

Tidy Towns Competition 2013

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Capparoe** Ref: **2025**
County: **Tipperary(North)** Mark: **243**
Category: **A** Date(s): **19/06/2013**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2012	Mark Awarded 2013
Overall Development Approach	50	31	33
The Built Environment	50	30	32
Landscaping	50	30	32
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	27	27
Litter Control	50	27	29
Sustainable Waste And Resource Management	20	10	11
Tidiness	30	18	18
Residential Areas	40	28	28
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	26	26
General Impression	10	7	7
TOTAL MARK	400	234	243

Overall Development Approach:

You are very welcome Capparoe to the Super Valu 2013 National Tidy Towns competition. You have a large number on your committee. How do you manage to efficiently run a committee of between 26 and 30 people? You hold regular meetings and are involved in practical work and developmental discussions weekly with a general monthly meeting. You are very well supported by local groups and businesses as well as by the local authority. We hope that your church newsletter extends to all denominational churches represented in your area. Well done on your Facebook page – unfortunately we were too early for the barbecue! It is a very active Facebook page and we have enjoyed reading it. Perhaps because of the Facebook page and the use of text messaging you might cut back on the distribution of Flyers in the interests of sustainable waste management. We are glad that you have an ongoing relationship with the local school. We are delighted to hear that your community has become a stronger community as a result of the Tidy Towns group activities. We noted from your entry form that the school got the Green Flag last year. This is good news for the area as well as for the school and congratulations to the students and staff. Perhaps it was taken down for cleaning on adjudication date?

Thank you for your sketch plan of the village. However you have not submitted a Tidy Towns plan. To progress in the competition and in particular to obtain extra marks in this category, 'Overall Development Approach,' it will be necessary for you to draw up a three or five-year plan. You will find lots of advice in relation to so doing in the Tidy Towns Handbook. The plan can be short and concise, but should be a community effort. You should consult widely with the local community in drawing up the plan. It should also take into account any statutory or local plans for your area. Do try to submit such a plan for next year's competition. It will focus your minds and make you realise what is achievable and what resources are required.

The Built Environment:

The buildings of Capparoe village are scattered on all four roads leading to the central crossroads.

At one end of the village on the Nenagh road the Community Centre, which is obviously an old school building, looked really well, painted as it is in blue and cream. We note the amount of work that you have carried out in relation to the said building. The gates adjacent might be painted to match the building. We admired the blue and yellow pump north of the Community Centre. The school is well presented.

Nearer the crossroads the public house is painted in a very bright orange colour which is clean, but rather glaring. The associated car park containing pallets and a blue container, as well as a skip did not enhance the setting of the premises. It would be a good thing if this car park could be landscaped in keeping with its rural surroundings. Part of the wall along the road frontage to the side of the pub is broken and dirty.

Good traditional gates were observed at a farmhouse near the picnic area on the road to the railway bridge. (Road to N7). Well done on your use of Irish in the village name signs. - An Cheapeach-Rua. We would encourage you to continue to use bi-lingual signage in public areas. We hope that you took design advice in relation to the conservation of the bridges.

Landscaping:

Capparoo is a very pleasant rural area set in rich Tipperary countryside. There are many mature trees and hedges forming field boundaries giving the area its intrinsic landscape quality.

The picnic area/Ned's corner is a focal point for the village at the crossroads. We admired the picnic benches and the lovely elongated flower bed with timber edging and gravel pathways. We would consider that this area is unsuitable for the erection of hanging baskets as they create an urban effect in a delightful rural setting. The old phone box is an antique at this stage and an item of interest in this location. Work is still ongoing here as we noticed some roadwork signs. We confirmed this when we noted the photographs of the recent Meitheal at work on your Facebook page. The edges at the corner of this junction require finishing. The Gathering sign using old computer keyboard letters and numbers is highly imaginative, and an example of waste minimisation. The grass margins along by the wooden fencing looked well. However an angled field gate and the unfinished store/cottage in the wildflower meadow detracted somewhat from the overall impression. We note that this is a temporary situation. The idea of planting fruit trees in this area is also commended from a landscaping and wildlife point of view. Good hedging was admired near the railway bridge. We will be looking forward to see the new bank planting at the community centre taking hold.

We noted evidence of chemical weeding between the public house and the picnic area. We would encourage you to use manual or chemical-free methods of weed control. Your County Heritage Officer would be a good source of advice in this regard. The use of tyres as planters is not encouraged and was noted in one location. The semi mature planting at the picnic area looked very well.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

We are saddened to hear that your wildflower project failed through no-fault of your own. It is extremely important to have good advice and to source seeds from a reliable supplier of Irish wildflowers. Nonetheless the wide area at the picnic site at the Ned's corner end looked very much like a wildflower meadow – planned or unplanned. As already mentioned the planting of the fruit trees is also a good wildlife initiative. You mentioned your bat survey but you give us no details about it. We noted the butterfly boxes and the insect Lodge. We noted the box in the picnic area in the wildflower area located against the stone wall and sporting the Tipperary colours. You have already achieved very high marks in this category and this adjudicator considers that the marks you received last year in this category reflect more than adequately your efforts to date in relation to wildlife and natural amenities projects. It would be unfair to other entrants to further increase the marks on the basis of the submission made in this entry. We suggest you speak to the County Heritage Officer who will give you advice and encouragement on all aspects of wildlife and natural amenities. You should also read the Tidy Towns Handbook which is quite detailed on this category. The Heritage Council's 'Wildlife in Towns and Villages' booklet is also a useful resource. Engaging with the schools on even elementary nature study surveys can lead in time to the further analysis and interpretation/presentation of the findings. Such survey work and presentation of findings in brochure or signage format can lead to increasing your marks in this area. However you should begin with a small step of conducting some elementary surveys. We are aware from the submissions of other communities that Tipperary county council is about to launch a County Biodiversity plan. It would be recommended that you investigate its contents and relate your work in this category to the overall plan.

In places the roadside hedges have been trimmed. Remember that it is permissible to trim hedging along cultivated ground (e.g. gardens) throughout the year. However with regard to hedge trimming, you are reminded that it is an offence under the Wildlife Act 1976 and Wildlife (Amendment) Act 2006 to cut vegetation in a hedge or ditch on lands not cultivated between 1st March and 31st August annually - this is for the protection of nesting birds. Please be careful of this in future years. Get your hedge trimming complete by the end of February, and, even if you feel there are some straggly bits of hedges bounding uncultivated ground (fields) don't be tempted to tidy them after March 1st! Exceptions to this rule may be implemented only in agreement with the local authority where road safety issues are concerned.

Litter Control:

Despite the fact that the village is spread over a large area and straddling four roads, there appeared to be no problem with litter. However we believe that you have had a problem with litter, but have dealt with it successfully. Like a lot of other communities in rural areas you are plagued with illegal dumping. Perhaps the Environmental Awareness Officer of the local authority could come to your assistance with regard to this ongoing problem. To improve your markings in this category continue with the good work, but you might also consider

including a litter management plan in your overall Tidy Towns plan. You can dovetail this plan with the County Litter Management plan. Your County Environmental Awareness Officer will also be able to advise you in this regard. What particular bring banks does your community use?

Sustainable Waste And Resource Management:

Your mulching lawnmower will be an asset. We note your segregation of litter and your efforts at recycling. We commend your energy-saving light programme on your Christmas tree. Remember that this category is about more than recycling and mulching, although they in themselves are part of the waste pyramid. We appreciate your efforts in relation to both recycling and mulching. We would refer you to the guidelines sent with this year's entry form in relation to this category, and suggest that you talk to your County Environmental Awareness Officer for help in progressing your work and marks in this category.

Well done on your solar powered school signs. We already referred to the use of the old computer keyboard in your Gathering sign as an example of sustainable waste and resource management

Tidiness:

Some of the work to the drainage dykes are not immediately obvious visually, but we commend you on working with the local authority in landscaping the post drainage works.

We would like to see field gates throughout the rural village of Capparoo generally improved to include painting. Outside one residential property boundary we observed pots without any plantings. In front of another house front boundary we noted trees that were dying – apparently choked by the surrounding tarmac which had given the trees no space to breathe. Some dead trees left in the ditch in the vicinity of the solar powered school sign (on the opposite side of the road) need to be removed. Quite a number of set-back areas in front of the front boundary of houses need weeding and surfacing. It would be preferable that the setback boundaries were formed of local stone or sod and stone banking, as the erection of many concrete and other urban type boundaries lessens the character of the rural environment. A kerb enclosed area near the school would benefit from additional planting. At present only the corners seem to be complete.

The pump beyond the railway bridge is set on a rather untidy concrete plinth with broken edges. The field gate and posts alongside the recessed pump area are badly in need of an upgrade and also detract from the nice pump itself. We would strongly suggest that you plant in the soil surrounding the pump rather than providing occasional boxes of flowers at this location. The galvanised gateway at the local Stoneworks needs repair.

Residential Areas:

The projects which you mention under this heading relate to further landscaping and tidying of the area generally rather than to works to residential properties.

However the rural residences scattered throughout the general area of Capparoo are well presented. We particularly admired the houses on each side of the railway bridge. We noted some nice whitewashed/stone outhouses in this area also.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

The village name sign on the Newport Road is worn and could do with renewal. Its location within the stone enclosed flower bed would be improved by the weeding and grassing of the area outside the stone boundary. The flower planting was sparse in the bed, but we will attribute this to poor weather conditions. On the approach from the railway bridge side, the village sign is located in a somewhat weedy area topped by a road sign and in front of a power pole. This may not be the most agreeable location for this village sign.

We acknowledge the work you have done and are continuing to do on landscaping near the crossroads. Throughout the large rural area of Capparoo there are some places where the road is in need of surfacing. Near the railway bridge we noted the edges of the road trimmed properly to provide for an inner wildlife corridor. A dirty yield sign was noted near the school. We have already mentioned the issue of field gates under the tidiness category and you also mention the issue of entrances piers and gates in relation to this category. We are glad that you are proposing action in this area as it affects all your roads throughout the village.

General Impression:

You are anxious to present Capparoo as a 'beautiful quiet area with a vibrant community' and we are glad to say that we agree with you that it is 'going really well'. The local groups will always be your loyal supporters, and you have been successful in integrating them into your work and plans. We hope that the adjudication comments will be as helpful as you hope they will be. We wish you every success in the future. Go n-eírí libh!