

Tidy Towns Competition 2025

Adjudication Report

Centre: Blessington - Baile Coimín	Ref: 713
County: Wicklow	Mark: 382
Category: E	Date(s): 12/07/2025

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2024	Mark Awarded 2025
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	80	53	55
Streetscape & Public Places	80	45	48
Green Spaces and Landscaping	80	44	47
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	55	40	43
Sustainability – Doing more with less	55	34	36
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	65	67
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	55	44	46
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	55	38	40
TOTAL MARK	550	363	382

Community – Your Planning and Involvement / An Pobal - Pleanáil agus Rannpháirtíocht:

Fáilte chuig Comórtas Bhailte Slachtmhara SuperValu 2025. Go raibh maith agaibh as bhur iarratas a chur isteach. Maith sibh don obair atá déanta agaibh in bhur cheantar go dtí seo - guímid gach rath oraibh i bhur dtionscadail amach anseo. Ádh mór. Our appreciation is extended to Blessington Community College for hosting the inaugural Wicklow Youth Biodiversity Conference that brought together students, educators, environmental experts and public representatives to tackle the urgent issue of biodiversity loss at both a local and national level; we are indebted to them! The structure of the Tidy Towns group is impressive with a committee of 14 members each with a designated role and liaising with relevant various bodies and individuals within their particular area. A volunteer base of 50 people that can be called upon for Tidy Towns activities is indicative of excellent community support; further support from a wide variety of bodies, agencies, sponsors and clubs is impressive also and sponsorship noted on a roundabout is favourably noted. Engagement with TUS and CE participants including your partnership approach with Wicklow County Council is invaluable for the future development of Blessington. Age Friendly parking spaces within the Town Square is a significant step towards community inclusivity, consideration might also be given to the installation of Age Friendly seating at strategic locations. The range of communications channels utilized ensures that Tidy Towns news reaches all whether through social media or the Parish Newsletter, we note the significant increase in followers on both Facebook and Instagram. Congratulations on the official opening of the Blessington Youth Hub in 2025 which offers a vibrant, inclusive space where young people across Blessington and the West Wicklow area can gather, connect, and grow; this augurs well for the future of community in Blessington.

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

Streetscape and public spaces in Blessington present high visual amenity with nicely presented business premises, landscaping including semi mature street trees in addition to container flower displays and service cables that run parallel to buildings rather than crossing the road in the majority of instances which minimizes visual clutter. The Market Square is a most attractive and spacious public space; the installation of some age-friendly seating here would be a welcome addition. A beautifully presented double fronted period building near the Garda Station makes a significant contribution to the visual amenity of the streetscape and deserves signage if in the public domain. Discourage the use of roller window security shutters such as those noted at the Famous Inn Takeaway premises. All public buildings noted were nicely presented and the container flower displays at the Fire Station are quite charming however road markings at its entrance need to be refreshed; the WCC offices looked well too as did the Business Park complex. The entrance and roadside presentation of the Community College was admired as were churches and schools in general including St Mary's Junior National School and the Church of Our Lady. We look forward to the redevelopment of the old HSE premises on the Kilbride road as a tourism and eGreenway development and its completion in 2026.

Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:

The new (2024) Blessington Community Park is a wonderful facility offering a range of recreational amenity opportunities to all age groups with its playground, walks, tennis courts, bowling area, playing surface and seated amenity areas, another suitable location for age friendly seating! The landscaped area at the junction near Aldi together with the entrance to the Super market is beautiful as is the roadside garden at SuperValu. Trees along the Main Street offered welcome shade from the strong mid-day sun during adjudication; sucker growth should be removed. Flower displays in Spring were no doubt delightful and your partnership on this project with the TY students is laudable; cognisance is taken also of landscaping to the green area on St Joseph's Road and on-going enhancement to the roadside green areas at the Circle K garage. The shift to an emphasis on Pollinator planting is well informed together with the No-Mow policy at selected areas. The Glending Greenway which offers a safe, scenic, walking and cycling route that links Blessington to the Glending Forest free of traffic encouraging active travel is an invaluable community recreational amenity facility for both the local and the wider community.

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

The Tidy Towns group is most active in promoting public awareness of the natural world and threats to our environment and has supported groups such as the students of the Community College to address the issues involved by education, cross sector support and collaborative effort. You have also organised many events ranging from a talk on The Effects on Biodiversity and Climate Change through Gardening for Biodiversity to The Future of Forestry in Wicklow and understanding wild pollinators and invertebrates in addition to planting trees, installing bird feeders and organising Pond Dipping events all of which is an amazing portfolio of action for nature and biodiversity in your locality! Pollinator friendly flowers appear to be the norm in Blessington and the verges along the Naas Road appear to be managed for biodiversity culminating in a biodiversity garden at the top of the road. Do keep us updated on the status of Dempsey's Lane No-Mow Meadow with its pathway, it may take some time to come to maturity.

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

The excellent working relationship between Blessington Tidy Towns and officers of Wicklow County Council is exemplary ranging from Climate Action, Biodiversity and Heritage through to the Municipal District Engineer all of whom provide excellent support. The recycling bins at both the SuperValu premises on the Lacken Road and the free car park featured a little bit of litter and broken glass but was not overly problematic. It is good to note that the group is sharing its experience with other Tidy Towns groups and we look forward to hearing of outcomes especially in relation to the Twinning concept. The Blessington Further Education and Training Centre with its emphasis on sustainability, biodiversity and the circular economy education is an exciting development that will benefit groups beyond the borders of Wicklow. The visit of the Near Zero Energy Building mobile training unit no doubt made a lasting impression and generated a lot of ideas for energy savings. Many impressive projects have been offered for consideration under this heading and are too numerous to comment upon individually but all have their place in Blessington's journey towards becoming a Zero Waste Community. It would be a worthwhile undertaking to calculate community savings made in the three categories of energy, water and materials management taking all of your actions into account each year and therefore being in a position to calculate how far away Blessington is from being a Zero Waste Community.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

A very light scattering of litter was noted at various points throughout Blessington during adjudication none of which could be classified as a significant problem; the solar powered litter bins are effective; some of the older bins needed cleaning together with some seating and stretches of footpath spoiled by bird droppings. Your 'Take 4 for The Lake', 2 Minute Street Clean and regular litter patrols are obviously making a significant contribution to Blessington's litter free status. Support received from WCC in the form of materials supplied is laudable. The masking of derelict premises as a temporary measure pending redevelopment is effective as it minimises their potential to diminish visual amenity. Graffiti removal, painting of street signs, weed control and a plethora of other actions involving all sectors of the community are favourably noted. Has a survey of collected litter been undertaken to identify the type and source of litter and whether it's on the increase or decrease? This kind of information can enable litter management strategies to be customised and streamlined resulting in less work.

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

Residential developments noted during adjudication were beautifully landscaped and landscaping at The Old Rectory development on the Lacken Road with pupils from St Mary's National School deserves a special commendation. It is good to note the emphasis on nature and biodiversity in estates and its expression in so many different forms. Your ongoing 'Pride in my Estate Competition' is an excellent initiative that makes a significant difference to the quality of life for all. Stretches of footpath in the Woodleigh complex were weed choked however it was otherwise nicely presented in respect of both visual amenity and biodiversity. Some roadside boundary walls near the Circle K garage need attention; a stretch of wall along St Joseph's Road sets the standard. A charming terrace of cottages near the top of the Lacken Road was admired for its elegant simplicity.

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

A Welcome / Town Twinning nameplate on one entrance to Blessington looked very well together with roadside verges; a second and third nameplate were somewhat obscured by growth however footpaths into the town centre were free of weed growth. Street furniture is generally well managed however some finger post signage on the Main

Street needs realignment when viewed from the Lacken Road. Parking is orderly throughout and appears to be ample for needs; disabled and age friendly parking is favourably noted. Good quality public seating looks well; some age friendly seats would be a welcome addition. It is good to note pedestrian crossings on this very busy thoroughfare with a constant flow of traffic through the town. The coin-operated Public Toilet is a welcome facility and looks well too.

Concluding Remarks:

Blessington offers a wide variety of shopping and dining opportunities in addition to many recreational amenity facilities all of which make it a wonderful place to visit and no doubt an equally wonderful place in which to live. There appears to be a lot of on-street car parking whilst car parks are relatively empty; consideration might be given to redirecting longer stay vehicles to car parks thus freeing up the main thoroughfare for pedestrian use and enjoyment of the town.