



Streetscape Enhancement Priorities 2020

Balla won the National Pride of Place Award in 2018 and has gained 35 extra points in the National Tidy Towns Competition in the last 3 years. These successes have boosted confidence and has further increased motivation within our community to embark on new projects. We are now looking at new development priorities and while we are very pleased with our progress in Tidy Towns there are a number of areas that need attention. While we received 10 extra marks in 2019 we were not awarded any extra points at all under two of the 8 categories which we found hard to understand. These were:

Community – Planning and Involvement
Residential Streets & Housing Areas

*We also only achieved 46% of possible marks in **Sustainability – Doing more with less.***

So these areas should get special attention in future applications.

Streetscape & Public Places

Our streetscape is unique and reflects our history as an important market town. Streetscape enhancement should aim at creating a more pleasant physical environment through provision of landscaping, new paving and street furniture. Buildings, trees and landscaping, lighting, furnishings, paving, and other elements fill the spaces of the streetscape with life, light, color, and texture and make a street a comfortable, interesting, and usable space. This report identifies areas requiring streetscape improvement and the new enhancement/ greening opportunities offered by these improvement proposals.

The most important things that must be considered when enhancing a streetscape include:

- Most importantly the streetscape must create a unique sense of place. This can be done in a variety of ways, i.e. paint, materials, brick paving, signage, lighting, landscaping, pedestrian crossing markings, and art of sculptural pieces are some of the more common ways to do this.
- Views from the street to buildings, businesses, or points of interest are extremely important and must be maintained, especially in retail areas where views and sightlines are critical to any businesses' success.
- There must be places to sit and interact along the street.
- Landscaping is critical in creating an image. Most low landscaping should be a maximum of 18-24" tall. Any trees or upper level landscape should be maintained at 8' or above. The middle area of the landscape should be kept clear to keep a line of site into things along the street such as retail areas.

This StreetScapes Enhancement project aims to reinvigorate and enhance Balla Town and make it a more attractive place to live, recreate and do business. Projects prioritised below were identified from community feedback during the process of renewing our Community Futures Plan as well as suggestions in recent Tidy Towns Adjudicators Reports. We now intend to improve the streetscape by upgrading and

carrying out remedial works on vacant buildings and empty spaces in the town as well as some strategic landscaping.

We received funding under the 'Local Agenda 21 (LA21) Environmental Partnership Fund 2018' towards the development of the Community Orchard' on the Castlebar road and this has greatly enhanced this end of town.

The provision of Community Information Notice Boards was identified as being critical to inform and give direction to visitors and highlight amenities, local walks and other sites of interest in the community. These are now In place thanks to SWMDC and Mayo Co Co. We also installed 10 large planters in the town square and car park at the community funeral home in order to soften the visual appearance of these areas. A number of seats and picnic tables were also installed to encourage visitors to visit and spend time in the town centre.

Waste management and litter control can always be improved and we took part in Mayo County Council's 'Anti-Litter Awareness Grant Scheme 2018' and would now hope to place litter bins strategically in order to improve the situation.

A meeting to consider improvements required to develop a sustainable Streetscape Plan for Balla was held with Ann Sweeney & Peter Gill from Mayo County Council.

The following immediate priorities were agreed

1. New front for derelict site at Claremorris/Mayo Abbey road junction (N60/L1705)
2. New flower bed to be developed on island at N60/Mayo Abbey road junction
3. House front study and draft Streetscape Paint Scheme for upper Main Street (Mayo Abbey road)
4. Upgrade footpath on Mayo Abbey road from N60 to the National School

Other areas needing attention:

- Straighten out trees on street and fill tree basins with sharp sand and chippings
- The tree supports on Green to be removed
- Grass will be cleaned off chimneys & gutters
- Algae to be cleaned off all poles and seats
- Potato manure to be used on trees
- All plastic signs would be discouraged and removed where possible

A. Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes

Tidy Town adjudicators repeat some negative comments: *'The junction to Ardboley North has an attractive planting scheme but too much associated signage. The southern approach to Main Street needs attention particularly around the Balla sign. A number of road signs would benefit from washing / cleaning'*. While they were complimentary of the *'works ongoing on the way to the Town Park, which we understand is part of the Greenway from the Medical Centre to the Town Park'*

Our enhancement priorities for this section must include:

- The development of a strategy to deal with the signage on the approach roads and around the town in consultation with local businesses
- The development of a plan for the back line from Spar/post office to the Claremorris road

- Extend the footpath on the Kiltimagh road to the speed limit
- Trim trees and verges on the mayo Abbey road
- Upgrade section of the Tóchar Phádraig walk at the Blessed Well

Priority Development Projects for 2019		
Project	Action	Cost
<i>Develop Streetscape Plan</i>	<i>Meet Mayo Co Co architect to develop a plan</i>	
<i>Remedial works on vacant buildings and empty spaces in the town.</i>	<i>New front on derelict sign at N60/Station Road Junction) (N60/L1705)</i>	
<i>Create new flower bed on island at N60/L1705 junction</i>	<i>Develop a plan and agree on type of planting</i>	
<i>Develop Streetscape Paint Scheme for upper Main Street</i>	<i>Coordinated Painting and flowers scheme for Mayo Abbey road opposite the green</i>	
<i>Upgrade footpath on Station Road</i>	<i>Improve footpath from N60 to the National School</i>	
<i>Develop a plan for the back line</i>	<i>Enhance backline from Spar/post office to the Claremorris road</i>	
<i>Extend the footpath on Kiltimagh road</i>	<i>Extend the footpath out to the speed limit</i>	
<i>Mayo Abbey Road</i>	<i>Trim trees and verges</i>	
<i>Tóchar Phádraig Walk</i>	<i>Upgrade section at the Blessed Well</i>	
<i>Develop a strategy to deal with the signage problem on the approach roads</i>	<i>Develop a plan with local businesses to reduce the amount of signage</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Some parts of the projects will be done by voluntary work & RSS</i> • <i>Balla CRD, Balla Tidy Towns and Balla Town Park would be happy to contribute to local financial contribution if required</i> 		

Sort out site at Claremorris Road /
Mayo Abbey Road junction



Develop Streetscape
Paint Scheme