

Introducing Ballinasloe

Ballinasloe occupies a strategic location on the N6 National Primary route linking Dublin and Galway and is one of the principal gateways to the West. The town owes its origins to its location as a crossing point on the River Suck, a tributary of the Shannon, on the borders of Counties Galway and Roscommon. It is the largest town in County Galway after Galway City, and its hinterland extends up to twelve miles from the town boundary into County Galway, and up to six miles into County Roscommon. The population of the town is almost 6,000 with a further 8,000 residing in the environs.

Ballinasloe is a prosperous and expanding town, and is the main commercial/industrial centre for East Galway. The town is within easy access of other major regional centres and functions mainly as :-

- A commercial and market centre
- A centre for hospital and educational facilities
- A centre for manufacturing industry
- A stop over centre for tourists, offering a plethora of leisure pursuits including coarse angling, boating, shooting, golf and horse riding and a marina.

Ballinasloe Urban District covers in excess of 4,000 acres, making it in geographical terms the third largest of Ireland's Town Authorities. Relative to other large towns, Ballinasloe would appear to have a low population density. This however, is more accurately explained by its large tracts of undeveloped lands including the Garbally Demesne and the Western Health Board lands in Creagh.

Every October, Ballinasloe is host to one of Europe's oldest and largest Horse Fairs, dating back to the 1700's. This annual event attracts up to 100,000 visitors from all over the world, with many returning to the town year after year. This festival is one of the most important social and economic events in the life of the town. The town is also renowned for horse and pony riding, show jumping and other equestrian activities which take place throughout the year.

Ballinasloe is steeped in history, and has been lauded for the architectural character of its fine streetscapes. This planned layout of the town in the 19th Century consisting of wide streets, a market square, fair green, show grounds and town hall can be attributed to William Trench, who was conferred with the Earldom of Clancarty at this time. The town can trace its roots back even further with the existence of three ringforts in the town and two possible Crannog sites dating back to the 1st century. Three Medieval Tower Houses are located within the Urban District in addition to a well preserved Early medieval parish Church at Templepoilin Pollboy, built in about the 9th Century by the Augustinian Monks of Clontuskert.

The town derives its name from the ford of the River Suck near the old Norman castle at River Street, which became a meeting place for the hostings of the Connacht tribesmen, chiefs and warriors of Breifne and Meath. The ford became known as 'Beal Atha na Sluaigheadh' meaning the 'mouth of the ford of Hostings'.

Ballinasloe is also famous for its limestone which was used in many public buildings in the town as well as several important buildings nationally and internationally. The most recent example of note is Galway County Council's Civic Offices in Prospect Hill, Galway City, which were completed in 1999.

What Ballinasloe has to Offer

Housing Information

Ballinasloe town offers a wide range of good quality, value for money, affordable housing. It also offers a range of apartments and townhouses. The following is a sample of average new house prices currently on offer on the town:-

3 bed detached bungalow: -	€155,000 - €180,000
4 bed detached: -	€170,000- €200,000
4 bed semi-detached: -	€155,000- €180,000
5 bed detached: -	€265,000- €330,000

A sample of second hand prices currently on offer in the town: -

3 bed some detached	€125,000- €135,000
4 bed detached	€140,000- €190,000
4 bed semi-detached	€135,000- €165,000
Period Houses	€400,000

For those that prefer country living, a superb choice of sites and houses in rural settings in surrounding villages, convenient to Ballinasloe are also available. Average house prices are :-

3 bed bungalow on 1 acre	€100,000
4 bed detached bungalow	€140,000- €190,000
4 bed dormer bungalow	€150,000- €200,000

A wide range of properties including townhouses and apartments are available for letting. Average rents are: -

3 bed House	€550- €600 per month
2 bed apartment	€110-135 per week
2 bed townhouse	€120-140 per week
4 bed house	€600-750 per week

The information as outlined is courtesy of all Auctioneers and Valuers in Ballinasloe and is based on properties on the market on date of going to press and is intended as a guideline only. Full details and listings are available from any local auctioneers

Service Charges

A weekly domestic refuse collection service is provided in the town by a private company. The annual cost for this service in 2003 is :-

120 Litre Bin - €125

240 Litre Bin - €209

Educational Facilities

The town is well serviced with facilities to cater for children of all ages, from child minding facilities and preschools through to primary and second level as well as facilities for those with special needs. Proximity to Athlone and Galway City for third level facilities is a major advantage. Spare capacity exists in both primary and second level schools. The building of a new building for the Gaelscoil has been approved in principle for the town and the Town Council are currently in negotiation with the Department of Education and Science regarding the selling of a site. This will afford even extra capacity at primary level, and supplement the existing capacity in all schools. The newly completed second level girls school brings to over 300, the spare capacity within second level schools.

Pre-school/Crèches

The Galway City and County Childcare Committee report 13 sessional services in Ballinasloe town and four private full day care services. A new purpose built full day childcare facility will be built in the Enterprise Centre in Creagh in 2003.

Primary Schools

- Scoil an Croi Naofa
- Gael Scoil Ui Ceathairigh including naoniaran (pre-school)
- Creagh National School
- Attyrory National School (outskirts)
- Newtown National School (outskirts)

Secondary Schools

St. Joseph's Garbally (boys) - Garbally College, a 2nd level institution for boys, is situated in 346 acres of magnificent park and woodlands. The college caters for both boarders and day pupils. Garbally House, in which the boarders reside, is a Georgian style building erected in 1819 by the 2nd Earl of Cloncarty. As a result of successive building and modernisation programmes, the school boasts the most up to date facilities, an extremely progressive and broad range of subjects to cater for pupils of all

abilities, and an extensive range of sport and recreation facilities both indoors and outdoors. The school currently caters for 575 pupils.

Convent of Mercy (girls) – new 500 pupil school to completed in 2002 adjacent to Garbally college. The new school will provide state of the art facilities for pupils including a full size sports hall, athletic track, 5 hard courts and 3 grass pitches. The school currently caters for 440 pupils.

St. Michael's Vocational School – (mixed) provides second level facilities including a special class for mildly mentally handicapped children up to school leaving age. Adult education night classes are also run in winter time.

Third Level

Distance to nearest third level institutions is as follows.

Athlone Institute of Technology	15 miles
Galway Institute of Technology	40 miles
National University of Ireland, Galway	43 miles

Other Training/Special Needs

County Galway Vocational Educational Committee provide a number of special needs projects in the town including training and educational facilities for socially disadvantaged and those with special needs. Examples of these are the early training centre in Canal House, the Madonna House Project, VTOS and Youthreach projects.

Computer training is available at the Ballinasloe Community Information Centre.

St. Theresa's C.E.D.C.

This organisation provide a day training centre for children with physical disabilities.

Health Care Services

Both Portiuncula Hospital, one of the largest general and maternity hospitals in the region, and St. Brigid's Psychiatric Hospital are located in the town. The services of medical practitioners, dentists, opticians, chiropodists and chiropractors are also available in the town, as are nursing/convalescent homes.

Transport Links

Ballinasloe is situated on the N6 and is within easy access to other major centres by road and rail. The table below indicates the distance from Ballinasloe to other Urban Centres and airports.

By Road	Distance	Travel time
Galway	40 Miles	50 min
Dublin	95 Miles	1hr 45min
Athlone	15 Miles	20 min
Loughrea	18 Miles	20 min
Roscommon	30 Miles	35 min
Tullamore	38 Miles	50 min
Limerick	65 Miles	1hr 30 min

Airports	Distance	Travel Time
Dublin	100 Miles	2 Hrs
Shannon	68 Miles	1 Hrs 30 mins
Knock	55 Miles	1 Hrs 15 mins
Galway	40 Miles	45 Mins

Public Transport

Ballinasloe is served daily by the Galway – Dublin mainline rail service and a number of bus companies.

Travel Times by Train

Ballinasloe – Galway 50 mins

Ballinasloe – Dublin 2 hrs

Travel Times by Bus

Ballinasloe – Galway 1 hr

Ballinasloe – Dublin 2.5 hrs

Train Timetable

Galway - Ballinasloe – Dublin

6.12am, 8.32am, 11.43am, 16.09pm, 18.51pm (Monday to Saturday)

9.21am, 15.27pm, 17.06pm, 19.01pm (Sunday)

Departure times are from Ballinasloe

Dublin – Ballinasloe - Galway

7.20am, 11.00-am, 14.25pm, 17.00pm, 18.55pm (Monday to Saturday)

9.10am, 14.15pm, 18.50pm, 20.40pm (Sunday)

Bus Timetables

Bus Eireann

Galway - Ballinasloe – Dublin

8.10am, 8.25am, 9.30am, 10.30am, 11.30am, 12.30pm, 13.30pm, 14.30pm, 15.30pm, 16.30pm, 17.30pm, 18.30pm, 19.30pm, 20.30pm (Monday to Saturday – some slight alterations to Sunday timetable)

Departure times are from Ballinasloe

Dublin – Ballinasloe - Galway

8.00am, 9.00am, 10.00am, 11.00am, 12 noon, 13.00pm, 14.00pm, 15.00pm, 16.00pm, 17.00pm, 18.00pm, 19.00pm, 20.00pm, (21.00pm Sunday only)

City Link Express

Galway - Ballinasloe - Dublin

8.25am, 8.35am, 9.50am, 11.50am, 1.50pm, 3.50pm, 6.40pm (Monday to Saturday)

9.50am, 11.50am, 1.50pm, 5.50pm, 6.20pm, 6.45pm (Sunday)

Departure times are from Ballinasloe

Dublin – Ballinasloe - Galway

9.00am, 1.00pm, 2.00pm, 4.00pm, 5.30pm, 5.45pm, 7.30pm (Monday to Saturday)

11.00am, 1.00pm, 4.00pm, 5.30pm, 5.45pm, 8.30pm, 10.00pm (Sunday)

Most buses also serve Dublin Airport

Bus Nestor

Galway - Ballinasloe – Dublin

8.00am, 8.30am, 11.15am, 1.15pm (Fri only), 2.15pm, 6.15pm, 6.45pm (Fri only)

Infrastructure Including Telecommunications And Information Technology

Ballinasloe has a remarkable advantage in the region's high speed telecommunications capabilities. The town is situated on Ireland's new Western Digital Corridor. This €17.7 million project consists of a 300 kilometre fibre-optic cable route connecting Dublin, Athlone, Galway and Shannon. This 'Corridor' will allow businesses and communities along the route to access a greatly expanded range of advanced broadband communications services, offered by national and global operators. The availability of this service will stimulate the construction of call-centres and other communications intensive businesses in areas such as Ballinasloe, situated along the Corridor. The town already has an Integrated Services Digital Network (ISDN) and modern equipment in place.

Water and sewerage infrastructural services are provided by the Town Council as well as a state of the art landfill facility. The town's main water supply is derived from the River Suck and its tributary the Bunowen and has capacity for a population of 9,420. An application for upgrading to cater for an additional 5,000 population is currently with the Department of the Environment and Local Government. The sewerage system has capacity for population of 9,000. A town sewer investigation is nearing completion and this will form the basis for a preliminary report to the Department of the Environment and Local Government requesting an upgrading.

Electricity is provided through the National Grid System, with a choice of voltages. Ballinasloe will also be serviced by the Dublin-Galway gas pipeline project. Construction work on this infrastructure within the Town is scheduled to begin in 2003.

Recreation, Amenity And Cultural Facilities

Ballinasloe caters for all interests, whether it be sports or arts, community work or cultural activities. A flavour of these is as follows :-

The town boasts an 18 hole, par 72 golf course, which is one of the oldest in Connacht. A mature and testing parkland course, playable all year round, Ballinasloe Golf Club offers a challenging variety of superb golf holes and is noted for its excellent newly built greens and dog legs, of which there are eight. The second will test the best golfers, being 385 meters sharp dog leg left.

Ballinasloe Rugby Football Club is one of the two homes of Buccaneers RFC, whose first team plays in Division 1 of the AIB All-Ireland League. Ballinasloe RFC also has a thriving mini and underage rugby section with their under 14's reaching the final of the Connacht Cup and the under 16's sweeping all before them by winning the Connacht League and Cup in 1999.

Ballinasloe GAA Clubs caters for both men's and ladies football, hurling and camogie.

Ballinasloe Town AFC Soccer Club runs 15 under-age football teams in three different leagues. The club caters for both boys and girls as well as senior level. This club recently completed the development of floodlit all weather playing facilities which can be hired by the public.

Ballinasloe Community Games are very active in the town, as is Ballinasloe Swimming Club which has won many prestigious competitions in a number of categories.

For those who prefer something a bit less energetic, Ballinasloe has very active Musical and Dramatic societies, and a Bridge club.

Doing Your Business In Ballinasloe

Financial Services

Ballinasloe offers a full range of financial services including all major banks, building societies and a credit union.

Bank Of Ireland	Main Street	(0905) 42284
Allied Irish Bank	Dunlo Street	(0905) 42271
National Irish Bank	Main Street	(0905) 43533
ACC Bank	Main Street	(0905) 42650
ICS Building Society	Church St., Creagh	(0905) 42352
First Active	Society Street	(0905) 42487
EBS	Dunlo Street	(0905) 42127
Irish Permanent	Society Street	(0905) 43106
Ballinasloe Credit Union	Main Street	(0905) 43179

Estate Agents

Michael McCullagh	Society Street	(0905) 42474
Paddy Keane & Company	Main Street	(0905) 42339
Cogavin & Staunton	Church Street, Creagh	(0905) 42352
P.A. Rothwell & Company	Dunlo Street	(0905) 42127
Frank McKenna	Brackernagh	(0905) 42227

Please note this list is by no means exhaustive and is meant for guidance purposes only. Any errors, omissions etc are not intentional

Retail Opportunities

There is a broad range of well established shops available, including supermarkets, hardware, electrical stores, travel agents, shoe shops, draperies and garden centres. There are over 400 'free' public car parking spaces available in the towns three car parks.

A traditional Calf Market which takes place in the east car park at Sli-na-hAbhainn every Saturday has been in existence for over a hundred years. In conjunction with this every Saturday, a vibrant, colourful Market takes place in the town square and proves very popular with shoppers. For alternative shopping, Athlone which is only 20 minutes away, has a new shopping centre containing branches of leading chain stores. Alternatively, Galway City with its bustling shopping areas and all year round vibrancy, is only a 50 minute drive from Ballinasloe and is well served by bus and train services.

Main Shopping Outlets

Tesco - Cleaghmore
 Salmons - Main Street
 Cosmo - St. Michael's Square
 O'Sullivan's Supervalu - Brackernagh
 LIDL - Marina Point

Travel Agents

Keller Travel (Campotel Headquarters) - Main Street
 Society Travel - Society Street

Eating Out and Entertainment

Ballinasloe has three hotels and a variety of restaurants ranging from coffee shops and gourmet dining and ethnic restaurants to fast food outlets, (the town is the original home of the Supermacs Fast Food chain). The town has over 20 pubs, many of which provide bar food throughout the day and offer a selection of music and entertainment ranging from live bands through to traditional music.

Hotels

Haydens Gateway Hotel (Lynch Group) - Dunlo Street
Gullanes Hotel - Main Street
East County - Dunlo Street

Local media

Ballinasloe is served by The Connacht Tribune, the biggest selling provincial newspaper in the country, The Westmeath Independent, The Athlone Observer (free sheet), the Galway Advertiser (free sheet) and the Galway Independent . Galway Bay FM and Shannonside are the local radio stations serving the town. All of these have representatives based in the locality. The town also has its own web-site which can be accessed at www.ballinasloe.com

Economic And Business Diversity

Established Industry

There is a workforce of approximately 3,000 in Ballinasloe, employed in a variety of sectors.

The principal manufacturing/industrial employers in the town are:-

Portiuncula Hospital

Valois

Western Automation

Premier Proteins

Parkmore Switchgear

Dubarry Shoe Manufacturers LTD

St. Brigid's Hospital

Arabawn – agri-business operation based in Kilconnell just outside Ballinasloe, carrying out a broad range of activities through a network of co-op stores.

Kelly's Printing Works (KPW)

ESIP – Telecentre

Employment Potential including part-time

Considerable potential for part-time work exists in the town. The main areas of employment are in retail and service outlets in the town and the recently opened ESIP Telecentre in St. Enda's Enterprise Centre, Creagh, an initiative of Ballinasloe Area Community Development Ltd. This enterprise currently employs 73 people and will provide further opportunities for both full-time job seekers and those interested in part-time and weekend employment. The town also acts as an education centre for Spanish and Italian students during the summer months.

Tourism

A 25 berth marina has been completed by Duchas at Sli na hAbhainn, opposite the Civic Offices. On-going works to make the River Suck navigable, have resulted in the linking of Ballinasloe to the Shannon/Erne Waterway. The 1999 Shannon Boat Rally finished in Ballinasloe at the Lock Gate in Pollboy, a recently completed part of the Suck navigation project.

Ballinasloe also lives up to its equestrian heritage and offers a choice of horse and pony riding facilities, stables and regular show jumping features which normally take place in the show grounds or on the Fair Green. Ballinasloe has also traditionally proved popular with anglers, particularly those

interested in coarse angling. Ireland West, in its publication *'The Coarse Angler's Paradise – A guide to Counties Galway, Mayo and Roscommon'* states "The River Suck is deep and slow, renowned as one of Ireland's most productive coarse fishing rivers. Shoals of bream are plentiful and throughout the summer, bags in excess of 100 lbs. are common. The stretch south of the town near Coreen Ford has an excellent stock of tench and rudd" Bream, Roach, eels, Pike and Perch are also found on the river. Lough Acalla, a rainbow trout fishery near Kilconnell, west of Ballinasloe, proves popular with local enthusiasts. Shooting holidays also attract many repeat tourists.

Ballinasloe is an excellent base to enjoy many national and internationally renowned attractions including :-

- The River Shannon and its tributary the Suck
- The Grand Canal
- Birr Castle and Gardens
- The Bog Rail
- Portumna Forest Park
- Clonmacnoise monastic settlement
- Battle of Aughrim Interpretative Centre
- Clonfert Cathedral
- Kilconnell Abbey
- Clontuskert Abbey

Community Partners And Community Action

Examples of Community Action

Ballinasloe has a long tradition of community driven action and promotion. The town is well served by residents/community based associations, business groups, charitable and recreational organisations. Amongst the most recent successes of such organisations are:

- Substantial fund raising throughout the county by the Friends of Portiuncula Hospital for the purchase of specialised equipment.
- Successful application made on behalf of the town for the 1994 Urban Renewal Scheme Designation.
- Successful application to Duchas to make the River Suck navigable and the provision of a marina in the centre of the town.
- October Fair Co-ordinating Committee works all the year round to ensure that this annual event runs smoothly, that health and safety requirements are strictly adhered to and most importantly that it is a family event. The committee consists of representatives of the Town Council, Chamber of Commerce, Fair and Festival Committee and the Show Society.
- The establishment of Ballinasloe Area Community Development Company Ltd, and its acquisition of a premises in Creagh for use as an Enterprise Centre for start-up industry.
- The refurbishment of the Town Clock in St. John's Church.

The following bodies constantly work in partnership with the community to promote the town and enhance the living environment, and a summary of their main functions and activities is set out hereunder.

Ballinasloe Town Council

Ballinasloe is a statutory administrative area in its own right, and the Town Council is a Municipal Authority with origins dating back to 1841. The Council over the years has laid the foundations for the development of Ballinasloe by providing the necessary infrastructure and services.

In addition to providing essential services such as water, sewerage, public lighting, street cleaning, social housing, development control and physical planning, the Council are involved in a wide range of other activities such as the provision and maintenance of recreational and amenity facilities, casual trading, the October Fair and tidy towns. The Council consists of 9 elected representatives, and the day to day administration of the organisation is carried out under the guidance of the Town Clerk.

In 1999, the Council moved into newly constructed Civic Offices on a site at Sli-na-habhainn. The project was carried out on a Design and Build basis by a local development company, Earls Construction. The project was completed within the contract period at a cost of approximately € 1.65 million.

The Council has recently completed a €500,000+ upgrading and refurbishment programme on St. Michael's town square, and discussions are on-going with regards to the drawing up of a refurbishment programme for the Fair Green and the provision of additional recreational facilities to compliment the new marina.

A new leisure centre is being built by the Town Council in the Town which includes a six lane swimming pool. This will be completed in the Autumn of 2003.

Ballinasloe Chamber of Commerce

Ballinasloe Chamber of Commerce which has limited company status since 1990 has as its mission statement; "To work in partnership with the local statutory and non-statutory agencies in promoting the economic and business development of the town and it's hinterland. " It is also the representative organisation of local business interests. The Chamber is affiliated to Chambers of Commerce of Ireland (CCI) and has a Board of 18 Directors and a number of sub-committees in Retail, Enterprise,

Infrastructure and Tourism.

Ballinasloe Area Community Development Ltd.

This company, which is a joint initiative of Ballinasloe Chamber of Commerce, Ballinasloe Town Council, Ballinasloe Credit Union and Creagh Community Development, was established in 1999 to act as the main driving force in the economic development of the town and its hinterland. The company's main focus is to assist the town in :-

- Creating sustainable local employment
- Stabilising the population base
- Attracting local skilled emigrants back home
- Facilitating the development of new and established businesses in the area
- Providing an Education and Training Centre for new skills and technologies
- Initiating Tourism Development

This Company is the community's response to tackling the job creation deficit. The first main project has been the acquisition of the St. Enda's Hospital building and its refurbishment and conversion into an Enterprise Centre. To date, 11,000 square feet of the building has been leased to ESIP for a telecentre. This has resulted in the creation of 73 new jobs. It is an objective of the Company that over 300 people will be employed in the Enterprise Centre within a two year period. Incubation Units and Mentoring services are also available to support start-up enterprise.

Tidy Towns Committee

A steady improvement in the town's performance in the annual Tidy Towns Competition reflects the continued co-operation of the community. The town won the 'Best Large Town Award' in 1979. Over the past few years, a number of initiatives have been undertaken by the Town Council to assist the Committee in achieving its objectives, which has seen a continuous improvement in the results for the town between 1996 and 2002. These include the purchase of additional litter bins, the establishment of 9 recycling centres including one civic amenity site in the town, clean-ups and skip provision for housing estates, school's competition and participation in An Taisce's National Spring Clean initiative. (The final page of this document includes *extracts from Tidy Towns reports on Ballinasloe over the last number of years*)

Ballinasloe Credit Union (Our Lady Of Lourdes) Limited

The Credit Union was formed in Ballinasloe in 1967. Today it has a membership of over 16,000 members with assets in excess of €51 million. As part of its ethos, the credit union contributes financial support to local organisations and clubs. It hosts a "Voluntary committee of the Year Award" scheme annually. The credit union actively supports local enterprise through grant aiding Ballinasloe Area Community Development Ltd, Community Games and other local entrepreneurial efforts. Through the use of the most up to date technology the Credit Union will in the near future be able to offer its members budget accounts and electronic funds transmission services such as Paypath and ATM services etc.

Town Twinning

In 1990, Ballinasloe Town Council formally twinned with the Moyle District Council in Co. Antrim after nurturing links on an unofficial basis for over 20 years prior to this. The Great October Fair in Ballinasloe and the Auld Lammas Fair in Ballycastle give both towns a unique common link. The twinning has been extremely successful, and is regarded as the pioneer of north/south linkages, a fact acknowledged by former Uachtaran na hEireann, Ms. Mary Robinson at a special function in Aras an Uachtaran in 1991.

The town also has close links with Killorglin Co. Kerry, home of the Puck Fair, again based on the concept of 'Fair Towns'.

Ballinasloe is further twinned with Chalonnes Sur Loire, France. These linkages have encouraged continuous exchanges between students, business representatives, public representatives and recreational organisations in the towns concerned and have provided very valuable cultural and economic benefits to all parties.

The Town Council work hand in hand with the Town Twinning Committee in nurturing these linkages.

Religious Services

Two religious denominations are catered for in the town, Roman Catholic and Church of Ireland.

St. Michael's Roman Catholic Church – this church has an imposing setting in the town centre, visible from the N6 Outer Relief Road and adjacent to the new Civic Offices, home of Ballinasloe Town Council. It is accepted as the most impressive building architecturally in the town. The altar shows the figure of the dead Christ by Albert Power and contains much admired stained glass windows by Harry Clarke.

Mass Times: Sat. 7.00pm (Vigil) Sun. 8.30am, 10.00am, 11.00am, 12.15am

Our Lady of Lourdes Roman Catholic Church, Creagh

Mass Times: Sat. 7.30pm (Vigil) Sun. 10.00am, 11.30am

St. John's Church of Ireland, Church Hill – occupying the highest point in the town overlooking the Fair Green. Its siting and orientation were designed as a terminal feature at the end of the approach road from the Clancarty House at Garbally to the town. The Church Clock was refurbished by the local community in 1998

Service: 10.00am Sunday also 11.30am service in Aughrim

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Health Facilities

Portiuncula Hospital

Portiuncula Hospital is a 212 bed acute general hospital providing an in-patient service in;

- General medicine
- General surgery

- Obstetrics
- Gynaecology
- Paediatrics and Neo Natal
- Oral Surgery
- Pain Relief
- Geriatric Medicine

The hospital also has a well defined day care service and a broad range of in-house and visiting specialists from other locations in most major areas of medicine. The hospital is currently undergoing a major extension and upgrading programme to provide 4 new operating theatre suites, intensive care unit, coronary care unit and a number of new services as well as the extension of those already available. Completion of the extension and other planned developments will considerably raise the bed compliment.

St. Brigid's Hospital

St. Brigid's Hospital, under the auspices of the Western Health Board caters for mental health and also has an Alzheimer's unit.

Health Centre

A Western Health Board Health Centre at Brackernagh caters for a wide number of community services.

Social Services

Ballinasloe Social Services provide a day care centre for the elderly and sick, facilities for children with special needs and a meals on wheels service.

Brothers of Charity

This facility caters for both physically and mentally handicapped adults on both a day care and residential care basis. Their workshop which imparts valuable skills to participants also provides a commercial printing service to the community at large.

Medical Services

Doctors		
Bugler, Finnegan and Jennings	Medical Centre	(0905) 43777
Arnold & O'Beirn	Dunlo Street	(0905) 42535
Dentists		
Mr. Nolan	Bridge Street	(0905) 42243
Mr. & Mrs. O'Rourke	Emmet Place	(0905) 43041
Mrs. McGrath	Dunlo Street	(0905) 43644
Mr. McGrath	Society Street	(0905) 42295
Opticians		
Egan's	Dunlo Street	(0905) 42148

Duanes Pharmacy	Society Street	(0905) 42059
Chiroprpodists		
Marie Staunton	Creagh	(0905) 43049
Catherine Burke	Main Street	(0905) 44964
Rita Staunton	C/O Duanes Chemist	(0905) 42059
Chiropractor		
Helen Clayton	Derrymullen	(0905) 45326
Physiotherapist		
Jane Conway	Glentaun	(0905) 42779

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Sporting, Cultural And Recreational Facilities

Recreational Facilities

Swimming Pool and Leisure Centre– A new swimming pool and leisure centre will be opened in the Town of Ballinasloe in September 2003.

Library – Ballinasloe Branch Library is situated between Society Street and the Fair Green

Parks and Open Spaces

The Famine Remembrance Park – Cleaghmore. Work was completed on this magnificent park in 1998, which was a joint Town Council and community project. It contains over 8,000 plants and shrubs. This historic site was donated by the Trench family to the people of Ballinasloe during the Famine, for the burial of hundreds of people from the workhouse. The development of this derelict famine burial ground was a fitting memorial to the people buried there as well as to victims of the Irish famine everywhere.

Garrdha na Laoch Park – Sli na hAbhainn. This park is adjacent to the N6 Relief road along by the river channel and is a very attractive amenity area for families particularly during the summer months. It contains a memorial stone commemorating the celebration of Ballinasloe's 850th birthday which took place in 1991

The Fair Green – This very valuable town centre recreational facility, donated to the town by Lord Clancarty, is home to the annual October Fair. It also provides an ideal location for circuses, funfairs and showjumping events throughout the year.

Areas of local Interest

- Pollboy Bog – Variety of flora and fauna
- Grand Canal Branch – Pollboy
- River Suck and Marina at Sli na hAbhainn
- Mount Pleasant Esker
- Garbally College and grounds
- Old Cemetery, Creagh – This cemetery which is no longer in use contains a medieval church ruin and is one of several buildings of archaeological interest in the town. There are plans by the community to carry out a re-furbishment programme at this location.

- Kilclooney Cemetery
- Teampolleen

Local Clubs and Organisations

Ballinasloe Hurling Club	Soroptimists
St. Grellans Gaelic Football Club	Irish Wheelchair Association
Ballinasloe Town Association Football Club (Soccer)	Conradh Na Gaeilge
Ballinasloe Camogie Club	Mentally Handicapped Association
Ballinasloe RFC	Creagh ICA
Ballinasloe Golf Club	Aughrim History Project
Ballinasloe Tennis Club	Creagh Development Council
Fair & Festival Company	Ballinasloe Mental Health Assoc.
Town Band	Community Information Centre
Show Society	Ballinasloe Pioneers
Ballinasloe Bridge Club	Vincent De Paul
Relays Drama Group	Legion of Mary
Acorn Drama Group	Scripture Group
Red Salamander Theatre Group	Stage Craft (junior drama)
Ballinasloe Musical Society	Squash Club
Badminton Club	Junior chamber
Padraig Pearse's GAA Club	Family Services Centre
No Name Club	Karate Club
Ballinasloe & District Anglers	Set Dancing
Community Games	Painting Group
Swimming Club	Contemporary Dance
Ballroom Dancing	Step Dancing
St. Michael's Folk Choir	Speech and Drama
Lions Club	Active retirement group

Please note this list is by no means exhaustive and is meant for guidance purposes only. Any errors, omissions etc are not intentional.

Extracts of Tidy towns reports

	Maximum Mark	Mark awarded				
		2002	2001	2000	1999	1998
Overall Development Approach	50	35	34	33	32	32
The Built Environment	40	30	30	26	25	26
Landscaping	40	34	33	27	27	26
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	23	21	20	21	21
Litter Control	40	18	20	24	24	24
Tidiness	20	13	13	13	13	13
Residential Areas	30	26	24	22	22	22
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	27	27	27	27	27
General Impression	10	7	8	8	7	6
TOTAL MARK	300	213	210	200	198	197

Landscaping

Landscaping areas throughout the town were generally well maintained. The Fair Green and its riverside park beyond looked well cared for. The landscaping to the Civic Offices was admired. Of particular note was the marina with its landscaping to the river's edge including an attractive heron sculpture. The simple landscaping to the Dubarry plant with its freshly cut grass was admired and is a good example of a commercial landscaping effort. There were good examples of incidental landscaped spaces throughout the town. The park to the rivers edge leading from Bridge Street looked fine. Scope for further landscaping is to be found in the many car parks throughout the town which would benefit from the softening affects of landscaping projects. In particular, that by the church car park with its bare tarmac and hedge by the bollards, would be greatly improved by this effort.

Wildlife

Ballinasloe is indeed fortunate in this regard. The new marina must be a magnificent asset to the town, in terms of attracting both human activity and wildlife. It also makes people more aware of the waterside and wildlife so close to the town. Pollboy Bog with its unusual wildlife is also a marvellous asset to the town and plans to link the tow path on the old canal with both the marina and the bog will link many of the natural amenity areas of the town together nicely.

Residential areas

The standard in this category of the competition was extremely good. Of particular note were the attractive new houses to Hopson's Lane with their sensitive use of material. The designer has achieved a scheme which makes good use of traditional materials but still appears extremely modern particularly the corner house. The estates on the Dublin Road were admired, of particular note being Hawthorne, Woodlawns and Kilgarve Park and Court. The standardised signage system for these areas works extremely well.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas

Your use of local crafts people for the design of the street furniture is a good initiative as are the bilingual street signs.

General Impression

Ballinasloe has improved vastly in recent years and is still a busy and vibrant market town which retains much of its unique character.