

Tidy Towns Competition 2011

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Ballynacally** Ref: **59**
County: **Clare** Mark: **305**
Category: **B** Date(s): **23/06/2011**
28/07/2011

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2010	Mark Awarded 2011
Overall Development Approach	50	48	48
The Built Environment	50	40	41
Landscaping	50	41	42
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	23	24
Litter Control	50	43	43
Waste Minimisation	20	13	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	302	305

Overall Development Approach:

Thank you for your submission, which included the completed application form, excellent plans and maps which were clear and greatly enhanced the adjudicator's enjoyment of the visit. Ballynacally is a lovely rural village still retaining a good quantity of traditional farm buildings and the committee hopefully will preserve and conserve this irreplaceable part of our heritage just as successfully as the treatment of the old School House and Hall. Your co-operative approach to a wide range of official bodies and your partnership approach to the Green Schools committee is exemplary. The village built character has a wonderful vernacular scale and new developments at the Green are totally in harmony with the old part of the village. Keep this up! Another important visual attraction is the wonderful (estate built) stone walls at the Ennis entrance. Again the Tidy Towns committee should make a commitment to preserve these and reinforce and strengthen this stone wall inheritance in new developments.

The Built Environment:

The redevelopment of the old school house and village hall is a brave undertaking in the current climate. The committee is to be congratulated on seeking specialist advice on the conservation of the school and the regeneration of the hall as this is a very important focal point complex of buildings in your village. The earlier developments here, consisting of the Credit Union, Montessori School, Health Clinic, and blue cottage, have an excellent scale and contain many traditional features, including attractive doorways, sash windows and slated roofs. The overall colour scheme is very successful and has a pleasant appeal. Opposite, the outbuildings to the rear of Daly's Bar enclose the other side of the village green and are complimentary in scale. Griffin's Bar looks very well, as does the adjoining residence, and both are presented with cottage style gardens with tables and seating to the forecourt. Opposite, a charming small scale cottage with its nicely presented outbuilding has great charm and is a fine illustration of a vernacular building worthy of preservation. Another fine example is the high-pitched, red corrugated, iron roofed outbuilding at Daly's Bar. Indeed this

adjudicator felt there was a good quantity of outbuildings in various locations, some prominent, some hidden away, that could play a more prominent visual role in your village, should they be highlighted and painted with a co-ordinated colour scheme. This would be a very attractive recognition of the agricultural heritage and culture of the village. To have retained an active working forge to the present time is somewhat unique and this facility further strengthens your rural traditions. The credit union contains some attractive signage but one sign at the corner was in need of re-aligning.

Landscaping:

The village contains a good number of incidental open spaces dispersed throughout the area and along the approach roads and all are landscaped to a high quality. The Fair Green is certainly a highlight, has matured very well and the sculpture and seating together form a fine centrepiece. The various storyboards add great interest in this location. The bicycle at the Ballnacally Heritage sign looked well here. It was a little disappointing to see weeds growing on the manhole cover and paved area at the village pump. The hedgerow and whitewashed wall here are lovely features. The playground is a fine facility and sited in an excellent location. The Rose Lovers Garden has a nice series of story boards with educational information on various tree species and has a tranquil location on the side of the stream. Opposite, the chestnut tree is a fine specimen at the entrance to St. Martin's Shrine and the 'Village Blacksmith' poem on a wall plaque here is very appropriate and another paean to your strong rural heritage. The hedgerow along the pathway to the shrine is magnificent and, as suggested by last year's adjudicator, is well worth reinforcing in other areas. Well done on a very impressive landscaping and planting presentation throughout. It was good to see the Ash Tree in honour of Michael Frawley replaced in recent weeks as the earlier tree planted in 1992 had died.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

The Native Tree Trail is impressive and has a fine educational value. We note your proposal to develop a Wildlife Trail and picnic area at Roscliffe – Sli na Mara. Last year's adjudicator again outlined an approach on this agenda which would provide good sustainable results.

Litter Control:

There was no litter in evidence in the village but there was a small scattering at the roadside beyond the school. Your ongoing litter patrols are obviously having a good effect. Well done on your involvement in the 'An Taisce' National Spring Clean.

Waste Minimisation:

It is great to see your posters on the waste awareness agenda 'Ballynacally Focus on Energy' and 'Ballynacally Focus on Waste'. Good luck with these and all your other projects under this heading. The Bring Centre was clean, tidy and well presented at the Community Centre.

Tidiness:

The village generally has a very tidy appearance and all presentations are bright and fresh. One house on the Kildysart entrance appears derelict and is in need of attention. Has any progress being made on this issue? On the roadside, beyond the school previously mentioned, there was a quantity of discarded building materials on the roadside margin including block work and plastic wrappings.

Residential Areas:

The new addition at Roscliffe Court has a very good design standard and this development encloses a semi-courtyard which provides a nice sense of space. The name plate and date stone here are nicely presented in a landscaped shrubbery. The green area to the front of the earlier scheme was well manicured and had some colourful planting. Elsewhere, many individual residences and some well presented gardens were admired.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

Ballnacally is not overdeveloped and retains its rural character well. There are some wonderful walls in the environs consisting of rubble walls, dry stone walls, and masonry walls and your community should treasure this inheritance and indeed reinforce with new high quality walls when the opportunity arises. The Ennis Road entrance winds its way into the village centre and exhibits these walls to great effect. The many planting schemes, information boards, wildlife structures, and boat feature added greatly to the vistas on this lovely approach road.

General Impression:

Ballynacally is a charming village retaining its original character and scale while developing a modern style and outlook. The driving commitment of the Tidy Towns committee is proving to be a great asset and will continue to enhance the village's natural advantages. We wish you success with your ongoing efforts.

Second Round Adjudication:

I stopped outside the lovely Ballcoric Catholic Church with the striking green doors, to get my bearings, and I must straight away congratulate you on this most professional approach to the competition going on the documentation supplied that included a beautiful map pin-pointing the many delights of Ballynacally. I next took the opportunity to look over the report produced by the first adjudicator and noted the importance placed in it on the stone walls. These traditional stone walls are beautiful and give a distinctive flavour to Ballynacally, and we can only guess what it could cost to build them today and could the builders attain this level of perfection? There are other stone walls on the Kildysart road that perhaps could be realigned and strengthened. A visit out to the well maintained graveyard was worthwhile with an impressive stone wall outside and lovely old gate. I took a stroll through this special place and came across in particular one beautiful headstone with distinctive Gaelic script and lettering. I must congratulate all concerned with the upkeep of this graveyard. The centre of the village is beautiful, and it was delightful to sit by the pump and enjoy the surroundings. I admired the plaques giving great history on Paradise House, Michael O'Hehir, The Forge and Thomas Rice Henn. Then across the road there was the stone with the beautiful verse. Once beside this ancient stone, We heard the piper Johnny Doran
Though silent now his noble art, The music lingers in the heart. This is a special tribute written in stone to an obviously great musician, well done for the presentation of this feature and perhaps the lettering could be "touched up" Looking back across the road we admire the details of your native trees in a lovely notice board, and the sturdy notice board of Ballynacally Heritage. St Martin's shrine and the Rose Lover's Bench are great little retreats with the little river flowing gently along. The stone bridge is a beautiful structure but I would prefer if it was not painted, but this is a preference and not a criticism and I simply feel these walls can "speak for themselves" without any decoration. Picnic areas and excellent landscaping make a big impact with lovely open grassed spaces and where possible it is recommended to leave grass where it falls from the lawnmowers, but if it is decided to collect it then it should be placed on a compost heap. There were some weeds at the centre of the village and near the pump that could be kept under control. But there is much more to the Tidy Towns competition that does not meet the eye and this is acknowledged by the first adjudicator with a thorough report and additional marks and I am delighted to confirm this situation. Well done for an outstanding entry.