

Tidy Towns Competition 2026

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Donabate - Domhnach Bât** Ref: **25**
County: **Dublin** Mark: **314**
Category: **F** Date(s): **01/07/2026**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2025	Mark Awarded 2026
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	80	47	49
Streetscape & Public Places	80	37	39
Green Spaces and Landscaping	80	41	43
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	80	42	44
Sustainability – Doing more with less	80	19	21
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	47	49
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	55	34	36
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	55	32	33
TOTAL MARK	600	299	314

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 which included photos, a map and suggested route instructions ... which we followed; thank you for that. We looked up donabateportranetidytowns as a Facebook address but didn't find one. We did find a Donabate Tidy Towns page (<https://www.facebook.com/donabatetidytowns/>) which we assume is you? You have 1.1 followers (we loved the logo), but you're only following 3. We advise that you increase this and follow other TidyTowns groups where you will get ideas for activities that you too can undertake. Remember to update your social media regularly to keep the community interested - this is vital for all social media feeds. For an area of your size your committee of five is small. But truthfully, this is no harm as it is important to have volunteers who assist when work needs to be completed. Your volunteer force of 20 is admirable but it would be excellent to have more. You need to advertise (in local shops, hair salons, barber shops, public houses, etc.) that volunteers are welcome just to help with one project. Many people don't want to have a long-term commitment and will happily help for a short while when asked. Also have more activities where the public can join in – bat walks, bird walks, costal walks, wood walks, composting workshop, etc etc. This will also increase your profile which may result in new volunteers. You list state and semi-state organisations, businesses, schools and community groups who support you. We are delighted to see that you are also in contact with your local schools and youth groups. This is your fourth year participating in the Tidy Towns competition and we have no doubt that in the intervening years you have seen an improvement in the beauty of your streetscape in addition to progress in your community with regards to knowledge of sustainability, biodiversity and environmental management. We are delighted that our reports are of help to you and we encourage you to keep up the good work.

See Concluding Remarks for further advice.

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

Surrounded by the green spaces of Newbridge Demesne, Turvey Nature Reserve and Donabate, Beaverstown golf courses, your village core is quite compact. In addition to the buildings in Newbridge Demesne there are a number of historical structure and buildings in Donabate – those associated with the railway, various houses and wonderful cast iron water pumps one of which has been recently 'unearthed' from a 'sea of trees'. As a village you are almost self-sufficient - schools, retail establishments, churches, library, community centre and a train station. With a mix of single and two storey vernacular residences and modern businesses sitting side by side the village core is quite

unique. Many of the businesses had wonderful floral displays in planters, hanging baskets or window boxes which gave great colour and movement to the street. The mural on the large building near the train station was admired but it would be better to have this building re-used and hopefully that will happen shortly. It's important to see vacancy and dereliction being acted upon and seeing either the buildings been refurbished or new development taking place is rewarding for the community. We were delighted to see that an historical building now houses your new library. There are quite a number of utility boxes along your streetscape many which have graffiti. These are unpleasant pieces of 'furniture' which, unfortunately, must exist along the streetscape. Elsewhere, Tidy Towns groups have painted these with pictures which relate to their areas. Perhaps look at the possibility of painting them with historical scenes, personalities or buildings relating to your area. Those in the vicinity of your planting beds could have floral themes. Needless to say permission from the utility provider is necessary before any work is undertaken. The murals along the wall to the Community Centre entrance was wonderful. We're assuming this was carried out by students of the school? Please thank them for visually improving this otherwise very dull area. Equally the visual treatment, of what we think is an independent living establishment? was admired. The walls at the water pump beside Somerton housing estate needs to be repaired.

Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:

You have quite a number of green spaces with large mature trees in Donabate which give the overall area a luscious feel. Newbridge Demesne, golf courses and the grounds of St. Patrick's and St. Ita's are around you. We admired 'the big tree' at Martin's Lane. Within the village itself we visited quite a few green areas and were pleasantly surprised by the standard of maintenance carried out. Clearly these green spaces are important for the communities that surround them. It's wonderful to see that there is a significant number of flowerbeds and patches maintained by individual volunteers. There is a distinct lack of trees on some of your roads which would benefit both visually and environmentally from them – e.g. the roads around the entrances to Gaelscoil na Mara, Coláiste Pobail Domhnach Beathach, and the vehicular entrance to Donabate Community and Leisure Centre. The carpark of the Community Centre also needs to be broken up with tree planting. We suggest that you look at your streets and roads (including your bypass road), and see area where tree would be of benefit i.e. undertake a 'Street Tree Canopy Survey' and give the results to FCC for implementation. The guerilla garden taken over by the elves was admired – we have no doubt that every child who passes stops to see what changes the elves have made. The planting bed along the entrance to the graveyard was very beautiful. A wonderful array of pollinator-friendly colourful flowers – hooker's fleabane (*Inula hookeri*), garden speedwell (*Veronica longifolia*), ox-eye daisy, (*leucanthemum vulgare*) etc.

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

With the woodlands, parks, green spaces, mature trees, hedgerows and streams in addition to the numerous stone walls, you have a great selection of habitats for insect, birds, mammals and invertebrates. In addition north of Donabate is the SAC and SPA of Rogerstown Estuary with its mudflats and sandflats and resident and migratory bird population. We see that you have studied your area well and that you are aware of the importance of biodiversity corridors. It might be interesting to study old maps and see where you have historical hedgerows and where they can be extended to improve these biodiversity corridors. It is excellent that you have the former Biodiversity Officer to assist you and give you expert advice on plant selection and location. Have you undertaken a Biodiversity Action Plan? As your area is rich in nature and biodiversity, it is important that this is not lost, and that actions are undertaken to preserve the habitats you have and possibly, hopefully, to improve them. You will need to employ a professional to undertake this for you, but in the meantime, we encourage you to keep up your good work. Have you had any success with your bird boxes? Let us know and next year's application. We also wonder if you are undertaking, along with other Tidy Towns groups, FCC's swift survey? Are there any beekeepers in your area? Enquire and let us know. The importance of our pollinators is now widely accepted, and we question if your golf clubs have adopted the principals of the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan. We hope that they no longer use chemical weed control? This is something you might check and report next year. It was lovely to hear the bird song as we walked through Newbridge Demesne – Eurasian black cap, house sparrow, chaffinch, robin, magpie etc. and of course herring gull.

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

Very often this category of Sustainability, is one where Tidy Towns groups are confused. This category is about tackling the growing waste mountain that is creating problems of pollution, unwanted land use, and the use of dwindling resources. It is a global and also a local problem. We need to move quickly to a zero-waste society and we encourage Tidy Towns groups to lead by example. Flower sharing and vegetable growing are all superb saving measures which can be undertaken by the wider community and we are delighted to see that many residents have donated plants to you. Perhaps organise a 'Take one, Leave one' so that gardeners who are dividing plants can put them into pots and leave them in an area for other gardeners to take. Nice to see that you have a swap shop which runs once a month. We looked on your Facebook page for information but didn't see any – perhaps we missed it. Is there a Men's Shed in Donabate? We see that you used recycled wood for bird boxes. We suggest that you organise walks relating to this category e.g. foraging walks are wonderful – children and adults learning about the food that nature provides for free along our hedgerows and in our fields - elderflowers, elderberries, mushrooms, blackberries etc. We noticed the planting tyres along the roads. While they are not containers we approve of we compliment the school who made the effort. Tyres should be recycled and made into street furniture. We tried to charge our phone on the Solar Rechargeable Bench – nothing works. Have it repaired or ask FCC to remove it and put in a 'normal' bench. The water butts at every downpipe in St Patrick's Girl's NS were noted – compliments to the teacher.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

We love the mural on your Tidy Towns container with the message which says it all – 'Keep it Clean'. The mural on the rear side is quite beautiful showing trees, grassland, and insect life but needs to be freshened up. As your village is one which receives a large volume of visitor during the summer months Tidiness and Litter Control are vital. Your area is a mix of residential, commercial and educational centres, and we appreciate that you have quite a large land area to coordinate in terms of Tidiness and Litter Control. We assume that your Tidy Town volunteers take part in the nationwide An-Taisce Spring Clean-Up event? Seeing your volunteers in their hi viz clothing would focus the mind of the general public on the high amount of litter/fly tipping/ dumping that occurs nationally and we would hope that it would encourage individuals to dispose of their waste correctly. We see that you have a problem with unauthorised advertising. Ask FCC to provide a 2.4 x 2.4 Community Notice board on the approach roads to Donabate and then all notices are 'legally' placed there. The removal of those you see along the streets is then justified. While it is good to see residents informally litter picking during the daily walks, school runs or while tending planted areas, the formality of the little pick days are important. Finishing the hour's work with the social interaction of a cuppa is always a treat for the volunteers. Perhaps one of your business establishments would sponsor a cuppa after the little pick? Your little pick volunteers are doing a good job, as we are delighted to report, that when we visited, that there was only a small amount of litter in your area. Unfortunately some weed growth was noted at wall / path / and road junctions which gave a slight unkempt feel to some areas. Ask your volunteers to bring a hoe or spade and a stiff brush with them and also to remove weed growth.

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

The residential accommodation in Donabate along the main roads consists of individual or detached houses set in their own sites. In addition there are a large number of mature housing estates located within walking distance of the village core. We see that Donabate is now being developed with almost 3,000 residential units and when we visited we noticed that some of these were nearing completion. This large number will make an enormous impact on your village – but also perhaps new volunteers will join you! We visited quite a few of your estates – Somerton, Beverton, Beresford, Carr's Mill, The Priors etc. and were impressed with entrances and also with the attention that house owners paid not only to their individual gardens, but also to the areas immediately outside them. Many of the houses had been freshly painted, including their boundary walls or fences which made a positive contribution to the area. In general gardens were well maintained and had herbaceous pollinator-friendly borders and neatly cut grass. Some home owners had allowed the grass to grow a little and so had clover, daisies and buttercups growing in the grass attracting our pollinators. We admired the entrance to The Priory – a wonderful pollinator bed. We suggest that the timber fencing is cut to the top of the large timber rails so that the beauty of the garden can be better seen. We admired the cutting regime around the trees in the open spaces – a diameter of approximately 1.2M of uncut grass around each mature tree. There are a few blank walls along entrance roads and adjacent to communal open spaces which would benefit from climbing plants, such as variegated ivy, pyracantha, wisteria etc. This will not only reduce the need for maintenance of the wall, but will also be good for our pollinators.

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

We entered Donabate from the west and were greeted by great views across the countryside of fields of ripened corn. Newbridge Demesne is indeed a wonderful asset to have and we see that a new pedestrian gate beside the Maxol SS has been created which has improved accessibility to the estate for your community. There are numerous pedestrian linkages which we were delighted to notice, both in housing estate and also from the village to the sports pitches of the GAA across the by-pass road. Along a number of roads we saw well-trimmed hedgerows and mature trees which add to the area. With the increase of residential units there will be in need for additional pedestrian activated crossings. This is something you should examine with the roads engineers of FCC. We admired the name stones at the entrance to the village but we recommend that planting is to the sides and rear and this is allowed to grow tall. Any planting to the front must be very low so that it does not obstruct the name of the village. Along the main roads, surfaces and road markings were presentable although some of the pink cycle routes need to be repainted at road junctions as they were badly worn. To be honest, we didn't notice any cyclists except a few children on side roads. Are these roads too dangerous? The junctions appeared to be extremely wide, encouraging motorists to drive quickly. On one road we noticed a chicane type design to slow down traffic. We love solutions such as this and encourage your LA engineers to do it elsewhere as they really do work making it safer for the pedestrian. Have you any 'Age Friendly' parking bays? We looked but didn't notice any. Your roundabouts need to be landscaped with planting, including trees as at present they are quite bland and characterless – hopefully this is in hand?

Concluding Remarks:

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

- We visited Donabate Town Centre and looked at the noticeboard for information about Donabate Tidy Towns - nothing. Put your notices here and change them regularly to inform the community of your activities.
- Increase the size of your map – fill an A4 page with it. Also the Legend on your map needs to be amended. We recommend that you have two - one legend indicating structures, etc and then a separate legend for your project locations.
- If you wish you can colour code the various categories to make your application clearer and then add numbers to your projects: New – N1, N2, N3 etc and Maintained M1, M2, M3 etc. You don't to have lots of projects indicated on your map, just the ones you want us to visit and where most of your efforts were applied.
- We strongly recommend that, following your AGM to which you invite the community, you make out a Five-Year Plan showing activities or projects which you wish to undertake under the various categories. This will

help you to focus on the developments you want for Donabate. When making your plan show who on the committee will lead the activity/project. Also show collaborators names (you'll need help from state and semi-state organisations with many of the projects). Put a tick each year after the topic when a project or activity has been undertaken/completed. We suggest this is best, 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 Donabate.