

Tidy Towns Competition 2009

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Ballitore** Ref: **840**
County: **Kildare** Mark: **222**
Category: **B** Date(s): **18/06/2009**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2009
Overall Development Approach	50	33
The Built Environment	50	33
Landscaping	50	34
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	18
Litter Control	50	23
Waste Minimisation	20	0
Tidiness	30	14
Residential Areas	40	28
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	32
General Impression	10	7
TOTAL MARK	400	222

Overall Development Approach:

Ballitore is very welcome to the 2009 Tidy Towns Competition and thank you for your detailed entry form. Your OS map was very useful on adjudication day but the key of numbers was not clear and map legibility could be improved for next year's submission. In order for you to really make progress in the competition we would recommend that your group prepare a three to five year plan with both short term and long term tasks identified. This need not be professionally prepared but should set out your clear aims and goals for your area. It will be a very useful tool to help focus your groups efforts and allow you to reach achievable goals in realistic time frames but will also gain you extra marks in this category. The other benefit of a plan like this is that it can show people in the wider community the projects you are hoping to undertake and when you hope to achieve them. This can also help you target sponsorship with local bodies that have vested interest in the area and build on successful sponsorship achieved to date. Well done recruiting more members for your committee as we notice that you numbers have risen from 8 to 10 since last years submission.

The Built Environment:

Ballintore has a number of historic buildings that are very connected to the unique social history of the village. This unique history and built form is combined in the Quaker Museum housed in the Mary Leadbeater House which also contains the community library and a lovely garden to the rear. This building was very well presented and the librarian was most helpful indicating points of interest in your village. The use of granite plaques and old style script on the signage both here and elsewhere in the village is well thought out and it would be great to see more of this signage on buildings of interest in the future. The ornate hanging sign at the corner of the museum needs some attention. We look forward to future developments of the adjoining Tramyard.

The upgrading of the Market Building with its sensitive use of timber sash windows and traditional finishes has

made a huge impact on the centre of the village and we hope this will be an impetus for the refurbishment of surrounding run down properties over the coming years.

Ballintore contains a number of shop and pub fronts that add to the village character. In particular the new Shaker Café, with its muted paint tones, and the adjoining Tracey's shop, whose signage was discreet and well maintained. Well done on the improvements here. O'Connor's pub was also looking well with some colourful window boxes. The old shop front adjoining Kelly's pub is one of the original facades in the village and care should be taken to maintain this and ensure any renovations retain its character.

The Meeting House itself was in need of some works with the gate and woodwork requiring attention. We note that the building is due to be upgraded by Kildare County Council so we look forward to seeing progress in this area.

Landscaping:

The planters to the main square were very pleasant and full of colour but add only seasonal interest. Perhaps you would consider some street tree planting which would add year round landscape structure and create a pleasant backdrop for the many historic buildings in the village core. An empty tree pit was noticed at the parking area to the front of the Museum and Library so perhaps tree planting has been attempted in the past. We would encourage you to try to plant some street trees here and perhaps on the paved corner area opposite the Shaker Shop, underground services allowing. This may be something you could discuss with the Area Engineer. The garden to the rear of the museum was an oasis of calm and well maintained.

The stone troughs at the entrance to the Shaker Store were nicely planted and perhaps the pump could be painted to make this a real feature.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

The area around the river was looking well with no evidence of litter so well done on your efforts in this area. We understand that you are planning to install seats here as a future project. Be sure to select a design that is sympathetic to the riverside location.

The area around the old mill is obviously a habitat rich location and care should be taken to ensure habitats here, and throughout the village are protected. Have you thought about undertaking a simple habitat survey of your village as has been suggested in previous reports? This can be done by simply indicating habitat types present in and around the village on your OS map. Hedgerows, gardens, riverside, trees, mown/umgrown grass etc can all be mapped. This can then be used as a basis for developing schemes and planting appropriate species in order to enhance and develop these areas, thus increasing the biodiversity of your village.

Litter Control:

Well done to you all on your efforts at litter control as very little litter was seen in the village on adjudication day. However the litter bin beside the Mary Leadbeater House was full and perhaps the schedule of litter collection may need to be reviewed. Some litter was also evident along the small stream that the road crosses before the Meeting House. The area of vacant ground here seems to be a litter trap and needs a clean up. Try to encourage shop owners and publicans to sweep their cartilages as cigarette butts were evident in road gutters outside some premises.

Waste Minimisation:

Waste minimisation is about more than litter collection and we would hope to see more progress in this category next year. You do not mention if your nearest school is part of An Taisces Green Schools programme. This is a great programme to drive home the issues of sustainability and waste minimisation to the younger members of the community and we hope you will take part in this in future years if not involved already.

Have you considered carrying out a waste audit to see how much waste is generated and how you can target specific actions to reduce this accumulation? As part of a waste audit you could see how many households in the village have compost bins (this could be done in conjunction with local schoolchildren. Households without bins could be encouraged to contact Kildare Co Co who supply bins at a reasonable cost.

Tidiness:

The various derelict and unoccupied buildings in the centre of the village can look unkempt though we hope in

time they will be developed. In the meantime owners should be encouraged to keep their premises tidy and try to ensure hoarding and windows are kept clean and facades tidy.

The hoarding to the new development Abbeyfield is well kept but ensure this is maintained for the duration of the building works.

The Quaker School information sign attached to the terrace of houses on the approach to the village from the east was cracked and in time perhaps this could be replaced with a granite sign similar to others used in the village. The satellite dishes on the front of the terrace were also unfortunately located. Try to ensure dishes are located on or near a structure so that they are not visible from the street, especially in the core historic village area.

The shrub planting at the entrance to Glanbia requires some pruning and cutting back.

Residential Areas:

We note the regular clean ups organised at Millview and the area was well presented on adjudication day, both old and new sections of the estate. The gazebo feature to the central open space at Abbeyfield was admired. Some of the newly planted trees here had failed so ensure all landscaping has been completed to a satisfactory standard and dead trees replaced before the developer completes the estate. There were a number of walls in the estate that could perhaps be planted with climbers to soften the 'new build' look of the estate. There were some colourful displays of pots and hanging baskets in homes and gardens on Fullers Court Road and the residents are to be congratulated on their efforts, they really added colour to the street.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

The Kildare Tourist sign at the entrance to the village at the junction with Thoran Road needs to be cleaned. Make sure all signs are clean and clear of overhanging vegetation. Hedges and boundaries along roadsides were well looked after.

General Impression:

Well done to all your members for the commitment shown to the TidyTowns organisation and their community, this being the 27th anniversary of your committees establishment. As you recognise, your village is going through a transition period at the moment and we look forward to following your progress over the coming years. Well done to all involved in this years submission.