

# Tidy Towns Competition 2026

## Adjudication Report

|           |                                                 |          |                   |
|-----------|-------------------------------------------------|----------|-------------------|
| Centre:   | <b>Portobello St Kevins -<br/>Cian Aoibhinn</b> | Ref:     | <b>2247</b>       |
| County:   | <b>Dublin</b>                                   | Mark:    | <b>275</b>        |
| Category: | <b>E</b>                                        | Date(s): | <b>16/07/2026</b> |

|                                           | Maximum<br>Mark | Mark<br>Awarded 2025 | Mark<br>Awarded 2026 |
|-------------------------------------------|-----------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| Community – Your Planning and Involvement | 80              | 40                   | 42                   |
| Streetscape & Public Places               | 80              | 37                   | 39                   |
| Green Spaces and Landscaping              | 80              | 35                   | 37                   |
| Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality  | 80              | 16                   | 18                   |
| Sustainability – Doing more with less     | 80              | 10                   | 12                   |
| Tidiness and Litter Control               | 90              | 52                   | 54                   |
| Residential Streets & Housing Areas       | 55              | 35                   | 38                   |
| Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes           | 55              | 33                   | 35                   |
| <b>TOTAL MARK</b>                         | <b>600</b>      | <b>258</b>           | <b>275</b>           |

### 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." Thank you very much for your entry into this year's competition and for including your map with legend as well as your Five-Year Plan, greatly appreciated. If possible, it would also be nice to see some photographs of your work in action. In addition to the 7 core members of your committee, you have up to 40 additional volunteers, and 218 WhatsApp members, and it would be great to encourage even more of those on your WhatsApp group to get involved, even for an hour every so often if they are not able to make any regular commitment. It is great to see that there is good partnership with Dublin City Council as well as some of the local businesses but given the number of commercial entities in the area, perhaps it would be possible to persuade even more of these to lend some support. It is great to read that you are looking into engagement with local schools and that you do get younger members of the community come along to help with your clean ups. It is encouraging to read that you have at least 80 people turn up to some of your events, and that your participation in the Tidy Towns competition along with your street parties has helped increase a sense of connection, community and friendliness amongst local residents.

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

The Portobello and St. Kevin's area although nestled within the city centre retains the character of a local neighbourhood, as well as a sense of history and heritage.

There are many fine buildings of great architectural value to be seen in the area such as St. Kevin's Catholic Church, and the St. Kevin's National School building, along with the old Methodist Church, the old Meath Hospital as well as the two bridges which add to the charm of the area, as well as some famous former residents such as Jack B. Yeats and Bernard Shaw.

Some of the commercial premises which caught the eye included O'Connell's pub with its distinctive red and gold paintwork, the Portobello Bar which had some beautiful floral displays, as well as the I I Monelli Italian restaurant with its colourful painted exterior depicting an Italian scooter and ice cream.

There is unfortunately quite a bit of graffiti to be seen, particularly in some of the side streets and lanes, however, counter to this I also saw some very attractive murals particularly the one depicting George Bernard Shaw on Synge Street.

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

The Iveagh Trust Community Garden is a wonderful resource to have in the area, a little oasis with everything from

potatoes, carrots, cabbages being grown alongside herbs etc. The emphasis here is very much on sustainability as well as biodiversity and operates on an ethos of community and inclusivity. It is great to see that it is also used for awareness raising and education and is very much a hub for residents of the area with workshops on a range of topics as well as volunteer days.

Although there are not many large areas of green space in the area, there are pockets of green to be enjoyed such as the wonderfully named Cabbage Garden at the former burial ground at Cathedral Lane, along with St. Kevin's Park, a lovely green space at the ruins of the old medieval Church.

The banks of the Grand Canal were full of people relaxing and enjoying the sun on the day that I visited the area and you are doing a lot of work to keep this clean and raise awareness of the rich flora and fauna here. Is there scope in the area to investigate having parklets or 'pocket parks'? maybe this is something you could explore with Dublin City Council, although acknowledging it is a busy area, there may be one or two under utilized spaces which could be transformed.

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

Despite being in a predominantly urban area you are undertaking a lot of exciting projects in this category. Arguably, the largest green space that you have is the canal and the area surrounding it. This area is a rich environment for a considerable assortment of flora and fauna as well as creating a valuable amenity area. We note that the Grand canal is being put forward as a National Heritage Area (pNHA) given its importance as an ecological corridor and haven for habitats. The many bird species to be seen here include Mallards, Moorhens, Swans amongst others. Great work by your iNaturalist volunteers in identifying many plant species along the canal banks and for establishing engagement with the Waterways Ireland Heritage Officer. It is also fantastic to see that input from the community can help make positive improvements such as the increase in planting and sustainable urban drainage systems (SUDS) at the development at Portobello Plaza. Other work that you are carrying out includes work at the award-winning Iveagh Trust Community garden, with great work being done in relation to pollinator and insect friendly planting. In the works you also have plans to conduct a Habitat Survey with input from experts, raise community awareness of issues surrounding biodiversity as well as hope to gain funding to carry out a local Biodiversity Action Plan.

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

You are making great inroads in this category with some practical ideas to help become more sustainable and to encourage the local community to do so as well. There are several charity shops as well as a furniture recycling shop and antiques shops in the vicinity, a good example of the circular economy and that 'one man's trash is another man's treasure' which helps repurpose items no longer needed and help prevent the vast number of textiles being dumped into landfill.

Some ideas you could investigate in this category would be having 'swop shops' for preloved items such as old sports gear, books, clothes etc. I also have seen some lovely little 'free libraries' where people can leave a book, they no longer want and take one they have yet to read. Also, you could engage with local cafes and restaurants about encouraging the use of 'keep cups or refilling water bottles to avoid the use of single plastic ones which often end up in landfill. Also make sure to look at the Tidy Towns Handbook for additional ideas or maybe contact other Tidy Towns groups nearby. The communications you have via your WhatsApp group is a great way of engaging your community and spreading ideas in relation to sustainability and the circular economy.

We also note that you are engaging with the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland in relation to sustainability and energy efficiency in your housing, and hopefully this will prove to be very beneficial.

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

It is fantastic to read that since your involvement in the competition that you have seen an improvement in the cleanliness of your streets and congratulations on your awards from Dublin City Council about this work.

In addition to your committed core volunteers, you also have additional helpers from time to time, with plenty of notice via your WhatsApp group to rally the troops. Do you participate in the An Taisce National Spring Clean? Involvement in this could be a good way of encouraging a huge effort and turn out as it is for just one specific day, and who knows it may get people to decide to get involved on a more regular basis.

Overall, the standard of litter control was good considering the area encompasses a very busy area with a lot of through traffic, though there were some areas that seemed to attract empty snack wrappers etc. such as some of the side lanes and along the canal banks. As mentioned previously, graffiti is still an issue in some areas, but maybe more art and murals on some of these walls might be a solution and would turn these into visually attractive spaces rather than eye sores.

Good work on your ongoing street cleans and management of weeds, grass litter and dead leaves etc. and you are approaching this in a very strategic way through prioritising which area needs the most work.

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

There is a very wide variety of house types to be seen in the area, with many houses being included in the Architectural Conservation Area or on the Record of Protected Structures. These include the many beautiful Victorian terraced buildings with their beautiful red brick often accompanied by grand stone steps, fanlights and railings, as well as Georgian townhouses and some very attractive cottages. There were some wonderful gardens to be seen around Grantham Street and Heytesbury Street, and the surrounding streets.

Good work on distributing pollinator friendly plants donated by Dublin City Council along with some of the lovely wooden boxes that I spotted as I rambled around the area. You also hold flower box and garden competitions, a lovely way to encourage people to up their 'garden game' and present them in the best possible light with a bit of friendly rivalry with social events such as the presentation of prizes and street parties encouraging a sense of

cohesion and community spirit.

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

As you mention in your entry, the area contained within your application is largely residential and thank you for setting out the exact curtilage of the area that you are including in the application, it is very useful.

Although very conveniently located for access to the city centre, we understand your concerns in relation to cycle and pedestrian safety, as well as accessibility for those with less mobility or prams with street furniture and the business of many roads, along with roots from the mature trees pushing up the paving in some areas. In these cases, the best advice is to continue to engage with the local authority and advocate for improvements in these areas, though we welcome the news that there has been some cycle lane protection provided at Heytesbury and Clanbrassil Street.

Overall, the many lanes and side streets were well kept, with the exception in some areas of graffiti and some small amounts of litter.

### **Concluding Remarks:**

Although I thought I was reasonably familiar with this area, I really enjoyed discovering so many new nooks and crannies and all that this charming neighbourhood has to offer. Well done on all the work done to date, and we wish you the best with all your future projects.