

Tidy Towns Competition 2025

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Newport - Baile Uí Fhiacháin** Ref: **567**
County: **Mayo** Mark: **343**
Category: **B** Date(s): **13/06/2025**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2024	Mark Awarded 2025
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	80	49	51
Streetscape & Public Places	80	48	50
Green Spaces and Landscaping	80	42	44
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	55	39	40
Sustainability – Doing more with less	55	22	24
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	59	61
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	55	29	31
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	55	41	42
TOTAL MARK	550	329	343

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 included photos of some of your projects, also for your legend and map with projects marked, and for your 5-year plan. (see Concluding Remarks below for advice on all of these). We visited the NewportMayo website which is very informative – well done. We learnt a lot about Newport and its surrounds – the viaduct, Black Oak River, St. Patrick's Church and The Last Judgement, Burrisholle Abbey, Newport House and the O'Donels etc. The NewportTidyTowns website is just a LetsHost holding page with no information. We also opened your Facebook page (1.1K followers) and see that you post regularly which we were delighted to see. It is vital to keep up the interest of the community on your social media platforms. We love to see photos showing the projects and the volunteers involved. Your population is over 800 according to the 2022 census – check and update this next year. Your committee of six is joined by an addition four who help when there are jobs to be done. This is quite a small number for a town/village of 800. Very often new residents to a town want to become involved in their new home, but don't want to join sport's clubs etc. Tidy Towns is an ideal prospect for them so we suggest you also reach out to these new residents. State, semi-state, voluntary clubs, and businesses support you with advice or financially which is perfect, as many projects need collaborators to see them being advanced/ completed. We don't need the details of your collaboration with the various organisations – or at least group them under various categories and then just list them e.g. financial help, advice, volunteers, manpower, etc. You've participated in the Tidy Towns competition for twenty-five years which has strengthened the community and assisted to improve the appearance and facilities on offer for 'visitors and locals alike'. It will be excellent when you have a member of Junior TidyTowns elected to your committee – remember to tell us when this has been organised.

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

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

The undulating terrain and the location along the river give Newport its special character. Your main streets have single, two and three storey residences and businesses sitting comfortably side by side. We loved the mix of architectural styles, primarily vernacular, but with interesting ornamentation, features, and details which adds merit to the streetscape. In addition, you have St Patrick's RC church, the old St. Catherine's CofI Church, Newport House, Cuan Modh Day Centre, the buildings associated with the railway station and the wonderful bridge and viaduct etc. to complete the architectural quality of the town. We also admired the two Grace sculptures which add

to the historical associations Newport has with Grace Kelly and Grace O'Malley. It's important to retain historical connections and build on them. Please commend the businesses who take care of their properties and made them very presentable along your streetscape – freshly painted facades, floral displays, planters, murals etc. Good to recognise the Merchant Prince with the plaque. Will you continue this action for other buildings in the town? We assume that over the years business premises changed hands and uses many times. Perhaps a project for you? A discrete plaque telling the visitor something about the history of the building and its occupants. We noted that unoccupancy and dereliction is being reduced in Newport with some of these buildings being added to the Derelict Sites Register resulting in the owners' undertaking improvements to them. It's a pity that this has to be the only way to get owners to maintain their properties. The murals/boards on the Castlebar road are quite beautiful – compliments to the artists. The playground was visited and admired and here too we examined the murals of land and water – very beautiful.

Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:

You have a number of green spaces around the town for the community to enjoy. We visited most and particularly admired the large Princess Grace Park to the west of the town. Here paths meander through great mature trees. The recently improved paths looked good and we admired that seating is provided along the route. We read that you felled some trees to give a clear uninterrupted view over Clew Bay. We took the time to walk up and indeed the view is quite spectacular. Storm Eowyn has done some damage – these trees should be removed too. We admired that the park is accessed from different roads as this makes it more user friendly. What is the purpose of the large concrete structure on the north Quay Road entrance? Quite unpleasant. The Fairy Doors painted by the play school are beautiful – thank you for the photo. We also admired the neatly kept area at the bridge at the entrance from Westport where picnic benches are available for all. The walkway along the river has a great number of seats - it would be great if all the same 'style' could be installed. Maybe Mayo Co Co might rethink this in your Town Plan Design. Your wonderful Greenway Activity Park opened in 2014 is a great MUGA for the community (interesting to read Latin on the GAP website!). The new permanent planting beds and the variety of flowers and shrubs give great movement along the streetscape. We see that you carefully selected the locations for maximum impact as very often beds are installed in places where they are barely seen by the public. The rose beds at the viaduct looked wonderful – a great burst of colour brightening this area of the town. The new Newport Horticulturalist Hub sound great; we look forward to seeing the fruits of their work in future years in your green spaces and landscaping projects.

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

You have a great number of diverse areas for nature – mature trees, stone walls, the bridge and viaduct, open green spaces, the river etc. etc. Good to read that you are involved in the Mayo Dark Sky Park and contribute by recording data to retain the Gold Tier status. We were happy to see that BirdWatch Ireland hosted a walk observing the heronry and rookery in the town. Did many attend? You have a blue tit nesting this year in one of the swift nesting boxes at the National School. When did you install the swift nesting boxes? Are there other locations around the town where swifts nest? Perhaps ask the owners of some of the large houses as swifts often enter under the eaves in these houses and nest there year after year. At dusk, they can be heard calling and seen circling around before entering under the eaves. Sometimes the swifts will use the swift boxes immediately and other times it takes a few years for them to be used. Let us know more about this project next year. The bird boxes in Princess Grace Park were noted. Have you had success with these?

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

Good to read that street lights, housing estate lights and also the flood lighting of the church have been changed to LEDs. We assume that they also have reflectors on them channelling the light downwards from the light source. Newport Men's Shed and local residents make use of the allotments adjacent to the Cuan Modh Day Centre but they were very overgrown when we visited. Pity to see the raised beds here empty; we hope it's temporary. We read that you grow quite an amount of your plants and shrubs from cuttings. Where is this undertaken? We liked the use of cardboard in the planting beds to reduce weed growth but did the compost stay? Tell us more about this next year as we've seen elsewhere where the 'topping' was blown off the cardboard. Interesting to read about Newport Astronomy Club who hold 'regular information evenings with stargazing sessions'. Sounds like a wonderful way to spend a few hours. Take some photos and attach one to the application form next year. Please commend the shops in the town who now use paper rather than plastic to wrap their products. We were very happy to read this and we hope that in next year's Application Form you will have encouraged more shop owners to do likewise. Do you know what do the coffee shops and public houses do with their coffee grinds? It would be great if they made them available for compost. The Free Book Exchange was noted.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

You resist for the An Taisce Annual Spring Clean-Up every year which is commendable and you are joined on this clean-up by numerous volunteers including Foróige. This annual event reminds the whole community, when they see a large number of Tidy Towns volunteers working in their high-viz (for you, blue) jackets, that they too need to be vigilant on weed growth, litter disposal, and fly-tipping. We read you have a problem with dog fouling. We don't recommend signage as signage is clutter and detracts from a streetscape. Instead, we suggest that you make a stencil and paint 'Clean up after your Dog' on the footpaths where dog fouling is a problem. We have seen this in other communities and have been told it works better than signage on poles. We also recommend that you adopt the motto 'Any bag, any Bin' as this too encourages dog owners to pick up and dispose of dog feces. Great that the local veterinary surgeon spoke to the school children on the dangers of dog feces carrying diseases. It seems a pity that you have to empty street bins in the town and keep the rubbish in your lock-up facility for collection by Mayo Co

Co; but all we can say is - well done on doing this. It looks like there's a dearth of bins in the town. We suggest you as Mayo Co Co that some large capacity smart bins to be installed. Mayo Co Co are flagged via a software system when these bins are reaching capacity and they can then come and empty them. We admired the utility boxes painter by the TY students. Utility boxes are dull on the streetscape and painting them to relate to an aspect of the town is great. Remember that permission must be granted by the providers before any painting is undertaken.

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

The central residential areas of Newport were very pleasantly presented with many of the single, two and three storey properties recently painted. Some had window boxes, hanging baskets or planters which added to their presentation and augmented the beauty of the streets. Along the approach roads there are some fine houses many of which have historical, artistic and architectural merit giving gravitas to the residential properties of the town. These set in mature landscaped gardens were well presented. We see that unoccupancy and dereliction is being reduced in Newport – hopefully some of these commercial properties will be converted to residential use and so bring back residents to the main streets which will ensure vibrancy of your town day and night. We noted that some commercial units have already been converted into residential units. It is important that the fascia and name of commercial properties be retained when a premises is converted to residential use as this is part of your social history. We encourage you to engage with developers/owners to reinstate the names where they have been removed. Lovely to see archways along the main streets giving residents (and businesses) access to the rear of their properties. We visited the estates and here, generally, they were well maintained. The name Sea View Park should be carefully painted in white paint so that it is legible. Ask the residents' associations to check suckers, ties and stakes on the trees in the communal open spaces as they need attention in some of the estates.

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

We entered from the south along the N59 and admired your new Newport sign – trim back the hedging beside the sign. The grass margin was neatly cut and with the kerb clearly visible to the oncoming motorists. The view across the river and along Medlycott Street is quite spectacular. The simplicity of the Grainne Mhaol sculpture set in gravel was admired. Perhaps a stone kerb at the gravel edge could be added for neatness, but it is not in need of any floral or shrub planting. We also noted the new town name signs on the other approach roads, with your town logo and Newport clearly written. We love that they are raised from the ground and so will facilitate the installation of a stone-surround planting bed at the bases. Here you will be able to plant both low and tall flowers and shrubs which won't interfere with the sign. Good to see bicycle stands available around the town where those cycling the Greenway can secure their bikes and stop off in Newport for a visit. We didn't visit at night but you tell us the viaduct and ramp are lit with low level lighting which must be quite impressive. We admired your street name signs – clean, easily read, a pleasant logo and the name in English and Irish. The Greenway is important to Mayo and we read that at weekends the National School facilitates those who wish to bring their cars to Newport and cycle the Greenway. As this will take a few hours, it's good that they are parked safely and not cluttering up the centre of the town. We noticed, and admired, the new kerbing and paths in the town. Nice that the National School had additional gravel donated which you used on the Mulranny Road rose bed. It's always good to see sculptures etc beautify an area and we admire the one of Princess Grace which was unveiled in 2023.

Concluding Remarks:

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

- Your application form is unnecessarily long. Just give us a brief description about your projects – we are quite experienced at understanding the implications of undertaking projects so don't need longwinded details. Bullet point format is a good method and helps to cut down on detail.
- In terms of your Tidy Town's application form we request applicants 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 your map – N1, N2, N3 etc and M1, M2, M3 etc. This is to help the adjudicators negotiate their way around your town and see the various projects or locations of projects.
- Your 5-Year Plan, isn't a 5-year PLAN. You have just written additional information which truthfully was just a continuation of the Application Form. For a PLAN we need to see a list of actions/projects which you hope to undertake, under each category of the Tidy Towns Application Form. We recommend that you add the name of one committee member after each action/project who will lead/advance it so as to divide the work load. Also, add the names of collaborators as many of the actions/projects will need help of others to accomplish them. Then every year put a tick in a box after the project if it has been undertaken or completed. We advise that the plan is written as an Excel document rather than as a Word document as it needs columns.
- All Future projects will be in your plan, and ONLY in your Plan. When they have been completed, then and only then, will you add them to 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.

We also ask that you make reference to the Sustainable Development Goals. We encourage you to look at the presentation by Limerick Co Co as it is extremely helpful

The link is : [https://www.limerick.](https://www.limerick.ie/sites/default/files/media/documents/2021-03/sustainable-development-goals-helpful-hints.pdf)

[ie/sites/default/files/media/documents/2021-03/sustainable-development-goals-helpful-hints.pdf](https://www.limerick.ie/sites/default/files/media/documents/2021-03/sustainable-development-goals-helpful-hints.pdf)

Thank you for entering the SuperValu Tidy Towns 2025 competition. We thoroughly enjoyed our visit and it was a pleasure to adjudicate Newport, a town we know quite well having visited as a tourist many times. It was great to see the improvements and we encourage you to keep up the good work which is reaping its just rewards.

