

"Caring for our environment"

Centre : **BALLINAHOWN VILLAGE**
County : **WESTMEATH**
Category : **A**

Results

Date of Adjudication : 06-08-2002

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2002	Mark Awarded 2001
Overall Developmental Approach	50	43	43
The Built Environment	40	31	30
Landscaping	40	33	33
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	17	19
Litter Control	40	33	32
Tidiness	20	17	17
Residential Areas	30	23	22
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	33	33
General Impression	10	8	8
TOTAL MARK	300	238	237

Ballinahown, Co. Westmeath

OVERALL DEVELOPMENTAL APPROACH

The Committee is thanked for their submission. No overall development approach programme was submitted with this year's entry form. It would be of great help to the adjudicator to have this in order to show the work to be undertaken in the future and how it will relate to the existing fabric of the village. Overall, it is a most pleasant village to come to, especially when it is considered the Committee's on-going struggle with the rising number of through vehicular traffic.

THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

There are many delightful features in this village. The three pieces of sculpture on the entry road, in the car park and in the school grounds are excellent and the Committee is to be congratulated on the commissioning of these art works. It was unfortunate that the fountain in the car park was not working on the day of adjudication, it is understood to have been vandalised. The stone wall enclosing the car park was well made but is marred by the non-traditional finish of the capping to this wall. There are many examples of the heavy, closely spaced, vertical capping stones within and adjoining the village. FÁS must learn to use this traditional construction, otherwise the tradition of capping will be lost. All we will then have is a slurry of mortar holding small widely spaced stones. The adjudicator would like to see a well designed display map of the village erected in the car park and Community Centre area depicting and drawing attention to the Pilgrim path to Clonmacnoise, Mongan Bog and the extent of work of Bord na Mona.

LANDSCAPING

On the entry into the village there could be additional tree planting on the well kept verges. It should be undertaken so that there will be, in the future, a tree lined entry into the village. Beech, oak and ash should be the considered tree types. The adjudicator will look forward to this tree planting programme being underway for next year's entry. The Church and School grounds were excellently maintained, even though the school building was being renovated. Possibly the Committee could organise a platoon of the school pupils to work on grass cutting and weeding of the school grounds, say once every fortnight, over the long holidays to keep up the appearances of the school grounds. The grass cutting should be kept for later mulching.

WILDLIFE AND NATURAL AMENITIES

The adjudicators had no plan to refer to in judging the Nature Trail that starts at the Sports Park. Possibly ENFO could be contacted to obtain some of the very fine publications they have produced on nature trails and wild life in general. The adjudicator will look forward to this project being advanced for next year's entry.

LITTER CONTROL

There was very little evidence of litter on adjudication day and the Committee is to be congratulated on this achievement. The five bin recycling unit provided by the County Council was noted.

TIDINESS

The absence of overhead wires has added greatly to the appearance of the village, but vigilance must be continually kept on the work of the electrical and telephone companies so that overhead wiring must not re-appear. As a general comment the village is very tidy and attractive.

RESIDENTIAL AREAS

The front gardens of practically all houses were very well designed and maintained and added greatly to the general appearance of the village.

ROADS, STREETS AND BACK AREAS

The relatively heavy traffic through the village – on the N62 – is a deterring factor in the orderly development of elements of the village. The County Council should be approached to define more accurately the priority of traffic approaching the T-junction in the centre of the village. Also the County Council should define the division between the public road and the verges of stone or tarmacadam by yellow lines – an example would be at roadside parking at the school.

GENERAL IMPRESSION

Ballinahown is a most attractive small village, both in its well maintained entrance approaches and the central area developed around the Church, the car park and the houses around this area, especially the Celtic Roots Studio.

SECOND ADJUDICATION (06/08/2002)

It was indeed a pleasure to see the fountain in operation, albeit on a wet afternoon, during our second visit. Despite the rain the cheerful paint colours and neatly maintained grass around the village and out the three roads were effective. It is suggested that Flynn's Bar might be painted in brighter colours or at least the windows painted white. Work was in progress at the school during adjudication. The miles of stone walls together with so many beautiful mature trees make Ballinahown a very special place. Do remember that yards and outbuildings where visible from the public domain are important elements to be considered. We look forward to returning next year.