

Tidy Towns Competition 2005

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Cootehill**

Ref: **291**

County: **Cavan**

Mark: **223**

Category: **D**

Date: **30/06/2005**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2005	Mark Awarded 2004
Overall Developmental Approach	50	36	37
The Built Environment	40	28	28
Landscaping	40	35	35
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	17	17
Litter Control	40	32	32
Tidiness	20	14	14
Residential Areas	30	27	27
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	26	26
General Impression	10	8	8
TOTAL MARK	300	223	224

Overall Developmental Approach:

The adjudicator would like to thank you for the town map that was useful on adjudication day. The 3 - 5 Year Improvement Programme sheet is useful. All towns and villages are required to have a simple straight forward 3 -5 Year Tidy Towns Plan for their area. This Plan is prepared by your Committee in consultation with the appropriate local organisations. It should be no more than seven to ten pages long. The purpose of the Plan is to guide the work of your Tidy Towns Committee and others over the short to medium term. This plan should identify your key aims and objectives clearly for each year of the plan, rather than having 15 objectives over the life of the plan with no implementation year indicated. Thank you for the nominations in the various award categories and these have been put into the national adjudication system.

The Built Environment:

Cootehill is a town in a rural setting where rivers and lakes are key features. This gives the possibility of significant development in the wildlife category of the Tidy Towns Competition for your committee, if they so wish. The new building development has been noted and many new estates seem to be at construction stage in many parts of Cootehill. The adjudicator awaits with interest the restoration of the cut stone Courthouse building, and hopefully it will find a new productive and viable future. The Livestock Mart area was quite untidy with long grass and weeds, a pile of tarmacadam and the building doors need to be painted. St. Michael's Church is indeed a spectacular building beautifully maintained with it's landscaped grounds. The very attractive shrubs here add

much to the overall impression of the building. The height restriction barriers to the church car park were rusty and need to be painted. The grass areas in the car park have been cut recently; the grass had a burnt colour to it probably because it was cut too short. The AIB property is another building that caught the eye - a lovely stone building. O'Reilly Solicitors has used excellent lettering techniques and the colour choice for the main building is excellent, complimented by the red doors. However there are some y poor shop-fronts in Cootehill that need much improvement and perhaps a member of your committee might speak with the owners involved to see if improvements are possible. Other premises that caught the eye were E & M Stores, the Credit Union with the lovely sculpture in front, and the Library building, an attractive modern building that fits its location well.

A few derelict buildings were noted that detract from the overall appearance of the built environment of your town. However there is a way in which perhaps you can make a feature of these buildings pending their removal or restoration. Try and get the owners to agree that they will blank out the window and door openings with heavy waterproof Marine plywood. This should then be painted matt black, and window bars and door panels painted in white. This approach as a temporary measure can look quite effective.

Landscaping:

New landscaping was noted in Church Street, and the long high grassy bank near the Esso premises was very attractive and well maintained on a difficult site. Across the road from the church the large house with the superbly presented lawns add much to the appearance of this part of Cootehill. In Station Road the tiered flower displays were very eye catching and highly effective. Further good Landscaping was noted at the Drum road junction, where an old boat has been used for planting purposes - so appropriate with some much water around the town.

The various hanging baskets and flower tubs set off the streets quite effectively, and a town the size of Cootehill can probably take a quite a number of such displays.

Good landscaping was noted at several housing estates and in association with many individual houses.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

A wildlife area was noted just across the road from Abbot Health Care. However the area on the other side of the road could do with some improvements as the area looked a little untidy. In many towns and villages this is an aspect of the Tidy Towns Competition where there can be significant potential for development. All towns and villages have the presence of wildlife to some degree. It is important that your Tidy Towns Committee would examine further the wildlife potential, and see what you can achieve in terms of making your area even more wildlife friendly.

If you have not already done so, the starting point is to have a habitat Survey carried out of the wildlife in your area. Suggested habitats to be considered include the following –

- Urban habitats – gardens, waste ground, walls, graveyards, hedges
- Wetland habitats – rivers, ponds, lakes, canals, reed marsh, bogs
- Woodland habitats – forests, hedgerows, plantations, parks
- Grassland habitats – roadside verges, parks, wet meadows, dry grasslands

The Survey should produce a species list for each of the habitats relevant to your area

This need not be an expensive Survey. Perhaps there is a knowledgeable person in one of your Schools who might undertake this task for you. Basically the Survey would identify the animals, plants, birds, fish that inhabit your area and their associated habitats. It should be remembered that to carry out the Survey properly that it will probably take a year so that all habitats can be assessed at different time of the year.

Using the results of the Wildlife Survey your next step should be to draft a straight forward Plan to preserve the identified habitats in your area, and investigate the possibility of new ones. For example perhaps there is an old Pond in your area that is disused, but with a little work could be an important area for wildfowl.

It is most important to try and involve your local school children in this project, and in many Schools there is probably a teacher who may have an interest in this area who would be willing to get involved.

As part of the actions to be undertaken in your Wildlife Plan you might like to consider the provision of some weather proof and vandal proof display panels, illustrating and explaining the wildlife in your area. This has been done very successfully in many towns and villages in Ireland.

Litter Control:

It is very important that your Committee would develop a litter control plan for your town / village. The issue of litter control is not an issue just for the Local Authority. All citizens and especially your Tidy Towns Committee have a key role to play. Your plan should include such issues as surveying the litter bins that you have in your community and their adequacy, clean up days and the role of your local schools.

It is most important that litter bins are placed in close proximity to the largest generators of litter. The regular emptying of a litter bin is of course essential.

Litter control this year on adjudication day was quite good. However litter was noted in several places. The Skercock approach was especially bad on the left hand side, as was the area of the school railings a short distance closer to the town centre. Litter was also noted in the verge opposite Abbey Health Care. Litter control in the town centre was quite good.

Tidiness:

Quite a number of open spaces of varying size were noted on the approach roads to Cootehill and many of these were quite untidy. It is important that sites such as these are maintained pending development, or otherwise screened from the public view. Such sites can become overgrown quite quickly.

Residential Areas:

New landscaping was noted at Drumaveil and the Giffith housing estates. Why do a number of housing estates in Cootehill have no name signs at the entrance? The Griffith housing estate was quite impressive with well cut and presented grass area and fine landscaping at the entrance area. On the Cavan road just outside the town centre a development of town houses on a difficult sloping site parallel to the road was noted. This is a difficult site from a housing design point of view and the end result looks quite effective. As a recommendation the railings at each house should be painted, perhaps using black, red and blue on alternative properties. The setting up of local estates committees is an excellent strategy. Have you considered running a tidy estates competition?

Many individual houses were very attractively presented and in many instances a high degree of colourful landscaping added much to the overall property presentation.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

On the Shercock approach road the verges had been roughly cut and some good landscaping was noted on the left hand side. The verges had been roughly cut on the Monaghan approach road, while on the Cavan approach good work had been done on the verges. Near the IDA property a very untidy verge area was noted on the left hand side. The dead grass needs to be replaced and perhaps the Local Authority would consider road kerbing here to mark the edge of the roadway.

All grass in landscaped areas and roadside verges needs to be cut on a regular basis if you are to achieve a lush green well-kept visual effect. Do remember also that all cut grass must be removed immediately after cutting, as dead grass detracts from the overall effect of landscaped areas. It is important also that the grass is cut away from the tops of kerbing, and this may need to be done by hand. Do remember also that verges will need to be cut on quite a regular basis if you are to achieve a lush green well kept appearance of banks and roadside verges. A tractor and mower will not give the neat well kept appearance that can be achieved by a motor mower.

General Impression:

A planned approach is required to the development of the environment of the town and immediate surroundings from a Tidy Towns point of view.

The really successful Tidy Towns Committees are those that succeed in harnessing the goodwill, skills and experience of a number of different groups and Agencies that have something to contribute to the implementation of the 3-5 Year Tidy Towns Plan. These groups and Agencies include the following –

- GAA
- Local Development Association
- FAS
- County Council
- Chamber of Commerce
- Local SuperValu outlet
- LEADER Company
- The CLAR Programme (if you are in a CLAR designated area)
- Local School or schools
- Urban & Village Renewal Grant Scheme

Good luck with all your future projects.