

Tidy Towns Competition 2025

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Westport - Cathair na Mart** Ref: **366**
County: **Mayo** Mark: **398**
Category: **E** Date(s): **11/06/2025**
24/07/2025

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2024	Mark Awarded 2025
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	80	57	59
Streetscape & Public Places	80	54	56
Green Spaces and Landscaping	80	51	52
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	55	45	46
Sustainability – Doing more with less	55	28	30
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	65	67
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	55	36	38
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	55	49	50
TOTAL MARK	550	385	398

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.

Welcome to the 2025 SuperValu TidyTowns competition. Thank you for your application form, which included photos, maps, and your Strategic Aims and Objectives. While we know Westport very well having visited many times as a tourist this visit, with more critical eyes, was slightly different. But we are delighted to say we weren't disappointed. The maps are vital for the adjudicators to visit the various projects ... please see Concluding Comments for improvements. You have 'proudly' participated in the Tidy Towns competition since 1958 and in the intervening years have been awarded the top honour of Ireland's Tidiest Town on three occasions and won Gold, Silver and Bronze Medals amongst other achievements. We are delighted to see that these have benefited the town economically, by bringing additional tourists. You and your volunteers have a lot to be proud of. Please commend them on our behalf. We hope the comments in the adjudicators' reports over the intervening 67 years have been helpful. It's excellent to see the collaboration between all the various community groups and businesses to advance Westport as a cleaner, more sustainable town by preserving and enhancing 'Westport's natural beauty for future generations'. Great that you have a weekly column in the Mayo News where others, not from the town, can read of your activities and come and participate. We see you have a Facebook Page with 3.7K followers and we also admired the Westport Wildlife & Tidy Towns Facebook which has some interesting links to other pages. Add these addresses to the internet and social media section of the form next year.

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

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

The undulating topography of Westport, and with the Reek as a backdrop, gives Westport its identity. Westport is one of a few planned towns in Ireland and with the small Carrow Beg River opening into the majestic Mall it is quite impressive. Single, two and three storey buildings of various architectural periods and styles sit comfortably side by side. There are two imposing areas which dominate the street layout – the Octogen and the area of the Art Deco Clock Tower. You have some fine buildings – the Market House, The Courthouse, St Mary's RC Church, the Holy Trinity Anglican Church, Westport Post Office, the Sacred Heart School etc, which add architectural merit to the town. Your neat, tidy streets give a very good first impression to the visitor and we were delighted to see that there were very few unoccupied buildings along the main streets. While there were some we feel, that due to the vibrancy of the town, these will soon be reopened as retail premises or as residential accommodation. We were delighted to see the conservation work done to salvage the protected structure and now the West One Restaurant is in situ.

There are also so many other wonderful shopfronts – John Moore, Sage, J.J Glynn (although it would be nice to remove the stickers in the window and do a proper window display), J. McGing, La Bella Vita, Sean Malone (great to see it retained after the conversion to a residence), Thomas Moran, The Old Grainstore (nice to see the Irish), Walsh's, etc. etc. We admired the many murals we saw around the streets and lanes – these always enliven otherwise depressing areas. Let's hope the outdoor dining parklets survive. These structures give a great atmosphere and vibrancy to many streets around our cities and towns when correctly installed and maintained. As Westport has good off-street parking facilities, we would encourage you to advance these for other premises in addition to Hobans. This will make Westport more pedestrian friendly and improve the streetscape by the removal of parked cars. We didn't see any detail of a Heritage Walking Guide. Have you made one? You have a large number of historical structures and so your town would be ideal for one. Use small QR Codes which will give addition information to the tourist. We noted a few shop signs in Irish which we were delighted to see. Paddington Bear was having his picture taken every time we passed by – a fun project enjoyed by children and adults alike. The convent gates are beautiful ... we assume these will be retained.

Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:

You have a large number of green spaces around the town where the residents and visitors can meander, including the wonderful grounds of Westport House accessed on foot, in the centre of the town, from Church Street. In addition, sporting organisations are well represented – GAA, golf, rugby, soccer, athletics, tennis, squash, etc. with many having facilities open to the public. In addition, the wonderful Greenway/Old railway Walk past the playground and skatepark was well used when we visited. But we didn't see anyone using the skatepark when we visited ... which we did a couple of times. We wonder if it is 'exciting' enough for the skateboarders and perhaps it needs to be enclosed? The changing facilities, steps into the water and picnic area at the Quay has added yet another wonderful amenity to the town as sea swimming has grown in popularity in recent years – well done Mayo Co. Co. The floral baskets along the Mall give great colour to the limestone walls and we were delighted to see that the variety of flowers included trailing plants. As one of your Facebook followers says they are the 'icing on the cake'. Please compliment those residents/shop owners along the streets who have made such an effort by proving floral displays in hanging baskets, planters and window boxes. These give great life to the street. The stunning planting at the Octagon and Clock Tower were much admired by tourists who were stopping to take photos when we passed. Compliment to all involved in this display. We loved the variety and colour and were delighted to see that the pollinators were catered for. We compliment you and Mayo Co Co on leaving approximately 13 acres of uncut green space along approach roads and elsewhere in the town. Our small mammals and insects need these areas for nesting and food supply. While there are some, there is a dearth of trees in some areas. We feel these would add to the streetscape and is something you should consider with Mayo Co Co. It will mean losing a few car parking spaces but truthfully that would be of benefit to the streets.

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

Knowledge of your area and promoting this knowledge to the local population and passing visitor are the key components of this category. Your town is rich with the variety of habitats for insects and mammals – large green open spaces, stone walls, hedgerows, mature trees, the little Carrowbeg River, the quays and the indented coastline. You have certainly taken advantage of these natural resources and we commend you on expanding your knowledge of them so as to ensure their survival. We see that you are focusing on sharing knowledge with the community and, with other community groups, arranged various seminars and workshops. The Westport Wildlife Facebook page shows some of this work. The Testing the Waters project sounds interesting besides the artwork what else do you hope to learn/achieve? Did many attend the 'Plant your Pollinator Friendly Garden' workshop? Why not put up a list of plants on your Facebook page? Using the scythe to cut the grass has been embraced by some of your committee members and it's interesting to read that the residents of Knockranny and Glenlara have now adopted this method of grass cutting. The Living Pollinator Wall Planters are interesting. The mural, art pieces, bird boxes and green walls certainly liven up this area of James St. carpark. Could this be expanded to other walls in this and other carparks? We were delighted to read that a wren had taken up residence! While the Wildlife Pond in Rice College is a lovely idea it badly needs some attention which we read will happen this year - something for next year's adjudicator to note. The gnó signage by Westport Quay Biodiversity Junior Group encouraging the community 'to foster these plants in your garden' was inspiring.

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

One Westport, with its goal of 'working together to sustainably develop Westport and protect its ecosystem for future generations' is excellent. Having such a diverse membership should ensure its success and we wish the organisation the very best in this endeavour. The all day 'Change One Thing' event hopefully gave the community the impetus to adapt/change 'one thing'. It would be an excellent project if you monitored those who attend the daylong event and also those who took part in the various follow-on workshops to see what changes they made. We loved the pre-St. Patrick's Day workshops which taught/encouraged those participating in the parade to make their own costumes from recycled materials. Usually, events such as these generate a huge volume of 'new' materials which are used once then discarded so we encourage you to have this as an annual event in your calendar. Do you know if the students of Rice College participate in Junk Kouture? It is an excellent international competition and being geared to second level students encourages them to think about recycling in a creative way. Over the years Ireland has been particularly successful so perhaps this is something you might encourage/help the teachers (transition year) to undertake. Let us know the results of the 'Eco-Congregation and School Sustainability Project' next year. You neglected to mention when these photos and ideas were due but we're assuming it was before the summer holidays? The post-Christmas Re-Gift campaign is admirable – compliments to the organisers. The Future Food Forest programme in Fr. Angelus Park is a great success story. Is it your plan to expand this to

other housing estates? This would encourage residents to grow vegetables, fruit trees and bushes etc who generally are reluctant to garden, due to what they think is a lack of knowledge/expertise. The mulched paths from 'waste' timber is excellent. Your traditional water pump on Bridge Street is a great reminder of bygone times. Could this be linked to the town's water supply and be used? We also noted one on High Street are there others? We have no doubt there are quite a few. The Community Garden is quite splendid – potting sheds, apple trees, polytunnel, raised beds full of vegetables and neat gravel pathways. It's great to see it and its location beside the Quay Community Centre is ideal. Next year include a photo of the Plant Sale Day of May 11th. We have no doubt it was a success with organic herbs, veggies etc on sale in addition to 'tea and chats'. We purchased a few tomato plants at Pax with the proceeds going to Western Care ... a nice idea of the honest box. We read of other projects – Pax – Craft Exchange, the Schools' Green Flags, Foróige using excess paint to paint the mural, etc. Please commend all involved in these very worthwhile projects and we're delighted to see that Westport, as a community, is embracing Sustainability – Doing More with Less.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

Your Saturday morning clean-up group has increased in numbers which is very encouraging for you. We're delighted to report that your town was extremely clean and tidy when we visited which is a commendation when we see the numbers walking your streets and visiting your green spaces. Compliments to the CE team of workers and to your volunteers. The photos showing the neatly trimmed grass along the concrete kerb and the power-washed pathway shows the work involved in just one area of the town and we're delighted to report that this attention to detail was noted throughout the town. Compliments to Westport Hotel Group for adopting a street and keeping it litter free and weed free. It would be wonderful if this initiative was undertaken by other businesses which would alleviate some of the work of the Saturday morning and Tuesday night crews. Having a different voluntary organisation joining you weekly on the Tuesday night is a wonderful idea and in this way those volunteering know it's only every few weeks and also it might have a little competitive edge ... which is always a bit of fun! A portable cigarette Hoover – compliments to the inventor. We see from your Facebook Page that Westport like many other towns in Ireland has its graffiti vandals. Well done on your quick response in dealing with it and good to see that it is being investigated by the Garda. Hopefully the vandal will be seen on some CCTV / dashcam. Some seats and picnic benches around the town need varnishing e.g. at the Greenway Recreational Park. The water station (near Aodha) was used for cigarette butts – maybe install a butt receptacle beside it? Some poles also need painting. We suggest you make an audit of Westport, street by street, area by area, and give the list to the Area Office for their attention. As with many other Irish villages and towns there was dumping of clothes bags beside the clothes bins (beside the Westport Tidy Towns green shed), at the Quays and on Fairways. We're not sure what the solution is: remove the clothes bins completely or put them all in one area – a recycling centre – which is monitored.

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

As we commented above, a little competition is good and generally promotes communities to work together as we saw in your residential estates/areas. The annual Residential Estates and Areas Competition which you run with sponsorship from the Westport Hoteliers? Destination Westport? (you mentioned both in your application form), no doubt introduces a little rivalry. We commend the residential associations for encouraging their residents to become involved. We visited quite a number of housing estates and were delighted to see that many houses and boundary walls had been freshly painted which gave a sense of being welcoming and cared for. You have also some interesting rows of terraced houses in your town varying in architectural styles which gives great character to your streets. Here too some of these had been painted and many had window boxes or baskets which gave great movement and colour to the street. In addition, there are some fine large detached town houses in the inner core of the town which, with their small front gardens were equally well presented. The row of houses on Distillery Road looked good – fresh and with colourful planters and hanging baskets. Along the approach roads the standard of presentation of individual houses was generally very good and we congratulate the many home owners and occupiers who clearly take pride in their property and keep their front facades, road frontage, gardens and boundary walls well-presented and neatly maintained. We also must comment on the new apartment developments which had well landscaped grounds for the residents to enjoy. We see that a regime of reduced mowing has been introduced in Cedar Park where paths now weave through the green space. As you say 'a great example of how managed green spaces and natural meadows can coexist—creating both play areas and biodiversity-friendly zones'. We actively encourage that open spaces not required for play be treated in this manner in all the housing estates. We also encourage the planting of small coppices of trees in open spaces and the introduction of seats/picnic areas for use by all: parents supervising children playing, teenagers meeting in groups, and also the elderly. Don't forget to encourage the residents to grow pollinator friendly flowers from now on and put a list on your Facebook page. The new A rated social/affordable housing scheme was welcoming. It will be good to see it in a few years when the home owners have a chance to add flowers, shrubs, trees etc as they see fit. We suggest that you make contact so that you can share your expertise.

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

With the completion of the N5, all traffic journeying to the north of Clew Bay now by-passes Westport and so the approach into Westport has become a smoother journey for the community. We noted quite a lot of weed growth on the cobblelock at the roundabouts on the N5 (jurisdiction of Mayo Co Co) which is something to be removed as it gives a bad first impression to the entrances to the town from the east and north. We liked the unmown grass in the centre of the roundabouts but understand that you are in communication with Mayo Co Co regarding a design for these. Neatly trimmed grass margins, some lined with mature trees, on the approach roads closer to the town, give a natural appearance and are aesthetically pleasing. The new signage looks good although we're not sure if the green is a good background colour as it was difficult to read the small white writing. The laneways project is

excellent and with the completion of Brewery Place this is something you plan for other laneways. This will not only brighten them and make them more user friendly, but will also give information/the history behind the name or historical use of the spaces. Equally the laneways along the Greenway have been brighten with colourful murals – compliments to all the artists. We love the layout of Westport with carparks located in what were back lands, which are now easy to access from all of your main streets. An example of good planning that many, many, other Irish towns should follow. The signage for street names was admired. We read that similar signage will be used for housing estate road names when they have been taken in charge by the council. The pedestrianisation of the Octagon, while inconveniencing some businesses, would certainly add to that area, so hopefully a solution can be found. We were delighted to see that access to the Greenway is provided at different locations around the town which gives the community the opportunity to do short or long looped walks. It will be good when the triangular piece of land at the junction of High Street and Monument Street gets a 'makeover' as its quite unpleasant at present. Are there plans for this? The discrete paving around the tree informing the passer-by of your Best Kept Small Town Ireland 2002 was noted, with the small floral display catching the visitor's eye. It would be nice to see more of these to celebrate your other wins. We read that resurfacing work is due in some areas – that's for next year's adjudicators. Road markings need repainting: we saw that a member of the public had repainted the Disabled Parking Space on Shop Street!

Concluding Remarks:

We thoroughly enjoyed visiting your town and compliment you on your application ... but we have a few suggestions for 2026.

Keep the same numbers for projects on the various maps e.g. Fr. Angelus Park Food Forest is 5 on one map and 9 on another. This makes it quite confusing for the adjudicators.

While you have Strategic Aims and Objectives this is quite general and so we suggest that you prepare a Five-Year Plan. This can show who on the committee will lead the activity/project, collaborators names, and it will also show progress each year with a tick saying it was undertaken/completed.

Show the new N5 on all your maps and also indicate the Greenway/Cycleway (by hand if necessary).

You mention a Biodiversity Map but as the colour was Yellow, we assume you meant a Green Spaces & Landscaping Map.

Future projects or projects that are in the design stage should NOT be included in your application form e.g. your Biodiversity Trail (and there were quite a few others). Add these to your Five-Year Plan and when they have been completed then they become a NEW project in your application form.

Carefully select the best Category for your projects e.g. you have 'growing crops in small areas' in Green Spaces and Landscaping whereas it would be better suited in Sustainability – Doing More with Less.

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/maps to inform us of your projects and make our visit rewarding. Thank you for entering the SuperValu Tidy Towns 2025 Competition. It was with pleasure, we visited Westport to adjudicate.

Second Round Adjudication:

We always get a lift when we arrive at Westport, because it looks so well and it is great to see so many visitors walking the main streets. Before our visit, we looked at the three maps attached to your application. Two of them were similar (one enlarged) and the projects for various criteria were colour coded. Given the variability of personal printers and the many colours on the base map, we suggest not using colour coded systems because on our printed page, some did not print as intended, especially light colours. As an alternative, we suggest using squares, triangles, circles, stars and other shapes which you can devise with a white background and black type and see if it works better for you. Please give a draft to an outsider and see if it works for them before submitting it with the application.

The map on page 42 had a list of 26 projects but the numbers did not follow a sequence and the numbers were very small and difficult to read. We suggest that you prepare the map first by placing the numbers in a sequence and transferring those to the application form. Better still, try labelling the map and eliminate the need to use numbers. Well done on your structural approach to completing the application form. Our one request is that you reduce the essay approach in the text and make more use of bullet points to make it easier for adjudicators to read. An iconic feature in Westport is the two tree lined malls on each side of the Carrowbeg River. We noted plane (Platanus), lime (Tilia), horse chestnut (Aesculus), young Sorbus trees and dead and dying ash (Fraxinus) trees. There were also many maple (Acer) trees. It was nice to see a label on one of the sycamore (Acer pseudoplatanus) trees but it is nailed to the stem which is not recommended, so we suggest it be removed. The amount of moss on the stem is an indication of the wonderful environment in Westport. Also, the amount of bird's dirt on the footpath is an indication of the numbers of birds in the trees, especially at night. We also noted that many flower baskets on the bridge and along the walls. That is a major task.

It is a delight to see established lime (Tilia) trees on each side of the main streets – they add important character to the streetscape. Pavements on the main streets in the centre of Westport are high quality and in good condition. Many shopfronts are attractive - even some of those which are unoccupied are painted – well done. Curry's cottage caught our attention because of the interesting stone façade contrasted with the green sign, door, and windows on the building. Across the road, the splendid three storey Clew Bay Hotel had beautiful window boxes on the second floor. Some of the other premises which were greatly enhanced with floral displays, included Hastings Insurance, The Wyatt Hotel and JW Brasserie, The Cobbler's Bar, the Courtyard. A little outside the main streets we admired the Castle Court Hotel and Cloneen Guesthouse, which were beside each other and covered with colourful floral displays.

Plant displays at the Octagon and the Clock Tower junction were superb. Hostas, Rudbeckia and Alstroemeria were

among the perennials which displayed their colourful leaves and flowers. Artwork in the laneway was very good and we also liked the street signs on the corners.

We visited the food forest at Father Angelus Park. Tucked away in a corner of the estate, it is essentially an allotment with fruit trees, vegetables and herbs. This is a work in progress - the area was untidy and would benefit from being enclosed. We admired the established trees on the larger open space – they add great character to the estate. The much larger and enclosed community garden at the Quay Community Centre is more established and had a great range of fruit, flowers and herbs – although some parts were also untidy. We spent some time admiring Red Admiral butterflies on flowers of the Buddleia bush. Access to the Community Centre is through Clew Bay housing estate, where the entrance is enhanced with an established line of lime (Tilia) trees. We visited the harbour and admired the impressive four storey building of The Harbour Mill complex. Further out, the new changing rooms at the harbour were very well designed and being well used.