

# Tidy Towns Competition 2012

## Adjudication Report

Centre: **Ballinabranna** Ref: **1816**  
County: **Carlow** Mark: **236**  
Category: **B** Date(s): **06/07/2012**

	<b>Maximum Mark</b>	<b>Mark Awarded 2011</b>	<b>Mark Awarded 2012</b>
Overall Development Approach	50	35	38
The Built Environment	50	31	32
Landscaping	50	30	30
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	20	22
Litter Control	50	31	31
Tidiness	30	20	21
Waste Minimisation	20	5	5
Residential Areas	40	26	27
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	23	23
General Impression	10	7	7
<b>TOTAL MARK</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>228</b>	<b>236</b>

### Overall Development Approach:

Welcome Ballinabranna to the 2012 National TidyTowns Competition for only your second year. Thank you for your detailed submission including your annotated map with suggested driving route, which made finding areas of interest an easier task for the adjudicator, given the spread out nature of your centre. Congratulations in recruiting even more members to your committee, we find that many villages are adopting a cabinet style approach and finding, as you do, that it improves your approach to tasks. Keep up the good work. The level of voluntary commitment is excellent and shows the amount of hard work and dedication needed to be successful in the competition. As a group you seem to have a well structured approach to gaining support from various agencies in the town, be it sponsorship or of a more practical nature. We look forward to seeing advances in your web site for next year's submission. Look to the websites of other successful towns and villages in the competition for inspiration. Overall your development approach is going from strength to strength and your organized approach is reaping rewards for you. We were delighted with the inclusion of your three year town plan in the submission and we hope this has allowed you focus on realistic long and short term goals. This has gained you additional marks in this category.

### The Built Environment:

You have a lovely village with a very neat core area and a variety of buildings of interest. The core of the village is supplemented with a number of interesting historical sites which you have included in your centre. We read with interest the information supplied on the history of the Milford Mill and RIC barracks. All this information should be put on your new website once it is up and running. Could a QR link be provided at the bridge car park to also give a link for visitors to access this information? The new green roof to the shed on the Tomard Road was also visited so well done in addressing this issue so promptly. Works were ongoing on the road surfacing at the bridge and as an approach to the village, the setting here is stunning. An old home at the turn in the road at Raheendoorna looked as if it may be in the process of being refurbished. If not

perhaps the window boards and front door here could be painted to improve its appearance in the short term.

### **Landscaping:**

You have a number of mature trees in the village and around the Barrow crossing and the preservation of these should be a priority, in addition to replanting new trees to create a long term landscape structure for the village and its surroundings. Keep a log of all trees planted and details of the events organised to plant them and those involved. As well as providing a record of what was planted where, it will be a useful resource for future generations to look back and see how the trees planted in the village were linked to local events. We noted that at Raheendoran and near the entrance to the Gort na Greine Estate a number of hanging baskets were attached to light and ESB poles. Please focus your temporary planters to other locations next year as it is potentially very dangerous to attach fittings to or interfere with these poles, many of which have live wires. Contact your local ESB supervisor for advice on any works in the vicinity of ESB infrastructure.

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

The focus your group has put in to this category is obvious given your location and the wealth of habitats surrounding you. A key in this category is to follow through on any proposed habitat initiatives and continually assess their successes. To do this, compile yearly updates and audits to see if any of your planned work is succeeding to attract new wildlife. As part of this process you could encourage local people to take part in some nationally organised online surveys, including the annual national bat count or the hop to it Irish frog survey. You say that the school has installed a nature table in their grounds. Encourage them to take part in the Birdwatch Irelands online garden bird survey. Keeping track of all these results will let you see how your habitats are responding to any proposed interventions. As well as your proposed wildlife talks consider holding a dawn chorus walk or a night time bat walk, an innovative way to bring the community together.

### **Litter Control:**

You have a structured approach to daily litter patrols and well done on your successes in this area. The inclusion of the local school children in your campaign here is a good approach to take as it ensures they have a stake in this issue from an early age. Litter management is currently at a high standard as very little litter was noted in the village on adjudication day. A small amount of litter was noted at the car park by the bridge. We would be loath to encourage the siting of furniture here which would clutter up this lovely spot but perhaps a discreet bin located here would help address the issue? An empty sign pole in this area should be removed if no new sign is proposed.

### **Tidiness:**

The standard of tidiness is excellent and a reflection on the hard work of the committee. Be careful with signage in the town as this can clutter up streetscapes if not properly sited and designed. The concrete post and wire mesh boundary to the school could perhaps be improved with a hedge planted to the grass verge here? Use native plants. Talk to the local roads engineer about getting the road marking redone as recent road works seem to have damaged the integrity of some of the markings, especially in the vicinity of the school. The Bring Centre sign was missing from the bank of bins at the church car park.

### **Waste Minimisation:**

The pupils and staff of the Ballinabranna National School are to be congratulated on their participation in the Green Schools programme. The schools already successful participation in the Green Schools scheme gives your community a head start in addressing waste and sustainability issues in a practical focussed manner. Can you give us examples of how the participation in the scheme has changed behaviour in the village? Have you considered promoting participation in the An Taisce Green Homes initiative? This could be encouraged as part of your proposed residential estates action plans. Look at simple ways you can address this issue. Have any Bring Sales been held in the school as a way of recycling items. Does the committee or local residents take part in the Earth Hour?

### **Residential Areas:**

In general residential areas in the village are presented to a very high standard and well done to all your residents for the efforts involved in presenting both individual homes and communal areas. We wish you luck with removing the signage at the Milford estate before it deteriorates further and becomes a hazard, as they were only ever meant to be temporary advertising signs. We like your approach to drawing up an individual three year plan for each estate, as each will have their own issues and resources to draw on from local residents. Be inventive in addressing the ongoing development of open spaces. Consider planting community orchards in open spaces or edible hedges to improve the look of bare boundary walls. Good luck also with devising a simple maintenance checklist. Ensure all tree ties are removed from trees once they have become established.

**Roads, Streets and Back Areas:**

The standard of verges and approaches to the town were good with road signs clean and legible. However, unfortunately on adjudication day, the hedges on the Tomard Road showed signs of recent cutting with a temporary hedge cutting sign in place at the road junction at the Leighlinbridge Road by the Wooden Tavern Pub. As I am sure you are aware it is illegal to cut, grub, burn or otherwise destroy any vegetation growing in any hedge or ditch during the period from the 1st of March to the end of August. Even when works are being done to roadside hedges please try to ensure that, as best practice, no hedge cutting is done during the nesting season.

**General Impression:**

Ballinabranna has progressed in leaps and bounds given its short history with the Tidy Towns competition. We hope that in assessing your performance over the last few years you will have the ability to see where you need to focus attention and then take positive actions to advance both your knowledge and practical application in projects on the ground. Well done to all involved in this years submission and we wish you continued success in 2013.