

Tidy Towns Competition 2007

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Ballymakenny** Ref: **1384**
County: **Louth** Mark: **180**
Category: **A** Date(s): **19/07/2007**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2007
Overall Development Approach	50	25
The Built Environment	50	20
Landscaping	50	20
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	20
Litter Control	50	30
Waste Minimisation	20	5
Tidiness	30	15
Residential Areas	40	20
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	20
General Impression	10	5
TOTAL MARK	400	180

Overall Development Approach:

Ballymakenny 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:

Ballymakenny is a beautiful small settlement of houses built around an old church and graveyard. The church is a magnificent historical building with an ancient graveyard (some legible headstones date to the 18th century). The grounds are well maintained however I noted with regret that some of the church windows are broken. It is great to see new homes still being built in the area with new families either moving in or being given a stay in their home town. The area still has some fine old farm building which are of heritage value and it would be nice if some of these could be incorporated into new developments if possible.

Landscaping:

The landscaping is entirely rural in nature. The graveyard is very well maintained and contains some impressive specimen yew trees. In such a rural setting, existing mature trees and hedgerows compose the bulk of the landscape features. As such they should be carefully maintained. For hedgerows, this means only cutting back in winter (October - February) and replanting where they become 'gappy'.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

The wildlife features of Ballymakenny are primarily the species rich hedgerows, which are vital habitats for a range of plants and animals. Old buildings on the road have impressive stands of buddlia (butterfly bush) and ivy – both providing great resources to birds and insects.

Litter Control:

There was practically no litter in the village on the day of adjudication.

Waste Minimisation:

Without details of ongoing community projects, it was difficult to assess the extent of progress being made under this category. However taking into account the existing council facilities and SuperValu's own commitment in this area, I believe a nominal mark is appropriate for this year.

Tidiness:

Ballymakenny has the potential to score really well under this category, particularly if something could be done to restore the beautiful old church.

Residential Areas:

Although only a small settlement, the area was greatly enhanced by very well presented houses. These have set the standard for any future developments, and it is hoped that the character of the new structures will enhance the area even further. Well done to all concerned!

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

The standard of the road appears generally good, and the laneway off it has a fine old stone wall with a beautiful adjoining hedgerow.

General Impression:

Ballymakenny is a gem with a clearly impressive historical legacy. This could be built on by working to restore the church, particularly the broken windows. It could do really well in TidyTowns and participation would help steer the development of the area in future years. I really enjoyed my visit, and look forward to seeing how the area develops in coming years. Best of luck for the future.