

Tidy Towns Competition 2025

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Aughagower - Achadh Ghobhair** Ref: **503**
County: **Mayo** Mark: **304**
Category: **A** Date(s): **10/06/2025**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2024	Mark Awarded 2025
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	80	48	50
Streetscape & Public Places	80	43	45
Green Spaces and Landscaping	80	42	45
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	55	23	25
Sustainability – Doing more with less	55	15	17
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	54	56
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	55	31	32
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	55	33	34
TOTAL MARK	550	289	304

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

Fáilte chuig Comórtas Bailte Slachtmhara SuperValu 2025. Go raibh maith agaibh as d'iontráil a sheoladh chugainn. Maith sibh as an obair atá déanta i bhur cheantar go dtí seo - guímid gach rath oraibh i bhúr thionscadail amach anseo. Ádh mór.

Welcome to the SuperValu Tidy Towns 2025 competition and thank you for your application form, photos, map and a brief 3-5 year plan. Your map was extremely informative showing a clear layout of the village including the various buildings and heritage structures. Your Aughagower Tidy Towns & Heritage Village Facebook page has over 500 followers and we see that it is updated regularly which is crucial for all social media feeds. We also opened the Instagram account and see that it too is updated regularly. We commend your PRO for this. Your village is seen to be one of a community working together with a committee of 12 and a voluntary body of 60. From a village of less than 200 that is a sizeable proportion of the village who support you. Your participation in the Tidy Towns competition for over 30 years is admirable and having the youth involved, through Foróige and the local schools, is wonderful as it will give them an appreciation of where they live.

See Concluding Remarks for advice on filling out the application form and producing a map.

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

The layout of the village streets, based very much around the numerous heritage sites, is quite unique. And in the development of the village, we admire that this uniqueness has been retained. The new map showing the numerous heritage structures in the village is in a perfect location tucked in off the road, so that the reader is safe from passing vehicles. We also admired your new wayfinding signage – subtle but informative. Signage is clutter in the streetscape and sometimes unnecessarily big and in poor locations: yours are ideal. The heritage art mural was admired. We loved that you have painted it on boards which can be removed when the mural needs to be repainted. It's wonderful to see the old telephone box with the old telephone and the phone book resting on the timber cabinet which you completed in 2024 and with you maintain. A very good refurbishment job – compliments to those involved. Calling it the Whispers to Heaven phone box is a very pleasant idea and having Midwest Radio promote it was great – we saw in on your Facebook page. Well done on hiring the cherry picker and painting the street light poles. Unoccupancy and dereliction are the blight of many villages and towns and Aughagower too has some ... but luckily only three. In addition to making contact with the owners and asking if you can paint /clear around them, all you can do is ask Mayo Co Co to serve derelict sites notices on the owners. Hopefully in time they will be renovated and given a new lease of life. There are so many wonderful heritage structures in your village we cannot comment on them all. We also loved the stone stiles noticed throughout the village which gave access to your main heritage sites. We found the Síle na Gig, after much searching, on the well wall and chatted for a while to a resident

about these unique fertility carvings. Interesting to read that Scott's Bar was established in 1887.

Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:

Your main green spaces in the town, the Fairgreen and picnic area by the river, are maintained by you. We read that you planted wildflowers under the trees in the Fairgreen. We'd advise that you might consider saving the seeds of wildflowers that grow along the roadsides as these are the ones which will survive and regrow year on year. Your picnic area is perfectly located in a safe area parallel to the road and accessed across the river. The newly painted benches and clean pathways welcoming. We read that the path is due an upgrade. We question what are you plans for the trees in this area? They seem to have been extremely badly 'pruned' at some stage and truthfully now look quite miserable. Perhaps it's time to sacrifice them and plant trees suited to this location. Maybe make a sculptural storey relevant to your history could be made from one or two? Funding is available for this. We also noted The Pound. Is this in the ownership of you committee? Have you plans for this area? The playground is a wonderful addition to your community and was well maintained when we visited. Facilities such as these are crucial in any village. Lovely to see the photos of the bright colours of the spring flowers which are needed after the dark winter months. But make sure that they don't block the name of your village. We noted some plant containers with good floral displays but remember the best plant containers are those which are concealed by the plants so next year add some trailing plants to these.

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

With the great number of hedgerows, mature trees, stone structures and walls, and the beautiful Aughagower River you have a great variety of habitats for insects and mammals. The hedgerows were very colourful with a variety of wildflowers in bloom and were buzzing with insect life – foxglove, ox-eyed daises, cornflowers, etc. all in bloom. The Nature Walk behind the Community Centre which is frequently used by the local playschool is wonderful. Good to see the playschool staff using this great amenity which is beside them. Have you had any birds using the nest boxes? It sometimes takes a while to have them used, so be patient, but do let us know of any progress. We suggest that you make out a list of plants – trees, shrubs and flowers – which attract our pollinators and put this on your Facebook page to inform the community of suitable plants to grow in their gardens. In fact, many lists already exist so use one of these. We visited the Cailleach viewing point which gives wonderful views to Clew Bay and its surrounding landscape. Keep the path to the picnic area clear of weeds and we suggest the remainder of the area be allowed to grow and produce wildflowers and grasses and just trimmed once a year in autumn. Here the wildflower seeds could be collected for use in the village. A small area could be left for car parking.

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

This category where many communities struggle is about being aware of how we use the resources of the planet so that we cut down on our waste. We particularly encourage Tidy Towns committees to lead by example. Your funding initiative where the community can leave the returnable cans and plastic bottles in bins at the local shop is great. It saves the individual bringing them to the nearest Deposit Return Depot, located in Westport, and you, as a committee, gain the money from each item for your future projects. We're delighted to read of your registration with SEAI and that this is now being advanced with a mentor from SEAI. The photo showed that a great number of the community came to the event you organised last November. Next year let us know of the savings the Handball Club are making on their electricity charge since the installation of the solar panels. We noted the pallets as a wood composter in the Fairgreen. What do you do with the leaves which rot in the leaf composter? Good to read that the uneaten food at the fundraising Tea Party was used in two subsequent events. Food waste is a huge problem. Nice storey behind the donated bike. Are you involved in the Green Flag programme with the local school? We have no doubt that help would be greatly welcomed by the teachers. Perhaps make raised beds and grow vegetables with one of the classes on an annual basis

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

Do you take part in the An Taisce Annual Spring Clean? We encourage groups to taken part in nationwide Clean-Up events as it focuses the mind of the general public of the high amount of litter/fly tipping/ dumping that occurs nationally. You could also get individuals in the community to register for the #2minutestreetclean also organised by An Taisce. We're delighted that you are supported by the council in the removal of the rubbish you collect. You have a twice weekly cleaning rota made out for your volunteers. We assume that they also remove weed growth when they're scheduled. When we visited the village was litter free and while weed growth was noticed we saw that you were removing it along the base of walls etc. so we assume that this was all completed in time. Great to see Foróige and the local school children helping out with the work around the village. This will encourage them to respect where they live. Compliments to all involved. We noted ivy on some stone walls. While ivy is a wonderful for insect life and is acceptable/good on rendered (plastered) walls it is NOT acceptable on stone structures as the roots penetrate between the joints in the stones, making the walls unstable and leading to their collapse. Ivy should be cut at its base and carefully removed when it has died taking care not to damage the structure. Natural stone constructions are in themselves great habitats for insect life and also very beautiful in the streetscape.

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

Set in rural Mayo, the residents have contributed positively to making the village extremely pleasant. Many of the houses were freshly painted including boundary walls and fences and those with gardens were neatly kept welcoming the visitor. Some residents had shrubs and herbaceous borders and some had specimen trees as features. Single and two storey traditional houses are the predominant style of houses along the entrance road and in the village. The small housing estate of Pilgrim Way had well-kept houses and gardens and here too colourful

flowers were noted. We recommend that in the communal space some of the grass be allowed to grow e.g around the trees so that wildflowers and grasses can grow. Trim a margin of say 600mm along the road edge to show that the wilderness behind is deliberate. This method of presenting a roadside frontage is a great example of how to effectively present a semi-wild habitat in this type of setting. There was a considerable amount of weed growth in this estate. A hoe and stiff brush would work wonders. We admired the estate name painted white (always a good colour for lettering on dark stone). In the immediate vicinity of the village and along the approach roads farm houses with well-kept farmyards were also noted and some had well-built stone walls as roadside boundaries. Some of these farm yards had flat iron gates and these were well maintained. We also not a beautiful wrought iron gate and it too was well maintained although the ivy on the adjoining pier needs to be removed. Boundary hedges, which are cut outside the bird nesting season, were neatly trimmed giving good visibility to the motorist.

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

Grass margins, some lined with mature trees give a natural appearance to the entrances to the village. We admired the village name, white paint on a dark grey stone, which is easily read by the oncoming motorist – but don't let the flowers in front encroach on it. There are some fine stone walls on many of the approach roads into Aughagower which give the entrance to the town strength and formality. Remove the ivy and other growth so as to expose these beautiful manmade structures – but please get advice on the way to approach this so as not to cause damage. Are there any plans for the carpark near to handball alley? At the moment it is just a vast open space with just the Famine Memorial and bottle banks. This could be a very pleasant space with a little imagination and thought. Perhaps approach the architects' department in Mayo Co Co for ideas. Road surfaces in the village are extremely poor with edge breakup, potholes and unravelled repairs in many areas. While we like the idea of 'shared surfaces' we feel that your village would benefit from additional footpaths (concrete not gravel) where the road width allows. We admired the well-maintained grotto and also the pump painted red, both which make dramatic statements due to their location at road junctions. You mention you are part of Tocher Padraig walking route from Ballintubber to Croagh Patrick (the Reek). We didn't see any map showing this walking route in any village we visited in Mayo and so it is not well publicised. This might be something you could instigate with the other communities on the route and apply for funding to have a map installed in the centre of each village on the route. This exists for other walking routes in Ireland so why not Tocher Padraig?

Concluding Remarks:

We thoroughly enjoyed visiting your village, and compliment you on your very clear map ... but we have a couple of suggestions for 2026.

- In the Application Form please number the projects New (N1, N2, N3 etc) and M (M1, M2, M3 etc). This same numbering system to be used to indicate the locations of these projects on a map – N1, N2, N3 etc and M1, M2, M3 etc. If you wish you can colour code the various categories to make it even clearer. This is to help the adjudicators to negotiate their way around your village and see the various projects or locations of projects.
- We recommend that you make a Five-Year Plan which concurs with the categories in the Tidy Towns application form. Don't worry if you don't have projects/activities under each category. We recommend a Five-Year Plan rather than a Three-Year Plan as many activities/projects take longer than three years to be completed. The plan can show who on the committee will lead the activity/project, collaborators names (you'll need help from state and semi-state organisations with many of the projects), and it will also show progress each year with a tick saying it was undertaken/completed. We suggest this is better than short/medium or long term as it will show progress annually.

We wish to state that this is not a criticism of your work but to explain to you that as adjudicators we rely on a clear application form and accompanying map to inform us of your projects and make our visit rewarding.

Thank you for entering the SuperValu Tidy Towns 2025 competition. Please commend the volunteers, residents and business owners for their work in making your village a beautiful place to visit. Your success in this competition is a result of your drive, determination and the hard work by you, the committee, and your volunteers. It was a pleasure to visit and adjudicate Aughagower.