

# Tidy Towns Competition 2026

## Adjudication Report

|           |                                 |          |                   |
|-----------|---------------------------------|----------|-------------------|
| Centre:   | <b>Macroom - Maigh Chromtha</b> | Ref:     | <b>183</b>        |
| County:   | <b>Cork(South)</b>              | Mark:    | <b>398</b>        |
| Category: | <b>D</b>                        | Date(s): | <b>11/06/2026</b> |

|                                           | Maximum Mark | Mark Awarded 2025 | Mark Awarded 2026 |
|-------------------------------------------|--------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Community – Your Planning and Involvement | 80           | 55                | 56                |
| Streetscape & Public Places               | 80           | 51                | 53                |
| Green Spaces and Landscaping              | 80           | 55                | 56                |
| Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality  | 80           | 46                | 48                |
| Sustainability – Doing more with less     | 80           | 28                | 30                |
| Tidiness and Litter Control               | 90           | 66                | 68                |
| Residential Streets & Housing Areas       | 55           | 42                | 43                |
| Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes           | 55           | 43                | 44                |
| <b>TOTAL MARK</b>                         | <b>600</b>   | <b>386</b>        | <b>398</b>        |

### 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.”

Welcome to the 2026 Supervalu Tidy Towns competition and thank you for your comprehensive application together with map and other appendices which will be commented on throughout this report. Macroom has an excellent record of competing in the competition for the last 44 years and clearly has a strong committee with 7 officers, 12 committee members and many other volunteers. Your interaction with youth is exemplary and includes strong relationships with St. Joseph's Primary, fourth-year students from De La Salle, McEgan College, Mary's Secondary Schools, Gaisce students, YouthReach and Foroige. Each participate in different ways demonstrating a good sense of community and this bodes very well for the future.

Thank you for your efforts in reducing the pages of the submission. As you have reduced the number of photographs in your submission, you have invited your adjudicator to visit your social media pages and your website. Rest assured this is done automatically and although time does not allow a full review, glancing through the posts gives an excellent flavour of the activities and work undertaken throughout the year.

Your map was well presented and the colour coding and numbering a great help. The numbers on the map itself were a little small and it would be of great help if these could be enlarged in future years. That said, your adjudicator had no difficulty navigating their way around Macroom and locating the many projects mentioned. You are one of the few groups to have removed the standard template introductions for each category despite this suggestion being clearly marked at the beginning of each category. It undoubtedly gives you a little extra space to include more information.

It is very wise to align your current long term plan (2025 – 2027) with the town regeneration and public realm projects as they will inevitably impact on any work that you may undertake. As such, your responses to the feedback given by last year's adjudicator relating to public spaces will be taken in the context of this plan and the works that are due to be undertaken shortly now that they have gone out to tender.

This category gives Tidy Towns members an opportunity to showcase their involvement with the community and it is clear that the Macroom volunteers do this in spades. From your huge interaction with the schools giving presentations on relevant subjects and supporting them with their work for Green Schools to taking part in the Macroom Food Festival delivering a Green for Business session for local food enterprises, you have covered every base in Macroom. You have a wide ranging list of supporters within local industry and businesses and have particularly developed a good working relationship with Danone.

Well done for your initiative developing a QR code to make visiting the Macroom Tidy Towns website and local hub quicker. You wisely nominated your Volunteer and Climate Ambassador Sean Cremin for West Cork Garda Youth Awards 2026 and hearty congratulations to him for being named the overall winner.

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

It was a pleasure to take the time to walk around the centre of Macroom for this adjudicator who had never done so in the past. There are many fine buildings and shop fronts to admire and some looking particularly well were Enchanted Flowers, Michael Purcell & Sons Solicitors, Lynch's Bakery, Granville's and the beautifully renovated Juniper Lane amongst others. The building that once housed The Gearagh Bar is a very fine piece of architecture. A 'For Auction' was noted and it is hoped that this will be maintained by future owners. Some eye catching murals were also noted and admired around the town including a stray cat on a wall. The display of Tidy Towns awards and activities was admired. You are lucky to have such a prominent location to showcase and spread the word of your work for your community.

The concept of a seasonal best shopfront window display competition is very good and it would be great to know who the winners are – perhaps you could include a photograph for your adjudicator next year. Like most towns and villages in Ireland, Macroom suffers from some areas of dereliction. Well done on liaising and working with Cork County Council to help eliminate this issue. Please continue to request regular updates and clear action steps to ensure ongoing progress. It is good to note that there is some progress especially of a building that has been derelict for some 30 years. The Church of Ireland church is a fine building and it is noted in your plan that via the Town and Village renewal scheme, funding may be available to make the building operational. Whilst it is a shame that the Post Office has relocated, it is good to know that a new tenant will be taking over the premises. The entrance to the Castle through the gates is your jewel in the crown and was looking particularly well presented. The maintenance of the cobble stones to such a high standard is no mean feat so well done. The red seat at the entrance might benefit from some refreshing and the Fire Station entrance was looking a little tired and perhaps could be freshened up, particularly the building to the left with grass growing from the gutter. St. Colman's Catholic Church was looking well and the grounds were clean and tidy. A newly planted tree was noted and the grass has been left to grow a little allowing some wildflowers to blossom. It would however be good to see a little more planting of shrubs in the garden too.

## **Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:**

As one travels through the town, there is evidence of lovely floral displays beautifully maintained. The shrub beds at St. Coleman's Cemetery were looking splendid, so too the Killarney Road Cemetery and the planter outside St. Joseph's amongst others.

You have done excellent work in preparing and planting 65 large hanging baskets, as well as maintaining them through regular watering and feeding throughout the season. The adjudicator noted, however, that the black plastic bases of the baskets were quite prominent. As the baskets are positioned so high, the planting itself was not really visible. With the increasing emphasis on more sustainable planting practices, it may be worth considering a move away from annual bedding plants and gradually introducing more perennial planting in the baskets.

The same principle would apply to the planting at the castle gates. Here too it would be better to plant perennials that would last through the year. You could also include bulbs for spring colour and some pops of colour in the Summer if desired.

The lovely round stone planter outside the Church of Ireland would also benefit from some plants. This may be privately owned however.

The Fairy Garden was quite lovely and there were plenty of young folk enjoying themselves there on adjudication day. The maintenance and ongoing work here takes a lot of manpower and you are to be commended for the excellent presentation of the whole area. Please be aware that it is not advisable to hammer nails into trees as this risks damaging the tree. When placing fairy houses on a tree, it is better to use an alternative method of attaching them. The donation box was also looking a little sad and might be brightened up.

The Tidy Towns HQ was looking great and the Men's Shed premises was also noted looking well.

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

Your key project this year was the ongoing work on Saint Coleman's Biodiversity Park. Visiting this was a real treat for your adjudicator and the work that you have put into developing this amenity is clear to see. It is not only a peaceful haven but a very special and valuable source of biodiversity that will only improve as it matures. It was however a little disappointing to note that weedkiller appeared to have been used on the grass verge along the edge of the park. This is a shame and does not appear to be necessary. As in many of the towns and villages in the area, weedkiller has been used around the trees in the town. It is time to have a conversation with those carrying out the spraying to ascertain if the practice could be discontinued. Herbicides are unfortunately partially responsible for biodiversity loss across the world, essentially reducing food sources for birds, insects and mammals. This is because their effects change the vegetation structure so that it's no longer possible for some species to survive in the affected habitat.

You carry out ongoing maintenance to the graveyard at the Church of Ireland church. This is a haven for biodiversity and although plans may be afoot to renovate the building, it would be advisable to refer to the excellent guide published by the Heritage Council on the Care, Conservation and Recording of Historic Graveyards [https://www.heritagecouncil.ie/content/files/guidance\\_care\\_conservation\\_recording\\_historic\\_graveyards\\_2011\\_7mb.pdf](https://www.heritagecouncil.ie/content/files/guidance_care_conservation_recording_historic_graveyards_2011_7mb.pdf)

The publication of The Macroom Tidy Towns Biodiversity Action Plan 2026-2030 this year is great news and will provide you with a structured approach to protecting, enhancing, and managing local wildlife and habitats. You are fortunate to have myriad green spaces that provide you the opportunity to greatly influence the range of biodiversity especially given that the local SAC Gearagh is so close to the town. Do pursue your aim to have it designated as a National Park, this is a very worthy ambition.

Your awareness of invasive plants is reassuring, particularly the Rhododendron ponticum growing within the Castle

Demesne. It is advisable to check the National Biodiversity Data Centre list of invasive species as there are new names appearing regularly.

Your continued work in this category includes erection of bird boxes about the town, tree labelling, wildlife displays in Tom Creedon Park, use of your Biodiversity programme to inform schools and a Tree Trail Brochure developed for the walkway in the Fairy Garden. You have transitioned the grass cutting in many housing estates to Council management going forward and it is hoped that areas of grass will be left to grow, not only in May but throughout the season to promote biodiversity.

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

Thank you for noting the specific Sustainable Development Goals that align to the projects in your entry form. It is important for Tidy Towns committees to have a clear vision of the aims of their projects in the context of the SDG's. You have mentioned many excellent initiatives in your application form that contribute towards raising awareness of the need for and ways to become more sustainable in our everyday lives.

The Green for Food Business Information Session, a Sustainability Treasure Hunt, Kids Cooking classes and presentations to the Green Schools Programme to name a few of these activities. The use and reuse of materials rather than dumping and buying new is so important in our need to have a Circular Economy and by using recycled materials for your signage and promoting the 'Macroom Free to a Good Home, campaign, you are helping the cause greatly.

One of the ambitions this category in your plan states that you will 'Promote awareness of the whole area of Sustainable Resource and Waste Management and its many facets and document the elements that comprise this topic and are relevant'. This is exactly the action that is required to ensure that the community continues to strive towards a more sustainable environment.

It would be important to try and quantify the successes and results of your initiatives.

It would raise awareness if you were able to put some figures in terms of saving, diversion from general waste streams and increased recycling figures as a result of your projects. Once some base figures are established, then the aim would be to increase the amount of reductions, reduce the general waste and estimate the savings in terms of costs, labour and environmental damage. The results could then be published on your social media and website to inform the community and encourage further waste reduction.

The Overview of Environmental and Energy-Based Initiatives at Danone document was an interesting read and thank you for sharing it. Your adjudicator was particularly interested and surprised to read in the statement that the company "cannot control the amount (of waste) generated" and therefore focuses on ensuring that recyclable materials are processed appropriately. While recycling is undoubtedly an important component of environmental stewardship, it would not only be encouraging but also vitally important to see organisations also explore opportunities to reduce waste generation at source wherever possible.

Given the scale of environmental challenges facing all sectors, continued efforts to minimise waste production, alongside effective recycling programmes, can make a meaningful contribution to broader sustainability objectives. The brilliant initiative of St Joseph's school to reduce litter and waste by eliminating the use of disposable tissues is an excellent example. Would it be possible to quantify the savings?

The report of the Green Schools in St. Joseph's Primary School Macroom is comprehensive and full of great activity. Well done to the co-ordinator and the pupils who have been successful in working towards their 6th Green Flag: Global Citizenship – Litter and Waste. Congratulations also to the young activists in St. Mary's Secondary School who reached the finals of the Young Environmentalists Awards.

Your award winning Climate Ambassador has now been joined by a second Ambassador and this is, as you say, testimony to the commitment and education that forms part of your information programme on Climate Change – a truly commendable project.

### **Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:**

You are fortunate to have TUS and RSS workers who help to keep Macroom litter free and indeed on adjudication day, there was virtually no litter to be seen. You make trojan efforts and have very regular cleaning and litter pick activities to ensure no black spots can gather. The introduction of a compacting solar bin on Main Street is good but it does not allow residents or visitors to help recycle their waste. Could a recycling bin also be installed?

The ever present dog fouling issue did not appear to be prevalent in Macroom and your vigilant maintenance of the poo bins contributes towards this outcome.

A few small issues were noted such as some old paper laminated planning notices on poles that could be removed, and Castle Hotel and Supervalu signs on the main street that were looking quite dirty and in need of a good clean.

Overall Macroom was clean and tidy on adjudication day and although it is acknowledged that you await the redevelopment plans of the Town Centre and Masseytown regeneration which will undoubtedly make the task easier, you are doing a great job in the meantime.

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

It is good news that Ros Alainn and Meadowlands ghost estate sections are now complete and that work is ongoing on another unfinished estate on the Killarney Road. With the need for housing so important, completing already built houses is one of the easy wins.

The new tree planting at Ros Alainn was evident and as the trees mature, the area will become much greener and provide great biodiversity in an area that has great expanses of grass.

Carraig Ban was also well presented with nicely maintained gardens featuring mature shrubs and colourful planting. Also visited and admired were The Glenties and An Gleann. Credit must also be given to the many residential

houses throughout Macroom both in the town centre and on the outskirts. There were many very well presented homes with healthy, mature trees and shrubs. These all help to create pollinator-friendly corridors foraging pitstops and safe shelter areas for pollinators.

Your aim to increase signage in all areas and develop a plan including Irish where possible as stated in your plan is good news. An important part of this should be to ensure that each residential estate is easily identifiable with a high visibility name plate or sign. The estate name should be bi-lingual and ideally reflect local heritage as noted in the Tidy Towns handbook. There appears to be a growing trend to eliminate the Irish name on new housing estates and that trend needs to be reversed with the help and influence of Tidy Towns groups around the country. As Macroom is a designated Gaeltacht Service Town, you already encourage bi-lingual signage. Well done for the progress you have made in increasing the number of signs in Irish on your tree signage.

The completion of the upgrade of the lane accessing the Biodiversity Garden is good progress and the access was clear and easy.

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

There is no doubting your diligence along the approach roads where the verges were clear of weeds and debris, the road signs were clean and easy to read. The welcome signs and planting surrounding them were a delight. At this time of year, the growth of the trees can tend to cover the speed signs and this was almost the case in some instances.

The graveyard eastern entrance has lovely planting maintained by Foroige. It is good to see perennial and evergreen planting here. You mention a grant application for the wildflower area around the Bull and it will be exciting to see how you will approach this. It was pleasant to view as it is however and you maintain it well. The new Safe School Route has been a great success and the area around the school was particularly well presented. It will be nice to see the new Welcome to Macroom Town sign in place marking your Gold Medal win.

### **Concluding Remarks:**

It was a pleasure to visit Macroom, a town with so much going for it in terms of heritage, green spaces and wonderful buildings that are being used to great effect and upgraded with the help of hard work and input from the Tidy Towns group. Well done for your continued work and community led spirit. You are wished continued success in the Supervalu Tidy Towns competition.