

Tidy Towns Competition 2006

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Cootehill** Ref: **52**
County: **Cavan** Mark: **233**
Category: **D** Date(s): **26/06/2006**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2006
Overall Development Approach	50	37
The Built Environment	50	29
Landscaping	50	35
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	18
Litter Control	50	32
Waste Minimisation	20	5
Tidiness	30	14
Residential Areas	40	28
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	27
General Impression	10	8
TOTAL MARK	400	233

Overall Development Approach:

Good progress is being maintained in Cootehill and that is a tribute to the hard work of all concerned. In a town of this size and diversity great cooperation is required in order to draw together all the strands of business, community and public aspects of the town. The work of meeting the local council, Chamber of Commerce, residents groups and schools is very important in furthering the goals of the town. A three to five year plan as mentioned in last years report is a vital key to achieving progress. Often people have ideas in their head but without these being coordinated in a unified plan embracing all the towns interests it is difficult to set the targets and note the achievements as they occur. There is considerable building development being undertaken in and around the town and all of this needs a careful watchful eye.

The Built Environment:

There is a very diverse range of buildings within the town giving a unique character. The Courthouse looks very attractive now and is a fine landmark in the town. The churches are also very significant buildings and add distinction to the fabric of the street side buildings. The Library and adjacent Credit Union building look very well. The newer buildings are also important and the Community services centre and the nearby St. Michaels Hall are imposing – unfortunately the surrounding areas of these buildings need a little uplift – in particular the red tin roofed building appears out of context. Scoil Aodain Naofa and the Darley school both appear well. The Brady Livestock Mart continues to be a blemish in the town. Buildings along the Market Street are interesting and represent a very concise organisation of shopping and business style. Most of the business premises appear well maintained. On closer examination there are still a number requiring attention to detail of paint, fabric and signage, these appear more prominent as others lead the way in good standards. Stone walls play an important part of the building fabric of the built environment and need careful attention to preserve their integrity. Some dilapidated buildings were noted and no doubt these are well known to the committee and only by persistence and determination can improvements be hoped for with these

Landscaping:

The grounds of Michaels Church and the cemetery form an important part of the landscape of the town and these give a very attractive aspect to the entrance to the town. Having mature trees so close to the town centre is very important and forms continuity with the surrounding landscape in the countryside. The landscaping at the school grounds is also helpful in maintaining a green aspect to the town. Landscaping at the Abbott premises was noted also – large scale industrial premises always need adequate landscaping to merge large buildings with the background landscape. Street trees have been planted to good advantage and in time will make a better impact – some of these need attention or replacement. The emphasis on container planting in the town is very effective and provides good summer colour. In particular the three tier planters look very well and make a good impact. The boat planting is attractive although the surrounding setting for this feature needs more refinement. Improvements at the Fairgreen are helpful. With all the building development taking place it is important to keep an eye on the landscape finish applied to the estates and to lobby to ensure estates are well finished off with appropriate planting before developers leave the site. Credit is due to the many home owners who contribute greatly to the overall landscape of the town and surrounds by maintaining their own roadside gardens.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

The Wildlife area at Haltons gives a great opportunity to enjoy the riverside and surrounds within easy reach of the town centre. Good work has been done in bringing this area to its present standard and it now offers an attractive recreational venue. The building hopefully will be restored or decorated at some stage. As was mentioned last year in the report there is considerable potential for further development in terms of initiating survey work and some additional information about what may be seen in this area. Extension of walks could also be considered. The river bridge along the roadside at Bridge street may offer more opportunities. Could the area by the riverside at this point be further developed?

Litter Control:

From your entry form it is evident that the committee is making strenuous efforts to deal with the litter problem. Litter is a continuing challenge and all parts of the community must be encouraged with diplomacy to help keep a litter free town. The main streets are being well cleaned. Small items of litter were noted however and a consistent effort will help to improve the situation even further. The involvement with local schools is particularly important in furthering the campaign for antilitter and it is to your credit that you have had such involvement. Also the identification of the chief litter blackspots, times, and occasions all help in this direction.

Waste Minimisation:

The work of the committee with the teachers in the schools and the local council is welcome to hear of. Keeping businesses informed about recycling as you mentioned you have done is also very worthwhile as frequently people do not consider recycling until attention is drawn to the issues. This aspect of the competition is about concentrating both on the need to choose materials and methods that avoid producing waste and to consider environmentally friendly ways of dealing with the waste that is generated. A campaign of awareness with both homeowners and business people needs to be started to give an understanding of the importance of waste management and recycling. Compost heaps can be made for green materials, avoidance of using materials that do not degrade easily and separation of the various materials so that they can be recycled.

Tidiness:

There is good level of tidiness evident throughout the main streets of the town. Some places where building developments are ongoing are causing disruption to this aspect – but these are temporary and hopefully when work is completed a more refined finish can be expected. There is a petrol station/garage on the Cavan Street which looks very untidy and as mentioned the areas of the Livestock mart and premises opposite the Scoil Aodain Naofa where pallets are stacked. As more back areas are opened up for development such as at the Community services centre – more backs of buildings are exposed and frequently need attention in some way. The area at the bend Bridge Street just before the bridge seems it could also be tidied. Overhead wires always give an improved vista on the streets – as is noted where the new lamps are positioned and the remaining overhead wires hopefully will be removed in time.

Residential Areas:

There is an enormous range of residential housing within and surrounding the town. Many of the older street side residences give a great character to the streets and it is great to have housing right in the centre of the town. Adaptations and improvements to these types of buildings should be carefully undertaken not to destroy the integrity of the streetscape. For example the attractive terrace on the Monaghan Road tends to have a very varied façade now and it would be great if such developments could retain their unity of style. The large house on the outskirts of the town look well and their gardens contribute well to the appearance of the sites. New housing is a major feature of the town and these are appearing in very many places. It is good that some

of them are right in the central area of the town as on the Cavan road as they unite well with the existing town and avoid sprawl. The housing development on the steep hill gives a particular character to this development. Good finish is very important to all sites and the committee should watch in this regard. The landscaping of the more mature estates is attractive and good credit is due to residents who take great interest not only in their own gardens but also in the green spaces at the entrance to their estates.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

The approach road along by St. Michaels Church is particularly well stated with excellent road markings, speed signs, parking bays and attractive paving. This gives a very good impression on entry to the town. Overhead cables are always undesirable and particularly when the contrast can be noticed where wires have been put underground within the same town – hopefully more of this work will follow. The roadside railings at the post office could benefit from cleaning or painting as this is a very prominent place in the town. The road surface on the Bridge Street is very bumpy in places. Approach roads in general are attractive with a good retention of the natural countryside vegetation. Large trees in the area help to keep the town concise and separate from the surrounding attractive landscape. Attention to back areas as mentioned above is important – laneways and the smaller streets.

General Impression:

Cootehill has developed very well and the improvements in the prominent buildings add greatly to the town. A concerted effort with dilapidated buildings and those that need cleaning and painting would be helpful now. Further improvements would be greatly facilitated by the initiation of a precise plan with time scales inbuilt.