

Tidy Towns Competition 2025

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Castlebar - Caisleán an Bharraigh** Ref: **512**
County: **Mayo** Mark: **393**
Category: **F** Date(s): **11/07/2025**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2024	Mark Awarded 2025
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	80	56	58
Streetscape & Public Places	80	51	53
Green Spaces and Landscaping	80	52	55
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	55	45	48
Sustainability – Doing more with less	55	30	31
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	61	64
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	55	38	40
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	55	41	44
TOTAL MARK	550	374	393

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

Fáilte chuig Comórtas Bhailte Slachtmhara SuperValu 2025. Go raibh maith agaibh as bhur iarratas a chur isteach. Maith sibh don obair atá déanta agaibh in bhur cheantar go dtí seo - guímid gach rath oraibh i bhur dtionscadail amach anseo. Ádh mór.

Thank you for your entry form – a lot of time and effort went into collating the text, pictures and the design of this document. You outlined how you work with many community groups, schools and civic bodies to advance your aims. Numerous businesses have been very generous also to support your work, and testimonies were included from those very happy with your efforts. We particularly liked in your entry form the quotes from personnel e.g. Castlebar Celtic to The Gardening Club demonstrating the wider buy-in and appreciation for your initiatives.

Your entry also demonstrated a strong understanding of the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals and how your work on the ground advances these. You have a rolling long-term plan based around the eight adjudication categories of the competition. With a year to go, and most actions complete, you should consider setting up an on-line questionnaire to help form your next long-term plan.

You provide regular posts on your social media. Communication is important so you are applauded for sharing pictures to demonstrate your work. Overall, the entry promoted the strong pride and hard work of all across Castlebar. And how lovely that the final page of your submission had a picture of the 'Mammy' of your Group - Ann Cresham.

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

On a sunny day, every pod and table at Market Square was taken up by workers and visitors enjoying this refurbished public space. Throughout Castlebar there are numerous outdoor spaces and you have great connections to the wonderful settings in and around the town. Lough Lannagh was one of our first ports of call and the new skate park was admired. It is a blank canvas so maybe an outreach youth art project could be considered here.

The restoration of the period properties in the centre of Castlebar was notable and many looked very well including:

The Linenhall Arts Centre; the building housing the Chamber of Commerce; And Chambers House.

Patrick Fahey's lovely traditional business sign was being painted during adjudication. Cannon's Bar also looked

very well, as did both The Irish House Bar and Coxes Restaurant - both festooned with flowers. The buildings housing the banks on the Main Streets looked well. Fresh white paint at 'Blue Serenade' caught the eye and the traditional sign writing at the 'Fishing' shop was noted too. The raised planters packed with bee-friendly flowers at the Ivy Hotel nicely separated the pavement from its outdoor seating area. The attention to detail at John McHale's Public House on this junction looked well. Consideration of strategically placed buildings like this is important.

We were pleased to see notices on derelict/vacant properties on Ellison Street. But we were worried that these notices were nearly three years old and nothing seems to have advanced except for possible remedial works on the roof of one. The three properties listed looked particularly poor, especially in comparison to the beautifully presented buildings opposite and around the junction. The four-storey Georgian house, recently repainted facing The Mall is an impressive building. If you know of any grants for the owners of occupied period buildings can avail, do advise them.

Other buildings including the Council Offices, and the Court House were very well presented. Flags provided an international feel on Spencer Street, another attractive area of Castlebar.

There were some empty older properties around The Mall – do you know what % of upper floors are unoccupied in Castlebar? Have you tallied the number of empty properties in Castlebar?

Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:

The sustainable landscaping scheme advanced through Castlebar was delightful – the flower beds at The Mall were stunning. The diversity of pollinator-friendly flowers at the 1916 monument made for a lovely setting here. Well done on working with the Council on replacing the trees that had to be felled at The Mall.

The use of dry-stone walls as habitats, and the inclusion of pollinator-friendly flowers everywhere is applauded. We loved how discreet corners were transformed – such as the new stone flower bed at the entrance to the old Barracks. We had to google what this building was as we couldn't find any information at the gates.

25 different business premises have displayed hanging baskets outside of their premises – some already mentioned which combined makes for a great impact. We enjoyed the dedicated wall on Castle Street to your former volunteer – Marie Kelly Moore. Her short life is celebrated with 20+ wall-mounted flower baskets that looked lovely here. A dead tree at the top of this street was noted. As were some dead on the ring-road near the business park – could it be possible ash die-back?

The Town Park was another busy area and the tree planting at the far end was checked and trees were coming on well. The hillside was being left to regenerate here and at the entrance a new biodiversity area is being developed.

Outside of the town centre, the park amenities in and around Castlebar are lovely. The trail head information at Lough Lannagh and the management of the graveyard, playground and skatepark is nicely managed. Patches of grass are allowed to grow long to benefit pollinators. The mown grass could be allowed to be more diverse as cutting it less often allows for clover, self-heal, and other flowering plants to bloom. On this topic you have set aside a number of areas to specifically manage for wildlife across the town.

We checked the support straps on roadside trees as you go downhill beyond Thomas Street. We were pleased to see they had all been watered, and had fresh mulch at their base which is important.

We also loved the work of the younger members of your community in your landscaping activities – for example the pupils at Scoil Raifteirí helped plant bluebells near their school. Great colour was added to the outdoor benches at St Brid's sensory garden.

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

The main project on which you worked over the last 12 months was the "Bee-Kind" initiative. This saw an amazing 20 orchards each with at least five different heritage species of native fruit trees planted. Using heritage species supports our pollinators also.

Wildlife information at the trail head of Lough Lannagh was admired, and the tiered mowing regime indicated that the site was being managed. Walkin through the centre of Castlebar we were delighted to see and hear swifts screeching overhead.

An invasive species survey is planned for the town to outline ways to enhance appropriately and support the ecological balance of Castlebar.

What we liked on the streets, roads and lanes around Castlebar was that every little parking bay edge had flowers growing around it and it wasn't just tarmacked over. This was highlighted on the Main Street with signs indicating that this formed part of your 'bee-kind' project.

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

Schools and community groups have advanced many different sustainable projects and you have listed many examples in your entry form.

Your committee received a grant for a 'foamstream' machine which allows you to tackle weeds in an environmental manner. And it can be used on graffiti and helps with chewing gum removal too. It would be great to hear how easy and effective you find it.

It was great to see the rental lime bikes available - there were a lot of these around the Business Parks but none near the central car parks – otherwise we would have hopped onto one. They are great to easily, and cheaply, get around.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

One of the best ways to help our wildlife is to lift litter. You provided photos of the excellent work that you carry out on a regular basis to remove shopping trolleys and traffic cones from the river. And many more volunteers helped out on land with the annual Spring Clean. Your volunteers have adopted specific areas and maintained these. Others have tackled chewing gum or litter black spots. We were impressed with the photos showing how clean your pavements were after some power-washing.

Through the election you worked hard to keep Castlebar poster-free. This included a submission to the electoral commission asking for refundable poster deposits and designated post zones. What great ideas and we would love to know their response. Many other villages adjudicated had many cable ties on poles that were not removed. Re-usable cable ties are easily obtained and should be mandatory. Well done on this work.

Street bins were provided and were in use, including the excellent solar-powered compactor bins. One, outside Supermacs, was covered in various stickers, including vape stickers. You're proactive on graffiti, and just a little was observed at the M.U.G.A. in the Town Park.

Your proactive work on signage is applauded and few old or redundant signs were noted in Castlebar.

Turning right from Charles Street Lower on to Thomas Street is an issue as there is no road markings at the crossroads here – dangerous for non-locals trying to figure out priorities. Sewerage vent pipes were noted on the N5 that were rusty.

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

There are many new homes under construction, or old homes being renovated in Castlebar. Can you be credited with the latter as you have promoted the grants available to home owners for retrofit services? This is part of Castlebar's Sustainable Energy Community's action plan.

With new residents in the town have you considered how you will reach out and involve them in your work?

At the Turlough Road / Pontoon Road junction there are a lot of new apartments with electricity producing PV panels on the roof. This should save on their electricity costs. Can some swift nest boxes be incorporated into new buildings in the town?

Near the former Barracks, there was a line of terraced houses boarded up – are these due for renovation?

Great work was completed at Mons terrace to tackle weed growth. There were some lovely properties in Cois Abhainn with hanging baskets, planters and biodiversity areas. Wooden bollards, a nice entrance name plaque and even a sculpture of keys as you enter into this lovely estate all enhance this area. Well done on winning the overall estate competition for the town.

Leaving the Town Park, we crossed over to Springfield to enjoy the lovely landscaped beds outside the homes here - what a special area. The delicately drawn red-squirrel on the electricity box here was lovely.

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

A clean, welcoming first impression is your priority and has been a focus of your work this year. Your volunteers litter pick all along the N5 approach roads into Castlebar. We giggled to realise that the sculpture at the Duffy roundabout has to be polished to keep it looking so well – that is a lot of elbow action! Fair play to your volunteers. Photos provided some a lot of great improvements as a result of your hard work.

We applaud the work on key focal points within in Castlebar. For example, driving past the Theatre Royal and descending towards The Mall there is a wonderfully placed flower bed.

The premises at the Business Parks looked well – though we would discourage the planting of cherry laurel as it offers nothing for wildlife. Perhaps you can advise local businesses on suitable alternatives? Most trees here looked well though a couple have died (ash die-back?) and should be replaced.

Could the cycle lane on Turlough Road have bollards provided to separate and provide some extra safety for cyclists from passing motor vehicles. This might encourage people to use bikes more as they are located some distance from the town centre.

Despite extensive damage from Storm Eowyn your volunteers and colleagues quickly opened up the Greenway Routes, and collated logs and sticks to create new habitats for insects.

Finally, you blitzed Station, Ballinrobe, Westport and Newport Roads with litter and weeding activities. Your volunteers have clocked up a lot of steps on their area. This is an impressive list of actions for this category of the competition.

Concluding Remarks:

For over 30 years you have been involved with this national competition driving change across the community. And what a community you have – their dedication and hard work was very evident in your submission, and also whilst we explored Castlebar.

The stats in your entry form were impressive – 20 orchards; 60 community groups planting trees; 1200 entries in your anti-litter poster competition; 105 housing estate visited for your Housing Estates competition to name a few.

As quoted in your entry form - "Little by little, a little becomes a lot" and well done to Castlebar as collectively a lot has been advanced over the last 12 months. Great work.