were plenty litter bins, and only small bits of litter was noted in this busy area. Lots of cigarette ends were evident on the footpaths, and one gentleman was "solving the problem" by sweeping the butts onto the main street!! The footpaths had many traces of the residue of chewing gum.

Waste Minimisation:

There is a bring bank located near the Credit Union and it was noted that people were using it and segregating the bottles etc. You could encourage the school authorities to try to attain the green flag for the school, this is very educational for the children as it makes them aware from a young age of the race against waste, and encourages the idea of reducing, recycling and reusing.

Tidiness:

I noticed two derelict houses across the road from Super Valu, and an ugly overgrown site next to the Methodist Church. Two disused petrol / diesel pumps are an eyesore across the road from the Courthouse. In the main street overhead wires give a bad visual impact, especially over the post office and leading up to Ballyconnell Inn where at both points there were an number of aerials branching off.

Residential Areas:

The general prosperity of this area is plainly to be seen by the large amount of new houses that are being built in the housing estates, and most of the houses are upper class substantial residences.

The finest that I saw was on the Cavan Road, Daisyhill Manor, it is a fairly new estate with elegant entrance walls, and elaborate nameplates for the estate attached to both sides of the entrance. There were colourful flowers at the base of the entrance walls, and fine shrubberies at the back of the entrance on both sides. A tarmac road and tarmac footpath leads down into the estate. A large well manicured green area is tastily screened off with hedging going into the estate. There is a roundabout at the bottom of the estate that had some fine young trees growing in the centre of it, and the area is well covered with pebbles. The houses are sizeable in design and have spacious surroundings. A lot of various young trees are planted throughout the estate. This estate is being extended with more houses under construction, and a large complex called Daisyhill Care Centre is also under construction. It is noticeable that a footpath is in place outside the estate for a few hundred yards.

On the Cavan road to the right going into the town there is an established estate of houses and further extensions to the estate are taking place. Going further towards the town there is another new housing estate under construction with its name Castleforde neatly cut into the stone entrance wall. There are extensive shrubberies at the entrance to the estate, which contains substantial residences.

Woodford Meadows consists of 25 apartments under construction on a link road. There is another housing estate starting on the Killeshandra road. Other estates noted were one near the GAA grounds with no name on it, Carrowmore on the Swanlanbar road, and another nameless estate of six houses.

There are some other established housing estates, and others under construction near the Credit Union. There are three good established estates, Mountpleasant, Doonbeg and Woodford Park on the Enniskillen road. A fourth estate nearby has no nameplate visible. I also noted Edgeword Estate, Boher Bui and Doon Heights. On all approach roads there are ribbon developments of houses, some of them were substantial structures of various designs and nearly all of them were well landscaped.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

All the roads leading to the town are substantial roads capable of taking very large volumes of traffic. The verges are inconsistently maintained and there is a good spread of trees, and most hedges are well trimmed. The Killeshandra road is very well landscaped. It was noticeable that all the signposts are clearly visible. Most of the back areas are alive and some are being developed. Construction sites, in some instances only, are marring the appearance of the roadsides.

General Impression:

It is about ten years since I was last in Ballyconnell, and I found the town has improved immensely in size and stature since then. The town could be further improved to make it a better place to live in, and most pleasant to visit if resident's associations were set up in all the estates and co-ordinated by the Tidy Towns Committee. In other locations there are annual competitions to decide the best kept housing estate. I understand that there are plans to put a ring road around the town and your committee could make submissions setting out your priorities for this major development.