

Tidy Towns Competition 2009

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Baltinglass** Ref: **263**
County: **Wicklow** Mark: **217**
Category: **C** Date(s): **17/06/2009**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2009
Overall Development Approach	50	30
The Built Environment	50	30
Landscaping	50	29
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	23
Litter Control	50	25
Waste Minimisation	20	6
Tidiness	30	14
Residential Areas	40	21
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	34
General Impression	10	5
TOTAL MARK	400	217

Overall Development Approach:

Thank you for your completed application, maps and photos. There is a committee of 5, with support from a community employment scheme, Wicklow County Council, Fas, many local businesses, Baltinglass Womens group, youth group, GAA, fire crew, Active Retirement Group and the Fair Trade committee. There is good local communications through the local newspaper, letters and meetings. There are also links with local school. It is good you see the TidyTowns competition as a motivator for prompting dynamic change. It would be great to see the community come together on proposing what the priorities should be and forming a 3, 4 or 5 year plan. It is impossible to tackle everything at once so realistic targets should be set that build steady progress year on year. Well done on work to date and good luck!

The Built Environment:

The primary school looks wonderful with its nice styles and gates. The adult learning centre is an interesting modern style, also well presented, as is the Teagasc offices with the nice entrance signs. The Abbey is a wonderful asset. It is clean and well presented with good info signs. The Church of Ireland adjoining it is also well maintained. All things natural, The Watermill and the Maxol were all noticed for looking well. There are good new commercial buildings and it is hoped that these find occupiers soon. The Church is very well presented, as is the fine building opposite. The CARE building is a good amenity. The outdoor education centre is very smart. Germaines/ Inisfail looks well also. The B.G. Inn stands out as the only one with colour and floral displays in the area. It would appear better for the town if more colour was spread around and distributed.

Landscaping:

Baltinglass Park is a real treasure. Great example of partnership working going by the list of organisations on the board. The area around the Credit Union towards the outdoor ed centre is good, can see newish road

markings , lamp-posts and trees in tubs were all admired. The weir area is well maintained.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

Water features greatly in this town. The river is an asset, the golf club pond is also a diverse habitat. The town park has native trees and fencing is with natural materials. It would be great to see information panels on entrance to the park on what wildlife is in the area. Walks along the Slaney could be developed and promoted

Litter Control:

Litter control was very good at time of visit. The bring centres near the outdoor ed centre is very well presented although there were no signs, but excellent parking facilities and landscaping. As this was a problem in previous years you are commended for making progress here, well done. Be vigilant as tackling litter requires more than just regular clean-ups. There should be education and also enforcement of litter laws to make for sustainable behaviour changes.

Waste Minimisation:

Well done to the schools for their green flags – retaining ones for years and for getting new ones. That takes a lot of work and creativity. There are many ways to increase marks in this section. Refer to the Race Against Waste guidance, environmental NGOs and council environmental officers for assistance.

Tidiness:

The Candadix factory is well presented but the vacant one across from it is in a poor state. Baltinglass Hire and Auto Shop have clean new railings which look well. This could be further enhanced by planting to screen and soften and as there is already soil at the base this would not be too difficult. Scattered cars for sale are out of place along the roadside. The garage presents the picnic area very well. The signs at junction of Casteldermot Road for bed and breakfasts could do with cleaning as can hardly be made out. It's a mixed bag in some places of town where very attractive new houses, or lovingly restored old cottages sit next to derelict houses. Baltinglass TT might like to do as others have and paint up fronts or doors and windows of boarded up houses. It can be difficult dealing with this but be persistent with council in addressing it. The building sites have gone some way in screening where boarding is in place. If it was painted it would be further improved.

Residential Areas:

Allandale is well maintained and tidy. Road of houses down from the hire shop are also well presented. Whitehall Park is clean and well cared for with efforts made to plant in communal areas. There are odd cycle lanes in place however which don't connect anywhere.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

The north approach on N81 is very nice with well trimmed verges and lines of trees, stone wall and name signs in view. The vista opens up to the Waterside Park which is lovely. Many roads could do with resurfacing and this was especially noticed on the Kiltegan Road. Approach from this direction is very neat with well trimmed verges and trees. This gives a good impression. A few derelict sites and shabby fencing but all kerbs are clean and neat. Other strong fencing just has gaps in places. On the Rathvilly Road, the surfaces are notably of higher standard. Some fine private houses and gardens here. The improvements in pavement with tactile surfaces and improvements to traffic management/ parking demarcation were noted.

General Impression:

Good layout and some fine buildings but the overall impression is that the town is not at its best. It is quite unkempt in places, though it looks like it was thriving in days gone by. There is a challenge in how to inject new vitality to the area. This could be helped by fresh paint and planters with colour for short term impact while at the same time working on the underlying community cohesion. If the community already is working in partnership then it should be easy to fix the aesthetics. There is great potential here and steady progress forward will see things thrive in future.