

Tidy Towns Competition 2022

Adjudication Report

Centre: Ballina Boher - Béal an Átha	Ref: 824
County: Tipperary(North)	Mark: 330
Category: D	Date(s): 09/07/2022

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2021	Mark Awarded 2022
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	80	48	49
Streetscape & Public Places	80	42	43
Green Spaces and Landscaping	80	47	47
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	55	32	33
Sustainability – Doing more with less	55	25	26
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	63	64
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	55	34	35
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	55	31	33
TOTAL MARK	550	322	330

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. Adh Mór.

Thank you for the comprehensively completed entry form which gives a complete insight to the workings of your committee and this was backed up by a collection of photographs.

The map was acceptable but was a little faded when copied, anyway the adjudicator was able to identify places fairly easy.

The Sustainable Development Goals are at the heart of the United Nation's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

These goals address the global challenges we face in relation to key environmental issues.

Tidy Towns has adopted these goals and has integrated these into the competition asking participating groups to show how they impact on their activities

Has there been a 3 year plan in operation if so maybe an update could be included for next year?

The entry form has a lot of information under different categories and it would be neigh impossible to comment on everything in a 3 page report covering 8 categories.

That said the adjudicator has read and noted all content and the adjudication was done in an objective and fair manner.

Your involvement with the schools is very strong and this comes across in the body of your document.

Well done to St Annes on the Clare side of the bridge! for its helping its neighbours out with the planting projects.

Interaction with the youth of the town via various groups is the key to future success for the town.

The contribution that you have made with other relevant stake holders in the development of Ballina Boher is very much reflected in the progress that the town has made in the last decade.

Ballina Tidy Towns is one of the main drivers of that success and this was observed at first hand on the day of adjudications there were volunteers out doing some remedial work.

Ballina has expanded population wise over the last number of years and it has become a sought after place to live

Have you any initiatives in place that involve people of different ethnic backgrounds who contribute to your community, if so maybe these should be highlighted in next year's entry form.

There are plenty other ways of managing your communication messages, including notes in the Nenagh Guardian, which you have done very effectively.

Social media platforms can be such a positive feature in the life of a community and you have a strong social media presence via Facebook, Instagram and Whats App groups.

What is Fresh Air Friday ?

The special project has been noted as has the comment on derelict buildings and both will be commented on in the next category.

For additional work and involvement in new initiatives considered under this category an additional mark is awarded.

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

The Development of Walking/Cycleway from the Junction on Birdhill Road to Ballina Riverside Park as planned will provide safe passage for cyclists and walkers.

This an excellent development and when completed will bring extra visitors to Ballina and Killaoe
Its in the throes of planning and land acquisition and hopefully all will work out well with that process as well as the application for funding from Active Travel Programme.

Your comment on addressing the problem of derelict and unoccupied buildings in the town has been recorded.
In fact some very positives developments have been happening on that score and the adjudicator got a low down from a local resident on the proposed Retail/Office Development in the Main Street.

Encouragement is the key to getting problems relating to dereliction of premises solved and you are wished well in your dealings with the owners of these properties.

Quite a lot of the content inputted in this category is for other categories and will be commented on later.
Last years adjudication report, which was based on a virtual assessment, had quite a lot of questions that this adjudicator doesn't see as relevant to this year.

There are not many new projects mentioned in this years but the adjudicator saw at first hand the result of the panting grant scheme offered by Tipperary County Council and as you state it greatly enhances the streetscape.
The following are few observations mostly positive that were made during a walkabout .

The town was busy because of the Feile Brian Boru which is a shared event with your Clare neighbours -hurling rivalry put aside for this one.

Quite a few flags supporting the noisy neighbours in the road were observed during the walkabout !

Church of Our Lady and St Lua was presented very well with the grounds and adjoining graveyard well maintained.

The adjudicator acknowledges the work of parishioners who keep these places of worship in such good condition.
Ballina National school is a fine modern building that was presented to a very high standard.

Some of the parking space markings in front of the school need to be stencilled

The following O'Donovan's Solicitors. Flanagan's Restaurant, Boruma and the Community Hall all beneficiaries of the aforementioned painting scheme certainly enhanced the centre of the town.

McKeoghs large commercial premises at the Nenagh end of the Main Street and Goosers and Ryans hostelrys at the other end were also admired for good presentation.

Tuscany Bistro shop front has a nice appeal to it

Street bollards prevented random parking and Street lighting was more than adequate.

Has the Washer Woman mural been upgraded ?

Road surfaces were acceptable as were footpaths and some new footpath extensions were observed on Grange Road.

Despite the fact that there were no new projects the adjudicator was impressed with the standard in the category and an additional marks had been awarded.

Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:

Lots of ongoing maintenance work is being undertaken in looking after the extensive green areas such as Riverside Park, replenishing hanging baskets, and other standalone planters.

Well done on adhering to good advice and ensuring that sections of the large Riverside Park will be mower free for an extended period to encourage the promotion and preservation of various forms of wildlife.

The commemorative stone at St Lua's at the Oratory which was power washed was admired.

Lights at the pedestrian crossing at the recreational area close to Gooser's is a new project and will be considered under this category because of its relativity to the Riverside Park

The repainted and repaired flower boxes at the park were observed during the walkabout and this adds to the enhancement of the said park.

The rose beds at the same location and the revitalised Flower Tower at the Dairygold premises all add to the upgrading of these areas

Well done to the principal and pupils of Ballina National School for contributing to this category by painting eight appropriate signs for the Tidy Towns committee.

The standard was good but as you have a limited number of new projects that are actually within the guidelines of this category the high mark that you got last year remains the same.

The adjudicator would consider the walkway and new stone wall projects to be under the previous category but that's a matter of personal interpretation.

When both will be completed they will add to the built environment of the Town.

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

The key objectives in respect of this category are to know local species and habitats and also knowledge of locally designated areas (SACs, SPAs, NHAs)

It is equally important to be familiar with the law and biodiversity before embarking on projects in your area.

As a committee, you have embraced the above and have set out on the proper track.

Excellent development to see that you have applied for funding for Biodiversity Plan for Riverside Park/Riverside Woodland area and that a more expansive for the greater Ballina area is being envisaged.

You are currently in process of applying for funding from North Tipp Leader for a biodiversity survey to be carried out in the first instance.

You must involve both schools' primary and post-primary a little further into the actual plan and allow them to contribute.

Well done to the National School on achieving 4 green flags.
An added mark has been awarded.
The remainder of your input fits neatly into the next category

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

This category has been evolving in keeping with current EU and government policy as well as ‘best practice’ guidelines.

It encapsulates how we try to minimize our use of all resources within the community so that we reduce our environmental impact.

It is a broad category so you may be surprised at how many of your existing community initiatives are relevant!

What you have included falls within the ethos of the above statement as the slogan of “doing more with less” promotes the message of the need to reduce our environmental impact.

Most of the activities stated are replicated in many other centres around the country and you got a relatively high mark last year

The adjudicator suggests that you engage with the local county environmental officer to see what is planned, now that we are back to some type of normality, in terms of workshops or mini-seminars in the county over the autumn and winter periods.

You might consider acting as hosts to such activities if they are being considered.

These workshops and seminars are a great way to network with other groups and share ideas.

Also, access the excellent section on this category in the Tidy Towns Handbook for links to websites that give ideas for new projects.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

You have put out a strong anti litter message to the local community and to visitors to the town and you have backed it up with concerted litter pics.

These efforts have proven to be successful as on a bust festival week end day the amount of litter detected was not that great.

As a committee you have addressed the litter black spots by highlighting them in your submission and well done on doing that.

Where have spaces that people congregate there are bound to be problems as there will always be people who have no civic spirit whatsoever.

Well done on partaking in the nationwide waterways clean up day.

The standard of general tidiness was acceptable, there were a few side areas that were weed and a few that had items scattered around the place.

Signage both speed and directional was clean and visible.

The pet hate of this adjudicator, roadside hoardings, were not to be seen on the outskirts of the town.

Overall the standard in this category merits an increase in marks.

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

The outskirts of the town have expanded greatly over the last 10 years with the addition of new housing developments.

Ballina has become a sought after place to live and is somewhat of a commuter town in that people travel, or did pre Covid, to work in Limerick and Nenagh and possibly farther afield.

The adjudicator visited some of these, Ivy Grove near the excellent GAA Grounds, Shannon View, Kincora, and the Beeches all on the Nenagh side of town.

He also visited areas off Grange Road, Ard Lua, and another large development Ard Coillte on the Boher Road.

Overall the standard of presentation of residences and communal areas varied from very good, acceptable, and in some cases fair.

Some houses in these estates needed painting and a few green areas were more than a little “rewilded”

This adjudicator does not consider bindweed and briars to be anyway contributory to the promotion of biodiversity.

Briars have become so problematic in the country of late.

It has been noted that you are in regular contact with residents associations in the town and that you give encouragement to them to maintain their properties and communal areas in an acceptable condition.

You could further incentivize these associations by way of holding a Tidy Estates Competition and fostering a bit of positive rivalry.

The core area of the town had some nice residences, particularly the yellow and black and salmon and black next door to each other on the Church side of the main street.

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

Entrances into the town from both ends of the R494 were visited and both were presented very well, especially the Portroe end as the road had been resurfaced lately.

The entrance from Birdhill had a very rough surface and the explanation as to why it is not in for re-surfacing has been taken into consideration as it is something outside the control of a voluntary body.

The Nenagh entrance is very well presented with verges cut back as per good practice but the name sign is obscured.

Further, in at the Junction with the R494, there is a nice area that has an arrangement of flowers complemented by rural artifacts.

The entrance from Boher is steep and narrow but acceptable.

In the town itself, some internal lanes and side roads were examined and were clean and tidy.

The new signs erected at entrances enhance these areas and give good first impressions.

Concluding Remarks:

The adjudicator is familiar with Ballina but hasn't been there for the last two years because of Covid. Over the last few decades, the town has expanded outwardly at a fairly fast rate. It was a pleasure to come back and adjudicate. You are wished well for the future.