Tidy Towns Competition 2026

Adjudication Report

Centre:	**Ballitore - Béal Átha an Tuair**	Ref:	**840**
County:	**Kildare**	Mark:	**284**
Category:	**B**	Date(s):	**20/07/2026**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2026
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	80	39
Streetscape & Public Places	80	42
Green Spaces and Landscaping	80	39
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	80	23
Sustainability – Doing more with less	80	18
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	48
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	55	38
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	55	37
TOTAL MARK	**600**	**284**

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.

You are very welcome back to the National Tidy Towns Competition after a very brief absence - thank you to Ballitore Tidy Towns for your submission and it is fully appreciated that putting an entry together for any community requires a lot of effort.
For 2026, Ballitore Tidy Towns have entered into Category B Village population between 201 and 1000.
Your current active committee of 6 members work regularly on your projects and are hoping to expand the number of volunteers who will help with keeping Ballitore to a good standard.

You are also supported by 2 CE scheme workers in helping keep your village in good condition.

You have highlighted that local company Tirlan, who have a major presence in Ballitore, have greatly contributed to the Tidy Towns work and 2026 submission.
Without exception all of the entrants from Kildare, including Ballitore Tidy Towns identified the support and assistance of Kildare County Council - the high standard achieved by the county's Tidy Towns family both in the past and in 2026 are a testament to the ongoing commitment and energy of the County Council.

Engagement with the various residents associations and groups and the local schools and youth groups together with the other voluntary groups is essential to working effectively in a developing village like Ballitore

Ballitore Tidy Towns communication with the community currently takes place through word of mouth, and notices in the local shops which is very welcome.

The previous adjudicator suggested that regular communication is key to staying connected and that other Tidy Towns groups have found that the use of WhatsApp helps with the communication of the details of the various activities of the group.

Thank you for your submission - for 2027 you might consider including some photographs of your work during the year, during the various seasons, and also showing a before -and-after photo - that would be much appreciated by the adjudicator.

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

Ballitore is village centered on the crossroads of the Ballitore Hill Road, running from the R448 and the L8026 Thoran Road, and the Main Street and Fullers Court Road. The river Griese runs through the village with a bridge crossing.
The village is noted for its historical Quaker associations. It was the first planned Quaker village in either England or Ireland - and remains the only one in Europe. Ballitore is also noted for it's association with the 1798 rebellion and the renowned author and diarist Mary Leadbeater.
The well maintained Ballitore Library and Quaker Building in the village centre is named after Mary Leadbetter, unfortunately the building was closed at the time of the visit, it is understood that there is a sculpture of the author at the rear of the building. The Market House in the Square is a landmark building that remains critical to the streetscape of your town. Unfortunately it is currently vacant. The other major building of interest is the Quaker Meeting House on Main Street the stone walls have been retained and the building has been renovated and remain in use by the Griese Youth Theatre, an excellent example of re-purposing our architectural heritage.
The old stone walls of of the old Quaker school remain in place near Abbeyfield on the Ballitore Hill.
The village generally comprises singel and 2 storey houses , some very fine terraces, some of the houses have retained particular features of their Quaker origins, and there are also a number of housing developments either recently completed or currently under construction. The village has also has a convenience store, a fast food take-away, a coffee shop and a number of public houses.
The site at the old Garda house now vacant is currently undergoing a Part 8 planning process for the development of new housing at the site. This site is away from the village centre, and is opposite the entrance to the old Quaker Graveyard.
There is an area of cobblelock in the centre which is the focal point of the village being used for planters, a replica casket and an unattractive concrete base used for the Christmas tree.
The entrance to the modern Glanbia/Tirlan agri-industry complex is the source of much of the traffic to and from Ballitore.
Sections of the stonewall on the Athy Road have fallen down and need to be re-built. Some roadworks were underway on the day of adjudication.
Ballitore Tidy Towns have applied for funding under the CLÁR project so that new planters can be installed in the town.

A long term approach is being taken by the Tidy Towns to ensure that all landscaping efforts are sustainable, low maintenance and in keeping with the character of the village.

This village has great potential to become one of the best towns in Kildare.

Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:

Given your location in a rural area and the fact that your town has been planned, Ballitore has good green spaces throughout the village and opportunity for some landscaping work. You have previously identified the banks of the river Griese at the bridge as one of the areas that can be worked on.
Special word of mention and praise for the green space behind the Quaker Meeting House off Main Street, this area has a number of new trees planted and staked with planters mounted on the stakes. Some effort has also been made in installing planters with a lot of flowers fixed to the containers beside the hall.
Please make sure that the stakes do not impede the growth of the trees but this particular area is a very very colorful part of Ballitore.
It is also recommended that where possible ground planting is preferred to the use of planters for a number of reasons, including the fact that ground planting allows unlimited root growth and requires much less frequent watering and maintenance.
You may also wish to get advice from a local horticulturist with a view to deciding on your plant selection and also the need to sow at the right time of the year, and the need to select the right plants for the right soil types.

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

The increased importance of Nature and Biodiversity is recognised in the increased scoring for this category for the 2026 Tidy Towns competition.
As you have correctly noted, it is critical that communities encourage native plants with wildflower areas, hedge grows and tree planting helping to create habits for pollinators such as bees and butterflies as well as supporting bird and insect life.
Your move towards reduced mowing is very welcome. Research shows that longer grass supports beetles, spiders, and butterflies, as well as reducing ground temperatures during heat wives.
It is important to realise that the process of encouraging native planting takes time and will not result in an immediate change but it is surprising that given the right conditions nature and biodiversity will flourish in Ballitore and surrounds.
Fortunately, Ballitore already has a good base to start from. Apart from the banks of the river Griese already commented on, the walk to the old Quaker Graveyard already has a magnificent mature ecosystem in place, including stands of trees, wild meadow, and native hedgerows full of birds.
Hopefully the OPW will take action to rebuild the damaged section of wall at the graveyard. Ballitore Tidy Towns might be interested in the "Havens for Nature" document produced by the Heritage Council.
You might also be interested in the All-Ireland pollinator plant which has now been updated for 2026 to 2030 and offers guidance to different groups including Tidy Towns groups.
Well done also to the resident became the first entrant from Ballitore, to put their garden on the pollinator plan map

making an entry in July 2026. Hopefully Ballitore Tidy Towns and many others will follow in the near future.

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

The increased importance of Sustainability for all communities is recognised in the increased scoring for this category for the 2026 Tidy Towns competition.
Many Tidy Towns groups are very active in encouraging community members to make their towns and villages more sustainable by their individual and community actions.
Ballitore Tidy Towns is committed to improving sustainability within the village through practical and environmentally responsible projects.

As part of future plans, the group hopes to source new planters and benches made from Irish recycled materials, helping to reduce waste and support the use of sustainable products in public spaces.

Other Tidy Towns groups have identified energy, water and transport as potentially the three main themes under which sustainable savings can be made by any community.
Ballitore Tidy Towns might be interested in contacting the SEAI who offer great advise to those who might be interested in learning more about insulation and solar power for homes.
The use of water butts is also a growing trend in many communities not only reducing the possibility of floods but also having water available in dry periods which is an increasingly likely scenario.
It was very encouraging to see that Ballitore is linked to public transport which is again identified as a sustainable action.
Small actions taken together can create real change.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

Ballitore Tidy Towns together with the CE workers and all the other members and businesses have ensured that your village and surroundings have a high standard of tidiness and litter control in all of the public areas visited.
There was some minor littering noted on the verges of the Ballitore Hill road but the streets and roads and paths were generally clear of litter.
Your plan to organise a community litter-picking day in the near future to encourage local involvement and raise awareness of litter prevention is very welcome.

Many Tidy Towns groups join in on the An Taisce Spring Clean every April as a good start to the year but there is no reason to wait till 2027 to take collective action.
For example, you might be interested in taking part in the very successful KCC “Green Kilometre” initiative where the group undertakes to maintain three kilometres of roadside verge in the village and outlying area
Congratulations on your work to date and best of luck in the future.

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

As you have identified, Ballitore is an expanding community - it is interesting that you will soon have a very unique mix of housing dating from your historical legacy to developments currently under construction.
It is acknowledged that it can be difficult to keep pace with the changes and needs of a developing community, however it is very encouraging that families want to live in Ballitore and to be part of the community.
You already have a very interesting mix of housing types from one-off detached bungalows to grand country houses and everything in between.
As mentioned previously the housing development off Main Street behind the Quaker Meeting House was in excellent condition and the residents obviously have spent considerable time and effort on their homes and public space.
Similarly, the Abbyfield estate was well looked after, many of the homes had well looked after gardens, some with flower boxes and the occasional hanging baskets.
Many of the homes in Ballitore had planters and window boxes in place.
The green space with trees in the estates were also well maintained.
One possible suggestion should be that all of the estates could have name plates, preferably in Irish and English, in place and clearly visible.

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

The adjudicator’s initial approach to Ballitore was from the R448 down Ballitore Hill and it was a very good introduction to the village, with stone walls, hedges, and trees lining the road. The re-development of the derelict Garda Station site will be most welcome but it is hoped that there pedestrian access to the town will be provided.
The entrance to Ballitore Main Street from Mary Ledbetter's birthplace home at the turn in the road leads to a very fine tree-lined avenue, with good entrance signage.
The Athy Road junction has some paved area with great potential but needs to be upgraded and redecorated. If planters are in place they either need to used or removed if they are serving no purpose.
While entrance signs are generally in place, the Ballitore signage coming from the motorway direction needs to be cleaned up and signs need to be touched up. Similarly, the southeast tourism sign at the Athy Road needs to be refurbished.
The overall impression of the approaches to Ballitore is excellent but a few improvements particularly to the signage would be very helpful.

Concluding Remarks:

This adjudicator was impressed with the presentation and great potential of Ballitore and the work and journey the committee has now taken on. It is fully appreciated that starting over again presents special and unique challenges particularly in a developing town. Please keep up the good work, it will be rewarding.