

Tidy Towns Competition 2012

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Cappagh** Ref: **446**
County: **Limerick** Mark: **274**
Category: **A** Date(s): **18/06/2012**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2011	Mark Awarded 2012
Overall Development Approach	50	37	38
The Built Environment	50	37	37
Landscaping	50	33	34
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	20	22
Litter Control	50	38	38
Tidiness	30	24	24
Waste Minimisation	20	4	6
Residential Areas	40	32	32
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	37	37
General Impression	10	6	6
TOTAL MARK	400	268	274

Overall Development Approach:

Cappagh is most welcome to the 2012 Tidy Towns competition. Many thanks for your completed entry form and map. While it is not in theory a problem using a printout from Google maps it is considered that the map you provided was of far too large a scale to meaningfully indicate the location of Cappagh's main landmarks. Better still would be to hand draw the area in which you work. You were well advised to maintain a more manageable size of area and this no doubt means that you can apply your resources more efficiently. You have a committee of four which perhaps is not bad for a small village. You also have additional volunteers upon whom you can call when needed and this mitigates for your small committee. You are maintaining contact with relevant agencies and are conscious of the need to liaise closely with the school. Progress in this area would be most welcome as schoolchildren here have so much to offer the development of the village. Could the principle be persuaded to join your committee? The green flag program is a wonderful project that serves to engage the whole community in reducing environmental impacts.

For a small village it is great to read about your numerous communication tools. This is such an important aspect to retaining public support and your use of Facebook no doubt augments this. Do you have high-vis vests with the Tidy Towns logo on the back? These are very useful in advertising the work that you do. Finally you are encouraged to develop a medium-term strategy to the contest by preparing a three-year plan. See the Tidy Towns Handbook for tips on how to do this.

The Built Environment:

The community centre (1978) is a simple building but well painted and the car park is well surfaced. The adjacent handball club is similarly clean but perhaps could do with some exterior paint in the coming years. The creche is an attractive modern addition with a very tidy car park and surrounds. Boundaries are a little

harsh and would be greatly enhanced with the addition of a hawthorn hedge. The extensive play area is clearly well used! The national school (1866) is beautifully refurbished although its boundary wall needs to be weeded.

The church is a beautiful building and adds an important focal point to your village. It's clean, whitewashed walls were especially admired. The horse hitching rings on the wall opposite the church are a reminder of times past and are worthy of conservation.

Landscaping:

In a rural setting like that of Cappagh the principle landscaping remains the rolling fields, hedges and tall trees. These features combine with natural stone walls to give our landscape the character it has. The landscape is therefore diminished somewhat by less sympathetic features such as timber fences, evergreen trees and wire fencing. The lovely stone wall at the community Centre is a good example of how new development can maintain links with the surrounding countryside. Planting native trees and planting boundary hedges with hawthorn planting are sensitive interventions that add character as well as resources for wildlife.

It is great that you took on board comments in last year's report to minimise use of annual flowers in favour of perennials. Your garden at the Hall is meticulously maintained and has a range of attractive trees and shrubs.

Flower baskets are used to good effect at the community centre and brighten up this area. Planters at the creche are a little forlorn and in need of attention. Shrubbery in the school grounds is attractive, if a little neglected. The church grounds are very well maintained with a combination of trees, shrubs and flower baskets.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

You are commended for bringing in an expert for consultation on areas of wildlife value. Don't forget that all the natural hedgerows in and around the village are of high value to a wide range of plants and animals. Ensuring these are maintained correctly, and enhanced when gaps appear, is good conservation practice. Your proposed survey is excellent and we look forward to reviewing this upon completion. The wetland you identified next to the church does indeed appear to be of significant value. Further investigation of this area would be most welcome. Do liaise with the Limerick county council heritage officer in this regard.

There is lots of scope in this category to hold heritage events such as bat walks. Do you have a golden mile or Slí na Sláinte? This will encourage greater use of your great outdoors.

Litter Control:

You participate in the national spring clean and this is excellent, does the school also help? How many people did you get to take part? Photographs would be most welcome here to show what you managed to achieve (even if you did not have a major problem area to start with!). Note that waste minimisation is not judged under this heading. Does your group carry out regular litter patrols?

Generally litter control was to a very high standard on adjudication day. Some litter had gathered in the church car park so perhaps greater attention needs to be directed to patrols here

Tidiness:

The village has few tidiness issues. The school grounds, as already mentioned, need to be weeded. The adjacent site is a little unkempt but your plans here are noted. The lack of a footpath creates a hazard for pedestrians and perhaps this is an action that could go into a three-year plan.

Hedges should be trimmed but only from September to February in compliance with the Wildlife Act. They should be cut in and not down to allow some tall trees to emerge. Road surfacing through the village is very good while signage is in good order. A nice project would be to paint metal farm gates in a uniform colour.

Generally however a high standard has been achieved here.

Waste Minimisation:

Well done on holding a public meeting on waste minimisation. This was a fantastic initiative. Was it well attended? What did you take from it? What are the main action items that you intend to prioritise? Have you

considered carrying out a waste audit? This would identify the volume of waste that Cappagh generates, where it goes, and what it is composed of. Armed with these data you can set informed targets and repeat the exercise in three years to monitor performance. The lack of a bottle bank in the village, as you have pointed out, is not a major impediment to this practice, since you are well served in neighbouring towns.

Residential Areas:

Cappagh has a small stock of houses and no estates. Greater awareness of the landscape and natural amenities would be of value in making boundary walls and gardens more sympathetic to the surroundings. Some natural stone walls were admired and houses themselves were presented to a very high standard.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

The approaches to Cappagh are all composed of beautifully lush hedges and tall trees. The welcome sign at the railway crossing was noted but created confusion as your village does not start for some distance past. The village nameplate is simple and perhaps could be enhanced to create more of a welcome.

General Impression:

Cappagh is a charming rural village with more to offer than meets the eye. You have done very well to complete actions under all headings and a three-year plan would consolidate these. This adjudicator very much enjoyed his brief stay. Best of luck!