

Tidy Towns Competition 2025

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Charlestown - Baile Chathail** Ref: **856**
County: **Mayo** Mark: **246**
Category: **C** Date(s): **16/06/2025**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2024	Mark Awarded 2025
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	80	38	39
Streetscape & Public Places	80	34	36
Green Spaces and Landscaping	80	30	32
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	55	16	18
Sustainability – Doing more with less	55	20	21
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	43	45
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	55	26	27
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	55	27	28
TOTAL MARK	550	234	246

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, which contained a map, and photos of some of your projects. Your committee of four is joined by a further 5 when additional help is needed. We'd hope that in a town as big as Charlestown you will succeed in recruiting others. Put up notices in the local grocery stores about a specific event /project, as often people don't want to volunteer on a regular basis but are happy to help out every now and again. You could also approach people who've recently moved into the town, and who want to become involved in the community but don't want to join a sporting group. We visited charlestown.ie – there's nothing about your Tidy Towns group or your activities on this website. We recommend that you start a Charlestown Tidy Towns Facebook page and post photos of community events, flowers, views of aspects of the town, bees /butterflies/insects, volunteers engaged in litter pick-ups, etc. etc. There should be at least one posting every week and that will see people engaging with your group. We suggest you ask a youth in the town to take on the role of PRO. PRO for Charlestown Tidy Towns will look good on their C.V. Good that you're involved with state, semi-state and other voluntary organisations but don't forget to approach the business and commercial community who may have ideas /offer financial assistance. We're delighted to read that you re-entered the Tidy Towns competition in 2023 having been absent for a few years. We have no doubt that your participation has strengthened the community and has encouraged all to take a pride in where they live. Hopefully the reports have been helpful and given you direction for your work and ideas for future projects to undertake for the improvement of the town. Well done and keep up the good work.

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

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

The street layout and variety of architectural styles gives Charlestown its unique character. We admire that residences and businesses are juxtapositioned along your streets giving the town a vibrancy both in the day and at night. Add to these the RC church of Saint James, Charlestown Town Hall, St Joseph's Community School, St. Attracta's NS, etc. to complete the architectural interest and merit of the town. We loved that your shops have good window displays which gives interest to those walking in the evening and facilitating them to window shop. Great to read of the success of your approach to Mayo Co Co which resulted with Charlestown Town Hall Arts Centre and Library opening as a Community Centre. You had considerable amount of work to undertake to reopen the building. This work is ongoing, with hopefully there's an end in sight for you. The photo of the Christmas lights in the centre of

the town looked good and we have no doubt that the brightness of the centre brought much joy to all and hopefully increased business for the town's commercial properties. A competition for 'Best Christmas Shop Front' sounds great – there's nothing like a little friendly competition. An awards ceremony where all are invited, including the local elected public representatives and local press, will give you additional exposure and possibly increase your membership! We admired the sculpture in the grounds of the Fire Station. The roadside boundary of the church was beautifully presented, grey walls topped by silver wrought iron railings. We also admired the flat iron gate painted in primary colours near the outdoor pool – but remove the weed growth which is now encroaching on it. The outdoor pool was visited and from outside the white walls capped in blue, we could hear children's voices and the splashing of water – children having fun. We visited the GAA grounds, with Health Quatres Gym etc. Here too we see the Men's Shed is located – it was closed when we were there. Please commend the businesses who presented well and made you streetscape appealing – e.g. Murray's Bar, J. J Finan, etc. We noted the fountain at the junction of the N17 and L8941 was not in use. The structure is quite beautiful and is an important feature of the streetscape. It was a pity to see it in this state without water - is there a problem? Please congratulate the Foróige youth on the 'Love where we Live' mural. There are other walls around Charlestown which would benefit from the application of murals to brighten the areas. Hopefully this mural is one of many which the Foróige youth will undertake. Just to counsel you that seats, bins, poles etc. are subsidiary items in the streetscape so painting them a bright vibrant colour is not advised.

Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:

The Town Park is quite beautiful. Here we saw some wonderful mature trees giving shade to humans and nesting and roosting sites for birds. We admired the playground surrounded by the simple railings making it safe for small children to play. The Foróige mural is an important feature at the entrance. Please ask those who take care of the park to stop using chemical weed control at the junction of grass and paths and at the base of trees as now the grass is completely burnt and the borders mucky and unpleasant. Unfortunately this will take a few years to grow back and look acceptable. The planting bed at the Community Centre was buzzing with insects when we visited which was a delight to see. Trim the grass around this building and remove the growth that's encroaching on the surrounding path. We're delighted to see trees along your wide streetscape. Trees are known to have a positive impact on mental health and wellbeing. By planting and caring for trees, you help reduce pollution, improve your surroundings, improve the appearance of your community and increase the value of your property. In addition, they provide shade for humans, food for insects and food roosting sites and nesting sites for birds. We suggest you do an audit of the town and see where there are other areas along the streetscape where trees could be added. There were some planters along the streetscape which were void of planting, including those on the bridge – these should all be removed. Good to see that you asked a local garden centre for advice on planting and landscaping management. Also approach the landscape /horticulture section of Mayo Co Co ... if they have one (Westport we feel must have one). We love that you decided to concentrate on large planters which add focus/drama to the streetscape. This is much better than a myriad of small insignificant planters which truthfully are a nuisance for pedestrians, those with mobility issues and those pushing buggies.

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

The river in the centre of the town is very pleasant and we loved that a walkway is being developed which will give a new trail. Good that you're taking time to develop this and we advise that you get professional advice on the best way to do this so as not to cause damage to the existing natural habitats. We read that you intend installing information boards. Remember signage is clutter which detracts from the landscape. Carefully select a location for the boards, group them together for less clutter and only install boards which are relevant to this area and not generic ones that we regularly see. The aim of this category is to encourage people to recognise, engage and celebrate the biodiversity and the richness of the wildlife habitats in their surroundings. So we're happy to see that this is the approach you're taking – learn about what you have in your area and then share it with the community. We admired that the grass area in the GAA grounds not required for play has been allowed to grow and has a great variety of wildflowers which had butterflies and bees visiting when we were there. There are many other activities you could undertake which aren't too difficult to do – you could organise a bat walk (contact Bat Conservation Ireland who'll advise you), organise a nature walk in the town park (contact the NPWS or Mayo Co Co who can give you advice on someone to lead the walk). At some stage, in the future, you can prepare a Biodiversity Plan for Charlestown. Again, ask Mayo Co Co environmental officer for help. Just a small Biodiversity Plan is all that's needed – enough to inform you of what you have locally and how to protect it / nurture it. Knowledge of your area and promoting this knowledge to the local population and passing visitor are the key components of this category. Visit the National Biodiversity website and examine the booklet 'Local Communities: Actions to help Pollinators' and put a list of the plants which are good for our pollinators on your new Facebook page. The Heritage Council (2004) 'Conserving and Enhancing Wildlife in Towns and Villages – a guide for local community groups' is also a good guide and may offer some ideas.

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

In this category Tidy Towns groups are asked to prevent the generation of waste when carrying out their day-to-day activities and to lead the community by example. In addition, see what others in the community are doing, both businesses and individuals, to reduce waste and save on water, energy and transport. We visited the Charlestown Organic Community Gardens but unfortunately it was locked so it was only viewed from outside the gate. The mural on the wall quite beautiful - butterflies, flowers, vegetables etc. We saw the raised beds, polytunnel, water harvesters, cloches, picnic bench etc. It's good to see it being well used. Tell us more about this next year – how big is the area, how many residents have raised beds here, where is the compost area, when is it open, do you swap plants and harvest products etc etc? You mention St. Josephs Community school – have one class got raised beds

which they're in charge of? We saw the EV charging point but we feel in a town as big as Charlestown that there should be more. Is it planned to install more? The recycling banks were visited – neat and tidy. We admired 'Sew Bazaar' offering 'Alterations' to your community. Are there other repair services on offer in Charlestown? We suggest you make a list 'Charlestown – where can I repair it?' and make this available to your community and visitors. It would be an invaluable document in this era of a disposable society. Another item to be posted on your Facebook page. We noted the cast iron water pump painted yellow beside the church. Is it possible to connect this to the water supply so that it can be used to refill water bottles for those using your walkways?

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

We assume that like most Tidy Towns committees you took part in the An Taisce annual Spring Clean-Up event. Generally this begins the main work of the volunteers and it helps to motivate the community to be vigilant on litter, weed growth, fly-tipping and tidiness. When we visited Charlestown was virtually litter and weed free so compliments to your volunteers. You focus on certain areas in the town which tend to collect litter and fly-tipping – the children's playground and the recycling bin area. When we visited both areas were litter free so compliments to your volunteers. Interesting that the TY students did an audit on the town pinpointing litter black-spots and that they now focus on making these areas litter free. We're delighted to read that you are also assisted in the litter-pick by Foróige, as helping at their stage in life, will give them an appreciation of the work involved in keeping the streetscape neat and tidy, and will encourage them to dispose of their litter correctly. We noted quite a number of signs on poles around the town including dog litter signs. Signage is clutter and you should try to avoid installing them. We recommend that you paint 'Clean up after you Dog' on pavements where dog fouling is a problem. We've been told by other communities that this works better than signage. It's now accepted for dog waste – 'any bag, any bin' so we recommend that you take this on board. The paint on a number of street bollards was chipped and they are in need of repainting. While the recycling bins were neat and tidy when we visited, the large sign needs to be repositioned (or removed). Is it needed? We see that while utilities have been put underground in some areas around the town, this has yet to be undertaken in quite a few other areas. When this has been completed it will make a huge improvement to the beauty of the streetscape. Make enquiries as to when this work will be undertaken and tell us next year. The Picker Pals programme is great for young children and having the local national school involved is commendable. Good to read that you have seen a positive impact on the community as a result of the implementation of this programme.

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

There are quite a number of residents living along your main streets and on the approach roads in house that are interspersed between business premises. These residences are accessed directly from the pavement and are primarily vernacular single or two storey. We loved that there is such a variety of designs and features which ensures the houses make an impact on the streetscape. Some of these residences had been freshly painted and presented well, and a few had colourful plants and flowers in window boxes which added to the attractiveness of the streetscape. We read that you have encouraged and worked with these residents to keep facades 'clean and painted in good order'. Unoccupancy and dereliction exists but truthfully, we've seen worse in towns of a similar size. All you can do is ask the owners to maintain them or ask permission to paint them so that they don't detract from the streetscape. If all fails, approach Mayo Co Co to issue derelict sites notices. The entrance to Lavey Manor looks good. We suggest that the name of the estate be put on the piers rather than the on the little stone where it is at present – this will make more of an impact. We also recommend stone-surround planting beds be installed on the communal open space rather than the ones which presently exist – less maintenance and flowering shrubs in addition to pollinator friendly flowers can be planted. Here in addition to planters etc some of the residents had planted trees which added to the beauty of the area. Many of the residents of Kilbeagh Village residents had made great efforts to present their properties – freshly painted facades and colourful window boxes and planters which added to the streetscape. Building work is ongoing in this area. We also admired the estates of Parkview and The Fairgreens where we saw well maintained houses and neatly kept communal green spaces with mature trees. We recommend that areas in communal green spaces in the housing estates which are not needed for play, be allowed to grow and produce wildflowers and grasses. Passages could be cut through for running paths/labyrinths etc. for young children. In addition, seating should be added to allow parents to sit and supervise children at play or to allow youths of the estate to gather and chat in safety. Have you an estates competition? Nothing like some friendly competition.

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

Located primarily in County Mayo, a small proportion of your town is also in County Sligo. We entered from the east along the L1331. While the N17 still passes through the town, being by-passed by the N5 has greatly improved the quality and safety of your streets and lanes. Your streets are extremely wide with parallel parking on both sides. We feel that the streets could be made narrower and more space given to the pedestrians by making footpaths wider - but perhaps this will happen if/when a Town Enhancement Layout is undertaken by Mayo Co Co. We read that the Tidy Towns committee along with the CE Scheme tidy and maintain all approach roads to the town. You have quite a number so this task is on-going. Excellent that the Foróige club also organise litter picks to ensure the approach roads are clean and clear of litter. The Charlestown Community Walkway which ensures safe walking access between the National School, Swimming Pool, GAA pitch and the East Mayo Athletics Track is a great asset to the town. In addition, it is a scenic, tranquil route which is enjoyed by evening strollers and we read you are committed to maintaining this in the best possible manner. We read elsewhere that you have a children's buried ground amongst your historical sites. Something for you to research? We noted dropped kerbs in a large number of locations; good to see these, as they give those with mobility issues, small children on bicycles and those pushing buggies a safer and easier way to cross a road. Good to also see pedestrian crossings. There's probably need for

one or two more on the wide streets.

Concluding Remarks:

We thoroughly enjoyed visiting your village ... in addition to the above we have a few extra suggestions for 2026.

- You will have seen in the Tidy Town's application form we request applicants to number their projects as, new projects (N), or improved/maintained projects (M). You are to give each action/project a number as New (N1, N2, N3 etc.) or Maintained (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. This is to help the adjudicators to negotiate their way around your town and see the various projects or locations of projects. Please also provide a Legend with your map which will greatly assist future adjudicators.

- Insert the photos into the application form under the appropriate category – another job for your new young PRO.

- We recommend that you make a 5-Year Plan listing activities/projects under the heading of the Tidy Towns Form. Just add one or two actions /projects under each category. No need to make it too onerous; just what you feel you can deliver. Add the names of collaborators who will help you e.g. Mayo Co. Co., National School, Foróige, shops etc. Also add the name of one committee member to lead/advance the project as this will divide the workload more fairly. Put a tick after the activity annually, to say if it has been delivered or if it is on-going.

- ALL FUTURE PROJECTS will be in your plan. When they have been completed, then, and only then, will you include them in your Application Form, and then as a NEW project.

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 visit and adjudicate Charlestown which we hadn't visited since it was by-passed. Great to see the improvements and please keep up the good work which is reaping its just rewards.