

Tidy Towns Competition 2026

Adjudication Report

Centre:	Ballyboughal - Baile Bachaille	Ref:	155
County:	Dublin	Mark:	374
Category:	B	Date(s):	23/06/2026

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2025	Mark Awarded 2026
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	80	56	58
Streetscape & Public Places	80	46	48
Green Spaces and Landscaping	80	51	54
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	80	38	41
Sustainability – Doing more with less	80	19	21
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	63	65
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	55	45	47
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	55	38	40
TOTAL MARK	600	356	374

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

Fáilte chuig 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 - guímid gach rath oraibh i bhúr dtionscadail amach anseo.

Welcome to the SuperValu Tidy Towns 2026 competition and thank you for your application form, photos, map, and your Ballyboughal 5 Year Plan. Truthfully when we printed your map we were worried... it's definitely NOT what we're used to seeing and we were worried we wouldn't find the projects. But in the end we learnt how it 'worked' and it was fine. We're still not sure however, if it's the best way to show your village. We looked at your website – it's good. Your Ballyboughal Tidy Towns Facebook page has 1.1K followers and the Instagram account has almost 800 followers. We see that both are updated regularly which is crucial for all social media feeds. Instagram is the platform used by the youth so it's important to keep this up to date if you hope to attract some as volunteers. You have a committee of 10 and a voluntary body of 10 which truthfully is small when we see the work undertaken. But we read that you get help from various other organisations when jobs need to be done which is probably a good way to approach the work. Generally people are happy to help 'every now and then', but don't want to commit on a regular basis. As the average age of the villagers is 36.2 hopefully the Tidy Towns volunteers will grow in numbers. Good to read that you are engaged with the various departments and experts in FCC. We note that there is a Fingal Tidy Towns Group – it is a great way to learn from one another, so don't be shy about asking or sharing information and ideas. For future applications just BRIEFLY describe your KEY project (as requested in the Application Form) ... you can tell us more about it in the relevant category. Your participation in the Tidy Towns competition for over 35 years is admirable and having the youth involved, through the local school, is wonderful as it will give them an appreciation of where they live.

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

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

The layout of the village is that of a settlement that grew up around road junctions and we were delighted to see that in the development of the village the character of a single street village has been retained. You have quite a number of historical structures and we looked at the Ballyboughal Heritage Guide which is very informative – 'A Village Steeped in History'. We loved that the rural feel is still retained with residences, businesses, farming, green spaces, etc all interwoven along the streetscape – this is the real feel of a village community. You have some dereliction/unoccupancy in the village and you have presented those in your remit in a very pleasant manner – walls, doors and windows freshly painted. Others are in the process of redevelopment and hopefully these will soon be completed so as to add to the streetscape. It's good to see infill sites in a village or town being developed and brought back to

use. The cow mural on the farm shed is quite beautiful – a tribute to your rural location. Compliments to the farm machinery business for the beautiful wildflower area at the roadside fence. We noted some of your utility boxes were painted (cows and also flowers) – is it your plan to repeat this? Painted utility boxes add beauty and interest to an area. You could have a theme – farming, nature or perhaps well known personalities from your area. The small discrete signs on slate located in a number of planting beds were noted and admired.... this size of sign is all that's needed. Compliments to the artist/ calligrapher. The bright yellow safety barriers looked good – not a colour that's often seen but perfect in locations such as this.

Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:

While you have no large Park you have 7 independent green spaces which you list, in addition to communal green spaces within housing estates. We admire the work which you have undertaken to produce 'The Square' – it's a wonderful space. The bright red of the farm building is wonderful against the green of nature. Thank you for the before and after photos. We see that you have worked with the Village Inn and helped them with the maintenance of their gardens. The Social Inclusion Week where you invited residents to join you and plant spring bulbs was a novel idea. Good to hear that the village was awash with colour in the spring as a result. Take a photo of the spring flowers and include it in next year's application. Good too that the juvenile GAA players planted a spring border along the road. It's wonderful that the monument park was donated by the landowners and now is used for community events, walkers and a picnic spot. We admired that trees were planted in the nature reserve and national school. Is it your plan to plant more. It is also noted that landowners in the village vicinity planted trees as part of National Tree Week. There are several benefits from trees - roosting, nesting and feeding sites for birds and insects and in addition, shelter for humans and having trees in a garden adds monetary value to a house. We note that you are now planting perennials, which we encourage. Good that local businesses and landowners now allow the grass to grow along their fences, which is adding to Ballyboughal's wildflower meadow areas. It's lovely to read that there is a sensory garden in the school and that it is used as an outdoor classroom when weather permits. Thank you for all the photographs showing the results of your hard work.

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

With hedgerows, mature trees, stone walls, Ballyboughal river and the surrounding farmland you have a great variety of habitats for birds, insects and mammals both in the village and along the approach roads. The hedgerows were in full flower when we visited and buzzing with insects. We strongly recommend that you collect seeds as you have such a large variety of local wildflowers growing all around you. We see that you have a Ballyboughal Biodiversity Action Plan which has 20 projects to create wildlife habitats etc. We opened the Action Plan on the website – best of luck with these and please inform us of progress next year. Having a Hedgerow Society is excellent – do you know if they have surveyed them for their age? It would be interesting to read this. You mentioned two swift boxes but we suggest that more could be installed – perhaps at the church and national school? Have any swifts visited the two installed? The Nature Reserve sign is wonderful – all the seasons covered. It's great that the river flows through this area which gives additional biodiversity with the riparian areas. Compliments on the talks/ site visits which you organised for the community – hopefully you had a good response. We note that the Hedgerow Society are installing barn owl boxes – another great project. Well done to the Montessori children for the bug hotel at the 'Pitch and Putt' fence – it was well maintained. While we read of No Mow May it's no harm to adapt this and in some areas have No Mow June and others No Mow July. The rotation of No Mow areas is what's recommended as in this way, a variety of grasses and flowers will bloom in rotation. In wild meadow areas, when the grass is cut in September, it's best to leave it on the ground for a few days and then to remove it. The wildflower seeds get a chance to fall so that they can grow the following year. The bird boxes were noted have you had success with any?

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

When this category was introduced many community groups struggle with the concept but now we all realise that this category is about being aware of our use of the planet's resources and how we can in our daily actions cut down on waste. We ask that TidyTowns organisations lead by example. We see that your Ballyboughal Smart Village plan focuses on biodiversity, rural resilience and heritage preservation. Your planters reservoirs to help harvest water and reduce water wastage. It's good to hear that you have a Men's Shed who have assisted you with planter repairs. We love when school children are involved in planting, and we see that the parents association have assisted in educating them in how to grow seeds and tended plants. Are you involved in this? Perhaps volunteer? Rainwater is collected and used in their planters. We're also delighted to see that they collect leaves in the school leaf mould cages. What is the upcycling competition that you run in the school? We admired the Slí na Sceacha walk organised by the Ballyboughal Hedgerow Society – we walked a little part of it. When it reaches a road a few discrete signs along the way advising the visitor of the route could be added. Just a painted arrow on the road or fence is all that's needed. It is kind of the pub management to donate all their deposit return scheme empty bottles and cans to you for your funds. We also noted that you have a bottle cage in the GAA grounds and that you collect these too. We see that you now are using perennial plants which will cut down on waste associated with annuals. We have no doubt that members in their own gardens regularly remove plants, which are no longer needed, including those that have spread. Encourage residents to put them in pots and make them available for a swap - 'Take a plant, Leave a plant', similar to the book swap that we see. We noted your Jotform composter and wonder, as you are close to farmland, if you can avail of organic fertiliser? To have your polytunnel 2.5k from the village is not really very far. It's great that you were given permission by the farmer to locate it in his field.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

You are involved in the annual 'An Taisce National Spring Clean' event. We encourage groups to take part in nationwide clean-up events as when the community sees the volunteers in their hi viz vests it brings to mind the need to be vigilant in the disposal of waste. We are delighted to report that when we visited the village was a virtually litter free. Please compliment your volunteers and residents on the presentation of the village. Have you set days for volunteers to attend organised litter picks? The presence of volunteers on the streets on a regular basis, helps to encourage the public to be observant in their litter disposal. Targeting a problem area with bins is commendable and hopefully Cois Sruthain walkway has benefited. Where dog fouling is a problem we suggest that instead of signs, which are clutter in the streetscape, you paint 'Clean Up After Your Dog' signs on the pavements. We have been told by other groups that this is more successful than signage. Your Biodiversity on Ballyboughal River sign is HUGE.... rethink this as remember signage detracts for a streetscape. Trim back the growth from in front of the bees sign and bug hotel in the Monument Garden. We noted some weed growth in a few areas which was a pity as it detracted somewhat from the areas. We also noted that chemical weed control had been used – please advise the residents/businesses against this as the resulting burnt grass is unsightly.

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

Along the streetscape, houses and businesses are interspersed, but the majority of the residential areas are housing estates located adjacent to the Main Streets or on the outskirts of the village. You mention that 68% of your housing was constructed after 2001. This has seen a huge change in your village in terms of population, but as we said earlier, this massive development has not distracted from the single street character of the village. The majority of the houses along the Main Street are individual dwellings set in sites with front, rear and side gardens. Many of these had been recently painted, including boundary walls and fences. Well matured landscaped gardens consisted of pollinator friendly herbaceous borders and shrubs, grass, and mature trees. We visited a number of the housing estates and here too, in general, residents had presented their properties so as to add to the streetscape. Some had wonderful floral displays in planting beds while others had planters and window boxes adorning their properties. We noted a few who had ornamental trees which gave additional drama to the streetscape. Are there residents' associations in all of these estates? It's always encouraging, and a positive move, when residents take ownership of the areas where they live as this will result, not only in their own gardens being cared for, but also the communal open space being well-maintained and welcoming. We admired that hedging had been planted along a blank wall in Cois Sruthain. We encourage Tidy Towns groups and residents' associations to plant climbers on blank walls along the entrance roads or beside communal open spaces, which will not only provide pollinator, friendly planting for our birds and insects, but also remove the necessity to paint/ maintain the wall. We loved the open space in Doorogue Woods Estate with the circular path and green area interspersed with trees. Check stakes and ties and remove if no longer needed. It has three name signs – perhaps remove two and just leave the beautiful cut stone sign to announce its presence.

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

You are situated on R108 and on the day we visited we are delighted to report that motorists respected the 50K speed limit which made your village feel extremely safe for the pedestrian. The entrance to the village from the south along the R108 with mature trees on both side is extremely pleasant. You have listed the work, which you and your volunteers undertake along the roads which consists of hedge planting, litter picking, path sweeping, verge maintenance, riverbank clearing, bulb and flower planting etc. The grass margins should be cut from the 50km signs on all entrance roads to the village as this treatment informs motorists that they are entering a settlement and so must reduce speed. A narrow strip is all that's required - we suggest 600 mm – and the area between this and the hedges are left unmown. We admired the name stone in the green space in front of the cottages at the entrance to Ballyboughal. It's good that footpaths extend from the outskirts of the village into the centre making it safe for pedestrians.

Concluding Remarks:

Firstly, when we visited the church we noted the sound – bees buzzing! Then on the floor we saw a number of dying bees. Hopefully by now this swarm has been rescued and rehoused.

We thoroughly enjoyed visiting your village ... but we have a couple of suggestions for 2027.

- Select which category is best for a project and put it there – e.g. you had the installation of swift boxes in 'Community Involvement and Planning' when truthfully it would be best in 'Nature and Biodiversity'. It also appeared in 'Streetscapes and Public Places'. Please select the BEST category and don't repeat the project in another category – this is just confusing for all. And there were many, many others in the incorrect category.
- As we said above your map is pictorial and truthfully a bit confusing. Next year just use a normal map format – one drawn by hand is acceptable.
- The map should fill an A4 page and a north point is needed. Put the legend of the projects on the same page if possible – there's always space! We were wondering why you had two legend with projects indicated on both .. one is all that's needed. If you wish a legend of the main structures could be added, but we feel this is probably unnecessary as your village is quite compact.
- In the Application Form please number the projects New (N1, N2, N3 etc) and M (M1, M2, M3 etc). This same numbering system to be used to indicate the locations of these projects on a map – N1, N2, N3 etc and M1, M2, M3 etc. If you wish you can colour code the various categories to make it even clearer. This is to help the adjudicators to negotiate their way around your village and see the various projects or locations of projects. And remember, our time is limited, so only select the projects you wish us to see to include in you map.
- We recommend that you make a Five-Year Plan which concurs with the categories in the Tidy Towns application form. Don't worry if you don't have projects/activities under each category. We recommend a Five-Year Plan rather than a Three-Year Plan as many activities/projects take longer than three years to be completed. The

plan can show who on the committee will lead the activity/project, collaborators names (you'll need help from state and semi-state organisations with many of the projects), and it will also show progress each year with a tick saying it was undertaken/completed. We suggest this is better as it will show progress annually.

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. Thank you for entering the SuperValu Tidy Towns 2026 competition. It was a pleasure to visit and adjudicate Ballyboughal.