

Tidy Towns Competition 2007

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Balbriggan** Ref: **154**
County: **Dublin (Fingal)** Mark: **233**
Category: **G** Date(s): **10/06/2007**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2007
Overall Development Approach	50	36
The Built Environment	50	30
Landscaping	50	30
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	25
Litter Control	50	30
Waste Minimisation	20	8
Tidiness	30	12
Residential Areas	40	28
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	28
General Impression	10	6
TOTAL MARK	400	233

Overall Development Approach:

Balbriggan is welcome to the 2007 National Tidy Towns Competition. Thank you for your submission, we note the absence of a planned work programme and urge you to send one in with next year's entry. Balbriggan has many attractive features to set it apart from other centres in the competition. Its amenity potential is excellent and serves the community well, the town park, the beach, the cliff walk and the harbour all looked particularly well on the day of adjudication. Your plans for a Marine Conservation Centre sound exciting and we would like to know more, details could be provided next year.

The Built Environment:

Public buildings look really well and the Court House, Library and Town Hall have been considered for the architectural award, the new cinema is a handsome development. A lot of your shop fronts look quite tacky with their dated signs and indiscriminate posters in windows and doors. The De Bruin premises is an example of a fine modern shop front which is spoiled in its presentation by its window display; a Spar premises had far too many signs. Discourage the use of closed window shutters for security at night in favour of see through shutters accompanied by internal lighting as this facilitates window shopping and enhances the streetscape.

Landscaping:

Balbriggan has been considered for the Landscaping Award particularly in relation to its new roundabout with its public art feature. The Balbriggan Business Park which includes the Brooks premises is beautifully landscaped also. The new civic space is excellent in design, maintenance and landscaping. Hopefully recently planted trees and shrubs will get a chance to mature and enhance the overall appearance of the town. Rowan trees are a good choice as they are supportive of wildlife and have wonderful autumn colour. Do submit details of your signature trees as this sounds like an exciting initiative.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

Work accomplished on the maintenance of the river Bracken is acknowledged however at the time of adjudication it was heavily littered with shopping trolleys and other debris. Green open spaces continue to be presented to an excellent standard at the harbour however even here there was dumping in the river; these appeared to be barriers of some type. We wish you every success in your lobbying for a pathway along the stretch of Bracken River owned by Fingal County Council.

Litter Control:

Well done to the volunteer who was noted picking litter in the town park on the evening of adjudication day. Litter control was very weak in car parks and this includes the car park of the Bracken Court Hotel, the SuperValu car park and the church car park. The beach was also quite littered and the large green bins featured bags of rubbish around their base.

Waste Minimisation:

Well done to the students of the two national schools in Balbriggan which have achieved their Green Flag and the efforts of other schools are acknowledged in this respect. We wish you every success with your plan to landscape the area around the recycling bins on the Harry Reynolds Road. Well done on your waste minimisation seminars, keep in mind the overall goal is to reduce the amount of waste produced, with this in mind perhaps a waste survey could be undertaken to use as a baseline for future plans for waste minimisation.

Tidiness:

More shopping trolleys were noted on the strand near the car park within the environs of what appears to be the old boat house. A car wreck located in the church car park was noted which is unusual these days. We look forward to the ducting of overhead service cables along Dublin Street. Well done on weed control along curbs and at the base of walls.

Residential Areas:

Well done on the standard achieved under this heading particularly in new residential developments, the challenge now will be to maintain this standard over the coming year. Balbriggan features houses of all ages and some period houses were particularly admired. The well maintained greens which feature handsome stands of mature trees to the residential area on the Skerries Road from the harbour were especially admired. Your Tidy Estates Competition is no doubt responsible to a large degree for the standard achieved under this heading.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

Roadside verges along the R132 enjoy an excellent standard of maintenance. Verges on the northern entrance have been left more natural which is fine as it encourages the growth of wild flowers; name plates look well also. Reference has already been made above to car parks which are in need of some attention. The wirescape on the northern entrance to the town centre looks poor, hopefully this will be ducted in due course. We acknowledge the proposed ducting for Dublin Street. Some stretches of footpath in the centre are in need of upgrading. The car park overlooking the sea at the Martello Tower is a fine amenity however the broken seat here should be replaced or refurbished. The car park at the railway station is being well maintained.

General Impression:

Balbriggan is a handsome town with many fine period buildings and an enviable location with a range of amenities for its residents; however the town centre could be enhanced greatly with greater attention to the presentation to the shop fronts.