

Tidy Towns Competition 2007

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Cahir** Ref: **634**
County: **Tipperary (South)** Mark: **219**
Category: **D** Date(s): **04/08/2007**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2007
Overall Development Approach	50	25
The Built Environment	50	33
Landscaping	50	28
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	23
Litter Control	50	30
Waste Minimisation	20	5
Tidiness	30	15
Residential Areas	40	27
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	26
General Impression	10	7
TOTAL MARK	400	219

Overall Development Approach:

Cahir performed well in last years Tidy Towns Committee and it came as a surprise that it had not entered for the 2007 competition and was instead entered as part of a new strategic drive by TidyTowns' sponsors SuperValu to work with communities to approve the environmental standards of their areas through participation in the National TidyTowns Competition.

Its is quite a while since this adjudicator spent some time in Cahir and after traversing the town was impressed by the changes that had occurred in that intervening time. The Committee had been very proactive in addressing issues of concern and indeed it seemed to have harnessed the collective talents of the community as whole to help the Town try to realise its full potential in the competition. Relationships between the local authority, relevant agencies and local business people seemed to have been very good and there was no indication that it would not continue in the competition. It is also most surprising in that Cahir is a Heritage Town and one felt that the Tidy Towns Committee would be committed to ensuring that town standards were in keeping with its Heriatge status. A town that boasts a wealth of interesting historical buildings such as Cahir Castle and its association with the powerful Norman Butler Family, Swiss Cottage, Cahir Abbey and the War Memorial attracts large numbers of visitors and needs to project a good image at all times. The Tidy Towns competition is the ideal vehicle to do this. The community leaders in the town are urged to re consider the decision not to continue in the competition and to re form or re structure the Tidy Towns Committee and build on whats has been achieved to date. Seek the advice from the Urban Renewal Section of South Tipperary County Council to put in place a 3 year work plan that is both realistic in its goals and achievable in a given time scale. Looking forward to seeing Cahir back in the competition in 2008!

The Built Environment:

The core of the town has many fine established buildings that in the main have been presented to a good

standard. Public buildings in the town are well maintained and the Cahir Credit Union, the excellently maintained Day Care Centre, new Garda Station on the Clonmel Road and the impressive building that is the RC Church with its well kept grounds deserve special mention. Credit also to the trustees and members of Cahir Park FC for the magnificent way that it has presented its grounds - one of the best examples of a local sports facility that this adjudicator has seen in many years of adjudicating. Most of the business properties were congregated in the Bridge Street, Castle Street, The Square and Market Place and nearly all were very well presented on the day.

The one negative noted was the number of inappropriate plastic signs or signs that just did not fit in on some buildings. Credit to the owners of some newly refurbished buildings for retaining a style in keeping with the original architecture albeit in a modern setting.

It was noted that one of Cahir's iconic commercial premises Cahir House Hotel has changed ownership and is due for further refurbishment. Some footpaths, especially on side streets, are a little uneven, new street signs should be a priority and it was heartening to see that the number of derelict or unoccupied buildings has decreased since this adjudicator did a serious walk around the town some years back. There are a few unoccupied premises that have a significant architectural worth to the town so it is hoped that when these are being re developed this will be borne in mind and that present facades will be retained in some format.

Landscaping:

Approach roads into the town are well landscaped and credit to the local council for the novel planting arrangements incorporated into the new footpaths as one enters from the Limerick/Tipperary Town approach. There are plenty well designed planting arrangements to be viewed in both the core and the extremities of the town, it is important that these are maintained properly some have become too weedy and shrubs such as spirea and helianthus are being choked as result. The town is well served also with floral containers and hanging baskets and despite the inclement summer these added extra colour to the town streets.

Trees are a very important part of any urban landscape and Cahir has its quota of recently planted trees as well as those that are decades old and indeed in some cases centuries old. It was good to note that some trees near Sommerville Close had been professionally lopped.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

Last year's report alluded to the fact that the Committee was assiting in ensuring that the proper procedures to encourage both the propagation and conservation of wildlife were being implemented such as correct mowing regimes.

It is hoped that when the town re enters the competition this practice will continue and that the schools will be part of the overall process. A new 3 year plan should include a significant input for this category and it may be worth considering engaging the services of a local wild life enthusiast to help with drawing up a practical plan. There are so many possible locations for a dedicated wild life project- for instance would it be possible to engage with Larann Road Eireann to consider the area adjacent to the track off the Clonmel Road as a possible starting point for a nature trail that could loop around the town.

Litter Control:

Litter control and the appropriate measures to encourage same were quite good, a town the size of Cahir with a high volume of through traffic is not going to be perfect and the litter traps are in places where people congregate.

The committee was very involved in promoting participation in various anti litter programmes to both schools and other sections of the community and it was noted that daily picks were in operation over the last few years. One wonders what the position is this year !! hopefully those people involved up to now are still maintaining this regime. Organised clean ups are proving successful in most towns and villages and it is good to note the business communities nation wide are backing the efforts of volunteers. It is important to keep the message of good litter control to the forefornt at all times.

Waste Minimisation:

Waste minimisation is a relatively new category and it is important to consult both the Race Against Waste publication and the official website to obtain ideas that will allow committees and communities to put together plans to help the race against waste concept. Education of the younger generation is a vitally important component of this category. It is hoped that on re entering the competition that measures will be taken by Cahir Tidy Towns Committee to engage with all sections of the community to impement a practical waste management programme for the town.

Tidiness:

The continuation of ducting of wires is important as it will make a big difference to a town like Cahir that has a compact core area.

The hoary old chestnut of fly posting on windows is an issue in Cahir as there were far too many examles to be seen - it is not alone in this respect. On a positive note it was pleasing to report that most side areas and

little lane ways were for the most part tidy and free from unnecessary clutter. Credit to the owners of properties for keeping these side areas in such good condition. Weed growth at kerbsides was under control and one gentleman was seen hoeing the area in front of his house on the day.

Residential Areas:

There are a number of new housing developments under construction at the moment and it is hoped that when completed they will be of the similar standard to existing estates. Mention was made in last years report of the good standard of presentation of private residences within the town proper, a similar commendation can be given this year as well and well done to all those owners that put in the effort. The following appealed to this adjudicator Sommerville Close, Butler Close on the Clonmel exit, Carrigeen Cottages well presented but boundary wall needs to be re dashed and finally the small terrace of houses off the Square on St Marys Road.

It was also noted that Committee was working with fourteen residential associations in the town and its environs, it is vital that this type of link is renewed when Cahir re enters the Competition.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

The main entrances were very well presented with the Limerick/Tipperary approach improved upon immeasurably as a result of the new footpath and planting arrangements. The Clonmel entrance was also well presented, the road surface on the entrance from Mitchelstown was a little uneven and needs to be re surfaced also further out the verges were a little over grown. The Ballyporeen entrance was a little untidy primarily because of over grown verges and weed growth at the base of wall at Golf Club and on the opposite side. This wall (Golf Club) is not in good structural condition and needs to be surveyed to detect problems particularly at the base.

General Impression:

Cahir is certainly a busy town and was host to many visitors on adjudication day. It was, as stated earlier, some time since this adjudicator spent time Cahir and some very positive changes have occurred since then. It is sincerely hoped that the Town gets behind the SuperValu initiative as it had been making good progress and had achieved very creditable marks under the new marking system in 2006. The positives of participation far outweigh the negatives and you are wished well for the future.