

# Tidy Towns Competition 2022

## Adjudication Report

Centre: <b>Ballinamore - Béal an Átha Mhóir</b>	Ref: <b>422</b>
County: <b>Leitrim</b>	Mark: <b>327</b>
Category: <b>C</b>	Date(s): <b>14/07/2022</b>

	<b>Maximum Mark</b>	<b>Mark Awarded 2021</b>	<b>Mark Awarded 2022</b>
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	80	48	49
Streetscape & Public Places	80	40	41
Green Spaces and Landscaping	80	48	49
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	55	35	36
Sustainability – Doing more with less	55	26	27
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	55	55
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	55	31	32
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	55	38	38
<b>TOTAL MARK</b>	<b>550</b>	<b>321</b>	<b>327</b>

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

Fáilte chuig Comórtas Na mBailte Slachtmhara Super Valu don bhliain 2022. Táimid buíoch daoibh as ucht na hiontrála a chur chugainn, agus guimíd gach rath ar bhúr gcuid oibre amach anseo. Ádh Mór oraibh! Many thanks for your application form, complete with map and photographs. Unfortunately, the scanned map did not come out well, leaving it difficult to read and the 5-Year Plan was not attached to your submission email, though it was submitted last year I believe. Please be mindful of this for next year's submission. While your Tidy Towns committee is small, you have explained that the new Ballinamore Steering Group works well for you in that it consolidates all the various town groups under one umbrella. I am very glad that the new residents of the local Direct Provision Centre have been made to feel welcome via the schools, Sanctuary Runners group and community garden. You seem to be well supported by local businesses and agencies, including Waterways Ireland, the local Super Valu and Leitrim Co Co. Communication via both digital and more traditional platforms should ensure you are reaching a range of age groups. Your links with the schools and youth groups, including Foróige and the Rehab Care Centre, seems to be working well and will hopefully encourage the next generation to take pride in their town. I am happy to hear you value being part of the Tidy Towns community and that it has benefitted Ballinamore over the years since first entering the competition in 1985.

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

Well done on the walkability study, resulting in repairs to footpath and change to LED street lighting. I am glad to hear the conservation of old buildings is a priority in this historic town. A few premises stood out along the streets with pleasant shop fronts, e.g. The Poor Scholar, Lakeland Bar, Smyth's 'Siopa Ól' and Duignan's Drapery. I noticed the many bilingual signs, which is great. Good luck with the completion of the new storage facility. Additional efforts in the public realm improvement scheme should help to improve some of the more rundown aspects of the town. Unfortunately, the old Shaylyn Arts Centre is quite an eyesore on entering the town from the eastern side. A couple of benches, e.g. at Cannaboe Street, along the railway wall and at Fair Green, need maintenance/painting. The John McGahern bench is striking but needs some light cleaning. The new recycled benches look well along the railway wall, plus the pollinator friendly stone planters. I am delighted to see the railway station being done up under the 'Junction Project'. The Ballinamore heritage trail signs and wall plaques look very well! The XL Park Store on Park Road is very neat, though its side gable needs painting. The planted wall/bench to the shop's left it is lovely though. Leitrim Genealogy Centre is a lovely old building but a bit hidden. Perhaps a light tree pruning is required with some enhanced signage? The green street signage very pleasant and well maintained and the street markings and trees along Main Street look quite good. Ballinamore Community Hall and Island Theatre building looks brilliant with its maintained paintwork and signage.

## **Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:**

There was some pleasant planting at Fair Green, including at the bike feature. The decommissioned fountain here looked bare and requires some planting, though I know this is planned to happen soon. The green space by the 'basin' or riverside at Kiltymooden was overall quite pleasant with just a little maintenance required here and there. The Canal Bank Walk sign was in good condition and the blue bike 'planter' very striking but there was a lack of plants in the baskets, mainly compost. The 'Pond Life' sign here was interesting too. Some of the terraced apartments look unoccupied towards the rear Super Valu entrance, although the planted beds are lovely. Ballinamore Harbour was nicely presented, however, as with any other marinas I visited on my way, the toilets were not clean and didn't flush properly. The canal bank walk at Lock 16 is well maintained although the bench here needs a lick of paint. There may be some invasive plant issues along the banks here, e.g. Bindweed and Coltsfoot. I trust that any works to remove Ivy from the main bridge will be done in an ecologically sound manner, e.g. ensuring no damage to bat roosts, etc? Well done to the CE/RSS staff, the Men's Shed and community volunteers who help to maintain the green areas in and around the town. The development of St Felim's pitch into a multifunctional space seem like a great idea – best of luck with this. The John Joe McGirl memorial area before lock entrance is very well kept, with beds of colourful pollinator friendly flowers. While I did not see the polytunnels behind the ETB building on my visit, well done on securing the funding to purchase and install them – I'm sure they will be well used for both education and propagation. The flower displays around the town were also nicely done.

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

You acknowledge you are lucky to have local experts in biodiversity who are of great benefit to Ballinamore. The polytunnels at the ETB centre are positive new additions for local groups. I am delighted to hear you host bat walks during National Biodiversity Week. Well done on continuing to avoid pesticides and waiting for Dandelions to emerge before cutting in the spring. I noted the verge in from the Carrick-on-Shannon side was left to grow and contained some lovely native meadow flowers, e.g. Meadowsweet, Vetches, Ox-Eye Daisies. While there were some pollinator friendly planting displays, some, e.g. at the Genealogy Centre were planted with Marigolds and Begonias, which have little nectar/pollen for bees. I noted the Sand Martin box at Riverside and hope they will nest there soon! The Swift project in conjunction with the Church of Ireland is great news for this threatened species and I wish you well here. For more inspiration under this category, check out the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan and related resources at [pollinators.ie](http://pollinators.ie). Free AIPP 'Managed for Pollinators' signage is also available to download from this website. FIT (Flower-Insect Timed) Counts are also a good idea for monitoring your insect populations – please see more at [biodiversityireland.ie/surveys/fit-counts/](http://biodiversityireland.ie/surveys/fit-counts/).

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

Sustainability is a broad topic, but it boils down to actions such as conserving water, minimising waste and practising recycling, encouraging walking/cycling and public transport, as well as saving energy and using renewable energy where possible. The social and affordable housing project off Church Street is great news. Delighted to hear Comfrey is being used at the polytunnels as opposed to purchased fertiliser, etc. Well done on getting the new mulcher lawnmower which should cut down on grass cutting 'waste'. Like many rural towns/villages in Ireland there is heavy use on the car in Ballinamore with quite some traffic on the streets. It is positive however, that committee members have begun using e-bikes instead of always relying on the car! The bike stands at Super Valu are a real plus and hopefully they begin to get used more often as cycling infrastructure and road safety improves. For more information on the UN's Sustainable Development Goals, you can visit [irelandsdg.geohive.ie](http://irelandsdg.geohive.ie).

## **Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:**

In general, Ballinamore was quite tidy, but there was some litter here and there, e.g. masks and disposable coffee cups. There was some debris in the Tesco car park and behind the green fence at the newly built/refurbished house on the corner of Willowfield Road. I note you have no public waste bins due to members of the public disposing of their household waste in them – this is unfortunate. Businesses are encouraged to provide their own bins, though I wonder how this is working out? At the XL shop junction on Park Road I spotted the 'Seattle's Finest Coffee' giant cup, which looked like a bin, but it wasn't. There was some rubbish noted lying on top. The solar bins look well and are a great addition to the town. I noted the bring banks are well maintained (your application from states you wash them annually) and accessible to the public. It is great that local young people partake in litter picking too. I note you didn't mention taking part in the National Spring Clean in your form – perhaps this would be a good idea for next year to encourage more volunteers to litter pick.

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

Good job on getting LED street lighting installed out to Edentenny, as well as from the top of Church Street out to the Graveyard & St. Brigid's Well. There is a noticeable amount of dereliction in Ballinamore, unfortunately, which is not the fault of the Tidy Towns committee of course. Some of the houses along Railway Terrace on the Newtowngore Road are lovely, though others need a little enhancement, as does the old petrol pumps further up. One or two houses along Church Lane look abandoned and have graffiti on them. The old petrol pumps further down here are quite derelict looking. It was difficult not to notice the rundown area by Tesco and the vacant Carraig Accommodation Centre. I noted a beautiful old house with a yellow door to the east of the town with pretty window boxes. The residential area at Kiltymooden seemed to be well maintained. Efforts are being made, but there is a little more work to be done in this category.

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

The sports complex and playpark are well maintained, in addition to the community school. As mentioned before, the verges are managed well, without being overcut. In the town centre, there was a bit of debris down Fohera Lane. Cannaboe Lane car park is currently not well surfaced, but it does offer an alternative to on-street parking. A couple of the blue name signs on approach roads need painting, e.g. on the Newtowngore Road. The blue Ballinamore sign on the Carrick-on-Shannon approach road looks well, along with the planting (though flowers were quite dry). Delighted to hear you have recently completed a cycle path/walkway from Ballinamore to Corgar, with plans for a further stretch to Aughawillan. You are aware of Japanese Knotweed locally and there are warning signs for it along the Carrick-on-Shannon Road, but I did notice stands in the Riverside carpark in the town centre. There was no sign up here just yet, so this should probably be highlighted. Some of the housing estates on the outskirts, such as Ard Feá, were nicely maintained.

### **Concluding Remarks:**

Ballinamore is a fairly large town with an interesting heritage and lots of character attached. The new Railway junction hub will really enhance the streetscape of the town when completed. Dereliction has hit Ballinamore over the years, but the Tidy Towns seems to be striving to overcome this challenge and focus on the positive aspects present here. You have a great community spirit in your friendly town. I wish you all the best for the future!