

Tidy Towns Competition 2023

Adjudication Report

Centre: Ballindine - Baile an Daighin	Ref: 1011
County: Mayo	Mark: 309
Category: B	Date(s): 03/07/2023

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2022	Mark Awarded 2023
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	80	37	39
Streetscape & Public Places	80	41	43
Green Spaces and Landscaping	80	42	45
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	55	31	33
Sustainability – Doing more with less	55	19	20
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	58	60
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	55	29	30
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	55	38	39
TOTAL MARK	550	295	309

Community – Your Planning and Involvement / An Pobal - Pleanáil agus Rannpháirtíocht:

Fáilte chuig Comórtas Na mBailte Slachtmhara Super Valu don bhliain 2023. Táimid buíoch daoibh as ucht na hiontrála a chur chugainn, agus guimíd gach rath ar bhúr gcuid oibre amach anseo. Adh Mór.

Welcome to the Super Valu Tidy Towns Competition for 2023. We thank you for your entry, and wish you all the best in all your future work. Good luck.

Ballindine - Baile an Daingín, a mid-sized village with a population of 349 people – has entered the competition for 23 years and has a committee of 14 members with support of another 6 volunteers.

- Tidy Towns group meetings are held in the local Community Centre, approximately every two weeks in the Spring & Summer. Less meetings are arranged in winter time, except on the run up to Christmas, mainly to plan Christmas lighting and Old Folks Christmas party. Ballindine is very welcoming to new residents and newly arrived Ukrainian refugees assist you with your work.
- Support is received from Environmental Heritage Section, Mayo County Council. South West Mayo Development, PEL, Centra, Costcutters, Healthwest Pharmacy, Supermacs, Ballindine Hub, Davitts GAA.
- You communicate with the public via the weekly Parish Newsletter, the Active Retirement Group and word of mouth, WhatsApp messages, Facebook page, and through activities organised by the Davitts GAA club.
- Your parish has an active Foróige club and the young adults, encouraged by their parents, get involved in the watering of the plants or weeding in the Pollinator Garden.
- It is very heartening to read that since entering the Tidy Towns Competition, Ballindine has seen major improvements overall. The competition provides you with an objective to work towards, and encourages locals to take pride in their village.

The coloured map provided with your Entry Form showing the main features of the village was of good quality but when printed out the details on the map were very small. The key on the map was also very small and quite difficult to read. For next year it would be good to provide a larger map on A4 size, showing the local landmarks and the location and precise description of all the various projects completed over the last year, with a legend on the map also listing all of these. This makes it easier for the adjudicator to navigate around the village and aids the assessment process.

The quality of the application form was very good and the inclusion of photos with individual descriptions showing the various tidy towns works and projects was very helpful. The Ballindine 5 Year Plan which includes 9 project areas and is very comprehensive and it is noted that some timelines have been included.

The adjudicator's assessment is based on a recent site visit and the contents of the application form, which is suitably concise at 23 pages long - well done. The text inserted on the form is also easy to read. The use of numbered bullet points worked well.

Streetscape & Public Places / Sráid-Dreach & Áiteanna Poiblí:

- We arrived in the village of Ballindine on a sunny day in early July. Ballindine is traversed by the busy N17 with very heavy through traffic. Despite this, the village has retained its traditional character and charm and the committee has clearly made great efforts to ensure the presentation of the village streetscape for local residents and for the passing motorist, is to the highest possible standard. Pedestrians are well catered for with extensive road setback areas and good quality footpaths and pedestrian crossing points.
- The Hub Primary Care Centre premises which has a modern style frontage looked fresh and smart and the adjacent stone fronted residence with attractive floral displays, was also greatly admired. The planted island on the western side of the main street which is paved with natural stone and planted with a line of London Plane trees looked splendid. The nicely pruned trees are underplanted with very colourful floral displays, and this provides a wonderful visual separation from the main road and greatly enhances the overall quality of the streetscape. The attractively painted residential and commercial properties along the street gave a sense of properties which are being well cared for. For the future it would be desirable, for the remaining overhead power lines in the village to be undergrounded, as they are visually prominent along a section of the Main Street.
- The two stone cottages fronting the main road near the Community Centre with neatly presented front gardens, were especially admired. The site of the community playground looked well, but there are a lot of hard surfaces in this area and perhaps consider planting a low hedge around the perimeter railings of the playground, to soften the visual aspect here. The community center building which is faced in natural stone looked splendid. The gate to the community centre which is fabricated in steel, would benefit from a refresh with a brightly coloured paint, to enhance the entrance here. The raised stone planter with colourful floral display at the nearby Grotto looked very well and the adjacent Church property and burial ground were presented to an excellent standard, including the car parking area and mature trees which enhanced the site.
- Davitt's GAA Club premises was neat and tidy including a well surfaced car park area. It would be desirable, where space is available, to introduce some tree planting into this area to soften the impact of extensive hard surfaces when viewed from the road. The nearby Maxol premises and car parking area was also welcoming with neat and tidy and well-ordered frontage.
- The adjudicator called to the Ballindine national school and the colourful windows and floral displays on the building were admired. No doubt the school's location adjacent to the GAA Club has significant advantages for all concerned. The piece of sculpture at the entrance of the school called the 'solar orb suncatcher' was noted positively. You might consider some tree planting on the gravel median-strip along the school entrance road, together with native hedge planting on the nearby road boundary fencing.

Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:

- The colourful floral displays provided by Ballindine Tidy Towns throughout the village, using a range of seasonal bedding plants, provided a wonderful splash of colour and added greatly to the overall presentation of the village and environs. The street trees, which were expertly pruned during the dormant winter months, also significantly added to the character and charm of the village. The large and very colourful sculpture feature located on an open space near at the entrance to the village, would benefit from power washing and cleaning/re-painting in the near future, to help restore the colour and vibrancy of this imposing piece of art.
- The adjudicator was pleased to note that a total of four decorative Christmas tree lighting stands have been erected in the village. No doubt these provide a magnificent spectacle along the main road, during the dark days on the run up to Christmas. However, one wonders whether these could be suitably re-purposed or redecorated for the rest of the year to help celebrate other local or national events/celebrations?
- The planted areas located beneath the trees on the eastern side of the Main Street brought great vibrancy to this part of the village, transforming this space into a visual treat for local residents and passing motorists alike. These plantings helped to soften the stone paved area considerably and the pink shrub roses and herbaceous perennials, with well-maintained gravel surfacing here were especially admired. The tennis court area looked well and we noted that the perimeter fence has now been removed in anticipation of a further upgrade. The stone wall along the frontage of this site enhances the road environs here.
- The Station Road and site of the old railway line and bridge over the nearby stream was visited. Perhaps there is an opportunity here to develop a walkway or Greenway along the old railway line and stream linking to the Community Centre? The sign reflecting the original location of the old Ballindine Station looked well. The floral displays erected by Ballindine Tidy Towns on the stone walls in this area, enhanced the Station Road on the approach to the village. The nearby Newtown Business Park also looked very well, with attractively landscaped car park along the road frontage. The Forge area was also visited and the neatly presented picnic area here was noted positively. Perhaps a sign could be erected identifying this area as the site of the old Forge, if that in fact is the case?
- Reducing Ballindine Tidy Town's overall use of seasonal bedding plants for your floral displays is an initiative for your committee to consider under this category for the future. Colourful and permanent perennial and pollinator friendly planting e.g., using plants such as *Alstroemeria* spp. can provide a good alternative to the flamboyant but labour/water/feed and energy intensive annuals such as *Lobelias*, *Begonias* and *Petunias* etc.

Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality / An Dúlra agus an Bhithéagsúlacht i do cheantar:

- It is noted that the community pollinator garden is an area in the village which is widely used by the community for both young and old and is your main project under this category this year. You have transformed the site over the last number of years with support from the Heritage Section, Mayo County Council and a local Garden Centre, whose support is fully acknowledged.
- We called to the community pollinator garden and admired the memorial seat erected to the memory of

former resident of Ballindine, Mr. Pat Kivneen and his dog. The standard of presentation of the garden here was excellent and the use of gravel and timber sleeper surrounds to the planting beds worked very well. The pollinator friendly planting, tree planting Bug Hotel and wildlife signage were greatly admired.

- The very attractive and artistic biodiversity mural located near the junction with the Ballyhaunis Road was superb and well done to the committee and artist who was involved in this wonderful project.

Sustainability – Doing more with less / Inmharthanacht - Mórán ar an mbeagán:

- You have sub-divided your activities under this category into a number of headings including, Sustainability, Water, Transport and Waste. You are making good strides in this aspect of the competition and your actions are encouraging more sustainable use of planting materials, measures for the conservation of water, encouragement of greater use of public transport and improved handling of waste locally in conjunction with PEL Ltd.
- When considering new projects under this category it is worthwhile first of all considering how the proposed project will align with the UN Sustainable Development Goals. The information provided in the Tidy Towns newsletters and handbook is very informative in this regard.
- You might in the future consider installing a community composter in the village. These are useful and provide a quantity of mulch to use on your planted areas, which will ensure rapid establishment of the plantings.
- Other areas worthy of consideration by Ballindine Tidy Towns committee for the future under this category, which is in keeping with the Sustainable Development Goals, include the development of small electric microgeneration schemes for Wind, Solar and Hydro in partnership with the Local Authority - these may also attract suitable SEAI or Leader funding.
- You might look at the provision of public e-car charge points and additional bicycle parking/off road cycle tracks (along the old railway line) and other facilities in the village, and where there are deficiencies, suggest suitable locations where these could be provided in the short term.
- The Committee might also consider in the future initiating membership of the Sustainable Energy Communities programme run by the SEAI which includes engaging in learning networks, preparation of energy masterplans and local energy action plans etc. The following are useful links in this regard.
<https://www.seai.ie/community-energy/sustainable-energy-communities/><https://www.codema.ie/sec>

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

- You are fortunate that you have established a good working relationship with Supermacs and as a result, this extremely busy area near their premises is kept litter free. You continue to strive to keep the approach roads, public places streets and lanes litter free and well-presented and attractive. You have a very good relationship with all the local businesses and it has been agreed that no posters/signs are to be erected within the speed limit boundaries. You organise regular litter picks involving the tidy town's members and other volunteers in the community.
- On the day of adjudication, the village area was found to be largely litter free - well done to all concerned with your litter control initiatives.

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

- It was noted during the visit that all residential properties, town houses and gardens in Ballindine are well maintained and cared for by their owners. The adjudicator called to a number of housing estates in the village including Liosamble, Shehavaud, and Carraig Mór estates and these were found to be generally very well presented with well planted internal open space areas and attractively presented private dwellings and gardens.

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

- The approach to the village from the Ballyhaunis direction is characterized by good road surfaces and markings, attractive natural field boundaries on both sides of the road and well-presented private residences and gardens. The post and wire fencing located opposite the school would benefit from native hedgerow planting to help screen this fencing from the public road.
- On the Galway approach to the village, the roadside is characterized by attractive natural roadside vegetation and margins, and is enhanced with a superb Ballindine welcome sign. Concrete post and rail fencing on both sides the road would benefit from screening with a natural hedge planting.
- As with the other approach roads, the approach to the village from the Claremorris direction includes concrete post and rail boundary fencing which is visually prominent and needs some screen planting. The attractive welcome sign here together with colourful tyre planters and floral displays enhance this approach. In the longer term consider replacing the tyre planters with a more permanent low stone fronted planting beds. The floral displays provided at the speed reduction signage at the entrance of the village were also positively noted.

Concluding Remarks:

It was a pleasure to visit Ballindine this year. The village has very good potential to progress well in the competition. From the significant enhancements witnessed in your village, it is clear that Ballindine Tidy Towns Committee and volunteers are very active. With the further development of your 5-year Tidy Towns plan, you will be able to guide further and significant progress into the future. We hope you found the adjudicators comments useful and we wish you well with all your future endeavours.

