

Tidy Towns Competition 2013

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Ballaghaderreen** Ref: **716**
County: **Roscommon** Mark: **218**
Category: **D** Date(s): **03/06/2013**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2012	Mark Awarded 2013
Overall Development Approach	50	31	33
The Built Environment	50	28	29
Landscaping	50	32	33
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	16	18
Litter Control	50	24	25
Sustainable Waste And Resource Management	20	7	7
Tidiness	30	15	16
Residential Areas	40	21	22
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	27	28
General Impression	10	7	7
TOTAL MARK	400	208	218

Overall Development Approach:

Thank you Ballaghaderreen for your very comprehensive submission to the 2013 competition with newspaper clippings and photographs. They give a real flavor of your work and of the range and number of volunteers involved in your projects. The map provided was well annotated and the second map with the street names was very useful. In the five years since you entered you have progressed very well. You have a structured work programme for the year and have progressed many projects in this short timeframe. You appear to work well with the many relevant agencies and business across the town, including the Western Development Commission and Connacht Gold Co-op. You also approach the schools each year. Have you considered having youth representatives on your committee? Some of the very progressive TidyTown communities even have youth councils.

It is a period of transition for Ballaghaderreen with the by-pass being completed and you have identified the need to continue to attract passing tourist into your community. Your adjudicator looks forward to seeing the five year work plan that was in development and hopes that all agencies, the Local Authority and residents will all buy into the programme and volunteer for specific tasks. Well done on your efforts.

The Built Environment:

Thank you for including a copy of the letter you sent to all business owners in the community. You have directed a lot of your work on the specific comments of last year's adjudicator. Perhaps you can continue to look at strategically placed buildings at major junctions or focal points, and consider their impact on the look of the village? Many of which are very positive and have improved recently.

There are many wonderful period buildings on the main streets of Ballaghaderreen. An amazing red brick building that is three stories on High Street with wrought iron railings needs some attention. Its windows were becoming quite bad. The corroded elements of the railings should be removed and then painted to prevent further corrosion and deterioration of these wonderful heritage features. Further details on the maintenance of wrought iron can be viewed at www.heritagecouncil.ie.

There were nice trees planted around the grounds of the Vocational School. Paint was peeling of the gable end of Club Infinity. The interior grills on the door of Mulligans finished off this period building very well – the curved

glass windows here are particularly attractive.

Like many towns, some properties on the main street are lying empty. You could consider asking landlords to insert temporary displays of heritage items or pictures that would draw the attention of the passer-by. There are many small, though unique, heritage features dotted through the town that caught the eye including the Edward VII post box and the old pump on the Sligo Road.

Do continue with your efforts on derelict homes and work closely with the enforcement unit of the Local Authority for possible listing on the Derelict's Sites register. What are the plans for the back of the Baby Field Estate?

Landscaping:

It is great to have your own polytunnel and should help reduce ongoing landscaping costs.

The Dublin Road landscaping project was in progress at the time of adjudication and should look very well upon completion. You plan to include here native trees and shrubs and a wildlife conservation area. This will provide year round structure and will benefit local wildlife. It will also give a wonderful image on approaching Ballaghaderreen as you approach along what is currently a very industrial part of town with little to attract attention to the visitor.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

Well done to the TY students at St Nathy's College for their work on local wildlife. Despite the fact that you have decided to abandoned the focus of work in the 'Plots' area, this work alone will raise awareness of the local biodiversity to some of the community.

You plan to work with the students again to survey the new area on the Dublin Road. Provision of the details of species noted, in both languages, could be added to your Facebook page or website. The survey should be preferably done in association with a professional ecologist that can work with the students to devise actions as appropriate to the findings of the survey. There was a nice native hedge line at the back of the playground. Japanese knotweed, the invasive species that can grow through concrete and affect the value of homes, was noticed on the Charlestown Road. It cannot be burnt and spreads easily. The only method to control it is through appropriate treatment of specific weed killer. More details can be found at www.invasivespeciesireland.com.

Litter Control:

The pictures provided with your entry show that you are tackling one particularly offensive item of litter: dog waste. Your catch phrase 'Children at play – Clean it away' is to be commended! The new paving stones were admired and are a novel way again of spreading the word.

Have you considered carrying out a litter survey on both a school day and weekend to determine the main sources and places where litter is located in Ballaghaderreen? This would allow you to take preventative actions depending on your findings. Thus, you may even be able to measure if anti-litter measures are having an impact to reduce littering across the town. Your adjudicator did not notice any dog fouling on adjudication day!

Your frustration is apparent with the lack of ability to install CCTV cameras where there are consistent dumping issues. Do keep up the pressure on this and in the interim, maybe you can ask the community to be alert and report or even challenge any dumping observed.

Sustainable Waste And Resource Management:

You mentioned in your entry form installation of cigarette butt bins and gum litter. These are all great initiatives that come under the litter category of the competition. Sustainable Waste and Resource Management is more about activities that reduce waste and resources such as book rental schemes, clothes swap parties, walking to school days etc. There are some excellent ideas on this on the TidyTown's website. As this category of the competition is likely to have a lot more marks in the future, you should have a sub-committee look at easy in which you can gain marks easily here.

Tidiness:

Well done on your work in this category of the competition it is great to hear so many positive comments on how the town looks so much tidier. Congratulations once again.

The main street has a number of crossing overhead wires and electricity poles that are very busy and do not add to the views of the main street. Perhaps with the planned installation of water metering in Ireland, some discussions could take place re installing electricity cables underground at the same time possibly? This will be a long-term project that should be listed in your strategic plan

There were some redundant signs on the layby by the civic landfill site. Your adjudicator also noticed a lot of cable ties on lamp posts. The committee should write to those especially election candidates, to ask them not only to remove posters but also the cable ties – or indeed use reusable cable ties.

Signage is now much less of an issue on the Dublin Road where just a few businesses are flaunting rules. Whilst in the current economic times it is understandable that businesses may want to display promotional signs,

these can be inappropriate and detract from the area, and indeed reflect badly on the business themselves.

Some of the older station buildings have quite neglected on the station road and the ESB gates here could easily be tidied up.

Several of the older, iron sewer ventilation pipes need some attention to prevent corrosion.

The old auctioneer's sign at Fortlands, off the Sligo Road should be removed. On adjudication day a large number of recycling/rubbish bags had been left at the front of the Council/Garda station premises. They appeared recently placed there so no marks were deducted despite this looking poor in front of one of the focal points of the community.

Residential Areas:

Well done on planning a 2013 Best Kept residential Area and it was noted that nearly all estates visited in Ballaghaderreen looked well. Brooklawn presented well and your adjudicator was greeted with a burst of yellow from the buttercups – which is good to see that the grass here is not too tightly managed bees etc get a chance to forage for nectar and spread pollen between the plants. The frames for old auctioneering signs at Oakwood villa should be removed. Homes opposite the health centre were presented very well. Friarshill Close was perhaps a bit too tightly mowed.

There are some lovely homes on Cathedral square.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

The explanation of the town name – 'Way of the little oak' was noted on most approach roads to Ballaghaderreen and helps to consider the influence of natural heritage on the development of what is the busy town of Ballaghaderreen. Arriving on the R293 looked very well. There are some nice wrought iron field gates on the station road that could be painted, as well as the sewer ventilation pipe here. Many of the back lanes and entries of the main street were inspected and look surprising well – good effort here! Likewise the graveyard area looked very enticing now following the works to this area.

General Impression:

You have a great head of steam going now in Ballaghaderreen with many projects developing well. You are highlighting and enhancing the built and natural heritage of your community. When the bypass is completed you will be able to build on making your community somewhere that will draw in tourists and residents alike to enjoy these features. Continue with your hard efforts – well done to all.