

Tidy Towns Competition 2011

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Ballinabranna** Ref: **1816**
County: **Carlow** Mark: **228**
Category: **B** Date(s): **08/07/2011**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2010	Mark Awarded 2011
Overall Development Approach	50	0	35
The Built Environment	50	0	31
Landscaping	50	0	30
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	0	20
Litter Control	50	0	31
Waste Minimisation	20	0	5
Tidiness	30	0	20
Residential Areas	40	0	26
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	0	23
General Impression	10	0	7
TOTAL MARK	400	0	228

Overall Development Approach:

Thank you for the completed application and the sketch map which was very much appreciated by the adjudicator as the area under consideration Ballinabranagh/Milford is very spread out and this was my visit to the vicinity. Maybe the committee might produce a more comprehensive map for next year's competition highlighting the area to be reviewed and also places of interest in more detail.

You are welcome to the TidyTowns Competition 2011 and it looks like you are a first time entry as there is no indication that the village has been in the competition before. I would suggest that you use the good auspices of the Carlow County Council and Carlow Partnership to get advice on how to prepare a simple 3 year plan of action for you as a committee. The representation of 10 from the three areas is very necessary as each area seems to have its own autonomy to some extent. Consult the TidyTowns handbook www.TidyTowns.ie for ideas on the formulation of a set of objectives that you can then take to the County Development Officer and Carlow Partnership. It will be of great benefit to you as a committee to have that plan ready for 2012. It's good to note that you have already set up good communication channels with the local community and school and this the key to getting people to support our efforts. Best of luck with your plans and one hope that this is the start of a fruitful relationship with the TidyTowns competition.

The Built Environment:

It takes a little time to navigate and get to know the three areas that make up the Ballinabranagh entry but we got there in the end. This section looks at the protection of architectural heritage, presentation of buildings and streetscapes including access for people with disabilities. It also considers the treatment of undeveloped sites, derelict sites and buildings. It is important that you as committee build (excuse pun) all this into your plan and maybe you should seek advice from one of your neighbouring villages who have been in the competition for some time, this of course can be done in tandem with any work you are doing with the agencies mentioned in the previous section. The Church and School, both sitting on an elevated site, were

maintained in very good fashion and the school has blended the new with the old well. It's a rather big school I suppose to cater for the burgeoning population. The GAA Grounds is a fine facility but the large parking area is a little bit rough on tyres at any rate! There is a low sized old galvanized roofed house on the Tomara Road that needs a bit of treatment, a simple coat of paint to prevent further corrosion would suffice.

Landscaping:

One would have to agree with the comment in your application that it is important to retain the rural appeal of your village and it may not be appropriate to over landscape parts of the area. Whatever you do there is no point encouraging planting for the sake of planting; thought has to be put into how it would impact with the built environment and the need to provide year round seasonal interest. This is not an easy job when you are starting from scratch and I would suggest that you consult the county landscape architect and horticulturalist to help you draw up a practical and feasible landscaping element of the main plan. It is also more than likely that you have someone amongst your community who may have the necessary expertise to give you a hand.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

This is a category that has often caused difficulty for some applicants in the past, but it is also a category that if you approach it in the right manner you can gain marks. The key is to have good knowledge and appreciation of existing habitats in your area and the various species of wildlife within. The works that you are planning such as the wildlife garden at Milford Bridge and any nature walks should be included in the appropriate section of your proposed 3 year plan. Make sure that you involve the local school from the outset.

Litter Control:

Even though the area extends outwards for a good distance from the Church and School the standard of litter control was good.

The daily picks are working very well and this shows that the commitment is forthcoming from the community. There are a myriad of options that will help you achieve best practice in litter control and consulting the TidyTown's website, (www.TidyTowns.ie) and even examining reports on long time participants in the competition will give you ideas that you may adapt to suit your own needs.

A sub plan is needed for this section this could be linked onto tidiness and waste minimisation.

Waste Minimisation:

This is a category of the competition that was first introduced in 2006 and many towns and villages have had some difficulty getting to grips with it fully. The main objective is to encourage entrants (people) to think more of reducing litter rather than just collection and binning it. Recycling and litter control fall under litter control not waste minimisation so in giving direction I advocate that entrants consult the Race Against Waste booklet, as well as the environment section of the local County Council. As in the last category there are 10 sub headings that you could work under. There are marks to be gained in this category by simply putting a few simple mini projects in place such as waste audits, segregation of household waste and organising waste information sessions for local people.

Having the local school involved in the Green Schools Programme is also a very important as it will give the children a good grounding in the essentials of good waste management.

Tidiness:

As I stated in another centre report, tidiness is not about the absence of litter but rather the overall presentation of an area under a number of subcategories such as clean signage, control of kerbside weed growth, monitoring of badly maintained sites and the list extends up to an additional 12 or 13 headings. The standard was quite good for a first time entrant with the general principles of tidiness being adhered to. There were one or two rusty sign poles particularly the one at the junction of school and church, a call to Carlow County Council Road's or its equivalent section might solve this.

Residential Areas:

Ballinabrannagh is primarily a rural area that has undergone major expansion during now long departed Celtic Tiger era. One would question how come that so much development was allowed by the planners in such an idyllic location, that said the benefit that accrues from this is that many new people come into the area bringing some additional skills and expertise. Your positive comment about newcomers is noted, hopefully, you the committee will be able to tap into the set of skills that they bring. Milford Park is a large estate that is maturing very nicely with large green areas and young saplings that are well preserved. Gort Na Greine has some fine impressive residences but looks as if part of it is incomplete, the existing occupied part has a well appointed green and the young trees are well maintained. One hopes that the planning issues that prevail at the moment will be resolved to the satisfaction of those affected in Bushfield Park soon.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

The standard in this category was good with the Tomara entrance most impressive with some fine homesteads to be viewed on the way in. The Bilbo/Rossmor entry has the fine stone name sign as it signature land mark. Milford Bridge was also visited and indeed it is a very scenic area one hope that perpetrators of this prohibited practice of illegal dumping will eradicated and that those responsible will bear the brunt of the law.

General Impression:

It's very encouraging to see a new entry to the competition and you are to be congratulated on this and wished look in the years ahead. Just to reiterate the importance of your 3 year plan and how it will help your village to develop as well assisting you to make progress in the Tidy Towns competition.