

# Tidy Towns Competition 2009

## *Adjudication Report*

Centre: **Balla** Ref: **894**  
County: **Mayo** Mark: **215**  
Category: **B** Date(s): **12/06/2009**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2009
Overall Development Approach	50	34
The Built Environment	50	30
Landscaping	50	30
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	16
Litter Control	50	30
Waste Minimisation	20	9
Tidiness	30	14
Residential Areas	40	20
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	25
General Impression	10	7
<b>TOTAL MARK</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>215</b>

### **Overall Development Approach:**

Balla Tidy Towns Committee is welcomed to the 2009 Competition after a five year absence, your last year of entry being in 2004. You have a good working relationship with Mayo County Council, GAA, South Mayo Leader, schools and local residents. The committee would appear to be rather small, given the size of the town, although we appreciate the comments you have made regarding pulling the whole community together and wish you luck in this regard.

### **The Built Environment:**

The standard in this category was quite good on the day. The National School and grounds looked well, although its boundary wall was a little flaky. It was sporting its Green Flag, and a bird table was noted in its grounds. The fine stone church looked elegant and its car park was well maintained, although additional landscaping/tree planting might be considered in this location. The church grounds are truly magnificent and even contain the old church bell! The new blocks of buildings on the Castlebar approach fit quite neatly in to the town fabric. One of these blocks contains Costcutters and the Post Office, and these looked well. The Bridge needed some attention. The Sheebeen was quite fresh, although other buildings in its vicinity looked quite shabby in comparison. John Mc Ellan's is an attractive old shopfront which should be restored to its former glory. The Rendezvous Bar looked well. The Garda Station looked well, as did the community centre.

### **Landscaping:**

This is an area of the competition that you obviously enjoy. The landscaped areas throughout the town were well cared for on the day. There is scope for developing the tennis courts and playing field area in to a marvellous landscaped space. The Village Green at the crossroads looked well surrounded by houses. The main square, with its incorporated community building and round tower, would be worth developing further in regards to this category. At the moment, the surface is very rough and a landscaping project would be well

worthwhile in this location.

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

We noted your involvement in developing local walks and the sowing, and proposed sowing of wildflower beds, all of which is to the good. The development of habitats at the woodlands estate by means of logs is an excellent idea. You mention the fact that there are many species of wildlife in the area. Have you considered conducting wildlife surveys? These could be done in conjunction with the school and lead to developing a wildlife management plan in the future.

### **Litter Control:**

We were pleased to hear that you participate in Mayo County Council's litter league. Your regular clean ups, information leaflets and dog fouling campaigns are all good initiatives. However, some litter was spotted in the square area and in the vicinity of the round tower on the day.

### **Waste Minimisation:**

The recycling area in the centre of the village was well maintained. We were pleased to note that the national school had achieved its Green Flag status and said flag was flying proudly on the day! The segregation of your litter pick-ups is an excellent idea. The proposal regarding applying for composting bins from Mayo County Council is a good idea.

### **Tidiness:**

The town was generally well cared for on adjudication day. We look forward to your new traffic signage. The tin roofs to some attractive traditional cottages on the Castlebar Road should be re-painted in traditional red colour. Weed control was a problem on this approach and beyond the church, also along the Kiltimagh Road. Do discourage advertising hoardings, as they can give approach roads a rather cluttered appearance.

### **Residential Areas:**

The houses along approach roads were generally well cared for. Churchview estate sported some new trees, which were coming along well. The rendered boundary wall at Ardchronan was in need of painting and the water tower in this location would also benefit from a fresh coat of paint, it appeared to have been painted some time ago? The estate on the Castlebar Road was admired. Cheerful houses beyond the church made a good impression, one had extended its area of interest to the roadside in front of its garden, which made a very positive contribution. Some of the boundary walls beyond the school were in need of some attention.

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

The ongoing maintenance of approach roads is good. We look forward to seeing the new lime tree avenue in years to come. However, on the day, the approach from Castlebar appeared somewhat overgrown - orange cones indicated that perhaps some roadworks had taken place, maybe this would explain its condition? New footpaths beyond the school were admired, the old village pump should be restored in this location. The verges on Mayo Abbey Road were quite overgrown at the town nameplate. The children crossing sign here was a little faded. The large open space opposite the Kiltimagh Road was very neglected and overgrown.

### **General Impression:**

Balla is a very pleasant town to visit and looked well on adjudication day.