

Tidy Towns Competition 2026

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Howth - Binn Éadair** Ref: **158**
County: **Dublin** Mark: **372**
Category: **E** Date(s): **15/06/2026**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2025	Mark Awarded 2026
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	80	48	50
Streetscape & Public Places	80	51	54
Green Spaces and Landscaping	80	50	52
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	80	43	46
Sustainability – Doing more with less	80	22	24
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	59	61
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	55	40	42
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	55	42	43
TOTAL MARK	600	355	372

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, interspersed with photographs, and for your map. We were delighted to see that you coloured coded the Categories – it make it easier for the adjudicators to navigate their way around your projects. You have a committee of 15 with a core group of 45 regular volunteers and then an additional 40 when needed. Great that 3 new residents from the recently completed apartments have joined you. You list a large number of state and semi-state agencies, in addition to business and community groups who support you and recognise your hard work. Your communication methods are excellent. The variety - social media, newspaper articles, radio etc - ensures that all ages are aware of your activities. Good to see you working with TY students from the numerous secondary schools in Howth: a win-win for you and for them. You have been involved with SuperValu Tidy Towns for 34 years which is an enormous commitment from you and we are delighted to read that you are recognised as the voluntary group who educate and campaign to preserve and improve biodiversity in Howth and that you also to help grow 'the idea and means to implement a sustainable Howth'. We hope you also enjoy what you do!

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

Howth village and Howth Head are attractions not only for Dubliners but also for tourists from all over the world and both in winter and summer the area is alive with tourists. When we visited the harbour, scenic hill walks, and village were buzzing not only with bees but also with visitors. While there are one or two single/two storey properties along the R105 (Harbour Road) the majority are three story and here there is a great mix of businesses, many of which had been recently painted and presented well. Businesses along the West Pier are primarily aimed at sea industries (fish sales, marine supplies, angling/fishing trips, boat trips etc.) and also at the food and drinks market. The food establishments were well presented and had made considerable effort to make their premises, attractive for both locals and visitors. We also admired many of your fine buildings – St Mary's CofI Church (which has a wonderful garden adjacent to it), the Presbyterian Church, the RC Church of the Assumption, the Old Courthouse, etc. We admired the painted utility boxes – some need to be freshened up as the paint is peeling. There are others which have not as yet been painted. It would be good to paint these with a theme reflecting your nautical area. The Smart Bench near the bus stop was noted. The WiFi aspect is not working. Something to bring to the attention of Fingal Co Co to be repaired. We admired the metal stile over the wall near the boat planter. This is a wonderful historic structure in your architectural heritage. We wonder why was it located there in the first instance?

Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:

What a wonderful large green area you have between the Harbour Road and the sea which is dotted with trees allowing views out to many pleasure and working boats moored in the harbour. We loved that there are many seats and low walls along this open space which provides the visitor with somewhere to sit and relax and enjoy the view. On the day we visited it was extremely warm and we noted that people were sitting under the trees rather than in the sunshine. Perhaps it's time to think about planting small coppices of trees, which will give shelter both from the rain and from the sun. Due to the high volume of pedestrian traffic coming from the Dart Station the grass immediately outside the exit is completely worn. We suggest that a shrub bed would encourage those exiting the station to use the footpaths. There's an area roughly midway along the seafront, where there is a construction of low brick walls and planting bed on each side. We hope there are plans for this area? We admired the planting on the sloping ground (along Church Street wall) along with the three sculptures – a Mermaid, a Fisherman (we particularly like this one with his floats and nets) and a Viking Dragon. The timber surround bed along the ramp into the Dart Station was colourful. Would it be possible instead of having a timber surround bed to use that whole triangular shaped area as a planting bed? It would have more of an impact and truthfully would be more suitable. You manage a large number of flowerbeds and also planters around Howth, which when we visited were in wonderful condition and added greatly to the streetscape. We particularly admired the planting at the Howth Seafarers Memorial. We're unsure about the small stones, set in concrete surrounding the planting of the rectangular spaces at the Olympic Garden. This treatment is very unusual, and truthfully, we feel might be re-examined in the future. Nowadays, due to climate change and large volumes of water in winter, rain gardens are the way forward and not hard landscaping.

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

There are great habitats for our insects, birds and wildlife in Howth. Wonderful mature trees, hedgerows, many stonewalls and stone structures, grasslands, the wonderful Howth Head and the cliffs and coastline. The only thing you're missing is a river, but you have many fast flowing streams and brooks, the most famous of which is the Bloody Stream. Howth Community Garden with its variety of planting both in the ground and in raised beds was alive with insects, particularly butterflies and bees, when we visited. The Welcome to Howth Community Garden sign is quite beautiful - compliments to the artist. This space is not only for nature, but is also a quiet space with many sensory outdoor activity panels for small children. We ask if you have done any research into the natural flora and fauna of your area. In order to inform your community firstly you must know what you have. We recommend that you undertake a Biodiversity Action Plan for Howth. This must be undertaken by a professional, but in the meantime, we ask you to continue with your own research and that of the local children. We look forward to seeing the ivy removed from the natural stone walls. Ivy is wonderful for block or rendered walls but should never be left growing on natural stone walls, which in themselves are insect, bird and small mammal habitats.

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

Unfortunately, quite a few communities still struggle with this category, and really it is just about you as a voluntary group 'doing more with less' and encouraging the community to do likewise. Reusing items which we would otherwise discard is what we must do. We looked for your allotment area indicated on your map (Nashville Road) and was told by a lady who lives nearby that it hasn't been there for a long time ... PLEASE update your map. We did visit your new allotment garden – interesting that it is a play area, picnic area as well as a growing area. We loved the combination and this will ensure it is well used. You have leaf mould cages and now collect wet leaves for your compost. Willow weaving has become very popular around the country and in Howth you too had yours demonstration – Willow Lobster Pots. Great to see that Howth Yacht Club is developing a sustainable oyster bed in Dublin Bay. Tell us how this project is advancing in next year's application. Being donated steel furniture and wooden picnic benches, which you painted and put into the community garden is another one of your projects for 2026. Propagating your own plants and making them available to the community is admirable. This cuts down on the huge waste associated with bought varieties of plants. Good to see that you use recycled paint from the Discovery Centre in Ballymun. We noted the refill station near the east pier. Is there one near the west pier or in the village? Perhaps we missed it. Are any of your many food/drink establishments part of Refill Ireland? You might encourage them to take part as it's an easy programme for them to sign up to. Congratulations on your many award that you have received which you show us in this category.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

You are a town which enjoys hundreds of tourists daily particularly over the summer months, so unfortunately litter will be an on-going problem. We are pleased to report that while a considerable amount of litter was noted, it had been recently dropped so we can see that you are trying to keep control of this problem. Well done to your volunteers and to FCC for their work – a thankless but very necessary job. A lot of the litter we noticed, was caused by take away food containers, napkins and disposable cutlery. Would picnic tables with rubbish bins nearby alleviate this problem? At present some people just sit along the walls, eat their food, leave their rubbish and walk away. We didn't notice any bins overflowing with rubbish and were delighted to see that FCC has provided a large number of Big Belly bins in addition to large wheelie bins. The Bord Fáilte Tidy Towns 1994 Endeavour Award is dull and couldn't be easily read a little attention/polish would brighten it up. You won the award so why not show it off? Are there other plaques similar to this which you have won? If the answer is 'yes', they should be displayed together. We saw very little graffiti so we assume that either you or FCC remove it as soon as it is noticed. Well, done to the TY students who painted the gates into the Abbey graveyard. But please remove the sign from the gate and from the pier and place them on the adjacent wall (that is if they are needed). These two signs detract from this architectural feature, and remember signage, like these, is clutter in the streetscape/ landscape and should only be used when absolutely necessary. Unfortunately signs such as these are installed without much thought given to the historical location. If you notice others, you should make your wishes known.

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

Your residential area is focused around the area to the north and east of Ben of Howth. You have single, two, and three-storey houses which gives great interest to your residential areas. In addition, you have large apartment complexes around the harbour and on the approach road which has brought new residents to your area. You mention that some have joined you, which is wonderful.

On the sea front there are two wonderful gardens we must mention – those beside O'Connells. In the small front gardens we saw, roses, alcea rosea, agastache foeniculum, crocosmia, etc. all alive with butterflies and bees. Please commend these two wonderful homeowners. We loved the simplicity of the name signs of your housing estates. The simple metal signs with both the Irish and English languages were admired. These simple metal signs raised above the ground or fixed to walls, make it possible for residents' associations to plant under and around the signs. Well done architects of FCC. While we didn't visit all of the estates we did visit a few and we found in all we visited the majority of residents who took a pride in where they lived and took great care of not only their gardens but also the areas outside their boundaries. We wonder if you have a 'Best Garden', 'Best Balcony' and 'Best Estates' competitions. A certificate to be presented to the winners at your AGM or perhaps a social event at the end of the season.

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

We entered Howth from Sutton along the R105 and were met by the beautiful planting near Clarmont Road with its great pollinator friendly perennials. We love the work which you have undertaken at the cottage – compliments to the artists (we also saw the photos). The simple Welcome to Howth, Heritage Town is quite beautiful – well done FCC for the design. We also love that 'A Tidy Town community' is mentioned!! While the roads were busy with traffic (it's summer and there are tourists), all, including the busses, moved steadily along the Harbour Road. We have no doubt that at times this is not the case. Parking was difficult and we wonder if it is time to construct either a multi-story car park or perhaps one underground to alleviate this difficulty. In addition to tables and chairs on the footpaths, we also noticed sandwich boards and these made it difficult for those with buggies to move along the streetscape. We must add that it would also be difficult for the physically and visually impaired members of your community. We suggest this is something you should bring to the attention of FCC. Perhaps it is time for some parklets to be re-introduced. These were a feature during Covid and truthfully worked well as they left the footpaths clear. We noted some new rumble strips and dropped paving which aided those crossing at road junctions and pedestrian crossings. Is this to be continued? We admired that in many areas there are small, narrow pedestrian linkages, which facilitate those walking from one area of your village to another, e.g. the steps from Harbour Road to Church Street.

Concluding Remarks:

We were delighted to visit Howth but we have some recommendation for your 2027 application.

- We requested a maximum of 500 words per category; PLEASE do as we ask. Select the projects/activities which are MOST important and only include these. You can put all the others on your social media platforms for the community to see.
- The adjudicators unfortunately cannot visit a large number of projects – you had 34 for us to visit. Please select the ones where you've made considerable effort or which fulfil the various categories in the application form. 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. We would appreciate if these points could be taken into consideration when preparing your 2027 application. Thank you for entering the 2026 SuperValu Tidy Towns competition.