

Tidy Towns Competition 2019

Adjudication Report

Centre: Cahersiveen - Caher Saibhain	Ref: 327
County: Kerry	Mark: 298
Category: C	Date(s): 17/06/2019

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2018	Mark Awarded 2019
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	60	46	47
Streetscape & Public Places	60	39	39
Green Spaces and Landscaping	60	38	38
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	50	28	29
Sustainability – Doing more with less	50	24	24
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	54	54
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	32	33
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	34	34
TOTAL MARK	470	295	298

Community – Your Planning and Involvement / An Pobal - Pleanáil agus Rannpháirtíocht:

Cuireann an moltóir seo fáilte roimh Cahersiveen Cathair Saidhbhín páirt a ghlacadh i gComórtas Náisiúnta SuperValu na mBailte Slachtmhara 2019. With twelve committee members and another eighteen volunteers who assist from time to time, you are well supported locally. SuperValu and many other commercial firms are supportive of your works and provide help of various kinds, including sponsorship. Facebook and WhatsApp are your social media communication channels as well as newspaper, radio and local flyers. The involvement with local schools takes several forms, including tree planting and specialized talks. Many thanks for attaching a map and some other pages (including a multi-annual plan) with information. May we suggest that it would be better to bind these various appendices as one document and the same advice applies to the application form. It can be difficult to keep loose pages together when an adjudicator visits the site. And please feel free to print on both sides of the pages. When using numbers to identify landmarks, please follow a sequence and reduce the need to go over and back through the map to find a number. Better still, just write the landmark name on the map, for example the Community Centre – we couldn't find it on the map. Well done on the Daniel O'Connell Heritage Trail which is being opened this year and in promoting a greater use of the Irish language.

Streetscape & Public Places / Sráid-Dreach & Áiteanna Poiblí:

Daniel O'Connell's birthplace on the approach from Tralee is a lovely feature. The large sign for the Heritage Trail is very good but the other signs are too small and some need renewal. We were surprised that the bust of Daniel is facing the River Carhan but perhaps that is a way of getting visitors to go into the small riverside park. There is plenty of information on this site, but some maintenance is needed as evidenced by the level of weed growth on the gravel pathways. There is also a problem here of Japanese Knotweed of which no doubt you are well aware. The ruin on the other side of the river attracts attention but we did not see any information about it and indeed, a trawl of the internet revealed that many visitors were enquiring about it and some believed it was the ruins of the O'Connell house. We suggest that some more information is needed on this site to reduce the confusion. In the town centre, the AIB building is of stone construction; it has good quality window boxes. Other premises noted were the Harp Bar and the Oratory Restaurant. There are many commercial premises in good condition in the town centre, too many to mention. The Barracks Heritage Centre is easy to find because of the large mural on a gable wall in the town centre which informs that it is the next right turn. Well done. It is a wonderful historic structure located in a strategic position near the bridge over the River Ferta. It is great to see it having a modern use. The church is a major structure in the town centre, and we note that it was built with concrete in the days before enough information was known about that material. It dominates the linear town square (Church Street). There is potential to improve the visual appearance of this important square by reducing the amount of car parking and providing more paved

areas for pedestrian use and other functions. Of course, such an idea would entail major public consultation. Most of the shops and private residences in the town centre are in good condition except for some vacant premises. We note you are following the Declan Sugrue Colour Scheme for buildings, which in our view is very pleasant. We liked the various murals throughout, Monsignor Hugh O'Flaherty gets a special position on a gable wall. We visited the grounds of the Old Abbey of the Holy Cross and graveyard. This is a major historical feature of the town on the Daniel O'Connell Heritage Trail and yet it is somewhat hidden. The various signs throughout the site are very helpful in explaining about Daniel O'Connell but some need cleaning. The self-seeded sycamore tree growing from the base of a wall has become very large. We suggest that it should be removed to preserve the ruins. The other trees here are fine and add great character to the space.

Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:

Trees are the main structural elements in the landscape and when planting new trees it is important to obtain professional advice to ensure that you choose the correct species and plant them in the correct manner. In that regard, we note the planting of 'Cherry Blossom' trees in the town centre. In our view, such species are not suitable because they are not native and are known for damaging pavements. People like their flowers but unfortunately, they seldom last more than a week and the trees themselves are short-lived. Suitable trees for the town centre include birch, lime and upright cultivars of maple or oak. It is best to use a single species on a road or street for uniformity. Also, it is important to ensure that the base of new trees is maintained free of weeds, grass and flower beds to ensure early establishment. So, we suggest a focus on tree planting, especially at the GAA grounds and the new cemetery before the space becomes filled with graves. We admired the Escallonia shrubs growing outside the boundary wall.

Guideline for plant containers is to use them only where planting directly into the ground is not possible; they should not in themselves attract any notice. It is better to have fewer well planted containers than a large number in which the quality of plants is inferior. Empty or poorly planted containers are less effective than no plant container at all.

If considering more seasonal flowers the use of permanent planting including herbaceous perennials for floral displays is encouraged rather than relying on annuals which are more time consuming.

Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality / An Dúlra agus an Bhithéagsúlacht i do cheantar:

Actions listed under this heading include building insect hotels with the Mens Shed group for placement around the town as well as bat and bird boxes made in conjunction with the Secondary schools. While these projects serve to raise awareness of nature and biodiversity, it should not be overlooked that you have a rich natural area surrounding your community without adding any of these devices.

Appreciating your local wildlife resources is vital in order to achieve under this category. In this regard researching and raising awareness is more important than 'doing' at the early stages. Habitats of value include specimen trees, hedgerows, treelines, streams, woodlands and wetlands. Try to list the plants and animals to be found there and recognise their significance (native, protected, or alien invasive?). We note you are planning to carry out wildlife surveys and will be appointing a Biodiversity Officer to your committee. Raise awareness through holding events such as hedgerow walks or bat walks. Contact the Irish Wildlife Trust for more information.

Sustainability – Doing more with less / Inmharthanacht - Mórán ar an mbeagán:

This category is about tackling the growing waste mountain that is creating problems of pollution, unwanted land use, and the use of dwindling resources. It is a global and a local problem. To save the Earth we need to move quickly to a zero-waste society. Your town can play its part by first looking at the volume of waste that is generated. The emphasis here really needs to be on reducing the volume of waste produced rather than recycling (which is taken for granted). At this level of the contest the adjudicator wants to see innovation in tackling bigger issues of food waste, plastic disposal and energy use. What are homes and businesses doing to tackle these?

Your application mentions in relation to water, a greater use of rain water (as indeed was the case in decades past), the possibility of placing drinking fountains around the town for filling water bottles. You continue beach clean-ups from June to August. In relation to waste, SuperValu now have compostable cutlery, cups and straws. You have also done workshops on plastic waste and you have two charity shops which help to reuse many items, especially clothing. We noted the edible medicinal augmented reality sculpture trail which involves a range of environmental and artistic measures. In transport, you are making better use of public transport and car pooling.

Other measures to consider are....

- One third of our waste is organic in nature, such as grass clippings. You can avoid collecting mown grass by more frequent cutting and using mulching mowers which shred the clippings and facilitate faster decomposition.
- Self-watering plant containers, especially hanging baskets are a help in reducing the amount of water used and also the task of watering.
- Working with retailers to cut down on packaging and reminding people to re-use shopping bags.
- Encouraging the re-use of water bottles and coffee mugs at school and at work.
- In response to an overuse of chemicals for weed control, many useful products of the past are no longer available and therefore communities are encouraged to use other means such as hoeing to maintain weeds. In some cases, allowing wildflowers to develop is an acceptable alternative.

These activities will highlight the fact that you are focussing on this category and when you develop more projects in the future your marks will increase.

For more helpful tips and case studies from other Tidy Towns entrants please take a look at <http://localprevention.ie/tidy-towns/>

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

You do an annual clean-up as part of the county clean-up week in April each year. You are fortunate to have Community Employment Scheme workers to assist in cleaning the streets. In our visit we found weeds at the base of stone walls and in Quay Street on vacant sites. The recycling banks are very conspicuous. Many centres are examining ways of making them less conspicuous and still available for use. Some signs needed cleaning (already mentioned).

Residential Streets & Housing Areas / Sráideanna Cónaithe & Ceantair Tithíochta:

In general, many residential properties in Cahersiveen are in good condition and well-maintained. Houses in Fertha Drive look very well but we were surprised at the lack of front gardens. The supporting stakes and ties on some trees here need attention as they are no longer needed. The trees are not thriving; perhaps because the grass is growing so close to the stem and taking moisture and nutrients from the tree roots. We liked the recess in the low stone wall which contains a holly tree. Cotoneaster specimens opposite need attention. There is overuse of herbicide here. At Marian Place the houses and gardens looked well; trees and hedges planted.

Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes / Bóithre Isteach, Sráideanna & Lánaí:

On the approach from the Tralee direction, one is met with the name 'CAHERSIVEEN' written in flowers on a white background. That is very impressive. This is followed by the large 'Failte' colourful sign framed between two stone piers and with flowers planted at the front. A line of trees forms a delightful background. On the opposite side of the road, an attractive tall sculpture represents St. Brendan's Voyage. It looks well. The trees planted here will enhance more and more as they mature. The flower beds looked fine. Further on, stone walls add great character to the approach.

Concluding Remarks:

Well done on your improvement works to date and please keep up the good work. We hope you find useful ideas in this report for future projects.