

Tidy Towns Competition 2025

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Lahardane - Leathardán** Ref: **928**
County: **Mayo** Mark: **236**
Category: **B** Date(s): **13/06/2025**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2025
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	80	30
Streetscape & Public Places	80	29
Green Spaces and Landscaping	80	31
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	55	22
Sustainability – Doing more with less	55	22
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	48
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	55	27
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	55	27
TOTAL MARK	550	236

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 your detailed hand drawn map with projects clearly indicated/numbered. We LOVE to see new Tidy Towns committees enter the competition so you are very welcome. We hope this report will encourage you to make some small improvements to your village and that you enter every year from now on. You are a small committee (but that's ok) and you have succeeded in getting ten members as volunteers which is commendable. Good to see that you make contact with Mayo Co Co as you'll need help with projects/ improvements. So also have support from local businesses which will also be needed. We suggest you make contact with other voluntary groups and also the school in Lahardane as these too will be of assistance in due course. Facebook and Instagram are a wonderful way of getting your message and showing photos to the community, so we encourage you to open these accounts. Get a youth to do it if you don't know how – PRO for Lahardane Tidy Towns will look good on their C.V. Good to read that you have completed a Futures Program with the community and we look forward to reading about these projects in years to come. We hope in time you will see a new spirit of community involvement in addition to an improvement in the village due to your participation in this competition. Best of luck going forward.

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

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

The village is dispersed along the R315 with residences and businesses located side by side. St. Patrick's RC church was well presented with its freshly painted boundary wall and well-maintained surrounds. We love the seating outside the shops. It's always good to see seating provided for the public where they can meet. The pump area is very pleasant and we love the red and green paintwork. While we see that Nephin spring water is available in the well beside it, we feel it would be lovely to connect the pump to the Nephin water as a testament to your heritage. Please compliment the business premises on their presentation, with freshly painted facades, window boxes, hanging baskets and planters. We particularly admired Leonards public house, and its presence on the streetscape makes quite an impact. We also admired their discreet signage. Your Community Center is well used by all for social events, sporting days, and drama. It's good that walkers can use the car park when they go to walk the Nephin mountain or your looped walks. We suggest some trees could be planted in the carpark which would add to the streetscape. While we admired the Nephin Whiskey signage and read about the history of whiskey, the sign and timber surrounds are in need of cleaning and repair and it should be upgraded or removed as it as it makes quite a large impact on the streetscape.

Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:

The Addergoole Titanic Memorial Park, which at Christmas time is home to your life-sized crib, is beautiful. While it's sad to read the names of all those from the locality who perished on the Titanic, this park is also a celebration of their lives. We love the simplicity of the park and encourage you to keep it this way and not to install clutter which communities are often tempted to do. The grass, seating, sculptures, stone structures, and signage is perfect at present. Compliments to all who were involved in this project. We read that you have a memorial service and annual bell ringing ceremony in their memory. Your old graveyard brought back to life by volunteers was quite beautiful we see that the annual Easter dawn mass is celebrated there. We love when seating is installed, and especially when the locations are carefully chosen, so that it will be used. We admired the planting in the stone surround planting bed at the 1798 memorial. The roses were in full bloom and the lower pollinator friendly flowers added to the beauty of this planting bed. You have a great number of trees around the village including those in the church grounds which are quite mature and beautiful. We noted a large number of planters along the streetscape and in housing estates. While it's interesting to see the half-barred planters coinciding with the development of Nephin whiskey, there's a stage when there's too many. We recommend that it is better to build stone surround permanent planting beds and to cut down on small individual pots/planters. These will take less maintenance and give you time to undertake other projects. They also use less water which benefits our planet. And remember the best plant containers are those which are concealed by the plants. We recommend that in addition to the summer and winter plants you also include some trailing plants.

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

With the wonderful Nephin mountain and Lough Conn on your doorstep, and all they have to offer, in addition to your hedgerows, stone walls, peatlands and mature trees you have a great variety of habitats and feeding sites for birds, insects and mammals. The hedge rows along the entrance roads were very colourful with a variety of wildflowers in bloom and were buzzing with insect life – honeysuckle, foxglove, ox-eyed daisies, etc. all in bloom. Focusing on pollinator friendly planting is admirable and we love to read that communities are aware of the importance of this. We're delighted to see that you're in contact with Mayo County Council horticulturist who advises you on suitable pollinator friendly planting for your area. Have a look at National Biodiversity Website for documents on Biodiversity Actions for Community Groups. We read that you have reduced grass cutting in the green areas of the village which will encourage wildflowers and wild grasses to grow in addition to being food for insects and birds and ground cover for small mammals. We're delighted to read about your local beekeeper and we read that he gives demonstrations and talks about beekeeping. Is the honey available to purchase in the local shops? Remember when you planting the wildflower garden it's best to collect wildflower seeds growing locally as these have the best chance of survival.

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

Many Tidy Towns groups struggle with this category but it is about looking at how the community as a whole can reduce waste and save on water, energy and transport. As a committee starting off, it is recommended that you get the basics right and focus on simple but effective measures. For example, you could make your own compost for use in your landscaping schemes as this avoids all of the associated packaging and other waste that comes with shop bought fertilisers. Growing your own pollinator friendly plants, harvesting your own seeds or sourcing donations of plants from keen local gardeners is recommended as this also avoids the waste associated with shop bought varieties. Consider harvesting rainwater in order to avoid using treated water when maintaining your planters. We were happy to read that you assisted the local GAA club with their recycling evening where football gear and boots were distributed free to younger members. These would otherwise have gone to landfill which would be a pity. Good that your community had the natural spring Nephin water available in the aftermath of storm Eowyn. Hopefully we'll be better prepared for the next storm. We read that the National School takes part in the An Taisce Green Flag program and has been awarded 5 green flags – it would have been nice to see them displayed. Great to see that a local link bus passes through the village three times daily giving the community the opportunity to travel sustainably to Castlebar, Crossmolina and Ballina. It will be good if you can set up a deposit return scheme for people to donate bottles and cans and the return fees then put to community uses. We see the proposed Community Garden Space beside the National School behind the green mesh fencing. This is ideal and hopefully it will be well used. There are lots of further ideas for this category in the Tidy Towns Handbook. <https://www.tidytowns.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Sustainability-Doing-More-with-less.pdf>. The platform, ChangeX is an excellent source of inspiration and also at times a source of funding. <https://www.changex.org/>.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

Like other villages and towns in Mayo we see that you took part in the annual An Taisce Spring Clean. This is wonderful for a community as it shows all the need for vigilance with litter, illegal dumping and weed control. The Foróige club and National School also helped in this annual spring clean event. Compliments to all. While the village was almost litter free there was a small amount of weed growth noted which was a pity. We see you have a weekly Wednesday morning litter pick. Remember to ask the volunteers to bring a hoe/spade and stiff brush with them and to also remove weed growth. We also noted some empty poles and unnecessary signage along your streetscape, some out of date. If you feel signage is a problem request Mayo County Council to erect community notice boards on the entrances to your village and there all community notices are erected and removed when the event is over. We read that all of the grass cutting, weeding and watering is now done by volunteers; we commend them for their commitment and for their hard work. We saw ivy growing on some of your stone structures including the ruins of the church in the graveyard. Ivy should not be allowed to grow on stone structures as the roots penetrate between the joints making the walls unstable and leading to their collapse. We're aware that ivy is wonderful for nature, but

natural stone constructions are in themselves great habitats for insect life and also very beautiful in the streetscape. Cut the ivy at the base and when the stems and leaves are dead carefully removed them. Get advice on the safe removal of ivy from the church and other protected structures or from National Monuments (contact www.archaeology.ie). We noted that chemical weed control had been used around trees and at the edges of the grass along the approach roads. Please advise those who are doing this that it is unacceptable. We see you have erected dog litter signs. Remember that signage is clutter and should be used sparingly. We suggest that you paint 'Clean up after your Dog' signs on the pavement/road where this is a problem. We've been told this works much better than signage and it's also less obtrusive. We noted the new litter bins around the village. If little bins exist people will use them and so the village will be cleaner.

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

The main housing for Lahardane is along the R315 and here we saw that the properties that are occupied presented well in the streetscape. Here too we noted quite a number of large unoccupied and derelict properties. While we note you have no control over these properties it would benefit the streetscape if the boundary walls could be painted and weed growth removed. We wish you well as you advance this situation. Close to the village are houses on individual sites and here there were gardens with herbaceous borders, shrubs and mature trees. We also noted some vegetable patches, fruit bushes and fruit trees in some gardens. We're delighted to read that your housing estates have Residents' Associations. You might advise them on the presentation of the communal spaces and entrance roads. Most of the communal areas would benefit from a coppice or two of trees in areas not required for ball play. We also suggest a picnic bench or some seats where not only elderly residents can sit but also the youth can meet. We loved the mature trees in the center of the communal green space of Lough Conn Drive. We noted that some residents in the various housing estates had made enormous efforts to present their properties. They had wonderful displays of pollinator friendly planting intermingled with evergreen shrubs and specimen trees. We commend them for their work which benefits our pollinators and also benefits the community as a whole. Single and two storey traditional houses are the predominant style of houses along the road. Some of these were farm houses with well-kept farmyards surrounded by vernacular outbuildings and modern sheds. Some had well-built stone walls as roadside boundaries while others had neatly trimmed hedges.

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

An interesting name on approach road from the south which joins R315 - the Windy Gap – which was our approach to your village. We admired the village signage on your approach roads giving the name of the village and also referencing that it is Ireland's Titanic village. Trim back hedge growth etc. which at present obstructs some of the speed signs. We suggest that you trim a tightly mown narrow strip along the outer edge of the grass margin on all approach roads between the village name signs and the village. This will alert motorists that they are entering a settlement and so need to reduce speed. It will also show that the wilderness behind is deliberate to allow wildflowers and grasses to grow. There's no need to erect signs stating this. We noted that there is a footpath from the village to the National School allowing children and their parents safe access on foot. The rumble strips and dipped kerbs at some road junctions which benefit those with mobility scooters, small children on bicycles, or those pushing buggies were also good to see. We admired the signage informing the visitor of your looped walking trails varying in length from 4 kms to 8.6 kms. Unfortunately, we hadn't time to walk any. On a busy road a pedestrian crossing is important and the one at Titanic Memorial Park is ideally located in the centre of the village. We noted a few new footpaths and suggest that in the gravel areas you could plant pollinator friendly ground cover which would add to the streetscape. While the center road marking along the R315 is clear the edge markings showing the road width needs to be refreshed along the length of the village.

Concluding Remarks:

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

- The Application Form can be filled out on-line which would allow you to add some photos into the various categories so that we can see before and after photos of projects, community activities in the village e.g. Halloween nights, turning on the Christmas lights, ICA craft makers, talks given by an expert etc. Another job for your new PRO.
- Add projects in the form of bullet points – it's easier for the adjudicators to read and also cuts down on unnecessary information.
- While this year all your projects are NEW next year some will be New and some Maintained. So next year, and from then on, 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 your map – N1, N2, N3 etc and M1, M2, M3 etc.
- At some stage (in the next year or so) make a Five-Year Plan with topics/projects under each category – don't make it too onerous, just what you can achieve. Put the name of a committee member or volunteer after each project who will lead/advance the project and also the name(s) of collaborators (e.g. Mayo Co. Co., BirdWatch Ireland etc) as you'll need help to implement some of the projects. Do this in Excel instead of Word as the Plan will need columns. Every year you can then add a tick after the activity/project if it has been undertaken or completed.

We wish to state that this is not a criticism of your work ... just a few suggestions.

You are very welcome to the SuperValu Tidy Towns competition. It was a pleasure to visit and adjudicate Lahardane and we hope you find this report helpful. Looking forward to visiting again in the future.

