

# Tidy Towns Competition 2011

## Adjudication Report

Centre: **Ballymurphy** Ref: **34**  
County: **Carlow** Mark: **272**  
Category: **A** Date(s): **06/07/2011**

	<b>Maximum Mark</b>	<b>Mark Awarded 2010</b>	<b>Mark Awarded 2011</b>
Overall Development Approach	50	38	38
The Built Environment	50	27	28
Landscaping	50	41	42
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	23	23
Litter Control	50	38	38
Waste Minimisation	20	7	7
Tidiness	30	22	22
Residential Areas	40	33	34
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	32	32
General Impression	10	8	8
<b>TOTAL MARK</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>269</b>	<b>272</b>

### Overall Development Approach:

Thank you for your excellent application and welcome to the 2011 TidyTowns competition. The hand sketched colour map with numerated areas of interest was most helpful as it was this adjudicator's first time visiting the locality and the task of adjudication was made easier when one was able to readily identify these different areas of the village. It was noted that the Committee has decreased in number since last year but this does not seem to have affected the excellent work that has been done in this period.

The effective communication and co operation between the committee and local community including schools liaison, Carlow County Council, and local FAS worker has continued to pay dividends. Special mention for your designated FAS worker, whose work and enthusiasm for the job is immense support to you as a committee. The level of pride and interest that local people have in their native village was very evident on the day the adjudication took place, a number of residents were out tending to their own properties. Annual festivals such as the Pattern provide further incentive to maintain the village's TidyTowns efforts. A 3-5 year action plan would provide strategic guidance for continuing and developing your TidyTowns' activities and would allow you to chart out what you wish to do over a three year period and in doing this you would be able to gauge what resources would be needed to achieve your objectives.

### The Built Environment:

Ballymurphy is an attractive village with some well maintained buildings. The recently painted pump stood out on adjudication day.

This is a simple but yet effective measure towards improving the streetscape particularly in a relatively small village such as Ballymurphy where something like the village pump can occupy a focal position. Your awaiting approval from Carlow County Council regarding derelict site was noted. The grotto and memorials are in an excellent state of repair and form a very eye catching central point of what is very quiet and tranquil village. When the Community Hall is completed it will be an even greater bonus for the local population so let's hope

that you acquire the requisite funding soon to ensure conclusion of the project. The Hilltop pub has a pleasing rural feel about it and looked well with flags flying and contrasting hanging baskets on display. The Church sits on a prominent location and is another fine public building; St Patricks National School on the St Mullins Road was also very well presented.

Over the last few decades it was noticeable that many of the traditional features of rural villages were slowly being removed in the name of progress and it is very pleasing to report that Ballymurphy has retained not one but two links with a long gone tradition of rural Ireland. The Forge with its banding stones, bellows and blacksmiths tools was often the pivot the village revolved around.

The 1916 Grotto at the Church entrance honours the memory of those who were involved in a part of our history that led eventually to our independence as a country; it is good to report that it is in good condition. A few improvements have been made in this category since last and merits an increase of one mark.

### **Landscaping:**

The mass of permanent flowers and shrubs used to brighten up the village approaches is very impressive. An outstanding variety of colourful flowers, including the old tried and trusted annuals, were planted on the Killealy Rd. The trees and shrubs planted in resident's gardens facing on to the road provide for a perfect complement to the variety of flowers on the opposing roadside.

The predominant greenery is subtly interspersed with a proliferation of wild flowering. The extent of the planting arrangements from sign leading down into the village is impressive in itself. The restoration of the ML Byrne stone is welcomed as it reflects on the past history of the village, well done to those responsible for undertaking this task. Planting around the rocks at the Graiguenamanagh junction/Michael Meany memorial area was also admired and the neatly trimmed grass added to the general tidiness of the area.

The stone tabled picnic area is a fine amenity and great asset to the village. Is it possible that you might consider placing similar type name stones similar to that at Graiguenamanagh junction at other entry points into the village? The installation of additional wall baskets and flower barrels at the base of walls throughout the village was also noted and this enhanced to the appeal of Ballymurphy as a picturesque village even more. You have managed to do the basics of landscape maintenance very well and have put in some additional planting arrangements that are in keeping with those already in place. You are granted an increase on one mark for the work that has taken place in this category since last year.

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

Well done on maintaining a permanent wildlife section with the support of the local national school. This partnership should develop a few more mini wildlife projects over the next number of years; this would benefit the schools quest for further green flag status and contribute to the promotion and conservation of wildlife in the locality not to mention the possibility of extra marks in the TidyTowns competition. Consult with your local wildlife enthusiast or wildlife ranger in Carlow County Council for advice on suitable project ideas.

With a small river flowing at the Post Office end of town and the variety of trees and open fields nearby there is scope for a possible basic wildlife trail something akin to the Sli Na Slainte walk. In addition since the old forge and Pound, Coach House, Church/Graveyard have historical links with 1798 and 1916 maybe you might give consideration to having a basic history trail put in place.

### **Litter Control:**

The continuous litter blitz that you have been engaged in has certainly paid off as there was no litter seen on the day of adjudication.

The fact that the village is small helps but it takes time and effort to get the message of anti litter engrained in the minds of locals in any community so well done on that score. Bring Bank areas and the like are often repeat offending areas for litter scattering and last years report mentioned that the bring bank area in the village was punctuated with pockets of litter, this was addressed and it is good to report that particular place was tidy and clean. A good performance in this category the basics were well adhered and for this the village gains one mark.

### **Waste Minimisation:**

Your leaflet for residents on food waste is to be commended and good first step to gaining momentum in this category, this is a theme that seems to be promoted throughout the County as similar leaflets were included in entries from other centres.

Information regarding home composting could also be obtained from Carlow County Council, and distributed in some form to the local residents as a further initiative. A communal composting bin could be placed at an appropriate location within the village and it could act as a source of compost for the many shrub and flower beds that the Village has, locals could also use it for individual gardens. The Race against Waste booklet is still a good source of information and idea generation and it should be consulted regularly to help you bring fresh ideas to the forefront.

### **Tidiness:**

Based on last years report, signage appeared to be improved and the general tidy nature of the village prevails in 2011. Areas around road junctions are free of clutter and verges have been cut. The main buildings and monuments project a fresh and well maintained appearance and together with the well landscaped approaches Ballymurphy continued to exhibit a high degree of tidiness.

The work at the top of the village was noted but this something that is outside the remit of any committee so hopefully it will be completed very soon. The Killealy approach the signs were very clear but there were three altogether including one in a residents garden, one notes that you are engaged in consultation with Carlow County Council about the overall signage requirements for the village. Weed growth was at a minimum and the absence of farm related activity residue was noted, this was very good considering that we are in the middle of the silage and haymaking season.

#### **Residential Areas:**

The Inse An Phúca housing estate was very well presented and maintained and credit is due to individual residents who have made the effort to keep their own homesteads and the communal areas of the estate in such good condition. The majority of homes and commercial buildings throughout the village were in keeping with what one would expect from an idyllic rural village such as Ballymurphy fresh and neat in appearance. As is the case with a number of other small villages Ballymurphy has avoided "the curse of Irish progress" unregulated housing developments, it's a village that doesn't need or want them.

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

All approach road surfaces were in satisfactory condition as were surfaces in the main stretch of village. The abundant landscaping at each approach particularly from Killealy and Graiguenamagh/Borris adds to the visitors' first impressions. Adequate road markings were also evident and signs were visible and clear if a little confusing.

#### **General Impression:**

Ballymurphy continues to build on the hard work of the committee and support from the local community. Research into developing categories such as Waste Minimisation and Wildlife and Natural Amenities should be ongoing. A 3-5 year action plan would help you to prioritise your main actions in terms of achievability and timescale. Ballymurphy is a fine rural village with plenty of potential for continued improvement in the competition.