

Tidy Towns Competition 2003

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Ballinahown Village**

Ref: **693**

County: **Westmeath**

Mark: **242**

Category: **A**

Date: **03/08/2003**

| | Maximum Mark | Mark Awarded 2003 | Mark Awarded 2002 |
|--------------------------------|--------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Overall Developmental Approach | 50 | 44 | 43 |
| The Built Environment | 40 | 31 | 31 |
| Landscaping | 40 | 33 | 33 |
| Wildlife and Natural Amenities | 30 | 19 | 17 |
| Litter Control | 40 | 34 | 33 |
| Tidiness | 20 | 17 | 17 |
| Residential Areas | 30 | 23 | 23 |
| Roads, Streets and Back Areas | 40 | 33 | 33 |
| General Impression | 10 | 8 | 8 |
| TOTAL MARK | 300 | 242 | 238 |

Overall Developmental Approach:

Thank you for your comprehensive map and plan. There are many objectives set out and it is praiseworthy that many of them have been achieved. The committee must be both dedicated and hard working.

The Built Environment:

The church is a fine building in Ballinahown and is well presented. The blue cedar in front of the presbytery is a fine specimen tree. The community centre with its disabled access, hanging baskets plus noted awards in the hall is a credit to the village. It is commendable to note that the school is involved with the Green Flag initiative. The trees at the school are a pleasant enhancement of the area and it was good to note that many of them are named bilingually. Work was being undertaken on the carpark outside and the judges look forward to its completion. Perhaps it was due to this work that the area between the carpark and road required some attention. It may be advisable to use evergreen shrubs here - perhaps a low bank of holly - either yellow or red berried varieties. The Celtic Roots Studio is a fine building demonstrating and selling the finest of Irish art. The information on bog formation and local bogs is noteworthy. The shop is presented well - the gate beside it (in deep red) is a most attractive color. Both Flynns pub and the Garda Station are a mass of flowers and hanging baskets.

Landscaping:

The landscaping throughout Ballinahown was well done. The fountain was operating on the day of adjudication and is truly a magnificent piece. The area/carpark around it looked well and is nicely landscaped. Hanging baskets on a number of buildings and the use of trees has been undertaken in a thoughtful manner.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

The woodland area is pleasant and an environmental assessment plan is an excellent start to identifying what can be undertaken in relation to this section. The nature trail is eagerly anticipated. Both this and the Green schools initiative are excellent examples of how a village can encourage the wildlife factor in the competition.

Litter Control:

Litter control was excellent on the day of judging and the litter bins were in good order. This is especially commendable with the increase in traffic through the village. The recycling unit was also in good condition and there was no dumping as is so prevalent around these units.

Tidiness:

The village was generally tidy - however there were a number of works being undertaken - footpaths being completed, sports ground facilities being developed and the school carpark area. On completion, these will add considerably to the tidiness of the village.

Residential Areas:

Houses in general appeared to have made great effort with clean fronts and good gardens. The small enclave of houses were well presented and pride in the village was evident. A new house is to be built up beside the Sports ground - will this impact on the trail or walks?

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

All of the approach roads were well presented. The stone walls are a feature - if you haven't already, investigate the stonewalling techniques employed to ensure a traditional finish. Do ensure that native/wall flora are encouraged to inhabit the walls as this integrates the wall into the local landscape. Work was being undertaken on the footpaths in the centre of the village and this will enhance the area once completed.

General Impression:

The village has come a long way over the past few years. A number of areas need to be completed, such as the building and development works. A concerted effort must also be made on the wildlife section as valuable marks will be gained pushing you to a higher standard in the competition. Well done on the work achieved in the past year.

Second Round Adjudication:

Ballinahown is a small village of under 200 people, developed around a T-junction. One could nearly use the phrase of hiding its efforts under a bush, but as one slowly examines the village in a walk around, its merits slowly reveal themselves. With a Committee of fifteen and ten assistants, one can understand their dedicated work and attention to detail and how it is achieved. All entry roads into the village are excellent with very well maintained verges, trimmed hedgerows and trees. The entry, in particular at St. Columbcille's church, is very well handled. The grounds of the Church

were immaculate, the cascade fountain opposite the Church was very beautiful, especially when seen in relation to the tree enclosed car park and the Village Hall with the great attention to detailing of the hard and soft landscaping. But the surprising treasure of this area is the sculpture walk starting at this cascade fountain, leading to the "Weathervain" sculpture and then the "flame" sculpture ending up opposite the school grounds. This walk is evocative of the former pilgrim's walk to Clonmacnoise which is close by. The "Pilgrim" timber sculpture at the T-junction reinforces this concept. The school and its grounds were under extensive renovations in 2002. This work is now completed and the grounds already are beginning to show the excellent work put into the landscaping. The Adjudicator was impressed with the retention of the trees on the front stone wall by building enclosures around them. There is only one small, but important criticism, in relation to this wall. The wall ends in a heightening and this could be a hazard to cars, especially exiting from the forecourt, the view of oncoming cars from the Ferbane road is blind. It should be looked at. The sports grounds are nearing completion. The Adjudicator looks forward to next year's submission when the small exhibition on all this theme of the sculptures is explained.