

Tidy Towns Competition 2025

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Louisburgh - Cluain Cearbán** Ref: **564**
County: **Mayo** Mark: **359**
Category: **B** Date(s): **17/06/2024**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2024	Mark Awarded 2025
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	80	55	56
Streetscape & Public Places	80	50	52
Green Spaces and Landscaping	80	44	46
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	55	37	39
Sustainability – Doing more with less	55	23	26
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	65	67
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	55	34	35
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	55	37	38
TOTAL MARK	550	345	359

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 hand drawn map with projects numbered. Similar to last year's adjudicators we advise that you split your map into 2 maps next year with one for the village centre and one for the wider area. Please also put the legend on the same page as the map to help the adjudicator. You also need to take a little more care in the lettering as even when we enlarged it, we found some words and numbers difficult to read. Your committee of six has the help of an additional two to four volunteers when jobs need extra hands. We appreciate it's difficult to get volunteers but we feel that with a population of 755 there should be more who are willing to become volunteers. Perhaps engage with the schools or GAA and see if they could help? Your Facebook page with 845 followers shows the various activities/projects you undertake. Engaging with state, and semi-state bodies is commendable but we suggest that you also approach businesses and other community groups who could be collaborators for your activities/projects or who could give financial assistance or advice. You have entered the Tidy Towns competition for 20 years which is a superb achievement and we commend you for this. You are a small dedicated committee and your voluntary involvement has contributed to advanced your village and make it a better place for all – residents and visitors.

See Concluding Remarks for additional advice.

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

What a beautiful street layout you have. Four roads joining in a raised central, octagonal shaped, Square defines this planned village. We love that the buildings at this cross roads were designed at an angle to form this strong central space. The layout of village main streets is of terraced dense plot arrangements with two storey vernacular structures. These have access directly onto the pavements and consist of residences interspersed by business and commercial units. Buildings which add interest are St Patrick's RC Church, the Granuaile and Library in St. Catherine's Cofl Church, the old convent, the Garda barracks and the old Glebe all of which make pleasing visual statements in a rural village street scene. You also have the well-maintained Sancta Maria Secondary School and Louisburgh N.S. We admired the weighbridge in the central square which is part of your industrial heritage. The grotto with its recently painted blue steps and plinth and colourful floral display presented well in the streetscape. Please compliments the businesses who had made such an effort to present their properties either by freshly painting them, or providing colourful floral window boxes or planters etc – e.g. S.M.C Creative Centre, A. Gaffney, Sea Gog Store, Flower Shop, art at One and Books at One (the seat and mural are wonderful), Staunton's

Pharmacy, TIA etc. Great to see an all-weather surface in the National School and we admired the silhouettes of the children in sport on the wall. We had a wander around and also admired the murals in the recesses. We see you didn't get to paint the street lamps.... Hopefully you'll have it completed for next year. The benches in the centre looked good. We love to see benches provided but it's important that they be provided in places where it's pleasant to sit.

Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:

Your wonderful Scott's Island is a jewel in the crown for you. This oasis of green on the bank of the unspoilt wide Bunowen river is beautiful. We loved that you have dotted picnic benches here and the little bridges across the channel offshoot stream are wonderful. What a great idea for the bare root tree offer and you tell us that bundles of 30-40 were readily 'snapped up'. Ask those who took them and planted them to give you photos and add them to the Application Form next year. CALL have also planted over 43 acres of native trees – wonderful in such a windswept area and we hope this is a successful project for them. Again, update us on this project next year. Let us know of the success of these – take some photos for next year. Compliment to the Men's Shed on the containers for your street planters. Nice to see collaboration between voluntary groups. We admired the timber surround planting bed and cart near the medical centre and also on the Leenane road (pale blue picnic seat a different colour). The colourful floral displays of petunias along the streetscape looked good but remember they are not a top choice for our pollinators. We suggest the three-tiered planter at the grotto be located elsewhere as it's not needed here. The GAA pitch was busy. We visited Carrowmore beach - great facilities are now available in this beautiful area. It'd be good if all the picnic benches blended into beautiful natural surroundings i.e. ask Mayo Co Co to remove the gaudy blue and stainless steel one which is TOTALLY unsuitable here. It would be interesting to find out who thought it was! We suggest paths be just cut to the various picnic benches etc. and the remainder of the grass be allowed to grow long for wildflowers and grasses.

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

Like most Mayo villages you have dry-stone walls, hedgerows, and trees, but in addition you have peatlands, rivers and of course the beautiful beach and harbour area, all of which are habitats and food sources for birds, insects and mammals. We admired that areas in the Santa Maria college grounds were left unmown to allow wildflowers and grasses to grow. Bird feeder tables and bird boxes were noted at the National School – have they had any takers for the bird nesting boxes? We suggest the bird feeders are too close so if the nest boxes haven't been used just move the feeders. Is there any update on the baseline study of the Carrowniskey and Ballyhip rivers? We looked for project 12 on the map. This sounds like a great project. While you mentioned the names we'd need the locations. Next year let us know where the four native woodland areas are located. We'd be interested to see how they are growing, being maintained etc. Nice to read that the Corncrake has been seen/heard. We read about the six-year funded LIFE on Machair project and saw the various Natura 2000 sites. The land around the estuary of the Carrowniskey river is a site for nesting Dunlins, which is quite special. Please keep us updated on this and on the talks attended by the community

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

You mention that you have people who have skills in terms of repairing items but couldn't organise a workshop which was a pity. We tried to download your Louisburgh Locality Repair Directory but it wasn't available on the CALL website. We suggest this could be expanded to 'Louisburgh – where can I FIND it and where can I FIX it?'. In this document you could list local producers/crafts people/businesses etc. and also those who repair items. A very useful document for those living permanently in Louisburgh and also for the visiting holiday makers. We read that clearing the site where your polytunnel is located was a major project for you following the damage caused by Storm Eowyn. We visited it and were happy to see that it is now ready to have new potting etc. undertaken. You have a large Community Garden which was full of vegetables etc growing in raised beds. The Louisburgh Growers save seeds, swap plant and share the harvest. We admired that their polytunnel has 'new little seedling on offer' to bring home and plant. Home grow vegetables are needless to say sustainable, taste better, pesticide and fungicide free, more nutritional, etc. In addition, we have less food waste with home grown as we only pick what we need that day. Good to read about Louisburgh Free Market, which now has 700 participants, where unwanted goods find new homes and new uses. What a lovely idea 'Gift Exchange' where the community drop off an unwanted item, get a ticket and then pick up an item the next day. The date in January is perfect as it follows unwanted Christmas Gifts which will suit someone else. Great to see the electric charge point. We spotted one but are there more?

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

We read that you took part in the annual An Taisce Spring Clean Days on 5th April (Facebook page). We love to see committees and volunteers taking part, as with the high-viz jackets, the whole community become alerted to the need to be attentive to litter, weed growth and fly-tipping. This year you had over fifty volunteers in addition to the Foróige group. Compliments to all who took part. When we visited the village was virtually litter free and weed growth along the main streets was minimum so the village presented neat and tidy. We also noted the ladies on your Facebook page manually removing the weeds from the Square and when we visited, the next day, we were delighted to see the results of their hard work. Well done ladies! Carrowmore beach is very beautiful but the entrance is completely cluttered in signage which detracts from its beauty. Remove any duplicates and group the others together in some orderly fashion to improve the area. You'll need help from Mayo Co Co etc. to do this but it will be worth it. The Carrowmore Toy Library needs attention. We love to read that school children take part in litter pick-up and both Killeen and Louisburgh Schools have a Pick-a-Patch scheme that encourages the collection of litter in their areas.

We read your volunteers are also involved in Clean Coasts with several volunteers daily clearing the local beaches

of Old Head and Carrowmore. At weekends, they clean Emlagh, and Carrownisky. Litter, jetsam and flotsam are a regular problem for coastal communities so we commend your volunteers

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

We loved the tightness of the centre of the village with houses and businesses sitting side by side. These vernacular, primarily two storey structures vary in height and plot sizes adding to the interest of the streets. Many of the houses had been freshly painted and presented well. We loved that shops which have been converted to residences still retain their fascia and names. These are part of your social history so we ask that you encourage developers/home owners to continue this trend. We particularly admired Uí Dufaigh, J.Morrison, R.Lyons, and the three bay two storey grey one with the name removed – hopefully the name will be replaced. We were surprised at the number of housing estates on the approach roads to your village. Some of these had modern houses set on detached sites with hedging as boundaries. Many had been freshly painted and some had floral arrangements - The Chimes, Beeches (remove the ivy from the pier as it will shortly obscure the name), Cluain Craobh, Árd Caher, Knocknashee, The Glebe (pick out the names in white for the last two to make it easier to see) etc. We assume that a large proportion are holiday homes and so maintenance of the garden is not a priority when the occupants/renters visit. We peeped over some garden walls of permanent residents and noted that there were raised planting beds full of vegetables and flowers which was wonderful. We noted quite an amount of weed growth at kerb/road junctions and in some areas chemical weed control had been used at the edges of grass in communal green spaces. It will be great when you succeed in arranging residents' associations who will take control of communal spaces including entrance roads, as this is badly needed.

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

Located on the busy R335 linking Westport and Killary Harbour the village has its share of through traffic which is a challenge to any community. We admired the entrance roadside verges giving the motorists notice that they are entering a rural settlement and need to reduce speed. Your Fáilte Louisburgh signs are cheery set in stone surround planting beds. Make sure the planting doesn't encroach on the wording of your sign. Nearer the village (coming from Westport) the grass margins need a trim along the road edge on both sides of the roads. We noted the footpath along the front of Cill Cluain estate. Is it planned to continue this into Louisburg? We admired the tree lined neatly trimmed grass margin along the new tarmacadam pathway but question the gravel. It would be better if the gravel was removed and grass planted. Road markings in the village need to be refreshed and we wonder why the disabled parking bays are not painted blue as we've seen in other Mayo villages and towns. We admired that you have a number of coloured raised areas along the streets where those with mobility issues and those pushing buggies can safely cross. Compliments to May Co Co on the parking arrangements at Carrowmore beach. The pier area was also visited - very nice.

Concluding Remarks:

We thoroughly enjoyed visiting your village ... but we have a few suggestions for 2026.

- We would love to see some photos of projects, activities attended, community events etc. etc. Insert the photos into the relevant categories in the Application Form. If you don't know how to do this ask one of the secondary school pupils to become you PRO. It'll look good on their C.V. – PRO for Louisburgh Tidy Towns.
- We suggest you make a Five-Year Plan for your village with topics under each category of the Tidy Towns Application Form – it needn't be long or onerous, just what you decide is possible to achieve. 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. An Excel document rather than Word is best for this.
- All Future Projects will be in your plan. When they have been completed will they be in your Application Form – 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 Louisburgh, a village we know very well, having often visited as a tourist and partaken of your hospitality. Keep up the good work.