

Tidy Towns Competition 2026

Adjudication Report

Centre:	Portmarnock - Port Mearnóg	Ref:	1517
County:	Dublin	Mark:	330
Category:	F	Date(s):	01/07/2026

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2025	Mark Awarded 2026
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	80	40	42
Streetscape & Public Places	80	40	43
Green Spaces and Landscaping	80	41	43
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	80	43	45
Sustainability – Doing more with less	80	19	21
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	57	59
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	55	39	41
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	55	34	36
TOTAL MARK	600	313	330

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, and also for your map and your Three-Year Plan. Your Portmarnock Tidy Towns logo was admired. We see that you are very active on social media – truthfully this is now a requirement if a Tidy Towns' group hope to involve the community in their activities and projects. People need/want to be informed. You are a committee of 12 and your volunteer force is 40, which is wonderful. In a town as big as Portmarnock you need a large number of volunteers to make a difference. It's brilliant that new residents have joined you and hopefully they will encourage others. You list state and semi-state organisations, and businesses who support you. You also are involved with schools and other youth groups which is excellent, as this engagement will help to develop a pride of place amongst your youth. It might also encourage them to assist you, as a group, to undertake one or two projects. This is your tenth year participating in the SuperValu Tidy Towns competition and we are delighted to read that involvement in the competition, has been of benefit by 'encouraging environmental care, bringing people together through teamwork, boosting local pride, and attracting visitors'. We encourage you to keep up the good work.

See Concluding Remarks for further advice.

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

Portmarnock is a north-south elongated village with the old commercial centre located along the seafront and now a relatively new retail area exists in the centre of the residential area, which it services. The village has some wonderful historic structures which are part of your Heritage and Environmental Trail. We read, (elsewhere on-line), that you have a quite number of archaeological sites, particularly in the Maynetown area, so we understand why you arrange an historical walk through Portmarnock. Next year include a map of the route that we can see what's offered to the community. Perhaps it could be a new walking route for you? Your beach shelter has been completely transformed and we are delighted to read that the students for Portmarnock Community College were involved with the painting which gives them ownership of the space. When we visited there were many swimmers using the space and others told us it has regenerated the area, making the beach a more pleasant place to visit and sit. Some of the businesses had recently painted their premises, which gave them a very fresh appearance and added to the appearance of the streetscape. There were a few great displays of colourful hanging baskets, and some had ornamental planters. We loved to see the activity outside some of the premises where people sat and chatted or just sat and watched the world go by. We note the projects and activities undertaken by you this year – well done. We

saw that one utility box had been painted artistically (the red kiosk), which gave great colour along the streetscape: compliments to the artist. It would be wonderful to undertake this as a project on all of the utility boxes. Choose a theme that references your area e.g. sea themes is ideal, maybe even ship wrecks!

Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:

You are in an oasis of golf courses and farmland and so all around you there are large expanses of fields and green spaces. There are numerous other sporting groups who add to your green spaces and we also see that you have a baseball field ... this is the first one we've come across. And then you have your wonderful coastline with its sand dunes and beach. Your spring flower photos looked lovely and we know that spring flowers bring joy to all as it is an indication that the long winter is over. Within the town itself there are large green space associated with your housing developments. We loved the green space at Skylark Estate with its natural mounds for children to explore. The trees in St. Anne's Park were admired including those that lined the pathways. We loved that the pathway facilitated the residents walking to the train station and so avoiding the roads and traffic. The tree lined pathway gives summer and winter shade to those using the route and in addition the trees are a habitat for insects and roosting site for birds. While most of your parks have mature trees we felt that many of the roads lacked them. Some LAs are providing build-outs along many of their streets and roads and adding a tree and pocket park. This is something we encourage you to investigate for areas which lack trees. With climate change, trees are becoming more and more essential to provide shelter during summer months. You might also investigate areas where mini forests/coppices could be planted in the green spaces. It is recognized that air temperature can drop between 1° and 5° and surface temperature in the shade can drop between 11° and 25° under trees. We will need these areas during the summer months and now is the time to plan for them. Great to see that you use as much perennials as possible. A little splash of colour with annuals, if needed, is fine too; but use the pollinator-friendly ones. You have an ENORMOUS number of blue planters. We have a suggestion for the removal of 8. At the junction of Baldoye and Portmarnock Road you have a wonderful planting bed. Add additional plants to this – particularly ones which are tall, and fill this bed COMPLETELY with flowers and plants. Then the planters can be removed as they will be superfluous. Truthfully the bed should be increased in size as there is plenty of space to do this. A similar planting scheme to be undertaken at the planting bed on Station Road.

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

With large open grass land, mature trees, your long coastline and sand dunes, and the Sluice River you have diverse areas of wildlife habitats for insects, birds, mammals, amphibians and invertebrates. Add to this the SPA, SPC of Baldoye Bay close by and we see that Nature and Biodiversity are indeed catered for in your locality. But now you have to protect these habitats and ensure that they are enhanced rather than diminished. We opened a website and saw the Portmarnock Tidy Towns Local Biodiversity Action Plan 2022-2027 (next year add it to your application as it will be the last year before you have a new one made). We noted from the biodiversity plan that there were suggested actions for you to advance. Have you progressed many of these? We read your Three-Year Plan but didn't see any reference to your BAP. Please amend this in your Three-Year Tidy Towns Plan. Have your Faith Communities signed up to 'Havens for Nature'? This is an initiative launched by the Heritage Council this year to help faith communities manage their properties and grounds for wildlife. Check out the Heritage Council website and advise your schools and churches. One way to reduce 'high fertility' in the grass is to remove the grass clippings when you've cut the area as this starves the ground of nutrients. This will help in areas where you hope to develop wildflower meadows. Are you aware if there are bats in any of your buildings? It would be interesting for you to find out – if you stand at dusk beside any of the old buildings, you will see activity if they are there. We see that you are monitoring your swift population with FCC. Do you know what birds are in your area? Arrange with teachers to bring school children on a nature walk and just listen to your bird song. School children love to be involved in such a project. Then they could make a drawing of their favourite bird which could be mounted in an exhibition in Portmarnock's Community Centre. Congratulations on removing the ragwort. This is classified as a Noxious Weed and should be removed. Remember not to use it in your compost area! Well done on your Blue Flag Beach Status.

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

We read that you believe in 'Think globally, Act locally' and that your actions follow this. When this category was originally introduced Tidy Towns' groups were confused. But they all learned that it's just about tackling the growing waste mountain that is creating problems of pollution, unwanted land use, and the use of dwindling resources. You, like others, have now embraced this and you lead by example. Brilliant that you received a donation of end-of-season Grow Bags for your use. It's always great to get donations of useful materials! You mention water butts but didn't elaborate. How many householders now have them installed? Undertake a survey of just one of your estates and see how many householders have them. An arrangement could be made by you, on their behalf, at a local hardware shop, to have a water butt available at a reduced cost. The Men's Shed might also help with the installation? We see the Men's Shed have been very helpful with the Toy Library containers at the beach – a great idea and wonderful that buckets and shovels are reused by visiting children. It's great that local clubs are availing of grants to upgrade their properties to reduce energy usage. Encourage others to apply for these grants which are substantial, and readily available. Do you collect seeds from you planting beds? This is very easy to do - collect the seeds and give them to residents to plant in their gardens or you could help the school children to plant these and vegetable seeds in raised beds, made from recycled timbers? Another job for your Men's shed.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

In addition to the streets and roads around the town you also have the long Velvet Strand to keep litter free from flotsam and jetsam. As you are a tourist destination, you have a large influx of visitors on warm sunny days, and this year, we have no doubt that you were inundated with tourists. Like most seaside communities we know that the

Local Authority are a great assistance and beach clean very early every morning during the summer months. Nonetheless your volunteers must also keep the beach litter free and we are delighted to report that when we visited and walked along the beach, it was extremely clean. Equally your roads were virtually litter free and here too your volunteers are doing an amazing job. We see that you have TY students helping you and on your behalf we compliment them for undertaking all the work that you have outlined. Well done, and we wish them the very best in the Gaisce Award. We noted your new signage. Do you really NEED it? Remember signage is clutter and detracts from a landscape and streetscape. Signage should be used in moderation and ONLY when a message is important. Informing the community that you maintain a beach really isn't an important message. We are delighted to see that you are rewarded with a complimentary cuppa and scone by The White Sands Hotel on your litter pick days – good to see that your hard, continuous work is appreciated. While the roads were virtually litter free unfortunately the same cannot be said about weeds. There was some weed growth along walls and kerbs which gave the area a somewhat unkempt feel. A shovel or hoe and a stiff brush are needed to move these on a regular basis. We are delighted that you no longer use chemical weed control but this just means more manual weed removal is necessary.

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

You are certainly diverse in your residential accommodation. But it's good to see that the character of the village heart has been retained and that new developments respect this. With a mix of single and two storey vernacular buildings along the Strand Road, your new estate developments are primarily focused around train station. We visited both old and new residential estates. Hazel Grove, The Dunes, Ardilaun, Carrickhill Rise, etc where some houses, including the boundary walls, piers and gates had been recently painted and presented well. There were quite a number that had colourful herbaceous borders which were very beautiful. We also noted a number of ornamental trees in gardens, and these added greatly to the streetscape. As we stated previously, trees are lacking along the streetscape in many of the old residential estates. The new estates of St. Marnock's Bay and The Kilns were also visited. These are well landscaped along the roads and in the communal open spaces and the playground in St. Marnock's Bay was particularly admired. There are some block/ rendered block walls along entrance roads and pedestrian links in some of the older estates. We recommend that these be planted with ivy, pyracantha, honeysuckle, clematis etc which will create biodiversity corridors. We also noted the fruit trees on some communal open spaces – good for the community and the windfalls will be enjoyed by your wildlife. We recommend that you make a list of pollinator-friendly perennials and annuals and put this on your Facebook page, so that residents can access it and see the plants that are suitable to aid our pollinators. It is wonderful to see people adopting a patch and you are honoured to have a dedicated resident in his 80s maintaining Torcaill entrance.

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

Arriving from the south we had great views across the low natural stone wall to the SPA and SAC of Baldoyle Bay. We were delighted to see the cyclist and pedestrian routes of the Portmarnock to Baldoyle Greenway. It's wonderful when walkers, runners and cyclists have a route which is separate to the motorist. The day we visited it was well used by those walking their dogs along with runners. We noted a number of newly installed rumble strips and dropped kerbs at road junctions. These make it possible for those in wheelchairs or using mobility scooters or those pushing buggies to cross roads with ease. Do you know if you're in line for these to be installed at all of your roads? We also must compliment the roads engineers for the insertion of two white lines across the road at these dropped kerb road junctions. This makes the crossing even more visible and the junction even safer for the pedestrian. The black and yellow painted capped stone wall was admired. This form of safety notice is simple to undertake but very effective. We noted the bicycle rack at Howth Station and also the bicycle lockers. Are the lockers well used? Are more needed?

Concluding Remarks:

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

- You have noted 44 projects for us to visit. Unfortunately that's an impossibility – we don't have the luxury of the time to visit 44 projects in every centre we visit. Please reduce the number and only select those where particular effort was made or those which have the most benefit to/ impact most on the community.
 - Be mindful as to which category you add your projects e.g. information about students litter picking etc. should be in Litter and Clutter and not in Streetscape. And there were others.
 - Your map is very small and so it took us quite a while to find some projects. Firstly use a complete A4 page for your map. Be selective regarding the 'Landmarks' which you include – just a couple is sufficient as we'll find our way around with these. See above regarding the number of projects you want us to visit. The Legends can be on a separate page or can cover part of the map – needless to say the part where there are no projects.
- 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 Portmarnock. Unfortunately we didn't have time for a swim ... a reason to return.