

Tidy Towns Competition 2010

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Ballynacally** Ref: **59**
County: **Clare** Mark: **302**
Category: **B** Date(s): **03/07/2010**
03/08/2010

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2009	Mark Awarded 2010
Overall Development Approach	50	48	48
The Built Environment	50	38	40
Landscaping	50	40	41
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	25	23
Litter Control	50	42	43
Waste Minimisation	20	12	13
Tidiness	30	23	23
Residential Areas	40	29	29
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	33	33
General Impression	10	9	9
TOTAL MARK	400	299	302

Overall Development Approach:

Congratulations to Ballynacally on your second consecutive Silver Medal award – a great achievement for you all. You have reached a very high level under this category and at this stage each additional point is hard won. You are engaged with a wide range of support groups and the numbers involved with the committee, including your junior TidyTowns group, is impressive. Additional support groups may include National Parks and Wildlife Service, Clare county council Heritage Office, the Heritage Council or GAA – the more the merrier. You could compliment your website with a Facebook or Twitter page as social networking can reach out to a new audience while also being an excellent communication tool.

Do you wear high-vis vests with the TidyTowns logo written across the back when working on projects? This is a good way of advertising your efforts.

It is suggested that you expand slightly on what you have been doing as the short bullet point phrases do not always fully convey the extent of the various projects.

The Built Environment:

You are commended for the range of projects undertaken from painting and wall repair to interpretive signage and new installation art pieces. The Arches Bar is looking very well on approach from Ennis. Ballycorrick church looks magnificent with its old stone work and well painted green doors. The renovated old forge is lovely although there is still a degree of clutter surrounding it. The stone walls running through the town are a fantastic feature. The grotto looks well. The school looks fantastic and it was marvellous to see the Green Flag flying. How about a tricolour and county flag to occupy the two neighbouring flag poles? The fair green is a fantastic attraction, immaculately presented and the new sculpture is a fine addition. The derelict building on the Kildysart road needs attention. The new Heritage of Ballynacally sign and treatment of the wall is excellent.

Landscaping:

The landscaped area around the boat is very nice although Clare county council traffic cones and other signage relating to road works that have been completed should be removed. The range of landscaped areas – even at the base of a 'yield' sign is impressive while I love the idea of you growing your own planting in a tunnel. In such a rural setting, and especially on approach roads, the landscape is defined by the hedgerows, trees and grassy banks. These are also vital wildlife refuges and so emphasis should be placed on cherishing and managing these areas correctly. The Rose Lovers bench is irresistible – what a great spot! McGriffin's bar looks great although the dead palm trees should be replaced with a native tree variety – Birch or Rowan would be ideal.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

The planned biodiversity survey is an excellent approach as this will give you the vital information on which to base meaningful actions. Don't forget to fully involve the school in this. Awareness raising is an important part and in this regard you could hold events to coincide with heritage or biodiversity weeks (August & September respectively). The Balleynacalley wildlife sign is excellent. The 'butterfly paradise' and log house are nice ideas. A suitable location should be found for disposing of dead grass in this location as this can damage the hedgerow habitat.

The nearby creeks and channels are a part of the tidal areas of the Lower River Shannon Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and so are part of an area of high conservation importance. The stream through the village is a small but important wildlife feature. The disposal of dead grass and other vegetation is a potential source of water pollution in this location. An adjacent infestation of Japanese Knotweed is an additional threat to the habitat as it is an Alien Invasive Species – see www.invasivespeciesireland.ie for more information. Seek advice from Clare county council on controlling this.

Feeding birds is a great idea but feeders must be regularly stocked as birds can come to depend on them (e.g. at the stream near the Rose Lovers bench the feeders are empty).

Litter Control:

You clearly have a managed approach to litter control from regular patrols to assigning responsibility to particular areas. There is very little to add under this category as litter control was excellent – well done! The newly designed bring centre is more like an attractive picnic spot than somewhere to dispose of your rubbish!

Waste Minimisation:

Please give further details of the waste minimisation awareness campaign that you undertook. Congratulations to the school on its Green Flag award. This is a great achievement and one which should spur on the whole community. The goal here ultimately is for no waste to be sent to landfill from Balleynacalley. How do you think this can be achieved? Home composting is one of the easiest ways to make a significant difference so this should be examined, e.g. through holding workshops or arranging supplies of compost bins. You could organise a hazardous or electrical waste collection day with Clare county council. Always bear in mind the reduce-reuse-recycle hierarchy. How can we avoid plastic packaging when shopping?

Tidiness:

Traffic cones etc. from the resurfacing works need to be taken away by Clare county council. A vacant pole at the fair green, near the roadside, should be removed. Have you approached the ESB regarding placing electric cables underground?

The village is very tidy with no obvious difficulties presenting themselves. Well done – the place looks great!

Residential Areas:

Carrying out biodiversity gardening, kitchen gardening or home composting workshops are great ways for residents to contribute to the environmental enhancement of the town. The Roscliffe estate has very well kept homes and green areas are nicely landscaped. Signage here should be reviewed and remove or refurbish those which may not be necessary or are worn.

Private homes are all presented to a very high standard with the numerous gardens and colourful displays all admired.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

The wonderful approach road from Ennis creates a great sense of anticipation on entering the town. The beautiful planting on the bridge was admired. New surfacing on the main road is excellent. On the school road, however, surfacing needs to be addressed.

General Impression:

Ballynacally is a wonderful town that looks fantastic. You are heartily congratulated for the hard work and dedication that you have put into your community. No doubt you reap the rewards every day. At this level in the contest the attention to detail is what wins you points. It was for this reason that points have been deducted under the wildlife category. These issues that have been raised however are tractable and the lost points can be recouped in the coming year or two.

Elsewhere you are doing great work under each of the categories – well done

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Second Round Adjudication:

Ballynacally village once contained Paradise House; today the same name might justly be applied to the village in its entirety. This presentation is a joy. The manner in which it has projected its history, especially around the restored Forge is ideal. The flora and fauna of the area are given due deference, the butterfly paradise being particularly note worthy. The log pile would work better if it incorporated older and already rotting logs. The landscaping, choice of flowers, trees and shrubs underscores the efforts undertaken by your twenty members, not forgetting your seven junior members - the Junior TidyTownns Club. Your four aims as set out; to improve the quality of life, to maintain the heritage, to involve all the community and to improve your position in the TidyTownns Competition are laudable and admired. You have certainly given tangible and successful expression to each of them under the various headings. The lavender herb boxes at the cottages on the Fair Green and the presentation generally of this area as one of high amenity and equally high ecstatic pleasure is a triumph. Litter can be dismissed in a word – none! Waste minimisation unlike the other categories cannot be judged by appearances “on the day” alone. It is vital that you fully advise the steps you have taken to first of all reduce, then reuse and finally recycle material. Good to note solar energy being used for the school ahead signs. This adjudicator left Ballynacally uplifted and inspired by your presentation. Congratulations.