Tidy Towns Competition 2026

Adjudication Report

Centre:	**Ballincollig - Baile an Chollaigh**	Ref:	**661**
County:	**Cork(South)**	Mark:	**407**
Category:	**G**	Date(s):	**13/06/2026**
			27/07/2026

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2025	Mark Awarded 2026
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	80	57	58
Streetscape & Public Places	80	54	55
Green Spaces and Landscaping	80	57	60
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	80	43	45
Sustainability – Doing more with less	80	27	29
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	71	72
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	55	43	44
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	55	43	44
TOTAL MARK	**600**	**395**	**407**

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

"Fáilte go Comórtas Bailte Slachtmhara SuperValu 2026. Go raibh maith agaibh as bhur n-iarratas a chur isteach. Maith sibh as an obair atá déanta agaibh in bhur gceantar go dtí seo - guíonn muid gach rath oraibh in bhur dtionscadail amach anseo."
Ballincollig is most welcome to the 2026 Supervalu Tidy Towns competition which it has been entering since 1965 and continuously since 1998 – you are veritable elder lemons in the competition. Your application was packed full of information and photographs and you still managed to keep it to a respectable 40 pages. The map seems to have been causing some issues in recent years. This adjudicator is happy to say that it was clear, easy to follow and with the new and maintained projects clearly marked, there were no issues locating them. Although you suggest printing in A3, it is simply not practical when walking around a town to have a large piece of paper in hand, often on windy and wet days. The A4 size for your map was perfectly adequate.
The additional welcome to Ballincollig and feedback to last year's report was also useful and appreciated. It is clear that you, like many other Tidy Towns, take on board the feedback from adjudicators and where it is feasible, implement suggestions or rectify issues.
Your 3 year (2026-2028) strategic plan is well structured with very clear timelines and targets. You have built it directly on the learnings and results of the previous plan to ensure consistency and follow through.
The list of agencies, bodies and businesses that have supported your activities is also very well outlined in list format with headings for each type of group. You are clearly highly respected, as evidenced by the knowledge-sharing hub you have become within the wider Tidy Towns community. This spirit of collaboration and generosity reflects the deep sense of care that Tidy Towns groups have for their environment—not only within their own local boundaries, but across the broader community and landscape. Your willingness to share experience, ideas, and learning helps strengthen and inspire others working towards the same goals.
Although you do not have a Junior Tidy Towns, you partner with the schools and have a dedicated Schools Liaison Officer thereby ensuring the younger generation are involved and engaged with your work and its values in the community.
This year your participation in the Communities in Bloom International Challenge is a primary focus and therefore your key project. Many projects are associated with this competition, and work has clearly been full on judging by the results on adjudication day.

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

Ballincollig's streetscape is defined by its long, active Main Street, which clearly serves as the commercial and social heart of the town. The street combines traditional two- and three-storey buildings, many with shopfronts at ground level, alongside more contemporary retail and mixed-use developments. Historic features, including the

limestone walls and former military buildings associated with the old barracks and Gunpowder Mills, provide a distinctive sense of place and connect the town centre to its rich industrial heritage.
Many shops fronts appealed and it was heartening to see that smaller independent retailers still survive in these days of large suburban shopping centres. Amongst those that particularly caught the eye were Tudor Rose Florist, Olga's Own Craft Studio, Ballincollig Cobbler, Leaf & Bower and MacEoin Jewellers.
The utility box beautification project was evident throughout and what a delight it was. The theme of flowers is apt and the upgrade from graffiti filled grey boxes to these floral displays very successful. The mural At Baker's Street was equally delightful.
The refurbishment of the Fairy Trail in Beech Walk is lovely and the availability of non-damaging ties good to see given the damage that nails and screws can do to the health of the trees.
Having never heard of the Ballincollig Powdermills, it was fascinating to read that it is Ireland's largest industrial archaeological site, spread across 130 acres in the beautiful River Lee valley. The introduction of the app will undoubtedly enhance the experience of walking the site.
Heritage sites have been sensitively restored and you are fortunate to have few derelict buildings. Those that you do have are being monitored and will hopefully be improved and occupied in time.
The street lighting looks well and there is plenty of public seating to enhance Main Street and its environs.

Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:

There has been significant work carried out throughout the town in terms of landscaping and in preparation for the Communities in Bloom competition, this is an area that has deservedly been given much focus. Upgraded and new flowerbeds were evident, and the choice of planting was appropriate for the location but also perennial, drought tolerant and good pollinators. This will reduce maintenance in the long term, avoid the requirement to water and thus become very sustainable planting choices.
Your no mow May, grass cutting strategy, no herbicide use, community effort and tree maintenance are all in hand and contribute hugely to the overall effect and to the rich biodiversity of the town and its surrounds.
The many floral displays were indeed looking resplendent on adjudication day. It would have been good to see a greater emphasis on perennial planting rather than annuals, even in the window boxes and large 5 tiered planters. Please considered this for future planting.

Don't be afraid to go big with your planting and remember that the container should not be the main focus. Choose plants that will partially soften and cover the edges of the planters to enhance their visual appeal. Apply the "thriller, filler, spiller" planting principle by combining a focal plant (thriller), supporting plants that add fullness (filler), and trailing plants that cascade over the sides (spiller) to create a balanced and attractive display.

The tiered planter with herbs is a great idea. It would be beneficial to include name signs to allow the public to learn what the herbs are and of course, many herbs are perennial and therefore very sustainable.
In front of the AIB there is a cluster of trees in a circle. Castle West Shopping Centre has large expanses of concrete with just a few trees. The cluster style would not only be more aesthetically pleasing but within large expanses of concrete in urban retail areas they provide significant environmental, social, and economic benefits. Whilst probably too late given that the landscaping is now complete, it is worth remembering for any future developments.
Thank you for providing the code to your allotment which it would have been nice to visit. However, unless it was missed, the location of the allotment was not provided on your application form. Next year…

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

Your environmental leadership in raising environmental awareness throughout the community is admirable.
An interactive map will be a part of your Significant Tree Project and will raise awareness of the value of and need for trees in our lives. The partnership with Wild Work and UCC to record the trees and celebrate those trees of historical, aesthetic and biodiversity value is wonderful. Have you also included which trees are native?
Your Biodiversity Hub is clearly a great asset that will go from strength to strength. You are already seeing the success of having a centre where you can bring knowledge and action together.
Ballincollig is fortunate to have the Regional Park as what you describe the 'jewel in the crown'. It is a wonderful asset and a delight to visit. Your adjudicator could have spent all day there.
The 20 mini-orchards scattered across the town, the installation of swift nesting boxes, bird and bat boxes in the Regional Park and the discovery of wild bees that have hatched all contribute to the already known fact that biodiversity is alive and well in Ballincollig. Do continue to work and raise awareness of the developments and discoveries and inform the community to ensure they remain passionate and defensive.
The continued planting of trees including 745 trees at the Westfield Development and 34,000 trees planted in the new Fionn Laoi Estate is an incredible achievement. The ongoing maintenance required for the success of the trees will be a challenge. The first three years after planting will be important in terms of formative pruning, weed control, checking ties and stakes and if necessary, watering. This will need to be carefully managed.
The Citizen Science Programme is another great project and your engagement with the Girls Guides, Colaiste Choilm students and local residents of Ballincollig teaching how to record vital information is to be commended.

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

The goal of living more sustainably influences every aspect of daily life, and as a result, is reflected across all categories of the Tidy Towns competition. This commitment is clearly evident throughout your application, where

sustainability considerations are integrated into a wide range of projects and initiatives.
Measurable dedication is the term you use on your website to quantify the savings, the reductions and the wins. Could you quantify the savings, the reductions and the wins across all categories of sustainability? Energy, water, transport, food and waste? You already have figures for the amount and reduction of litter collected as well as the number of green waste bags composted.

Reducing energy consumption through improved insulation, efficient lighting, and renewable energy sources lowers greenhouse gas emissions and decreases reliance on fossil fuels. Water conservation measures, such as rainwater harvesting and efficient irrigation systems, reduce demand on treated water supplies and help protect natural water resources. Waste reduction initiatives, including reuse, repair, recycling, and composting, decrease the volume of material sent to landfill, conserve raw materials, and reduce pollution. Sustainable transport choices, such as walking, cycling, public transport, and car sharing, help to cut carbon emissions, improve air quality, and reduce traffic congestion. Biodiversity-focused actions, including tree planting, pollinator-friendly planting, and habitat creation, support wildlife, enhance ecosystem resilience, and contribute to carbon sequestration. Collectively, these measures not only reduce environmental impact but also generate long-term economic savings and create healthier, more resilient communities.

The figures could be published and the community informed of the results and success of the initiatives and actions implemented.

Your awareness raising videos are not only thought provoking but very impactful. No doubt there are more in the pipeline.
One aspect of sustainability that seems to be missed is the lack of recycling bins for the public to use. Whilst the Big Belly Litter Bins reduce the frequency of collections, they offer no opportunity to the public to recycle their waste. There are effective recycling bins available for use in the public realm elsewhere and it is suggested that these be investigated.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

It is indeed good news that you have consistently seen a fall off in the amount of litter collected on litter picks and although the number of volunteer hours spent increased the amount of litter decreased by an estimated 8%. Your 'Decade of Impact' poster is most informative and certainly good news. How can we now decrease the amount of plastic being produced in the first place? How can we decrease the amount of recycling knowing that this is due to reuse of items rather than recycling or dumping?
Your diligence and continued efforts in keeping Ballincollig clean and litter free has paid off in dividends and on adjudication day, there really was no litter to be seen and no black spots to be found. This is a great result. The Gum + Butts were eye catching and a first for this adjudicator.
Small details noted include the already mentioned Pike Walking Trail notice that was really not in good condition. It may be that it cannot be cleaned sufficiently to be legible,it is in need of upgrading. One 50 m speed sign was in need of a refurbishment and beside it a faded notice remained stapled to tree.
It would be nice to see the post box at Station Road properly erected instead of the current arrangement which looks slightly crooked and temporary.

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

You have pioneered 'no spray' policies and wildflower initiatives with Resident's Associations. In many towns and villages, the only use of herbicide noted is in the housing estates which are often managed by contractors. Not so in Ballincollig. There was no noticeable use of herbicide. Some of the residential areas visited included Fern Walk, The Close, Coolroe Meadow, Wyndham Downs, Inniscarra View. Each one was well presented and houses and gardens nicely maintained. One new housing estate with superb planting had no visible name. It did however have a hedge of Cherry Laurel planted. As this is an invasive species, it is recommended that it is removed and replaced soon and before it becomes too large to remove easily.
There were many large expanses of grass that could be left to grow wild whilst still leaving space for recreation and play. Leaving areas of a housing estate to grow wild provides numerous environmental, social, and economic benefits. Wild areas create valuable habitats for birds, bees, butterflies, and other wildlife, helping to increase local biodiversity and support declining species. Native grasses, wildflowers, and shrubs improve ecosystem health by enhancing pollination, natural pest control, and soil quality. These areas can also help manage rainwater naturally, reducing surface water runoff and lowering the risk of local flooding. From a climate perspective, wild spaces store carbon, improve air quality, and help cool urban environments during hot weather. For residents, natural areas provide attractive green spaces that promote relaxation, mental well-being, and opportunities to connect with nature.
Some of the name plate of signs were not easily visible and some also needed to be cleaned. Church View stone would be an example.
Each residential estate should be easily identifiable with a high visibility name plate or sign. The estate name should be bi-lingual and ideally reflect local heritage. This is something that is often neglected or forgotten about especially in the newer housing estates.

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

The Poulavone Roundabout has indeed blossomed and the design allows for safety, visibility and the environment – a win, win in anyone's books. The continued support of O'Donovan Agri Environmental is appreciated and the focal point of the roundabout very pleasing indeed.
The Carrigrohane approach road is also looking well although you mention installing a watering system to irrigate

the hydrangeas. Sometimes it is better to remember right plant, right place and if there is a need for such intensive intervention, perhaps it would be better to relocate the hydrangeas to a more suitable, shady location and replace them with more drought tolerant plants. That said, the hydrangeas were looking splendid on adjudication day.
When acquiring new planters such as those at Aldi, try to harmonise the planters to give a consistency of style and planting.
The approach roads in general were looking very well and the entrance planters were clean, visible with colourful plants underneath.

Concluding Remarks:

Ballincollig has again shown a dedicated and consistent approach to the Tidy Towns competition and the results are excellent. Your hard work has and will continue to pay off in every way but importantly in protecting the environment for the sake of your community and future generations. You are wished every success in the 2026 Communities in Bloom competition whose theme this year is Therapeutic Gardening. This is most appropriate for Ballincollig. Best wishes also for the Tidy Towns competition and keep up the great work.

Second Round Adjudication:

This year has been very busy for the group preparing for Communities in Bloom and you have done quite a lot of landscaping which is looking fantastic despite the summer temperatures. Replacing the dull utility boxes with cheerful designs really brightens up the neighbourhood. The mural is a wonderful way to highlight the community's commitment to biodiversity and hopefully will spark conversations about protecting local bees and butterflies. It instantly grabs our attention and turns Baker Street into a bright landmark. Assure the priest at the nearby St. Marys and St. Johns church that parishioners will form a green team to handle the labour and planning for any actions taken on the church grounds as we do not want any burden on the clergy. They only need to give permission and moral support. Tiered planters are an excellent choice to inject street colour and supporting urban wildlife corridors. They act as biodiversity stepping stones and help connect fragmented green spaces giving our pollinators safe passage through built up areas. Swapping sterile traditional bedding such as petunias for nectar rich species aligns with modern eco-friendly landscaping goals so we will be looking for sustainable beauties all over on our next visit – now that's a challenge! Choose reliable container plants with open accessible flowers and long blooming windows such as yellow flowering bidens, trailing bacopa, dwarf salvias, nasturtiums, fuchsias and your herbs for example.
Walking through the town is a lively sensory experience. The smell of fresh food in the air, discovering independent book shops etc, colourful window displays alongside the chatter of the villagers really gives us the chance to feel the pulse of the community. To keep area's attractive well-functioning infrastructure is a necessity and we thank Cork County Council for works carried out. We see you plan to look at street furniture maintenance in 2027 which is necessary.
The Regional Park is an excellent facility with plenty to offer. A dedicated history App of the Gun Powder Mill is a great idea because it will provide immersive storytelling at your own pace. Displays of equipment provide interest. Avoiding harmful chemical weed sprays is a highly effective choice and sets a clear positive standard for the public to follow. Flower beds provide stable moisture and room for larger root system support and you have many great examples. Choosing dry shade plants for in ground beds is a smart way to manage tricky areas under trees and near walls. Planting trees is a powerful climate action strategy and educational signage greatly enhances the Tree Trail experience transforming walkways into an engaging journey. At the allotment carpark it was great to see park users pick fruit and it really shows how urban trees can benefit the public. A small sign warning to wash fruit very well as car park trees absorb exhaust fumes. The pursuit of sustainability is an urgent goal and we favourably acknowledge your video campaigns to create awareness on various subjects. We applaud all the businesses who have embraced sustainability. Identifying real measurable transformations is noteworthy and keep working on publishing figures on carbon savings like 34, 000 trees save ??? in their lifetime etc.
Achieving a neat and clean environment is hard work but it is truly worth it for volunteers. It takes a lot of time and heavy lifting yet it brings people together and makes the village safer. Finding enough helpers is tough and we really appreciate your ongoing efforts. It presents very well and looks and feels very welcoming. Behind the scenes, CE scheme participants, Tus workers and many others continue to 'Keep Ballincollig beautiful'.
New estates can be great for growth but also bring challenges for community life and inclusion. We are very confident you will reach out to everyone and invite them into local life. Overcoming tight mowing by contractors of green spaces requires clear communication and updating the maintenance agreement. Talk to the residents again. Roundabouts on approaches are very impressive and signage is clear. We would like to see more areas set aside for biodiversity and like most of the country areas of grass were very brown and we wonder did the council or contractors keep mowing during the heat wave or did they re arrange schedules? Grass verges are considered a valuable linear habitat, another wildlife corridor, that we would like to see better managed.
Ballincollig has great energy and we were drawn to many initiatives that you have worked on this year. We wish you all the best in the competition and Communities in Bloom. Its obvious the community takes pride in their environment which will have long term benefits for the success of the community. Well done everyone.