

Tidy Towns Competition 2017

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Ballinode** Ref: **585**
County: **Monaghan** Mark: **297**
Category: **B** Date(s): **04/07/2017**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2016	Mark Awarded 2017
Community Involvement & Planning	60	37	38
Built Environment and Streetscape	50	39	39
Landscaping and Open Spaces	50	40	40
Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities	50	34	34
Sustainable Waste and Resource Management	50	17	17
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	56	56
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	38	39
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	34	34
TOTAL MARK	450	295	297

Community Involvement & Planning / Rannpháirtíocht an Phobail & Pleanáil:

Ballinode is most welcome to the 2017 Tidy Towns competition. Many thanks for your application form with additional information and map. Unfortunately glue had seeped through the pages of the photo compilation, sticking them together. Your lovely hand drawn map is perfectly suited to the requirements of the contest and identifies all the local features as well as project areas. Other communities could well look to this for guidance on how to present the all-important map. Your three-year plan was read with great interest. You have identified a number of worthwhile projects in this and you are wished success in its implementation. It was wonderful to read of the energy and community spirit which exist in Ballinode. You have a strong committee with good connections to all the relevant support agencies, all the ingredients to succeed in the contest. It's great that the schoolchildren take part in an annual eco-camp, is there any discussion about forming a junior Tidy Towns group? This would allow the children an opportunity to initiate and develop their own projects. Well done on the strong entry.

Built Environment and Streetscape / An Timpeallacht Thógtha agus Sráid-dreacha:

You are wished well with your project on Connolly's Corner and we look forward to inspecting the final product next summer. Your issues with dereliction in the village, especially the shop, are noted. Do work with the owners (the bank, and Monaghan county council) to ensure that the exterior is maintained to an appropriate standard. This should include removing the Christmas decorations and other defunct signage on the facade. You are wished success with your mill project and we have to wonder whether this should fall under the built environment or sustainable waste and resource management heading. We'll have to just wait and see what it looks like before deciding! St. Dymphna's church of Ireland is a beautifully preserved heritage building with very well maintained grounds. Well done for not using herbicides here as is so common elsewhere, it looks so much better! The playground and AstroTurf pitch are excellent facilities for the young people, being well used on adjudication day.

Landscaping and Open Spaces / Tírdhreachú agus Spásanna Oscailte:

The large number of mature trees in and around the village are a huge asset to the people and the landscape. Do make sure these are cared for and added to when the opportunity arises. Flowers in pots are attractive in doorways or on windowsills but do not work so well on grassy verges. Where there is soil it is always better to plant shrubs straight in the ground. The Riverside Park is an excellent amenity looking over the historic three-arch bridge. The wildlife information painting here was admired while maintenance of raised beds and lawns is first class.

Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities / Fiadhúlra, Gnáthóga agus Taitneamhachtaí Nádúrtha:

The children on the summer eco-camps are indeed fortunate to be brought to the local lake and bog for outings. Are

there nature studies for all the students as part of the regular school curriculum? Do tell is about the level of bat activity around the old graveyard, how can you use this information to raise awareness among the community about these fascinating creatures? Similarly did the river survey reveal any information which could be shared? The adjudicator is looking at how the community celebrates its natural heritage and raise awareness of its importance to our daily lives. The use of herbicide was noted in a few spots around the village and this should be discouraged as it leaves behind dead vegetation and is very bad for the environment. Don't cut the grass right to the water's edge but allow the native grasses and flowers to develop, this is important for the ecology of the river.

Sustainable Waste and Resource Management / Bainistiú Acmhainní agus Dramhaíola Inbhuanaithe:

In this category the adjudicator is looking at ways in which the community is aiming to reduce volumes of waste generated, both at home and at work. Recycling is lower down the priority pyramid. Your second-hand furniture shop and car boot sales are example of ways in which items can be reused, and so avoiding the need to throw things away. Does the school take part in the green flag program? This is an important initiative in this category. Some time on the Internet or speaking with Monaghan county council staff would turn up a number of ideas which could be adopted, reducing resource use and cutting down on waste. For more helpful tips and case studies from other Tidy Towns entrants please take a look at <http://localprevention.ie/tidy-towns/>

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

Well done for carrying out regular litter patrols and participating in the annual spring clean. Despite challenges it is important to continue to do your best with the resources available. The village is generally very tidy and clean and there are few issues of note. The old pump would be enhanced with a wash while the two shrubs are a bit big for the location. It is otherwise a fine heritage feature. Some litter had gathered unfortunately around the takeaway. Otherwise however litter control was to a high standard.

Residential Streets & Housing Areas / Sráideanna Cónaithe & Ceantair Tithíochta:

The new wall at Cappog is a marked enhancement in this location. Well done to the residents across Ballinode for the work they have put in to maintaining the high standard of presentation. A great many homes were admired throughout the town on adjudication day. The thatched cottage near the Church of Ireland is especially eye-catching. The 'Bulgarian Embassy' is a beautiful building, with a curious story! Riverside Close is a handsome enclave of homes, kerbing here needs some weeding however.

Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes / Bóithre Isteach, Sráideanna & Lánaí:

Welcome signs on approach roads needs to be reviewed. On approach from Monaghan the visitor sees Ballinode community hall before the welcome sign a little further on. There is another (plainer) sign a little after this one. One welcome sign is sufficient which is placed at the most appropriate point of entry to the village. The signs themselves meanwhile are distinctive and attractive.

Concluding Remarks:

It was a pleasure to visit Ballinode and admire its many attractions. Best of luck and keep up the good work!