

# Tidy Towns Competition 2009

## *Adjudication Report*

Centre: **Ballycastle** Ref: **504**  
County: **Mayo** Mark: **245**  
Category: **B** Date(s): **09/06/2009**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2009
Overall Development Approach	50	34
The Built Environment	50	36
Landscaping	50	34
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	18
Litter Control	50	34
Waste Minimisation	20	9
Tidiness	30	17
Residential Areas	40	24
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	32
General Impression	10	7
<b>TOTAL MARK</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>245</b>

### **Overall Development Approach:**

Ballycastle TidyTowns Association is welcomed to the 2009 Competition. You would appear to have a good relationship with Mayo County Council, local school and various residents' associations and committees.

### **The Built Environment:**

There is quite a lot of dereliction in the town centre, as you have identified. This looks unfortunate and many of the traditional buildings would be marvellous if restored to their former glory. We wish you luck in your efforts to tackle this issue. Have you contacted the County Council to seek their help regarding this issue? The two churches looked well, either side of the Main Street. The building beside the Catholic Church (possibly old National School?) sported some attractive Neo-Celtic murals, which were admired. However, its rear area is visible from the church and national school car park, and could be improved upon. The hall was admired, although its sign will need repainting before next year. Commercial premises generally looked well cared for, of note being the Ballycastle Resource Centre which was quite fresh. The mural on the Ceide House was admired, but will need painting before next year also. Hopefully, its new owners will restore it. Healy's is a nice traditional shopfront. Discourage plastic signage and encourage its replacement with signage of a more traditional timber variety. The Post Office was quite fresh, but will need painting before next year. Polke's is another traditional front, it sported some staining below its signage. Do ensure, the render is not removed from traditional street buildings, these were intended to be plastered and, therefore its removal, to reveal stonework below, is not only incorrect from a conservation point of view, but can also lead to problems of water penetration. The Garda Station was quite fresh. Don't forget gable walls when considering overall presentation, as these are most apparent as the houses step up and down along Main Street. An attractive outbuilding facing the Crossmolina Road would benefit from a fresh coat of paint.

### **Landscaping:**

The picnic area on the Belmullet Road was admired and well maintained, but the area at the opposite side, with relatively new tree planting, was quite overgrown. The Tir Saile Sculpture Trail is a very interesting one, but may need further signage to increase its accessibility. There is scope for development of this aspect of the competition in the Catholic Church and National School car park area. It could incorporate the playing pitch to the rear of the church.

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

There is scope for development of this category of the competition, given Ballycastle's unique coastal position. We look forward to the further expansion of the nature trails and provision of new signage. Have you conducted a wildlife survey in conjunction with the National School? This is one idea you could investigate.

#### **Litter Control:**

The standard in this category could have been better on the day, litter being all the more visible in a town of Ballycastle's size. Some was apparent blowing along the main street, in the vicinity of the recycling area and along approach roads, such as the Killala Road. The bin at the Belmullet Road picnic area was a little rusty and could be repainted before next year. Congratulations on your participation in the Mayo County Council Litter League. The help you get from the schoolchildren in this regard must be useful in your work.

#### **Waste Minimisation:**

The recycling area was reasonably neat and well maintained on adjudication day. What other projects have you planned in relation to this category of the competition?

#### **Tidiness:**

On first impressions, the town looked quite neat but closer inspection revealed rusty poles along the main street and a lot of derelict sites. Work in relation to derelict sites is vital in a town such as this. We appreciate the problems involved and wish you luck with this. Ballycastle is a unique and charming town and it would be a shame to lose some of these unique buildings. An outbuilding at the corner of the Crossmolina Road needed a fresh coat of paint. Weed control was a problem at the hall area, to its side wall by the recycling area. Weeds were also a problem on the Killala Road and to a roofless building on Main Street, which was quite derelict inside. This opening could perhaps be boarded up? The tin roof of an outbuilding should be repainted on the Belmullet side of the town, its stone walls could also be freshly whitewashed. The Christmas lights on some properties looked somewhat un-seasonal!

#### **Residential Areas:**

The individual houses along the streets of the town looked well cared for on the day, and freshly painted. The attractive and unusual houses at Seaview Place were greatly admired, with their freshly painted pebble-dashed gables, and the associated open space was well maintained, with tree planting and grassy expanses. Presumably, the circular houses and landscaped space on the Killala road are part of the Tir Saile Trail?

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

The approach roads were a little inconsistent in standard on the day, advertising hoardings were a problem. This practice gives approach roads a rather cluttered appearance. The townland nameplates, a feature of this area, were greatly admired and are an attractive idea. The Killala approach was well maintained with well cut verges. The Crossmolina road was quite overgrown and the nameplate was virtually obscured from view. The Belmullet Road was somewhat neglected, apart from its attractive picnic area. The directional signage on this road was a little grubby. This is an attractive approach to the town, with its view to the church spires of the town on the hillside above.

#### **General Impression:**

It was a pleasure to visit Ballycastle after a number of years. It is a pleasant and busy town which retains much of its unique character. Good luck with your future work.