

Tidy Towns Competition 2012

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Cahir** Ref: **634**
County: **Tipperary(South)** Mark: **279**
Category: **D** Date(s): **18/06/2012**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2011	Mark Awarded 2012
Overall Development Approach	50	42	42
The Built Environment	50	40	40
Landscaping	50	33	33
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	29	29
Litter Control	50	28	30
Tidiness	30	16	17
Waste Minimisation	20	13	13
Residential Areas	40	30	31
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	36	36
General Impression	10	8	8
TOTAL MARK	400	275	279

Overall Development Approach:

Welcome to the National Tidy Towns Competition 2012. Your committee of eleven people are obviously hard working and enthusiastic and you have many successful links with the local authority and other public bodies in the area as well as support from the community. We note that your three year plan is in its last year and you can be proud of your achievements. It is good that the Area Engineer has used it as a guide to the local authority's annual improvement programme. Your list of supporting organisations is very impressive and we note the range of activities undertaken. While your submission was well presented it would benefit from having a more suitable map of your area with roads and street names indicated.

The Built Environment:

Well done on implementing the works at the Dovecote, the new signage and the action taken in regard to the Billboards. The bi-lingual heritage finger post directional signs and round information plaques were of good quality and generally well maintained. Cahir Castle is a magnificent edifice that dominates the town. Its car park and tourist office looked well and there are great flowers at the monument and the tourist office. The signs here were very informative; one for a craft shop needs cleaning. Castle Street looked well; in particular the AIB building was well painted and had nice hanging baskets. The small bridge and fish sculpture were very good as was the notice board and there was no evidence of litter. In the square the flowers were good and the signs were clean. Most buildings such as Cahir Castle Hotel here are fine; the derelict antique shop is a problem. On adjudication day the memorial fountain was not working and some litter was present. The Market House, Post Office and Craft Centre building were all well presented in Church Street. There was an unappealing colour scheme at the disused Castle Chinese Restaurant. The Granary and terraced housing looks well. The John Nash designed St. Paul's Church looked splendid as did the former Erasmus Smith Schoolhouse (now Council offices). It was sad to see the Cahir Motor Company and two service stations closed down but a bit of cheer was added with the well painted and planted old pump nearby. The disused

mill opposite the pump was an eyesore. The Co-op looks well and is well planted and maintained. The premises of Eamon Gleeson Tyres looks well, some plants in the bed would help. Morrison Car Sales was well presented. The stone houses on the Cashel Road are well presented. Carrigeen Castle is very inviting and was litter free. The gable and adjoining buildings at the corner of Barrack Street on the Cashel Road side needs attention. The Phoenix pub is closed down but is well painted. In Barrack Street the entrance to Cahir Park and Lodge is very impressive with the stone wall and mature trees. The old Abbey building is undergoing restoration, the sign needs cleaning and the area outside it needs to be tidied. There was no access to the building. In Abbey Street the buildings looked fine and there were no weeds, some litter was evident and the litter bin needs painting. Coláiste Dúnlascaigh looks very well and the established hornbeam were impressive. Railway House and the surrounding area was tidy. The old cemetery and church on the Clonmel Road looked fine as did the Garda Station and its planting. The houses on Market Street were well maintained and there was no evidence of weeds. On Convent Road the school entrance looked well, the grounds were well landscaped but the hedge appears dead and unlikely to recover. The Convent is a well preserved building and a landmark feature greatly enhanced by mature trees and on adjudication day a field of buttercups added to the scene. Other building complexes which looked well included St. Mary's R.C. Church and cemetery and the Cahir Day Care Centre. Cahir Park AFC has an imposing entrance planted with Berberis. There are impressive stone walls on both sides of the road and there is a need to control weeds at the wall base.

Landscaping:

Cahir has a number of mature trees which provide strong structure in terms of landscape and it will be important to consider renewal planting as replacements in years to come. It is best to focus on permanent planting and limit the use of annuals because they are time consuming and provide short term benefit. The guideline for containers is to use them only where planting directly into the ground is not possible, such as hanging baskets and this appears to be the practice in Cahir. The feature planting with finger post signs is effective in the Square and the use of large containers was noted. However the locations are quite shaded and the annuals used in the edges of these require more sun than is available in this situation. In the Square, the trees are significant but the central area is simply being used as a car park. It is suggested that this area be re-examined. One idea to be explored would entail increasing car parking capacity at the frontage of the buildings with right angled parking and removing car parking from the central area and developing it as a larger open space feature. There is scope for tree planting at Tom Burkes. We noted the hedge in the steel palisade fence opposite Cahir Engineering; in time this might help to conceal the fence. There is scope for the creation of an avenue of trees on the Cashel Road. Remember if you decide to pursue this idea please use one species such as lime, hornbeam or maple to obtain maximum impact and uniformity. In Abbey Street the cherry trees are old and will need replacement. Consider hornbeam for this purpose; they are elsewhere in this street. It is recommended that tree supporting stakes be removed before they cause damage to stems. Locations where this is required include Coláiste Dún lascaigh. Tree and hedge planting on the Clonmel Road made for an impressive and novel approach.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

We noted that in responding to our comments last year you attended a biodiversity course which no doubt increased your awareness of the various approaches that may be taken to increase biodiversity and public awareness. The River Suir as mentioned previously is part of a special area of conservation (SAC) and it is a wonderful facility in your community. The ducks, geese and swans attracted interest from many people and the duck field is an added feature. The walk to the Swiss Cottage is very interesting. We noted a lovely field of buttercups in front of the Convent building. Items mentioned in 2011 and which are still important include listing and mapping habitats of value include specimen trees, hedgerows, treelines, stream, woodlands and wetlands. Also involving school children in identifying plants and animals will greatly increase their knowledge and interest in the environment.

Litter Control:

Your anti-litter campaign and patrols are working very well as litter volumes observed were minor in this well visited busy town. Your special focus on the car park at Cahir Castle seems to have been worthwhile. It was disappointing to note the accumulation of litter in a corner of the Ha Ha at the side of St. Paul's Church. Litter was also seen on the ground beside the Cahir Engineering sign.

Tidiness:

It is difficult for a town the size of Cahir not to have some untidiness. However, in general it looks very well and we noted the work done on painting gates. At the farm yard entrance on the Ballylooby Road, weeds detract from the area. The private gardens on the left look well. At the steel palisade fence in the industrial estate there were weeds at the kerb and the base of the fence. Tree planting would assist in softening the appearance here. Cahir Engineering is badly in need of improvements such as painting and tree planting. There was rubble and a sign lying on the ground and the poor standard company sign is rusty. At the entrance to the pallet making enterprise, opposite Cahir Abbey, the large tank needs cleaning and screening.

The handy shop on the Tipperary Road was derelict and there were weeds in the Cahir Business Park. Opposite the entrance the control box enclosed with a steel palisade fence would benefit from screening with a hedge. Sráid na gCuach was in good condition but the derelict site beyond needs attention. In Bridge Street the signs need cleaning and a derelict building with an empty site opposite present problems, which is a shame so close to Cahir Castle. Its saving grace is a good stone wall opposite. In the lane opposite St. Paul's Church there was untidiness of weeds and graffiti. There were weeds at the entrance and along the road at the Duneske Sports Centre.

Waste Minimisation:

Your participation in World Energy Day and Earth Hour is noted. We noted the two green flags flying at Coláiste Dún Iascaigh. Congratulations to Our Lady of Mercy Girls School for achieving five flags and we hope they achieve their ambition of a sixth flag this year, well done to all concerned. Bring Banks were fine. Have you calculated the quantities of material that is recycled from the bring banks and the collections from houses, schools etc.

Residential Areas:

In general, Cahir has a number of well-maintained residential estates. It is difficult to read the estate sign at Sommerville Close which was well maintained and the row of trees successfully screened adjacent industrial activity. Beechpark with its well enhanced entrance, its established trees and no evidence of weeds or litter is a credit to the residents. Highfield housing estate is very good. It is suggested that the estate sign be combined with the planted bed. The housing estate and the terraced houses in the vicinity of the Cahir Business Park all looked well. The unnamed estate opposite Sráid na gCuach looks well and a lady was busily planting bedding plants at the entrance. The housing estate past the railway bridge had mature trees and looked well. We could not miss the large rock announcing Farranlahassary estate. There were some weeds under some trees here and on the unfinished area but the rest had well-kept homes, trees and grass. The residential estate opposite the Day Care Centre is well planted.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

The entrance from Ballylooby is a nice old stone wall with a row of Beech and other trees. The town distance signs need to be cleaned and the heritage sign was cleaned. At the junction of the Cashel and Cork Roads for the most part the signs looked well but the grass needs cutting under the twinning sign and there are weeds at the 60kph sign. Across the road there are heaps of soil and gravel which should be removed. We noted that weeds were removed from the stepped section of the stone wall outside the Highfield estate and it is ready for planting. On the Tipperary Road, the birch trees looked well and we noted lots of bedding with work in progress on adjudication day. The Rectory House and Lodge had a nice stone entrance. The roundabout near Coláiste Dún Iascaigh is an opportunity for planting of trees to highlight this area.

General Impression:

Cahir is a major centre in Tipperary and has many wonderful assets such as the castle and the River Suir. You are to be commended on your achievements to date, well done and keep up the good work. We look forward to your application in 2013.