

Tidy Towns Competition 2026

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Ballymun - Baile Munna** Ref: **854**
County: **Dublin** Mark: **370**
Category: **G** Date(s): **06/06/2026**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2025	Mark Awarded 2026
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	80	53	55
Streetscape & Public Places	80	46	47
Green Spaces and Landscaping	80	48	49
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	80	49	52
Sustainability – Doing more with less	80	36	38
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	49	50
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	55	39	40
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	55	38	39
TOTAL MARK	600	358	370

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.”

Ballymun Tidy Towns are very welcome to the 2026 Supervalu Tidy Towns competition and thank you for your entry. You have been taking part in the competition for 20 years and your work in those years has brought together the community, engendered a sense of pride of place and raised an awareness of the need to care for the local environment.

Your application form was packed full of information and news about events, organisations, new businesses and groups, club activities and initiatives. Each event or project was marked as M (maintained) or N (New). This made for great reading and gave a sense of the vibrant and engaged community that Ballymun is with lots going on. For your adjudicator however, it was difficult to decipher the work of the Tidy Towns group as opposed to general events and it is the projects undertaken by the Tidy Towns group (sometimes in conjunction with others) that your adjudicator needs to know about in order to award marks under each category. The entry form at 54 pages was too long and this is because of the huge amount of detail included. You are encouraged to try and reduce the number of pages in future submissions.

You have redrafted the map based on previous adjudicators comments and have put a lot of work into the new map. It was easy to find the various landmarks in Ballymun but not to find Tidy Towns projects. Please include a legend with just your projects clearly noted.

The Tidy Towns Handbook is a valuable resource to which you can refer for guidance in these matters. For example the guide to numbering your projects states:

“When numbering projects, your first project under Streetscape & Public Places should be numbered 1, and carry this numeric sequence into subsequent categories. Please ensure you include a legend with your map outlining all your projects and classifying them as new (N) or maintenance (M)”.

Your very well structured committee with 9 members also has up to 120 volunteers and you have taken the advice of last year's adjudicator to draw up a Volunteer Policy. This was a wise decision and you have included a copy of the policy with your entry form. You have set out your schedule of meetings as a committee, the AGM, the liaison meetings with DCC and you have established sub committees as needed for various events or projects. This shows an organised and effective group and is to be commended.

Your revised 2026-2029 plan is a comprehensive schedule divided into the categories of the Tidy Towns competition and is informative and ambitious which is as it should be.

The myriad events that take place during the year and in which you are involved is most impressive. Your annual community BBQ as well as a Christmas dinner to thank volunteers for their hard work during the year is a great idea and it is good to see that you are an inclusive and welcoming group who welcome members of the local direct provision community who work with you as volunteers.

You have listed a great number of agencies, businesses and bodies who support you and itemised the support they give through funding, help with specific projects and by providing equipment or refreshments. Your communication methods are varied and you have a great social media presence with regular posts about your work and events taking place in Ballymun.

You hope to have a more developed Junior Tidy Towns in the future working with the TY students as well as those who are working towards their An Gaisce awards. The local scout group has joined you on occasion to help with clean-ups. The schools in Ballymun also take part in the Picker Pals initiative. Do the schools take part in the Green Schools programme?

Your main project this year has been the Better Ballymun Day of Action, an event that is now in its 6th year. The list of projects carried out and the photographs showing the work and the results is wonderful and a great way to bring the community together to demonstrate what teamwork can achieve. A project such as this takes a considerable amount of planning, organisation and communication so well done to all involved.

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

Adjudication day took place on a wet and windy Saturday afternoon but nevertheless there was plenty of activity and it was easy to see the tremendous changes that have taken place with the Ballymun Regeneration project including a renovated town centre, residential estates as well as schools, parks, sports facilities, renewed shopping areas and two hotels all providing great facilities alongside the vast green spaces that provide the foundations for a Ballymun with much to be proud of.

The Ballymun Plaza is a fine development and The Axis Community Arts Centre a wonderful facility for the local residents with its theatre, arts gallery, studios for dance and music, café, conference facilities and creche – it acts as a community hub and the name is very fitting given that the hope is that community would revolve around it.

The Ballymun Library is another fine building, and it is great to see that there are new disabled and Age Friendly parking spaces now in place.

There were some great murals to be seen, and the treatment of the recycling bins was particularly impressive. Not only do they give a great splash of colour but also hopefully deter graffiti.

The upgrade of the paths in Coultry Park are a huge improvement. It is hoped that drainage has been allowed for. The area in front of the Plaza had some very large puddles of water from the rain and one wonders what provision has been made for drainage, if any.

The Better Ballymun by Trinity Comp students edited by Karl Parkinson was much admired and very telling. It shows the desire of the younger generation to live in a better environment and brings a lot of hope.

It was great to see the clean and fresh Community Notice Board that is available for any community notices and you encourage members of the community to send you a message if they wish to put a notice up.

Ballymun did exceptionally well in the Dublin City Neighbourhood Awards last year and it is no wonder given the initiatives and great groups you have in Ballymun – well done to all the winners.

The Rediscovery Centre has been the 'go to' for this adjudicator for a long time and is an inspiration to all in terms of reuse, repurpose and effectively promoting the circular economy. As ever the outside space here is beautifully maintained with a living wall, a pond and great containers with pollinator friendly planting. The visit of Mary Robinson who was presented with a hand-crafted commemorative piece made with repurposed chair legs to celebrate her work is testament to the wonderful work that the centre does.

The mural outside the Virgin Mary Girls' School was very much admired and as it features Ballymun biodiversity in all its forms, it is highly appropriate.

Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:

The planting on either side of the recycling bins was noted. Unfortunately, there was still dumping in the area and this was ruining the plants. Perhaps you might consider some robust shrubs instead of the small plants. These are less likely to have bags dumped on them and would look well. There are plenty of pollinator friendly shrubs that would fit the bill.

The City Farm Ballymun held another Harvest Festival at Muck and Magic and was a celebration to share knowledge under the trees, enjoy the farm animals and showcase fresh garden produce. Unfortunately, the Muck and Magic Community Garden was closed on adjudication day but it was possible to see from the outside the wonderful space it is for the community to learn from and be involved with.

The flower beds on Balbutcher Lane were visited and very much admired. The work here was a collaboration with Global Action Plan and volunteers from Logicalis together with Ballymun Tidy Towns and the results were excellent. Although in general it is preferred that containers are used only on hard surfaces where planting directly into the ground is not possible, on this occasion the large wooden planters were quite a statement in themselves and looked very well.

It is good to know that you are continuing to plant trees around Ballymun in collaboration with Dublin City Council Parks and Landscaping personnel and this year trees were planted near the Ballymun Library. 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 to ensure the success of the trees.

Planting in the Ballymun Plaza was excellent and gave a great sense of movement, space and biodiversity. It is important to try and consider using planters with a cohesive design to improve and harmonise the visual appearance. For example, the large wooden planters with trees have alongside them three-tiered plastic planters with a variety of plants. It would be nice to see planters that share a common aesthetic to create a more visually appealing space.

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

The Ballymun Biodiversity Action Group (BBAG) is a subcommittee of the Ballymun Tidy Towns group and its members bring a vast and varied range of experience and knowledge and include a representative from the City Farm, Muck and Magic Community Garden, local ornithologists, horticulturalists, the Global Action Plan and Rediscovery representatives and a DCC elected councillor.

This year you held Ballymun in Bloom on 22 May and sold pollinator friendly plants at cost as well as offering gardening advice to the general public. The BBAG provided information on the Biodiversity Action Plan and gave tips on everyday actions to increase biodiversity. They also announced the launch of the Ballymun Seed Library in March 2026 working with the staff of Ballymun Library. This project is a great idea and a worthy project, and we look forward to hearing details of its success in future submissions.

The myriad activities and projects undertaken by the BBAG is tremendous and include the creation of their first pocket forest and heritage orchard, continued work on a wildlife pond, building a dead hedge and bug hotel as well as attending foraging workshops, a leaf composting workshop and participating in the annual Buzzfest.

An issue that was concerning to your adjudicator was the amount of herbicide that had been used in a number of areas. Outside the Muck & Magic Gardens, it had been used on *Rubus tricolor*, it was evident the length of the bank under the trees on Coultrey Park and underneath many trees along the roads. These are just some of the areas its use was noted. Herbicide use can significantly contribute to biodiversity loss by negatively impacting various organisms and ecosystems. This includes direct impacts on plants, animals, and soil health, as well as indirect effects through habitat alteration and food web disruptions. The use of herbicides can lead to a decrease in the variety of species (both plant and animal) in an area, impacting the overall health and stability of ecosystems. You are encouraged to liaise with the agencies who have been using the herbicide with the aim of halting its use unless absolutely necessary.

It is great to see that you are entering the Local Authority Pollinator Award and you are wished well.

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

You are fortunate to have so many great enterprises in Ballymun that live and breathe sustainability including the aforementioned Rediscovery Centre who hold a Sustainable Christmas Fair every year, and were the venue for the Fairbruary celebration of Fairtrade Month. A Bike Maintenance Workshop coupled with Seachtain na Gaeilge was inspired and a great idea that will hopefully be repeated.

You use harvested rainwater for maintaining plants and the wire containers for collecting leaves to make leaf mould were noted in strategic locations. The Men's Shed refurbished a lovely garden bench that will be placed in the Sillogue Community Centre in memory of a deceased local community activist as well as repurposing some timber to make Christmas decorations and bird boxes. Thanks Hun, Ballymun Swap took place in the Axis in September. You have the opportunity to raise awareness in the community through your social media platforms. Encourage residents and visitors alike to stop buying or using single use plastic, ask them to read the small print on detergents and washing up liquids before using them (some say harmful to aquatic life with long lasting effects), advise them how much water is wasted when the tap is left on when brushing teeth. Often small snippets of information help people to realise that small changes can make a difference and you are in the perfect position to inform and encourage your community to make those changes.

Well done for entering the EPA Circular Economy Awards and the best of luck.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

One of the core actions of most Tidy Towns groups is the regular cleaning and litter picks and Ballymun is no exception. You have weekly clean ups on Saturday mornings with time for a chat and a coffee afterwards. The social aspect is most important for the volunteers.

You liaise with IBAL to identify the main causes for the poor categorisation in the IBAL surveys and the black spots identified have been tackled by DCC contractors and volunteers on Better Ballymun Day. The landscaping that was carried out has resulted, you feel, in a considerable improvement in the litter issue and hopefully this will be the case.

There were some areas noted to have littering on adjudication day but in general the vast majority of spaces were clean and relatively litter free. Well done to the Ballymun Kickhams G.A.C. under 14's team who worked with you to do a litter pick earlier this year.

Do any of the schools or other clubs also get involved?

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

There is an enormous amount of residential development due to take place in Ballymun. It is hoped that the contractors are cognisant of the desire of the local population to maintain green spaces that are environmentally friendly and select planting and trees that are conducive to a rich biodiversity. It is at the early stages of development that you can use your influence to ensure this happens. It is also a good time to engage and ensure that all housing developments names are bi-lingual.

Belclare Lawns was a treat to visit. The work and care taken by the local residents in conjunction with Dublin City Council Public Domain Team is exceptional and must be so nice for the residents and visitors to use.

The DCC Public Domain Team also worked with a local horticulturalist and the residents of Whiteacre Place to support a clean-up and planting enhancement project which has made a huge difference to the visual appeal of the area.

Dane Road residents, Ard na Meala Court and Belcurris Park were all visited and the houses were generally well maintained and green spaces neat and tidy.

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

The approach roads to Ballymun are well maintained. The spring bulbs on the southern approach road must make a great display in the spring and the welcome signs look well. You are hoping to have a bigger welcome sign that is bi-lingual on the central medium near the Library and have been in discussion with DCC in this regard.

The 'Protected Junction' at Balbutcher Lane/Hampton Woods looks well and this is the first of this type of junction seen by the adjudicator.

As the M50 approach is under the remit of Fingal County Council you liaise with them regarding the landscaping and upkeep of this area. You encourage No Mow, May and plant native hedgerows and you maintain the planters here also. The approach from Santry Avenue sign and planter is maintained by a local resident and it is very nicely kept. It is a great help to your group when residents are happy to take on individual projects close to home that they can manage in their own time – a very inclusive system.

Concluding Remarks:

It is great to hear that as a group you are understandably proud of your achievements to date but you continue to learn and grow, working with all stakeholders, encouraging volunteering, and aiming to make Ballymun fully sustainable in the future. It was a pleasure to visit Ballymun as an adjudicator and to see fully the work that you have undertaken. You are to be commended for your dedication and hard work on behalf of the community and encouraged to keep up the good work.