

# Tidy Towns Competition 2009

## **Adjudication Report**

Centre: **Ballymun** Ref: **854**  
County: **Dublin(City)** Mark: **252**  
Category: **G** Date(s): **04/06/2009**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2009
Overall Development Approach	50	42
The Built Environment	50	33
Landscaping	50	32
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	30
Litter Control	50	27
Waste Minimisation	20	16
Tidiness	30	12
Residential Areas	40	28
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	25
General Impression	10	7
<b>TOTAL MARK</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>252</b>

### **Overall Development Approach:**

Ballymun is very welcome to the 2009 TidyTown Competition and many thanks for the comprehensive information and supporting document supplied. Your map outlining particular areas of interest, including the location of winners of local best garden and schools competition, was a great help on adjudication day. It is evident that you are an extremely active group and work closely with Ballymun Regeneration, Dublin City Council, the local community and other stakeholders on the many projects and initiatives that are outlined in your submission. Once again you have submitted an entry which shows innovation along with real results from project which you are continually developing. Your commitment to developing a five year plan will be a great help to assist you in creating a timeframe to undertake all the tasks you wish to do. It allows you to see how you are progressing towards your goals and also provides satisfaction on completion of tasks. Well done on your efforts this year to complete this plan, which has gained you extra points in this category. We also welcome your exchanges with other TidyTowns committees as this is a great way to learn what has been successful in others areas and also to exchange information on the many projects you have underway in your community.

### **The Built Environment:**

As Ballymun changes year on year this is a category that we know will evolve in successive submission to the competition. As you travel through your town the journey takes you from waste ground, to building sites to streets that have settled extraordinarily well into established residential neighbourhoods. The success of this regeneration projects is how you have managed to keep these activities running side by side with such evident success. The human scale of many of the streets means that on adjudication days neighbours can be seen chatting over garden walls alongside children playing in the street. The sense of real neighbourhoods being established rather than streets of houses being built are a real achievement for your community. In particular the areas around Longdale Terrace and Marewood Crescent were admired.

The centre of Ballymun was looking particularly lively and attractive on the day of adjudication as the farmers market was in full swing. The plans to develop the main square may be a part of future phases but it was great to see the space being used in the interim. The commercial area and the neighbourhood centres scattered through Ballymun were also lively and looking well with shop fronts generally well maintained. The challenge will be to keep empty units maintained to a high standard so they do not detract from local business. The run of shops on the entry to Coultrey from Santry avenue were admired as the hoarding to empty units has been painted the same colour as the red brick surround and so empty units do not stand out. As ever schools were presented to a high standard so well done to all concerned. In addition the grounds of St Pappins Nursing home and the Tir na Nog crèche were beautifully maintained and a real credit to the staff here.

In the coming year as the rate of development may be impacted by the current climate the challenge will be to retain your high standards of presentation both in the developed areas and sites awaiting works. We look forward with interest to the results of your Open Space Project on such a visible site at the heart of your town.

### **Landscaping:**

The emphasis on landscaping right from the start of the Ballymun Masterplan project is very evident on the ground with the large number of street trees and the development of the local open spaces to such a high standard. The challenge to all involved is to maintain these areas to ensure the ongoing success of all the spaces. Generally trees were very well maintained and thriving. The challenge is to maintain the shrub and more ornamental plantings. In many areas weed growth was evident through planted beds. We see that the maintenance of all areas is high on your agenda and the use of local initiatives such as the GAP community garden teams in motivating residents to look after their communal areas is a great way to address this issue. The communal areas at the entrance to Coultrey and the stone sign were very well maintained and we congratulate residents in this area.

The high planters with colourful seasonal flowers to the main street really added a dash of colour to the street. This colour scheme could also have been extended to the temporary planter boxes in the main square as they needed some attention.

In general the open spaces were well maintained with Coultrey Park looking especially well in spite of the rather ugly railing surrounding it. This is a deserved winner of past awards and we look forward to the railings being removed once the park is complete to allow it to be properly viewed. The Poppintree community centre was well used on the day of adjudication and the surroundings were clean and well maintained although graffiti is an issue here.

### **Wildlife and Natural Amenities:**

Congratulations on the production of your Biodiversity Action Plan which sets out very clear short and long term targets for you to aim for and has gained you extra points in this category. This is a real credit you and again an innovative project for others to learn from. The list of actions, both long and short term, will certainly keep you busy. We will follow your progress with interest over the next number of years to see how you fare, and wish you every success with this fine initiative. What is particularly of interest is how the ideals of the biodiversity plan are very much linked to practical measures such as the plant sales which were seen at the farmers market and the works with the school groups.

### **Litter Control:**

Generally most areas were litter free with the town centre particularly clean. One area which let the space down was the number of cigarette butts outside the hotel in spite of the wall mounted cigarette butt collector. Perhaps you could encourage local business to arrange for their curtilages to be swept a number of times during the day to keep on top of this. You seem to be approaching the issue of litter from a number of angles including education and liaison with residents. Well done on this approach. Congratulations on the success of your Beautiful Spaces winner. The Holy Spirit Girls School was a deserved winner as was not only their ground beautifully presented but the verges and areas outside of the school boundary were also looking well kept and clean.

We note your rapid response teams aim to remove fly tipping within 24 hours. This is critical where empty sites adjoin residential areas. Rubbish was noted dumped on the empty site at Shangan Avenue opposite Whiteacre green which resulted in litter being blown through gaps in the hoarding into the surrounding residential areas and pocket park. This must be a real issue with residents in this area trying keeping their communal areas clean.

We will be interested to see the results of the transition years students litter audit which should help identify

where to concentrate your resources to tackle this problem.

### **Waste Minimisation:**

The range of initiatives you are spearheading to tackle the waste minimisation issue are to be commended. The practical and most visible examples of which could be seen at the farmers market with the sale of restored items of furniture which in addition to preventing items being sent to the dump also allows the furniture be passed on to new owners.

Good luck on your efforts to secure the reverse vending machines which have proved successful in other areas.

Your efforts at encouraging composting are to be commended and again you are leading the way in trying out a community composting project.

Well done to all your schools on their achievements in the Green School scheme. All schools should be encouraged to fly the green flag as a constant reminder to students and indeed parents of their schools involvement and successes in the project.

### **Tidiness:**

This is a difficult category for you as though many of the established areas were tidy they exist for the moment alongside empty sites or vacant buildings. The prominent hoarding to the ground floor commercial unit at the gateway building at Santry Cross was painted and well maintained and will need special monitoring as it is so open to views on the approached from the north, Would there be a more creative short term solution for this hoarding that could perhaps incorporate a welcome to Ballymun theme? This could complement your proposed welcome to Ballymun signage which we look forward to seeing next year.

The issue of weed growth to tree pits, in residential areas especially, is a real challenge for you. We note your proposal in the Biodiversity Action Plan to introduce a competition for gardening for tree pits for under twelve's which is a positive approach to gain community support in tackling this problem. Where tree pits have a compacted gravel surface such as in the main street the weed growth is at a minimum however in other areas the weed problem in tree pits really detract from the tidiness of the streetscape. Good luck in your initiatives to tackle this issue.

Your efforts to tackle graffiti seem to be really paying off as very little graffiti was noticed on adjudication day. Where graffiti was a problem efforts to remove it were noted as well as some walls which had been planted or treated with anti graffiti paint. Well done to all involved at keeping this issue under control.

### **Residential Areas:**

The phased provision of housing has resulted in a variety of housing configurations which all fit well into the evolving streets. The success of your best garden and best areas awards are a tribute to the sense of community and pride in ownership that has been a cornerstone of your housing strategy. The garden action teams and its evolving community action teams run by GAP seem to have been very successful.

Once again Belclare Avenue was beautifully kept and maintained. Also the front gardens in Marewood Crescent were delightful with the window boxes adding seasonal colour. The neighbourhood sign and entry point at Coultry was well done and we wonder are there any plans to create more formal signage to indicate the entrances to neighbourhood.

The circulation layout including one way streets and cul de sacs can make orientation difficult for the visitor to Ballymun. Perhaps you could consider a more legible signage system or way markers within the residential areas. This may fit in with your green map signage plans for a coordinated approach. These can attract graffiti and would need to be regularly cleaned once installed.

### **Roads, Streets and Back Areas:**

As the roadways are still evolving some of the older paths and surface are in poor repair and we hope that any temporary repairs will be carried out to ensure they are safe for all road users including wheelchairs. The entrance to Ballymun from the M50 is obviously a work in progress with the works to the M50 ongoing. The grass verges on the approach were very unkempt and once the road works are complete we hope the opportunity to maintain this area to a higher standard will be taken. Even a mowing strip maintained to the edge of the road would do much to tidy the approach especially as long term tree planting may need to wait

until all the engineering works in this area are finalised. As mentioned in previous sections the issue of weed growth in tree pits really is a problem that needs to be tackled through the area. Overall the use of good quality materials including stone and good quality setts has resulted in a quality of footpaths that is exceptional. We hope this standard of finish will be continued on all new paths as your town evolves.

**General Impression:**

As you rightly point out in your submission Ballymun is a work in progress but as ever we are impressed by the innovative approaches used to tackle the issues your community are facing. The strength of the Ballymun Tidy Towns Committee lies in its spread of members, covering so many interests, that all combine to create a group capable of tackling and achieving set goals. Your work to date and your goals as set out in your annual plan are nothing if not ambitious and we wish you every success in your future endeavours.