

Tidy Towns Competition 2023

Adjudication Report

Centre:	Ballaghaderreen - Bealach an Doirín	Ref:	716
County:	Roscommon	Mark:	247
Category:	C	Date(s):	13/07/2023

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2023
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	80	35
Streetscape & Public Places	80	34
Green Spaces and Landscaping	80	35
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	55	20
Sustainability – Doing more with less	55	14
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	44
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	55	30
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	55	35
TOTAL MARK	550	247

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.

Thank you for submitting your entry form and we are delighted to welcome you back after a number of years. It had been some time since we visited Ballaghaderreen and there is a real feeling of vibrancy and turning things around. Everywhere we looked there were freshly painted buildings and lovely colourful flowers.

Your entry form included some fantastic photographs showing how the different cultures of your community are working together to enhance your town.

You are just reforming your group. In the next year or so we recommend you focus on a number of small simple projects and put a lot of effort into communication. Recruit somebody who is good at PR who can share photographs and stories on social media or in the local newspapers to raise awareness of your group. Perhaps put some notices for volunteers up at the community notice board in SuperValu? Funding permitted, purchase some high visibility vests with your name and logo. If you don't have a logo, have a competition to devise one. You could also start building relations with local businesses, organizations and community groups. We also recommend you have a suggestion box and maybe a short online survey to get ideas from the community. What they would be interested in seeing happen through this competition? Have you registered with the PPN? You should also reach out to Roscommon County Council's Heritage Officer and their Environmental Awareness Officer to make sure you're on their mailing lists and that you will receive invites for any events they are organizing. Finally we direct you to look at the Tidy Towns website and download their handbook. This has been recently updated and is available chapter by chapter according to the separate adjudication categories of the competition. It is packed full of ideas.

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

The Western Development Commission building, and the library are beautifully presented and form the main focal point in the centre of Ballaghaderreen. On adjudication day your flowers here looked really nice. Public information on the history of the town and places of interest was read on clean notice boards. At the top of New Street the Garda station looked well with its window boxes planters and even a nice outdoor seat here.

Many premises were presented to a very high standard. Durkin's had lovely window boxes and an attractive first floor mural design that helped draw your eye to the upper floors here.

Window displays at Carrols pub looked well and the 1999-pint glass made us smile. We loved the hardware displays of Mulligans next door. Around the corner there was another lovely window display at Hanley's with many old

artifacts from the pub business and also the bus timetables were clearly displayed here. Sharky's funeral home and shop was very nicely presented. The painting of Duffy's SuperValu store looked really well as did the front and window display of Towey's news agent. Another building of note was that of B Mulligans & Co. with its rounded full-size windows, stain glass inserts and lovely window displays showing off this period building to its best. What a pity though that there's such an ugly electricity post positioned right in front of it on the street corner. An item to include in your long-term plan would be to lobby to have overhead wires put underground.

During adjudication that was obvious excitement building for the Arts Festival and they have cleverly taken over many empty premises to form lovely window displays such as at Gallagher's.

St Attracta's Primary School looked really well and there is good continuity of pavement to here. Nearby Willowbank Medical Centre had attractive hanging baskets and window displays to brighten up this building and to also support the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan as many of the flowers here were bee friendly.

Traditional features such as the ordinance survey milestones were still in place despite one which was cemented in next to an ESB box on Cathedral Street!

There are so many heritage features in the centre of Ballaghaderreen that maybe a small heritage trail could be devised. You could get lots of information from the online map viewer at www.archaeology.ie. A question for the trail could be 'what is the greatest number of chimneys/ flues on the buildings on The Square?' (Most had seven flues per chimney!). Many businesses could get involved suggesting a suitable clue about their building.

Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:

You have completed some lovely work in landscaping creating strong bursts of colour in the centre of your town. Your planters were positioned in excellent places where they could be enjoyed by many. Have you thought about growing these plants from seeds or using your own homemade compost in the future?

The planters at the entrance to the cathedral looked well.

Many premises had lovely window boxes a few already mentioned, and others included Clark's bar on Pound Street.

A longer-term action might be to paint street bollards and provide some outdoor seating in the Square as a number of older people were observed leaning against window displays to rest.

The roadside landscaping outside Abbey Fields hotel looked really well. Another great website you are directed to is www.pollinators.ie where you can get brilliant plant lists of flowers and shrubs that are great for pollinators. They have free resources such as bookmarks and flyers that you can share on-line to others in Ballaghaderreen.

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

Arriving into Ballaghaderreen we could hear the calls of swifts. These are amazing migrating birds that fly non-stop for months eating and sleeping in the air. We saw the swift boxes erected at the side of the Western Development Commission Building and the calls we heard were recorded as you try to attract the birds to use these artificial nests. Is this project registered with Swift Conservation Ireland? Perhaps you can do a short wildlife walk around the town during biodiversity week next May? You could talk about swifts and other wildlife such as bats, bees and other birds. Maybe during biodiversity week you could organise for locals to vote for their favourite wildlife species?

On the Sligo Road there are lovely silver birch trees planted that are growing really well and they make a lovely statement as you arrive into your town. Another simple task for you to do would be to check every tree and remove the support staff straps and any other plastic ties on them. These trees are now growing as they are established, and these straps are actually rubbing against, and damaging the bark. Another suggestion would be to put a circle of mulch around the base of these trees. We also noticed similar trees on other approach roads, so we suggest you replicate this action elsewhere.

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

It was lovely to see how you have used repurposed pipes to form your street planters. The town also hosts a number of second-hand shops such as the NCBI and Hayden's Plant and Tool sales with new and refurbished tools and bikes. This prevents items going to land fill, supports reuse and is important to advance the circular economy.

As the playground is quite far from the town centre, cycling here could be encouraged. It is suggested that maybe you work with the Local Sports and Recreation Partnership to deliver some cycling classes and to consider cycling amenities and safe cycleways in the town.

The Tidy Towns handbook has lots of other ideas about sustainability also.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

We suggest you monitor when, where and what types of litter are found in Ballaghaderreen. Then you could devise actions to prevent certain types. For example if there was one place where a lot of dog waste was noted, maybe some children's posters could be put up here outlining the problems and health hazards from it? Another action would be to host the Spring Clean next Easter encouraging all in the town to get involved and offer tea and cake afterwards.

There was a very rusty pole outside the Euro shop on the Sligo Road. The council should remove this.

On approach roads a number of streetlights and posts had cable ties that should be removed. This is a relatively easy task that you could do periodically. Another would be to clean road signs once a year maybe. Outside a number of closed public houses (we visited early in the morning) there were cigarette butts. Maybe you can work with these premises to see if you could have cigarette, butt-bins installed or a bucket with some sand for waste cigarettes. Or they could be encouraged to sweep up outside before closing time? There was a nice bright red butt-bin here at Hanley's. The post box on the main street needs repainting. The car park where the bottle-banks are located was clean, albeit a little stark. Maybe some honeysuckle or climber ivy could be encouraged to grow along the concrete block walls here? Or you could also put a lovely community notice board with some bright colours or even some of your gorgeous planters near the bottle banks to brighten this area.

A suggested action is to check notices to see if they are no longer legible or applicable and if they could be removed. For example in the playground one sign was very faded and maybe the covid-19 notice could be removed from here as well. An attractive bottle top mural could be a fixed to the fence here made by local youth club.

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

It was great to see so many homes on the main streets being refurbished or occupied. Many homes had solar or PV panels on the roof and you are encouraged to share information about this and how people can get grants and supports for energy efficiency in their homes.

Three-storey Georgian homes caught the eye on Pine Street with lovely fan lights above their doors. There were also recent modern home refurbishments such as number eight Pine Street and next door 'Clune Mara' had lovely hanging baskets and shrubs.

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

There is great continuity of pavement out to the Kilcolman graveyards. The lovely stone walls here can be an important habitat so mosses and ferns should be encouraged to grow here. Perhaps some nice fencing or screening could be applied to the gates of the cemetery car. A handy tap is provided to serve the planters at the graveyard and maybe you can put inside the wall here watering can for people to use. Some of these signs at the entrances to the graveyard would be better placed on the inside walls of the graveyard.

The new 'Welcome' signs on approach roads looked well and we loved your wooden welcome signs that explains the meaning of your Ballaghaderreen - the way of the little oak. Planting under welcome signs looked well too.

Concluding Remarks:

Thank you for inviting us back to Ballaghaderreen and we enjoyed exploring your town. There is a lot of refurbishment and development bringing vitality into your community. Your photographs showed the pride and enjoyment of your volunteers working to keep Ballaghaderreen tidy. Well done to all for your hard work so far and best of luck with the new committee.