

Tidy Towns Competition 2009

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Ballydehob** Ref: **664**
County: **Cork(West)** Mark: **283**
Category: **B** Date(s): **21/06/2009**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2009
Overall Development Approach	50	42
The Built Environment	50	36
Landscaping	50	37
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	32
Litter Control	50	38
Waste Minimisation	20	11
Tidiness	30	17
Residential Areas	40	28
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	34
General Impression	10	8
TOTAL MARK	400	283

Overall Development Approach:

Congratulations to the Ballydehob Tidy Towns Committee for participating in the Tidy Towns Competition 2009. Thank you for your submission, the photo album and for your map. The photos gave one a sense of Ballydehob ever before leaving home. The numbered hand drawn sketch of the town which highlights the places you regard as being most important for the Tidy Towns Competition was a great help to the adjudicator. It is a pity that you did not include a 3-5 year plan. There are many developments in Ballydehob and a vision of how the village will look in 3 to 5 years time is important. If you do not have one the exercise of compiling such a plan would enable you to set immediate, medium term and long term targets for yourselves, would help you decide which local bodies and agencies would assist you with your various projects. As all projects need funding you would set down in your plan how you propose to fund these various projects. You engage with a list of organisations and this must assist both your work and morale. Glad to read that your participation in this competition gives you a sense of achievement, further raising morale.

The Built Environment:

The mainstreet is a delight both in the design and the colour. The lower street has an understated, appealing appearance. Further along the street the traditional wooden fronts of Rosies, Annie McSweeney's and the Foodhall are most attractive. The Danno sculpture is prominent, celebrating one who brought pride to Ballydehob. Stabhall St is somewhat of a mixed bag at present as its identity changes somewhat. The railway bridges are a most important feature of the built environment of Ballydehob. They represent an important element in the development of Ballydehob. All seem well maintained. The plaque on the Twelve Arch gives the visitor a significant resumé of the history attached to these bridges. Some gable ends add to the charm of Ballydehob. The Church and its grounds are well presented. So also the Church of St Matthias and its fine cemetery. Scoil Náisiúnta Matthias Naofa is beautifully set into the natural wilderness about it, the wildlife sculptures adding to the wild and natural image. The natural stone

outcrops every so often, as by the school, bringing a natural appearance, definition and a neat appearance to its surroundings. The school is very well maintained with the hedge secluding some of the school activity from public view. The sense of a Gaeilge background is hinted strongly at one. What your submission calls 'a sense of place'. There are a number of unoccupied buildings throughout the village. In many cases their treatment means that they bring colour and character to their surroundings. The shed at Bóthar an tSórais presents a problem. The National School of 1882 maybe older than that shed but meaningful use as a naíonra and brightly coloured fresh paint have given it a lease of life. The Forge does not have that authentic old forge appearance but it is good that its location is marked. The Garda station is a special delight. Certainly one would not feel threatened by the thought of spending a night there. A pretty village.

Landscaping:

Last year's report mentioned that your 'footprints' are evident all over town. Still true. One could only feel admiration for the lady with the spraying can who went from one garden of bedding plants to another spraying tender loving care onto each hungry multi coloured plant. It is a joy to see the appearance of big buildings softened by generous space devoted to landscaping. This is particularly true in the case of the Community Hall. Similarly the road into Quay House is well landscaped and clean. There are attractive bits and pieces around. The best example is the landscaping at the pump, made all the more interesting by its name, Gáirdín Cití. The playground area, tennis courts and amenity area are all enhanced with fine landscaping. Keep an eye on the maintenance of some of the seats and picnic tables. One at the playground gazebo is particularly in need of repair.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

Ballydehob is obviously rich in wildlife. The swans and their family seem content in their surroundings, a positive sign. Access to the estuary and the walkway from the back of the school invite town dwellers to leave the TV and experience their natural surroundings. Seats are to be found everywhere and invite one to pause awhile and enjoy the surroundings. Picnic tables make one feel more welcome. Well done. One wonders if an ecological survey has been carried out for Ballydehob. If not, then think in terms of such a project. Certainly the notice board at the park is informative and suggests that some work has been done. But with such a wealth of biodiversity in the area the responsibility is even greater to cater in a proper manner for that biodiversity.

Litter Control:

One sympathises with the gentleman who is up and at the litter picking in the early morning, cleaning up the mess (relative mess) from the night before. It is a tribute to your committee that such a dawn patrol takes place at all. It is also an indictment of general anti-litter awareness projects that such a patrol is necessary. One is in no doubt but that your anti-litter award was well merited. Well done on participating in that competition. The emphasis in the litter section is not just on collecting and organising clean-ups. These are important but creating awareness of litter reduction is equally important. As a next step in your fight against litter make reduction your key ambition.

Waste Minimisation:

The Green Flag Status of Saint Brigid's fluttered in the breeze, to front and back of the school. Good luck to St Michael's. Your composting practices are also commendable. This is a waste minimisation procedure. The Bring Bank is maintained well and though easily accessible is not on public show.

Tidiness:

Overall Ballydehob presents a tidy appearance. There are problems. Construction work does create an untidy appearance but, hopefully, that is passing. I read of your problems with graffiti. And the problem persists. The wires on main street are an annoyance. There may be an opportunity to bury those cables at some time in the future. If that opportunity arises grasp it. But there are other features that create a secure environment. The finger signposts are welcoming and help draw one into the heart of Ballydehob. One feels like walking the shoreline. The street name signs are superb. But a 50 km speed limit sign must have been hit by a speeding motorist. For the most part, roadsides and kerbsides are well presented but as one arrives to town via the school there is need for attention. Keep an eye on other directional signs. Some need a cleaning.

Residential Areas:

The building boom is leaving its mark on Ballydehob also and in doing so is enhancing many areas with fine housing, well sculpted entrances, good open space and landscaping that is eye catching. The use made of the native rock is an attractive feature of Cnoc Aoibhinn. Make it a priority to give the new estates name stones or signs. Names help create identity and pride. That pride is evident in most estates with one exception where there is no name but kerbside weeds rule. But there were fine houses and homes in Ballydehob ever before the Tiger. There is a splendid example up the hill by the Garda station and the Laurels. This house, though somewhat diminished now by the new arrivals, lorded it over the surrounding countryside for many generations and enjoyed the spectacular views. Houses on the Station Road also add to the fine housing stock.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

The Skibbereen approach road is the keynote approach. The fine houses add to the attraction. The rock makes its calming presence felt. The care and formal landscaping signal that we are approaching somewhere special. Suddenly we are on the fine bridge into town, with its Twelve Arch cousin eyeing all that is happening. We go in search of a few holes of golf when we see the sign. No golf. But there is ample opportunity to express one's sporting prowess on the Bantry approach road. Another lovely bridge to get onto the pitch. A coat of paint on the clubhouse door would add to the pleasant experience. Sailor's Lane presents a challenge to your Tidy Towns Committee. All of the activity surrounding the golf range is unfortunate, not just the dereliction but the neglect of the landscaping. Even the footpath is impeded by the branches.

General Impression:

Ballydehob is blessed in having a natural estuary on its doorstep, spacious recreational grounds and blessed to have inherited a series of splendid bridges, the relics of another age. Estuary, recreational area and bridges are now woven into the everyday fabric of Ballydehob life through the walks that have been created and the more modern bridges that have been built. All combine to make Ballydehob a most pleasant place in which to live.