

Tidy Towns Competition 2009

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Cahir** Ref: **634**
County: **Tipperary(South)** Mark: **260**
Category: **D** Date(s): **08/06/2009**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2009
Overall Development Approach	50	41
The Built Environment	50	38
Landscaping	50	31
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	28
Litter Control	50	29
Waste Minimisation	20	11
Tidiness	30	17
Residential Areas	40	25
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	32
General Impression	10	8
TOTAL MARK	400	260

Overall Development Approach:

Congratulations to Cahir TidyTowns Enhancement Group for participating in the TidyTowns Competition 2009. Thank you for your comprehensive submission and for the supporting literature which shows that you are an enthusiastic group of people, committed to the improvement of the appearance of Cahir and to the enhancement of the quality of life in Cahir. Thank you for the map and, especially for highlighting what must be seen by the adjudicator. The content and quality of your submission gives the adjudicator a high expectation of what to find in your town. Cahir possesses all of the ingredients to make it Ireland's tidiest town, including a committed, representative committee, active engagement with local agencies, the co-operation of the schools, dialogue with the town inhabitants and a heritage town with a string of fine buildings and a theme to unify the total package. You not only plan for the present, but you itemise your plans with a costing for next year. One notes your landscaping plan for the next number of years. A similar plan for all sections of the competition would also benefit the efficiency of your group.

The Built Environment:

Cahir is truly a Heritage Town with the heritage buildings well maintained and, in general, accessible to the wider public. It is obvious that the town is proud of its August past. This is a wonderful start. Not all buildings of a previous age transfer meaningfully to a new age and so, there are some problem buildings in the town, a fact that must be accepted. Cahir is also blessed by having a town square as focal point. While the traffic is still heavy, it flows well. There seems to be ample parking and the disabled spaces are clearly marked. The square itself must be another showpiece of town life. The numbers sipping coffee along the square illustrate the relaxed atmosphere of the place, despite the traffic. Trees and landscaping make the square attractive. Most of the colours on the buildings add to the atmosphere. The Post Office is a delight and the standard bearer for the rest. An immediate project should be to install attractive bilingual street names. They help give identity to a place. The side of the street leading to the fine granary is the town pride. In general, the shop

fronts along here are attractive and appropriate. You should discourage plastic or garish fronts. In other parts of the town centre, the painting lends a shabby appearance to the street, as in the case of the AIB. Cahir House Hotel is a focal point for the whole town and ,therefore needs to set the tone for the square.

Landscaping:

Over the years many landscaped beds have been installed throughout the town to soften corners and to soften the influence of the mass concrete. This is admirable work. Many of these beds are well maintained, but others are being neglected, for instance on leaving the town car park. Such neglect leads to a shabby appearance. The sculpture at the Granary car park bids one stop and examine, but the landscaping around the beautiful piece diminishes the experience. One notes from your submission that maintenance and enhancement of existing work is a priority for you. Where that maintenance happens, it lights up that area, as at the 'Prince of Pipers' monument. The landscaping on some of the approach roads is breathtaking, as on the Clonmel and Limerick approach roads. Tending to old and creating new landscaping is a major challenge. The colour created at the monument to the great war soldiers was visually beautiful and most interesting in method, as one sensed that these tubs could be easily substituted, as colour fades and new colour becomes available. Mention must be made under some section of the fine facilities at the GAA pitch and Cahir Park AFC. Maintenance standards here are very high. These must be the most picturesque grounds with the best maintained landscaping in the land. The equestrian centre alongside, with the stone buildings, adds to the idyllic part of town.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

The influence of the Siur on the town has not been mentioned because it merits mention in its own right. Apart from the amenity value, the aesthetic value of the river, its meander through town creates bridges, banks and boundaries that enhance the town. The river provides surround sound in many places. The adjudicator had a wonderful time on the new walk at Swiss Cottage, and saw the contribution of the anglers to wildlife along that stretch. One can empathise with the people who objected to meadowing Inch Field. There are many opportunities around the river for encouraging wildlife habitats. At Swiss Cottage, the information boards are of a superb quality. And yet one feels that your group could take further advantage of this section. You should participate in the Biodiversity Award next year. Identify a clearly defined project. Last year's report mentioned an ecological report. Comment on that proposal in your submission for next year.

Litter Control:

It is clear that your committee uses both, carrot and stick, in order to reduce the amount of litter in Cahir. Well done on those efforts. A special mention of praise for all the co-ordinated clean-ups. And still the problem persists. In general, the approach roads were free of litter. In many of the older estates, there is still a problem. In the town, back areas suffer from the torment of open air drinking. A major problem for your committee is the disposal of cigarette butts. They are all over. The area around the Tourist Office and bus stop is of particular concern. A receptacle for these butts at the bus stop might help.

Waste Minimisation:

Well done on the Cleanups and for segregating the waste, well done on the Bring Banks and well done to the schools for attaining and pursuing Green Flag Status. All of the above are waste minimisation measures. Special mention must be made of the walking bus. Keep us updated next year on the success or otherwise of this enterprising waste minimisation practice. Involvement with the Tipperary Energy Agency will prove of great benefit, when devising waste minimisation schemes.

Tidiness:

Cahir has been very successful in burying its cables. Well done. The effectiveness of signage is of a high standard. Your amenities are well posted. This adjudicator could not find redundant poles! Good quality footpaths extend for miles. Cyclists are acknowledged with your cycle lanes and, hopefully encouraged. The weeds along kerbs are a pity. They seem to be everywhere and create an image of neglect. Estate residents with a strimmer could help out in this work. Traffic flows freely. Renewed street lining in the square would improve the look of the area.

Residential Areas:

One area of Cahir is dominated by the Siur, the park, the golf course. Another direction and one finds most of the older housing developments. Finally the modern estates are given their area of town. This is the way in which your town has developed. Many estates were visited. The expectation was that the residential estates would blow one away, principally because estates have representatives on your committee. While open spaces were generally cut, there were too many weeds and too much litter to make one feel welcome. Some estates were immaculate.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

Cahir is now fortunate that the new road layout makes the town easily accessible. The approach roads offer a céad mile fáilte. The Clonmel and the Limerick approach roads are particularly welcoming. Landscaping, well defined lanes, trimmed verges, pointed stone walls, hedging, picturesque fronts and attractive house design are a visual feast. There are fabulous semi detached and terraced houses in some of the less accessible streets. The walkway from the lower car park to the upper car park could be a paradise and should be looked at. That eucalyptus tree is causing havoc with its sheddings. Well done on having names on the streets. The Mall, marked on the map, is a joy.

General Impression:

Cahir is a wonderful experience. One would love to leave town without being so negative. The negativity is born of frustration that the beauty which was so difficult to create, is often spoiled by something curable. One expects great strides from your committee. You are the creators. Therefore, criticism hurts. Hopefully the cure is in the hurt.