

# Tidy Towns Competition 2026

## Adjudication Report

|           |                                   |          |                   |
|-----------|-----------------------------------|----------|-------------------|
| Centre:   | <b>Drumcondra - Droim Conrach</b> | Ref:     | <b>1322</b>       |
| County:   | <b>Dublin</b>                     | Mark:    | <b>239</b>        |
| Category: | <b>E</b>                          | Date(s): | <b>15/07/2026</b> |

|                                           | <b>Maximum Mark</b> | <b>Mark Awarded 2026</b> |
|-------------------------------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|
| Community – Your Planning and Involvement | 80                  | 38                       |
| Streetscape & Public Places               | 80                  | 34                       |
| Green Spaces and Landscaping              | 80                  | 34                       |
| Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality  | 80                  | 25                       |
| Sustainability – Doing more with less     | 80                  | 20                       |
| Tidiness and Litter Control               | 90                  | 42                       |
| Residential Streets & Housing Areas       | 55                  | 23                       |
| Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes           | 55                  | 23                       |
| <b>TOTAL MARK</b>                         | <b>600</b>          | <b>239</b>               |

### 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 with photos, your map and our Strategic Five Year Plan. We LOVE when new groups enter the SuperValu Tidy Towns competition as it means that residents have joined together to make their area a better place for all. We admired your Five Year Plan but suggest that in addition to collaborators you also have a column which indicates the committee member who will lead/take charge of advancing the project/action. In this was the jobs are equally distributed amongst committee members and also it ensures that the projects/actions are advanced in a timely fashion. You are a committee of 7 with a voluntary force of 12 which is wonderful for a new committee. You tell us that regularly new volunteers help out which is good to hear. We tried, unsuccessfully, to open your Facebook.com/Drumcondra20 page ... has it been removed? You need to have a strong active social media presence to attract new volunteers by 'advertising' what you do. It's very important to keep it up to date and to promote the work you are doing. Add photos of flowers, trees, insects, vegetables growing, your volunteers working etc. etc. ... anything that relates to your area and your work. Your website opened successfully and we read of the success of the beautiful Lemon Square (which we had visited before opening your website!). Instagram is another popular platform for younger people so in time perhaps open a page here too. Good that you have the support of state and semi-state organisations, local businesses and local schools and also of DCU students. Wonderful to see you made a Drumcondra Calendar as a fund raising method for the group. Next year show us some more photos – the ones included in the Landscaping category were beautiful. We wish you the very best and hope that the comments in this report are helpful. Compliments on the map - hand drawn, easily read, with main roads and key buildings clearly marked. The legend was equally clear and your project locations accurately numbered and marked. Well done.

See Concluding Remarks for advice for your 2027 application and map.

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

Your area is quite large and your main road is a mix of residential and commercial developments which intertwine seamlessly. The commercial area of the village is separated by a line of residences. To the north are primarily restaurants, pubs, etc and to the south, the main village, has a variety of retail premises in addition to offices and businesses. The imposing granite wall of St. Pat's Training College with its row of mature trees behind adds to the beauty of your streetscape. You have a number of buildings of architectural merit in your area – Corpus Christi RC church and adjacent NS, the old Whitehall Garda Station (now the State Pathologist's offices), the Cofl church of

St. John the Baptist, Drumcondra Library, the buildings of the DCU St. Pat's and All Hallows Campuses etc etc. In time a Heritage Trail should be undertaken which will bring the visitor around your area – check the Building of Ireland website for details of items and structures of architectural, artistic, social, historical and technical interest. The beautiful tiling on the façades of Kennedy's Public House and also the old Youkstetter's shop were admired. Many of your commercial premises had made considerable efforts to present their properties in support of your work and had wonderful floral displays in hanging baskets, window boxes or planters. Please commend them for making such a wonderful effort. It would be good to see more pollinator, friendly planting in these displays in the coming years and we suggest that you advise them of suitable flowers. We noted some of the utility boxes have been painted with artistic themes. We recommend that you continue with this and select a theme for them which relates to Drumcondra – historic buildings, personalities, poets/artists, nature etc. etc.

While normally we don't comment on Future Plans (FPs) we must refer to your FP12 and FP14. These will TOTALLY transform the village heart and it will be wonderful when these projects are undertaken. We suggest however that you look more to 'parklet' type constructions instead of the seats in the FP12 proposal as they are more conducive as community meeting and chatting spaces which is what this village area lacks.

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

Griffith Park is a wonderful space and on the day we visited in addition to the numerous seats dotted along the pathways, people were sitting on the grass and enjoying the sun. Children played in the playground while adults used the adult exercise equipment. The wonderful Tram café was busy with ice cream sales. We were delighted to see there are public toilet facilities in this park as often they don't exist in public parks. Close by is Our Lady's Park with the beautifully planted flower beds which are visible to the pedestrians walking along the adjacent footpath. We loved the flags – Ireland, Leinster and the EU - flying high. The River Tolka flows through both parks and this, along with the mature trees (beautiful row of Populus Poplars in Our Lady's Park) helped to reduce the ambient temperature. Our Lady's park is lacking in seats and as it is closest to the main village additional seating would be of benefit to those who work locally. The mowing regime is severe in both parks and we suggest that areas are allowed to develop as wildflower meadows. These to be cut in spring and autumn and the then grass removed. Needless to say a litter pick is undertaken before the cutting in the autumn as litter WILL be in the long grasses. After a couple of years this will develop into a beautiful wildflower meadow. So ..... be patient. There are a number of other beautiful green open spaces – the grounds of Corpus Christi church, and the grounds of All Hallows and St. Pat's - where your community can visit and enjoy. The wonderful Platanus occidentalis American Sycamore double tree lined avenue of Griffith Avenue is always a pleasure to visit, whether it be in winter or summer. Now in summer during these hot days it is a refuge for those walking or running due to the wonderful shade provided. There are other areas of mature tree lined avenues which in this time of climate change will provide shade from the summer sun and shelter from the winter rains. The planters and hanging baskets where in full flower and quite beautiful. We recommend that you use some trailing plants in the planters as truthfully planters should be hidden (or almost hidden) by the plants. The new Lemon Square is stunning. We know it is a work progress and assume that the next part of the project is the insertion of seating, so that the community can sit and relax in this wonderful environment.

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

Open parkland, mature gardens, hedgerows, wonderful mature trees, and stone structures and walls are habitats for your birds, insects and small mammals. We see that already you are aware of the richness of your flora and fauna and now you need to inform the public. While we are not in favour of signage (it clutters the landscape and streetscape) it can be undertaken in a controlled manner. We suggest that you carefully select types and locations for your signs which will not interfere with what you are trying to protect – your environment. At some stage in the future we suggest that you make a Drumcondra Biodiversity Action Plan. For this you must engage a specialist but in the meantime, continue your recording of nature and biodiversity in your locality, which will be a benefit to the specialist when he/ she is undertaking the project. You have two local national schools in your area. Do you know what the two national schools are doing in relation to activities which relate to this category? We have no doubt that the teachers have projects which would sit comfortably in this category. It would also be good if you undertook some actions/ projects with the school children. We know that the teachers would gratefully accept your help. You could begin with e.g. a Fit Count (check the Biodiversity Ireland website for this). It's a great way to look at our insect life. A nature trail around the schoolyard is another possibility. There are other ideas for activities and projects for you to undertake which are on the Biodiversity Ireland website and also on the TidyTowns website.

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

When this category was introduced some years ago communities were confused. Now we all know that it is just about being aware of how we use the resources of the planet so that we cut down on our waste. We particularly encourage Tidy Towns committees to lead by example. You mentioned that you have a TidyTowns tool store at the Rosmini clubhouse. Is it your plan to have a poly tunnel in this area where you can grow your own plants from the seeds you collect from your planters and hanging baskets? It would be wonderful if you could obtain a small area for a poly tunnel and compost area. Good to see that you buy your planter boxes from PACE which supports community reintegration and well-being. We noted the leaf cages on Griffith Avenue and were delighted to see that only leaves were in each. Often we notice that residents have put grass clippings into these cages, which is a pity. Using perennial pollinator-friendly plants will result in lower maintenance, which will be beneficial to your group. Do you know what your numerous food establishments do with their coffee grinds? Earthworms love coffee grounds which makes them excellent for compost bins. In addition, acid-loving plants like blueberries, hydrangeas and azaleas do well if a light sprinkling is raked into the topsoil. Ask them to make them available to your local gardeners. You might have to supply them with compostable bags but it would be worth it. You list a number of projects which you will undertake in this category; we encourage your actions in these.

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

As a new community we encourage you to take part in the An Taisce Annual National Spring Clean. Just register with An Taisce in early Spring and they will send you equipment etc. and also (as far as we know) include you on their insurance ... but please check this for accuracy. We admire it when groups take part in annual or local LA's Clean-Up events as it focuses the mind of the general public of the high amount of litter/fly tipping/ dumping that occurs nationally. When you are seen in your Drumcondra Tidy Towns high vis jackets you make an impression on the public. It is perfect to see that you concentrate on the retail and public areas as these have the highest volume of visitors. Good that DCC supports you and remove the litter which you collect. We suggest that you ask residents to remove weed growth outside their properties as this will ease your workload. They can register with An Taisce's #2minutestreetsclean. We are delighted to hear that you remove ivy from the stone walls. Ivy roots penetrate the mortar joints in the stone walls and over time cause damage to the walls finally leading to their collapse. While ivy is wonderful for biodiversity so too are the gaps in the stone walls which insects, and small birds and mammals call home. We are delighted to say that when we visited the little we noticed had been freshly dropped and we have no doubt that your pick up team would have removed it shortly. Weed growth, while present, was negligible. In summertime a minimum of a once weekly litter pick is generally what volunteers undertake: some groups rotate the members to undertake this.

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

There are a great number of houses in your area of varying architectural styles. Those on Griffith Avenue and on the Drumcondra Road with large front gardens were, in the main well presented with well-tended herbaceous borders as edging to grass areas. Some had great specimen trees which added to the beauty of the streetscape. Houses on the roads north and south of Homefarm Road are set in smaller gardens and here too most of the residents are proud of their properties and with the attention paid to them support your efforts. We loved the terraced housing along Church Avenue where many of the small front gardens were ablaze with colour. The wonderful Terrace of Grace Park Gardens must also be mentioned. There is only one housing estate in your area, Beresford Estate, and here too residents take pride in their properties and present them admirably with gardens well-tended. Many of your residential roads are tree lined, which we admired. Where trees are lacking in residential areas we recommend that you ask that build-outs are created by DCC where trees and small pocket gardens can be planted. DCC have done this on other roads nearer to the Canal which you can visit and see the wonderful result – a total transformation of a residential road. We also recommend that you make a list of perennial pollinator-friendly flowers and shrubs and put this on your website so that the residents can select these which will help your biodiversity efforts.

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

Your area is bounded by the majestic tree lined Griffith Avenue to the north, and the Strain Built houses of Hollybank Road and environs to the south and in between we have the river Tolka and its two well-used parks. Once we leave the busy Drumcondra Road with the large volume of traffic we enter the quiet local roads of your village. We admired the Welcome to Drumcondra sign and we agree that it is in need of a large floral arrangement at the base which will draw the attention of the visitor and inform them that they are entering your village. When we leave the main road and head west we are met with quiet roads and linking lanes. This pedestrian permeability is admirable and ensures that it is safe for the school children, walking to and from the local schools. Your vision for the main roadway is admirable and hopefully in time it will become a reality. It would certainly be of benefit to the village community and to the beauty of the streetscape.

## **Concluding Remarks:**

We thoroughly enjoyed visiting your area ... in addition to the above we have a few other suggestions.

- You are new to this competition and so understandably will have made small errors in the application form. We request that next year the only projects/activities you put into the application are New and Maintained. Just numbered them New – N1, N2, N3 etc and maintained M1, M2, M3 etc. All Future Projects/Actions are in your Plan and not in the application form.
  - When we ask you to BRIEFLY identify one specific project, we mean it to be a project that has been completed or is being maintained and not a Future Plan. Just BRIEFLY describe the project/activity in the Community Involvement category and then, in the relevant category, we will read more about it.
- 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 your village which is one we know and visit regularly as a tourist. We hope the comments in the report are helpful and we look forward to receiving your application in 2027.