

Tidy Towns Competition 2012

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Ballybunion**

Ref: **323**

County: **Kerry**

Mark: **276**

Category: **C**

Date(s): **21/06/2012**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2011	Mark Awarded 2012
Overall Development Approach	50	40	40
The Built Environment	50	39	40
Landscaping	50	38	39
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	25	28
Litter Control	50	37	37
Tidiness	30	17	18
Waste Minimisation	20	7	9
Residential Areas	40	25	26
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	31	32
General Impression	10	7	7
TOTAL MARK	400	266	276

Overall Development Approach:

Welcome to the 2012 National Tidy Towns Competition and thank you for your comprehensive submission. Ballybunion is a wonderful family holiday destination which the adjudicator found very easy to negotiate given the excellent signposting, information panels, maps and other media indicating a variety of activities in your lovely town. Your adjudicator appreciated the wonderful scenic views both of the town and the seascape, especially travelling into Ballybunion from the Tarbert road. Interpretation of your heritage is good however none was found at the remains on the junction with the Tarbert road. The two stones offering interpretation in Casheen car park are noted. The committee's partnership approach with local organisations, school and regional and national bodies works to ensure an integrated and cohesive approach to the development of Ballybunion. We look forward to the preparation of the new Area Plan for the town.

The Built Environment:

Public buildings in general were well presented; the Fire Station looked well together with its grounds as did the Kerry Library premises, the latter was excellent. The Garda station could be improved to its roadside facade. Schools were generally well presented and St. Joseph's Secondary School was admired. The Catholic Church building had a rather drab appearance, perhaps more colourful landscaping within the curtilage here might ameliorate the greyness. The fountain which features on the grass verge leading to the theatre in this adjudicator's opinion is too ornate and is inappropriate for this location; the lack of water and weed growth here was also noted. The Cliff House Hotel is a most attractive corner premises which lifts the streetscape in this section of the town; in fact most buildings are presented to a high standard the Danna's premises achieved a standard of excellence, its gable was admired also. Discourage the use of roller safety shutters to the roadside of windows of shops, these can be located inside the window with an attractive window display to the roadside to enhance streetscape. Work undertaken regarding derelict buildings is appreciated and we wish you success for the future in this regard.

Landscaping:

The entrance to Ballybunion from the Listowel road looks really well with the dolphin sculpture feature polished granite seats, 'welcome' spelled out in planting the flower-filled boat and the Marian grotto; all of which together form an excellent introduction to Ballybunion; it is important to ensure that the small garage and its walls here are maintained freshly whitewashed each year as they are an important focal point in this general area also. The Health and Leisure Centre is a fine development and landscaping together with picnic facilities was admired. The small hard surfaced traffic island within the SuperValu car park need refurbishment in some instances and could feature colourful flower displays (containers) for visual amenity; the perimeter walls of the car park should at least be maintained cleaned or painted and perhaps climbing plants could be used to good effect here; resurfacing work here is acknowledged. The junction with the Tarbert road was admired also in respect of landscaping however further in the flower beds on green areas between dwellings and the public road were too low to create a strong visual impact and, in the opinion of your adjudicator, should be raised up. Do not forget the importance of choosing native species of plants when possible to enhance biodiversity; it is good to note that you favour permanent planting over bedding plants. Green areas enjoy good maintenance.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

All of Ballybunion's beaches were very clean and are a wonderful natural amenity offering top class recreation; a few house-keeping details such as maintaining seats freshly painted can be noted but the problem is not significant. The wild flower verge made up of Dogrose, Montebretia and others on a Cliff road to the beach was appreciated. The graveyard on the road to Casheen together with the roadside green areas enjoy excellent maintenance, well done to those responsible. Your adjudicator wonders if wildlife panels would be appropriate for the car park at Casheen; talks with interested bodies such as Birdwatch Ireland and others are noted and we look forward to developments in this regard and maybe one day witness improvements to nesting sites for the Chough; the interpretive stones here have been noted. The children's playground, car park and information panels in the centre were all found to be in good condition.

Litter Control:

Litter control in Ballybunion was excellent at the time of adjudication the only significant problem under this heading was the amount of cigarette end litter in the Casheen car park. You are reminded of the importance of segregating collected litter for recycling. Participation in the Spring Clean is noted together with regular litter patrols and anti-litter awareness activities especially those involving the schools. Well done on the dog fouling campaign also.

Tidiness:

Derelict premises and unsightly roadside boundary walls beyond the Fire Station are problematic and an untidy site at and across from the Great Gas Garage was noted also, an undeveloped site at the top of the road to the Golf Course near the junction with the beach road remains for many years now and your hopes and disappointment regarding the development of a wild flower meadow here must be frustrating. As stated above your activities around dereliction in Ballybunion are commendable. As in previous years the wire fencing to the Golf Course is quite shabby in appearance along some stretches and the weeds at its base appear to have been sprayed and left and look quite poor. It was a pleasure to note the wirescape-free aspect of Ballybunion's town centre, hopefully some of your major entrances from approach roads will receive similar treatment in the not-too-distant future. The toilet block in the SuperValu car park should be painted and, as a point of interest, both the male and female toilets were locked on the day of our visit. Well done on some footpaths being made more wheelchair accessible and on the presentation of signage. The overall appearance of Ballybunion is one of tidiness

Waste Minimisation:

Recycling points were found to be clean, tidy and well maintained. Focus and attention now on a different type of waste minimisation, prevention at source; an appropriate starting point might be to conduct a community waste audit, perhaps starting with households or businesses and then moving on to sectors of the community. Congratulations on participation in the Green Homes initiative; are the schools involved in the Green School project?

Residential Areas:

A number of guesthouses marking the entrance from the Listowel road were admired and at least one garden was magnificent in design and presentation. Holiday home developments are being nicely maintained too; it was a pleasure to note the beautifully presented roadside boundary walls to bungalows at this entrance to Ballybunion. The landscaped 'welcome' is a nice touch. It was also a pleasure to note attractive roadside areas to boundary walls and the gardens of many dwellings along the road by the Golf Course; the holiday home development located across from here was admired for its landscaping. Weedy kerbs were a problem

in some estates notably one on the road to Casheen, however again beautifully managed roadside areas to boundary roads were noted. Dwellings within the environs of the Leisure Centre were admired for the quality of their green open spaces and verges. No doubt a few poorly presented boundary walls here will receive attention. The colour scheme to residential properties along the Doon road is eye catching, a development coming back into the town from the Tarbert junction had overgrown green areas and reference has already been made to the flower beds on the Tarbert road, some poor roadside boundary walls predominated on Church Street. A new estate sign was admired and hopefully will follow suit.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

Nicely shaped field boundaries are an attractive feature of the entrance to Ballybunion from the Listowel road and, of course, the welcome signs and other features add to the overall positive impression of the town; the seated insets into a wall are a nice touch. Road and footpath surfaces are quite good throughout as is signposting and car parking facilities in general. The large namestone at the Tarbert junction is singularly impressive and reference has already been made to the excellent standard of presentation here. Your adjudicator wonders if the interpretive stones at the Casheen car park might have their lettering highlighted? The one for the Kitchen Middens needs this the most. Perhaps the Convent Walk (community buildings 2004) development can be signposted from the public road; the crossroads sign on Church road is in urgent need of refurbishment.

General Impression:

Ballybunion is a welcoming destination and very 'user friendly'. It is a pleasure to visit the town on any occasion.