

Tidy Towns Competition 2025

Adjudication Report

Centre:	Ballycastle - Baile an Chaisil	Ref:	504
County:	Mayo	Mark:	346
Category:	B	Date(s):	13/06/2025

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2024	Mark Awarded 2025
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	80	47	49
Streetscape & Public Places	80	49	51
Green Spaces and Landscaping	80	43	44
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	55	32	33
Sustainability – Doing more with less	55	19	20
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	67	69
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	55	38	39
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	55	40	41
TOTAL MARK	550	335	346

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.

Thank you for your completed Application Form and Appendices document which included photos etc. You are a committee of five with an additional ten who help when jobs need extra hands. Great that you also have help of the members from the international protection centre who willing get involved with your work. While you don't have a dedicated Ballycastle Tidy Towns Facebook page we did see a Ballycastlemayo Facebook page which has 7K followers which showed us photos of some of your volunteers working. You had a 22-page Application Form and a 38-page document of appendices with photos and additional information under the various categories. Next year we ask that you insert the photos into the Application Form in the relevant categories and omit the additional information, some of which was repetitive. Ask a young person to do this if you don't know how – PRO of Ballycastle Tidy Towns will look good on their C.V. Select the most appropriate photos – we don't need many. Many of the photos were quite dark and so we recommend that photos be taken around 11am on a bright day as this is the best time /day to take photos.

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

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

Like many Irish villages the structures along the main section of the village are single and two storey vernacular structures with entrances directly off the footpath. You have undertaken considerable work along the Main Street this year with painting most of the buildings, including those that are unoccupied. The result is wonderful and we're delighted to report that your streetscape looks very presentable. Great to see new businesses opening in the village which will bring a vibrancy to your street. Hopefully in time this will include some entrepreneurs from the international community. We were also delighted to read that the local hotel has reopened. A business such as this is vital to a community for large social gatherings and events. St. Brigid's RC church with its wonderful exposed timber vaulted ceiling, Saint John's Cofl church, Saint Brigid's NS (old), Ballycastle Community Hall, etc add interest to your streetscape and completes its architectural merit. The Shambles area is very special and the work done a great celebration to past times. We love to see seats and picnic benches in villages and towns where people, including the passing motorists, can sit and relax for a while. We admire the cast iron water pump – we didn't test to see if it was in use but what a great way to have a Refill Station made in your village? Somethings for you to discuss with the Mayo Co Co area office. Great to see the local school children painting the fencing and also paint the mural on the low wall. What's happening with the old National School on the Main Street? This building, visible on the

streetscape, is on the RPS so we were delighted to see a contractor's firm signage in position. Don't forget to tell us about it next year.

Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:

Your Shambles area is quite beautiful as your green space as it is a walled green oasis where people come and relax. We admire the carefully located picnic benches you've provided here. We recommend that you prudently select signage and other items you might be tempted to position here in the future – clutter will make this space quite unpleasant. Ivy has grown over some of the existing displays – remove the ivy or remove the displays. We read that the space is used to hold community events at different times of the year and also as a performance space for musical events. We loved the Jack B Yeats reproduction on the wall with the information under. We admired the small woodland area at the rear of the church which you say 'is now creating a nice habitat for wildlife'. Storm Eowyn damaged some of your trees and you have replaced these on the R314. We were delighted to read that you check stakes and ties on the recently planted trees as often this is a job overlooked by Tidy Towns committees. You mentioned that you provide window boxes to residents but we saw very few so we wonder what happened this year? The little nature display – owls and hare/rabbit - is a bit of fun along the entrance to the national school, but it needs attention. Remember that planters and window boxes should be secondary to the planting so we think it's time for you to rethink the colours of these.

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

You tell us that due to the undulating landscape there is no intensive agriculture and so the land lies 'undisturbed, resulting in a variety of natural habitats such as blanket bog, mountain, lowland meadow, marsh, rocky shore, cliff, beach'. We visited the beautiful Ballycastle Beach, north of the village, with its great vistas across the surrounding countryside. We're delighted to see that you are aware of your area, what grows here and also what lives here in terms of birds and mammals. This information is crucial if you are to retain what you have and hopefully expand it. Do you engage with the local schools and share your information with the pupils? This is something that might interest the local school and you could lead a project for the teachers. Interesting reuse of the second world war, look out station – now a bird and whale watching area. We loved the photos of the pre-school children engaged with nature – planting seeds and examining wildflowers. As you have so much knowledge of nature, we suggest that perhaps it's time you shared it with the local community. We recommend that you lead a walk and point out aspects of the nature and biodiversity in your area. The mural of the sky, sun and wildflowers at the school was admired. The Bee Friendly Wildflower Patch was completely barren – did somebody spray here? Interesting to see Lamas in the middle of the village tell us about these next year.

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

Tidy towns committees are encouraged to try and prevent the generation of waste when carrying out their day-to-day activities. It is recommended that you get the basics right and focus on simple but effective measures. We read that the Ballycastle Community Garden has become a hub for the community and we were happy to read that there are talks on composting, natural pest control, and organic gardening methods for all to attend. In addition, there are beds producing a variety of vegetables - potatoes, brussels sprouts, cabbage, onions, garlic, leeks, etc. We commend those who instigated this garden. You planted 50 fruit/native trees throughout the village and on the main approach road from Ballina. This is the kind of action we commend. We're delighted to read that you engage with experts from the local authority who can assist you, both financially and also in terms of information delivery. You removed crocosmia from your planting bed and, yes, while some varieties of crocosmia are considered to be invasive (especially in the south west), generally the ones bought in garden centres 'behave'. You mentioned you planted wildflowers which we encourage. Hopefully you collected seed locally and propagated them in your polytunnel? Interesting to read about the Ballinglen Arts Foundation and its residency programme for artists. The three storey Ceide Coast Eco Campus was noted – good to see this in the village.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

Your village was extremely clean and tidy when we visited which is a commendation of how the villagers view your work. Compliments to the RSS and TUS team of workers and to you and your wonderful volunteers who walk the Main Street every morning to ensure it is clean and tidy. In addition to having your village to maintain litter free and tidy you also have, like all coastal communities, your beach area which accumulates litter, jetsam and flotsam. And we read that the volunteers have undertaken to keep Dún Briste area also litter free and tidy. We're delighted to read that these beach and Dún Briste clean-up days get additional volunteers as you advertise them in advance through local shops etc. We noted the photo of the volunteers manually removing grass from concrete kerbing at the road edge. This is the only way to make an area look good as with chemical weed removal the grass edge ends up being burnt and mucky. Please compliment them on this arduous but worthwhile task. We suggest the removal of the 'Social Distancing' sign on the Crossmolina Road – it is bleached and also partially hidden by the hedge growth. The 'Advice from the Ocean' sign is unpleasant and detracts for the boat nearby. It's a pity that some commercial entities etc. put signs along the entrance roads – ask them to remove them as they're unpleasant and are clutter. We suggest you do an audit of poles and signage in the village and on approach roads and have all damages, unnecessary, outdated, etc poles and signs removed.

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

The houses along the Main Street are single and two storey, interspersed with businesses, making an interesting streetscape in your village. You have worked hard this year on upgrading the buildings which is very noticeable and so the village presents well to the visitor. Unoccupancy and dereliction is difficult for all communities but having

these buildings painted and clean makes an enormous difference, so well done to all concerned. We hope that permission is given to you from the owners of the remaining derelict properties to repaint them which is for the benefit of the whole community. As with the Main Street single and two storey traditional houses are the predominant style of houses along the entrance roads where shrubs and colourful herbaceous borders were noted in many gardens. The small housing estate of Seafinn Way had well-kept houses and gardens and here too colourful flowers were noted. Suifinn Way housing estate was equally well maintained. It would be nice to get a more pleasant estate name sign for Suifinn Way. Perhaps a large rock with the name painted on it? We also visited the rental cottages (were these originally thatch?) on the entrance road from the south. The green would benefit from trees and perhaps the owner could be persuaded to allow the grass to grow for biodiversity – beautiful wildflower and grasses? The stone with the estate name Seaview Place needs to be cleaned – a stiff brush and soapy water will be sufficient.

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

We admired the entrances into the village with verge trimmed at the edge allowing the grass at the hedges to grow and produce the wonderful wildflowers we saw – oxeye daisy, foxglove, clover, meadow thistle etc. We loved to see that footpaths extended out beyond the village core making it safe for pedestrians and children on bikes along the busy regional roads. The build-outs and pedestrian crossing at the church make for a safe passage for the pedestrian on this busy road. We see that you have rumble strips at some of your road junctions. These help those who are visually impaired in addition to those in mobility scooters and those pushing buggies to cross the road and we congratulate Mayo Co Co for these. We await the dipped kerbs as this is better than a sloped triangle of tarmacadam, which presently exists. While we didn't get to walk the Sralagagh loop walk we were delighted to read of its existence. What a wonderful designated walk of 9.5km from the village through lanes and bog roads and across rivers, bogs and also through farmland and forests. A reason to return. Some of your pavements are in a bad state of disrepair. We suggest you undertake another audit of the village – this time of pavements, roads, road marking etc and give the list to the Area Office so that you are put on the works schedule.

Concluding Remarks:

We thoroughly enjoyed visiting your village ... but we have a few additional 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. Your new young PRO will help you do this.
- Please identify ONE project, and only ONE, where it requests you to 'Briefly identify ONE specific project' – you had a list of projects. One and only one is what's required in this section and the others are to be included in the relevant categories.
- We suggest you make a Five-Year Plan for your village with topics under each category – it needn't be long. Add the name of one committee member to lead/advance the project and put the names of collaborators after each activity/project as you'll need help with many of the projects - financial or otherwise.

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. It was a pleasure to return and adjudicate Ballycastle.