

Tidy Towns Competition 2007

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Baltray** Ref: **1383**
County: **Louth** Mark: **192**
Category: **A** Date(s): **19/07/2007**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2007
Overall Development Approach	50	25
The Built Environment	50	25
Landscaping	50	20
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	20
Litter Control	50	20
Waste Minimisation	20	5
Tidiness	30	15
Residential Areas	40	25
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	30
General Impression	10	7
TOTAL MARK	400	192

Overall Development Approach:

Baltray 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:

Baltray is a beautiful coastal town with lots of character. The houses are all distinct – including a beautifully thatched cottage near the 19th Hole pub. The town is small and while lacking a church, shops or school, it does possess a focal point around the pub and the amenity area in front of it. The picnic tables are a particularly nice feature. Gardens are well kept and the entrance to the golf club is neat.

Landscaping:

There is some potential to improve the landscaping in Baltray. There is a certain lack of colour that could be addressed by putting in flowers and flowering shrubs. There are benches on the approach road to the estuary that provide great places to watch the river. Mowing the edges of grassy areas greatly improves its appearance by giving it a cared-for look.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

Baltray is blessed with natural riches! The Boyne estuary is a Special Area of Conservation for its diversity of habitats and species, particularly wintering birds. An informative panel at the car park overlooking the estuary would do much to highlight this fact. The village itself has a remnant hedgerow and there are open grassy areas that have been allowed to grow. These are great for wildlife although cutting the margins of the grass gives them a 'cared-for' appearance – also a sign to let people know what's going on does much to raise awareness. The Little Tern wardening project along the coast is helping one of Ireland's most endangered summer visitors and is well signed. The dunes are rich in wild flowers – again, a simple information sign would greatly increase people's appreciation of this.

Litter Control:

The village was litter free of the day. The area towards the dunes however is littered.

Waste Minimisation:

Without details of ongoing community projects, it was difficult to assess the extent of progress being made under this category and I would look forward to seeing whether progress has in fact been made on future assessments. 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. There are however plenty of ways in which local communities can assist in tackling this growing problem many useful tips are contained in the Race Against Waste community booklet available from the TidyTowns Unit in the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government.

Tidiness:

The grassy areas in and around the 19th Hole pub, while good for wildlife, look a bit scruffy. Simple mowing the margins of these areas does much to improve appearances. Also, the approach road to the dunes, along with the litter at the car park create a bad impression.

Residential Areas:

There are no major residential areas as this is a very small village. The houses all around are very well kept and each has a distinctive character.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

The approach road from Drogheda is very impressive as it hugs the Boyne estuary and makes for a spectacular entrance. Welcome signs on the approach roads would do much to add to the town's identity. The old bridge at the turn into the town is a beautiful heritage structure. Unfortunately a building at this corner is badly derelict with broken windows and takes considerably from the charm of the entrance. The road towards the dunes is very badly pot-holed and the dunes immediately adjacent to the parking area are littered and there is evidence of quad biking. This activity destroys sand dunes and should be prevented if possible. The back roads of the village are very much in keeping with the general character of the town with stone walls and decorative gardens.

General Impression:

Baltray is a lovely seaside town but is probably best known for its golf course. It is surrounded however with unique natural features and there is great potential to raise awareness of this fact.