

# Tidy Towns Competition 2012

## Adjudication Report

Centre: **Ballyforan** Ref: **283**  
County: **Roscommon** Mark: **227**  
Category: **A** Date(s): **04/07/2012**

	<b>Maximum Mark</b>	<b>Mark Awarded 2011</b>	<b>Mark Awarded 2012</b>
Overall Development Approach	50	27	28
The Built Environment	50	30	32
Landscaping	50	29	30
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	23	23
Litter Control	50	29	28
Tidiness	30	15	14
Waste Minimisation	20	8	9
Residential Areas	40	25	26
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	30	31
General Impression	10	6	6
<b>TOTAL MARK</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>222</b>	<b>227</b>

### Overall Development Approach:

Ballyforan is very welcome to the Supervalu National TidyTowns competition 2012. We note that you have eight members and six meetings per annum. This does not seem like a lot of meetings to carry out all the work you try to do. Your main sources of help are Roscommon County Council and LEADER. You only seem to use the parish newsletter to communicate your message about the importance of tidy towns. We hope that you also send your notes to other denominational churches in the area. Have you considered setting up a Facebook page? Or do you use the media?

We are delighted that you have bi monthly meetings with a pupil from each class from the primary school. Well done to the Green School coordinator. We notice that you hold a Fair in October every year.

Last year's adjudicator commented on the fact that you did not include a work programme, and unfortunately we do not appear to have received a plan in 2012 either. This is an important project which you should give time to. A three or five-year plan will focus your mind on the important issues facing you, and it will help you to prioritise your work. A plan need not be prepared professionally, but you should consult widely locally in preparing such a plan. You should also consider any statutory and non-statutory plans applicable to the Ballyforan area in drawing up your work programme. It is difficult to advance in this category in the absence of such a plan. Please do refer to the TidyTowns Handbook for advice in relation to the preparation of a three or five-year plan.

We note that you have an issue with funding. This is common to all voluntary groups in the present economic climate and we empathise with you.

Your map, although quite diagrammatic was helpful.

### **The Built Environment:**

We wish you every success with your efforts to have your wonderful bridge conserved. It would be very important that this is done to best architectural conservation standards, as this is not alone a protected structure, but a most beautiful example of a 13 arched stone bridge built in approximately 1820. Did you know that it is described in the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage as "a robust and handsome masonry viaduct which is a reminder of the engineering achievements of the local craftsmen in the 19th century"? Please speak to the Architectural Conservation Officer of your local authority in this regard. We are unsure as to whether the bridge is partly the responsibility of the adjoining county (Galway) - in which case you should also speak to the Architectural Conservation Officer there also.

We are delighted to see that the future plan is to improve this situation of field gates in the area. They are in need of such attention.

We note that you held the Sesquicentennial celebrations of Ballyforan church last November. We also note that this is a Protected Structure, and we are delighted that maintenance and repairs were carried out on the church. It would be interesting to see the book about the church which was published as a souvenir, but you do not enclose this. We noticed that the three flagpoles in the church were empty on adjudication day. A lovely (green) old farm gate was noticed opposite the church. One set of the church gates needs painting – that facing the Four Roads access. The others looked very well. The grounds of the church are extremely well maintained, so well done to those responsible.

The school is presented neatly and is nicely landscaped. We noticed the Ggreen Flag flying. Well done to the children and staff!

Well done to Maureen's Foodstore for painting the shop front and for erecting new gates at the side of the shop Well done to your community on the gravel-based running track at the GAA pitch.

The Hook and Tackle premises would benefit from a brightening up. This is a fine building, but it is in need of some attention. The back of the Hook and Tackle premises however is almost derelict.

The Heather Hill Post Office has shutters which looked dense and 'defensive.' We realise that security with post offices in rural areas has come to this. We can understand the problem. However, we would prefer to see shutters behind a lit window display. There is a lovely gate beside the post office and the garden centre.

The Credit Union flagpoles were empty and looked quite untidy in the absence of flags - as they are projecting from the building. It would be a good idea to remove these flagpoles as there is a lot of clutter already on the building.

The Health Centre could do with repainting - especially its fascia board on the flat roofed part of the building. The hand rails also benefit from painting if this were possible.

The Big Apple premises was clean and presented in a neat fashion, together with its parking space. The Top premises is tidy with nice low landscaping.

The Hopes and Dreams Playschool could do with a repaint, and perhaps a restriction to one sign. The Pairc Naonh Aodán sign was admired, but the boundary wall of the GAA field would benefit from a repaint. The surface area outside the GAA pitch is also in need of resurfacing. Some faded numerical signage on the boundary wall looked poorly, and the gate also needs repainting.

The grotto was delightfully presented with its lovely back drop of trees and exquisite floral planting on its raised stone bed. It is a very delightful part of the village. A building with its gable to the street with a shopfront on the lower level and two small windows on the upper level, together with an orange coloured double pillars and gate (the gate was falling down) looked very poorly. This was located on the Athlone exit from the village. The village pump which is a Protected Structure is located in a very prominent position at the corner of the large green open (private) field in the village. It is very nicely presented apart from the omnipresent advertising signage which included a sandwich board located beside it, and a small amount of litter which lay under the picnic table.

We admired very much the terrace of houses fronting the Athlone Road as one exits from the village on the left. These properties have lovely railings and very well trimmed and well maintained gardens and hedging. Well done to these property owners

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### **Landscaping:**

Your beautiful riverside amenity area/slipway beside the bridge – not alone is nicely presented with its greenery, but gives a unique opportunity to admire the wonderful structure that is your bridge. Very often people pass across bridges and never get to see the bridge itself, so it is wonderful to have such a location along the riverbank and close to the bridge where it can be admired. The stone boulders along the edge of the parking area fit in very well with their surrounds and the nice fencing and semi - mature planting, together with the shrub planting was all very much admired. The stone wall and shrubbery leading from the bridge past the County Roscommon and Ballyforan signs were admired.

The playground was very tidy and it was being used – which is nice to see.

We notice that you maintain the shrubs and plants throughout the village including the flowers at the pump which is a Protected Structure. Well done on the replacement of the frost damaged planting at the school.

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

We admired the lovely green area and bounding stone wall with edges for wildlife on the Mont Bellew approach at the 50 K pH.

You mention the new footpath at the front of the environmental park. The references you make to keeping the litter away from the slipway at the bridge are also effective ways of respecting an important area of biodiversity. We note your plans for bird boxes.

Roscommon County Council in association with The Heritage Council has published some wonderful literature on the biodiversity of County Roscommon. We recommend that you discuss the potential of your area in this regard with the County Heritage Officer. In the meantime perhaps there are some students in the school who would be interested in carrying out some survey work on the wildlife to be found in Ballyforan. Or perhaps you may have a student studying at third level from the area who would be interested in carrying out some research for your village. However you approach it is very important that you endeavour to move forward in this category in an overall fashion.

### **Litter Control:**

Thank you for submitting your national school newsletter from May 2012 which details the national spring clean up day programme report.

We were disappointed to find an amount of litter including an open black plastic sack with clothing falling out of the sack which lay on the ground between the clothes bank and the brick wall beside. The wall behind was cracked and the general appearance of this was poor. This purple clothes bank is rusting in places and the signage was torn on the same receptacle. The paved area had quite an amount of broken glass, and a plastic bucket with litter inside was left behind. Three cardboard boxes lay between the turquoise clothes bank and the grey bring bank

We are sorry to hear that you have had problems with household rubbish being put in the village bins and that you have - what you describe as a "minor" problem - with dumping at the bring centre. You are communicating with the Environment Department at Roscommon County Council in relation to the latter problem. It would appear that you are going to have to mount a daily or twice daily check here.

We look forward to hearing about the landscaping you propose at the bring bank later this year and early next year.

Your regular cleanups in conjunction with the schools and the national spring clean week are showing

dividends around the village generally. We note your commencement of litter patrols in areas not covered by daily street cleaning.

### **Tidiness:**

Signage appears to be the cause of most of the untidiness around the village. A large auctioneering hoarding 'hits you in the eye' as you approach the village. from the Galway approach. This looks poorly on the approach to the village. Near this large hoarding there is a very weedy and stony area with a dirty lateral boundary facing one as one approaches the village also.

We notice that you have removed ivy from walls in the village and painted railings at the grotto. You have also rebuilt walls in the village that had fallen down. However, we still noticed breaches in the wall opposite Claremont. Further parts of the wall facing the main road in the village were broken towards the pump on the opposite side. The roadside verge opposite the Hook and Tackle needs tidying and weeding.

Weed-free kerbs were admired in the vicinity of the school and the lovely green verge and stonework which leads from the school area towards the village was admired.

The flower shop/post office/garden centre sign is obscured by the 'stop' sign which is rusty on the top and the bottom.

A house opposite the church has a boundary wall which would benefit from repainting. All kerbs in the area of the church were weed-free.

A large redundant rusty sign was located beside the Garda Station, the boundary walls of which need painting and the gate of which is becoming quite rusty.

You mentioned that you realise that the hoarding around the 'ghost estate' needs to be addressed. A plethora of auctioneering signs in this area – some in very poor condition need attention and the screen needs repainting. It would appear that only one house is occupied and two have overgrown gardens. Opposite this was a rusty gate and unfinished curtilage. The footpath needs finishing at the estate exit. Beyond the Big Top premises further advertising signage was noticed on the road margin.

Close to the fingerpost sign for St Aidan's GAA club near the village pump there was a completely obsolete wooden sign attached to the same pole, and a National Lottery faded and dirty sign. The Green Heartlands cycle route's fingerpost sign on the Athleague/Roscommon pole looked somewhat battered.

At the Athlone end of the village there were some good road signs together with fingerpost signage for the South Roscommon Drive and the Green Heartlands cycle route. Unfortunately another fly posting auctioneering sign was located nearby on another pole.

### **Waste Minimisation:**

You segregate litter for recycling and compost grass clippings. It is good to work with the school to promote the Green School program. Parents and other people who live in the village will learn something about waste minimisation from the green school participants.

Waste minimisation involves the prevention of waste accumulation in the first case. It is really what it says – to minimise on waste production before we, as a community, private or public create it. You could increase your marks considerably in this section. As a local community you could look at some innovative and simple ideas such as organising a "Bring and Take Day". This would involve using a local hall / community centre for instance for a day - where everybody brings items they have no further use for, but which other people might want (and which under normal circumstances they might get rid of as waste) and puts them on display. The corollary is that somebody else needs these items. No monies change hands. Website versions of this idea have been set up in places also.

Read the Tidy Towns Handbook on this topic, and talk to the Environment Department of Roscommon County Council.

### **Residential Areas:**

Claremont estate looks a bit untended. Lovely red gates and stone pillars opposite the entrance to Claremont need attention.

We note your reference to the green area in Hawthorn Avenue and that the council are going to deal with this.

Your summary of projects undertaken for this year to not refer to residential areas in particular. However the projects you have planned for the future do.

Some boundary walls in Ashbrook estate require re-painting. Otherwise this estate has nice semi-mature planting. Keep an eye on the bands which hold the trees to the stakes and allow them to expand as the tree trunks grow. Some open space needs cutting here. A van and trailer were noted parked on the open space in this estate.

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

The walls leading up to the bridge on the Galway approach are in the need of conservation work. The directional yellow and black paint at the bend is dirty.

The Ballyforan and Roscommon signage in the recessed space just up from the bridge is pockmarked and some other signs in this area need renewal.

Some signage on the approach to the school was broken and some fly posting was noted here also. We note the attention you are giving to maintaining approach roads and we acknowledge the great work that the TÚS workers are doing.

We notice under your landscaping proposals that you intend to improve the road edge on the 363 approach road.

A site with gravel/soil on the Four Roads approach just at the 50 kph sign needs tidying or screening. A yield sign from Ashbrook estate onto the Four Roads road needs cleaning. Trimming is needed inside the 50 kph on this approach. We noticed some advertising on this approach, and the tall distinctive County Roscommon village name sign for Ballyforan in this case was slightly obscured.

The Athlone approach is a lovely leafy entrance to Ballyforan. It was well trimmed and has nice stone walls, although some rusty gates were noticed.

Some road surfaces especially at the end of the footpath on the hard shoulder on the Galway approach need finishing.

### **General Impression:**

Ballyforan is a nice village with great potential to improve its environment. You are working hard to do just this. We hope you get the cooperation and appreciation of all the residents. One of your biggest issues is the proliferation of signage. One of your greatest assets - apart from your people - is your bridge. Go n-éirí libh!