

Tidy Towns Competition 2009

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Cashel** Ref: **325**
County: **Tipperary(South)** Mark: **255**
Category: **D** Date(s): **06/06/2009**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2009
Overall Development Approach	50	37
The Built Environment	50	39
Landscaping	50	35
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	19
Litter Control	50	30
Waste Minimisation	20	9
Tidiness	30	18
Residential Areas	40	28
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	32
General Impression	10	8
TOTAL MARK	400	255

Overall Development Approach:

Congratulations to the Cashel TidyTowns Committee for participating in the TidyTowns Competition 2009. Thank you for your submission and for your map. A hand drawn sketch of the town, which highlights the places you regard as being most important for the TidyTowns Competition, is a great help to the adjudicator. It is a pity that you did not include a 3-5 Year Plan. If you do not have one, the exercise of compiling such a plan would enable you to set immediate and medium term targets for yourselves, would help you decide which local bodies and agencies you need to be involved with in the promotion of your objectives. As all projects need funding, you would set down in your plan the sources of funding for the various projects. As 2011 is an important year for Cashel you will be planning projects to further enhance the appearance of the town and to capitalise on the opportunity to promote of the town. Include such plans with next year's submission. At present, it is mutually beneficial that you engage with the influential agencies that shape your town. Aimsir Bia is not a name normally mentioned and sounds like it brings a different dimension to the promotion of the quality in life in Cashel. An explanatory note on this organisation would help your submission. In your dealings with the schools, you might expand on the content of your presentations and on your aims in dealing with the schools. Good to read that your improved marks last year raised your profile in the town. Here's to further improvement.

The Built Environment:

A walk around Cashel provides a feast of interest. Stand at various vantage points and enjoy the multitude of contrasting colours and design options of the many shops. Sprinkle in the stone buildings of previous ages and you know it is a privilege to stand here. Most of the shop fronts suit the vista. Whether it be a street with Feehans and Davorens or a street with Gleesons and Ladyswell Restaurant, one's eye will be attracted in

some direction. Discourage chain store sign tackiness. Cashel seems to be a town of gable ends, some treated so attractively as in O'Dwyer's drapery or Burke's of Cashel, others not so indigenous, inviting us to fit into a certain bikini size. The stone of your heritage is replicated tastefully in many of the modern buildings. John's Street is a special delight, made more interesting, if the brightly coloured yard doors happen to be open and allow a peek inside. The Church of Ireland/cemetery/Bolton Library site are a haven. Do not let those noble railings deteriorate. The Catholic past of Chapel Lane vies with its rival religion as a haven. The thatched cottage/museum/folk village area yet another gem. Pity there was no access. But access to your past is provided in the library by the welcoming ladies who direct one to the inner sanctum, a delightful stroll down the centuries, which affords one the opportunity to understand the development of the town. While Áras Caiseal Mumhan maintains the native stone motif, it needs a facelift. Not so, the charming library behind. The old Presentation convent, the Church and Church grounds complete another breathtaking echo of the past. Schools visited looked so well. The bulldozer of the Celtic Tiger did not erase important everyday traces of your past, as in the thatched Cottage on the Clonmel approach road. Well done. Inevitably, there will be some dereliction, but for the most part there appears to be someone demanding accountability.

Landscaping:

The colour of the shop fronts and the colour provided by the natural surroundings are enhanced by the landscaping projects in the town, on some of the approach roads and in the estates. There is an integrated plan to landscape the town centre with hanging baskets, that look well. There are attractive raised beds on approach roads. Some roads need further planning and action. The slope is used to great effect to create stepped landscaping on the Dublin road, breaking the monotony of a continuous high slope. A similar idea might be used on the road out to Scoil Naomh Baiste. The support of the residents is obvious in many cases. Further support should be welcomed in other areas.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

There may be people in your community who have an informed interest in wildlife and who would be willing to assist you with this section of the competition. When planning your landscaping projects, keep in mind the welfare of birds and bees. There is need for a plan with immediate targets, medium term plans and long term aspirations. Take a look again at last year's adjudicator's report.

Litter Control:

The town and its environs were remarkably litter free. Your submission is somewhat vague on the role your committee plays in the fight against litter. Cigarette smoking seems to be flourishing in the beautiful Town Plaza area. Have you become involved in the 'Bin it' gum campaign? This should be considered. The emphasis in the litter section is not just on collecting and organising clean-ups. These are important, but creating awareness of litter reduction is equally important. As a next step in your fight against litter, make reduction your key ambition. Scoil Naomh Eoin Baiste gets another mention. The litter bins are obvious, they are painted and strategically placed.

Waste Minimisation:

The fluttering green flag at Scoil Naomh Eoin Baiste proudly proclaims that school's Green Flag Status. A poster on a window tells how they earned their status: 'We are energy aware'. A lesson for all of us! The solar powered school sign is a waste minimisation scheme. It is disappointing that you make no mention of the project with the EPA mentioned in last year's report. The projects mentioned in your submission this year have more to do with the litter section than with waste minimisation. It could benefit your committee to study the booklet 'Race Against Waste'. Such a study would stimulate new waste elimination projects for you. Remember that the emphasis in this section is not on litter control, but on minimising waste in your community. Bring Banks visited were well maintained and clean.

Tidiness:

The finger signposting throughout town is a delight. In one instance, the imagination is fired by invites to the Ducking Pond and Bothán Scoir. Sadly, no other signs for these destinations were found. But many of the directional signposts are in a shabby state. One post, beside the finger post mentioned above, lowers the tone of its august neighbour. Overall, there appears to be a policy of weed control, but there are problems in places. Kerbside weeds create an unkempt impression. The weeds need to be treated on some approach roads and in some estates. Fly posting and advertising needs to be monitored. Some of the auctioneer notices are out of date, for example one telling of the opening times for showhouse viewing back in April. Consider the impact of hoarding on gable ends.

Residential Areas:

What one would give for a consistent practice regarding estate name stones and street name plates. The

name plates that exist are beautiful bilingual signs, for instance Catherine's Lane. Estate signage not only helps the postman, but also gives identity to an estate. A worthwhile project. It is a relief to read of Hillview or McDonagh Court. One feels like driving in. Many estates were visited. The overall impression is that new estates provide space, adequate open areas that are maintained and fine landscaping throughout. There are exceptions where graffiti and littering are but symptoms of a deeper problem. A long expanse of wall leading to one estate needs to be freshened and the open space at the entrance needs treatment. The road surface in Abbey Side estate needs renewal. There are superb estates with stately entrances, as in the Steeples and another on the Tipperary approach road. One of the features of Cashel is the way in which residential areas have grown up in various eras, in the immediate vicinity of the town. Their various designs alongside and so many heritage buildings give Cashel its unique flavour. For the most part these schemes of houses look well.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

What strikes one about the approach roads to Cashel is the variety of treatments that one experiences. The roads leading from the by-pass have a different philosophy to the older approaches. In some cases that treatment of the grass margins, the verges, the landscaping is of the highest standard. On one of the roads from the Cashel roundabout, there are many commercial units, generally melting into their well manicured surroundings. Mind you one or two of those units should be made aware of the negative impact of their signage on their surroundings. One notes the lack of development on the right hand side of the road leading from Hillside B&B, possibly Boherheenglas, thus giving an unimpeded view of the castle. The Dualla approach road is an example of an ad hoc approach to planning the overall appearance of an approach road. One wonders is grass not cut by design or is it that no one has responsibility for this stretch of road. Where there are houses, the owners do a wonderful job with the area outside their site. Broken boundary walls on a few roads need mending.

General Impression:

Cashel is a bustling town in the process of renewing itself. Thankfully, that renewal is not at a cost to your many heritage buildings and places. The blend of ancient, old and modern is producing a town to be proud of. Now, that one has visited, one feels that your submission lacks the ambition that should course through the veins of a Tidy Towns Committee in a town like Cashel. Good luck with 2011. Tell us more about it in your 2010 submission.