

# Tidy Towns Competition 2009

## *Adjudication Report*

Centre: **Ballacolla** Ref: **407**  
County: **Laois** Mark: **285**  
Category: **A** Date(s): **24/06/2009**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2009
Overall Development Approach	50	45
The Built Environment	50	35
Landscaping	50	40
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	28
Litter Control	50	38
Waste Minimisation	20	12
Tidiness	30	17
Residential Areas	40	25
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	37
General Impression	10	8
<b>TOTAL MARK</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>285</b>

### **Overall Development Approach:**

When this adjudicator first visited Ballacolla in 1980, it seemed to be a not particularly handsome village in pleasant, but not particularly picturesque countryside: what impressed at the time and impresses even more today was the energy with which the TidyTowns Committee members were addressing both, their man-made and their natural environment. It could be said that the people of Ballacolla have created this successful village out of remarkably little; it is now among the highest ranking centres in the county. Congratulations, therefore, on your determination and enterprise – and thank you for the fine album covering all activities, in addition to your 3-Year Plan. Would that more committees did a 'walkabout' to identify the work needed!

### **The Built Environment:**

Arriving from any of the four directions, but especially from Durrow and Borris-in-Ossory, one is left in no doubt that one is approaching a well-kept village. On the date of the visit, one end of the church was in scaffolding and significant repairs were obviously in progress; the church also benefits in appearance from the very fine stone roadside wall. The school is also well presented, but its boundary wall will need repainting before next year. The neat Garda station was admired. The old National School, very decently renovated, is perhaps the most picturesque public building and it is very good to learn that it is now in use as a hall. The Sports Hall does not pretend to be a handsome piece of architecture, but it is very well kept. The business and commercial premises are all well presented – their colours are particularly eye-catching – and there is a minimum of mass-produced and plastic signage.

### **Landscaping:**

The Failte sign is appropriately welcoming and well tended. Trim roadside verges, extending far out into the countryside with well tended shrubs and shrubberies, picnic areas with sturdy seating, and floral displays in

beds, barrels and other containers throughout the village and including at the Sports Centre, all impressed. The roses were especially well tended and successful opposite Caoch O Laoire and on the Borris road. The area round the pump with its fine stone wall on the Durrow road is another pleasing feature. The lengthy stone wall topped by bedding plants at St Fergal's Park was one of the most imaginative landscaping projects. The playground at St Fergal's Park was bright and clean. If the graveyard may be considered as part of Landscaping, it is certainly most beautifully maintained. It is good to have your photographs because these disclose that you plant bulbs extensively for spring showing.

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

The Wild Life park is an excellent amenity – not only for those who inhabit it, but as a very striking educational resource for human beings. This adjudicator had not been in Ballycolla since the trees were tagged with names – a first rate enterprise. The pathways are extensive and well looked after. Trees come under this heading – it is fairly astonishing to read that you have planted 300 beech trees on the Borris road: please continue to provide statistical information of this kind. Young trees were also seen in the school grounds. The glass house must be a useful facility. Hedges, which this adjudicator recalls from his last visit as struggling, now add to the scenic and environmental inventory in a substantial way.

#### **Litter Control:**

It is good to read that you are taking part in LCC Litter Challenge. You should do well, as there was very little disposable litter on the date of the visit.

#### **Waste Minimisation:**

You are clearly continuing to take this subject very seriously by giving talks in school and also involving the business community. The Recycling Point was seen to be accessible and well kept, and includes a clothing bank.

#### **Tidiness:**

In general, Ballycolla is a tidy village. There is some dereliction, but not of an overwhelming nature.

#### **Residential Areas:**

The prominent houses at the cross roads, mainly businesses, are well presented. The thatched cottage is a picturesque relict of the past; the slate cottage next to it is in need of some attention. St Fergal's Park is generally well kept with many nicely painted houses, but several boundary walls were in need of repainting; the colours of boundary walls should match the houses to which they belong; the long wall opposite the planted wall was especially in need of a coat of paint. Many individual homes, especially on the Borris road, are proudly maintained, with charming gardens adorning the roadside.

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

Resurfacing in some spots such as at the pump and at O Laoire's was favourably noted. The surface of the Rathdowney road is not as good as the others and this may be due to heavy construction traffic servicing the motorway. It was good to find traffic lights, pedestrian crossings and paving appropriate to traffic calming, and also new signs.

#### **General Impression:**

'Self-sufficiency' seems to be the motto of Ballycolla: no task appears to be too great to be taken on.