Tidy Towns Competition 2026

Adjudication Report

Centre:	**Caragh - Ceárach**	Ref:	**1985**
County:	**Kildare**	Mark:	**327**
Category:	**C**	Date(s):	**01/07/2026**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2025	Mark Awarded 2026
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	80	46	48
Streetscape & Public Places	80	42	43
Green Spaces and Landscaping	80	45	47
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	80	33	35
Sustainability – Doing more with less	80	19	20
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	55	57
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	55	38	39
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	55	36	38
TOTAL MARK	**600**	**314**	**327**

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.

While I have often passed by your village by train, this was was my first visit to Caragh. As the adjudicator for the Tidy Towns Competition for 2026 I was very impressed by your home town.
Judging by earlier reports and consistently increasing scores across all categories, previous adjudicators have also been equally impressed. You have maintained your consistently high standard for this year.
It is no surprise that you have previously secured the Endeavour award in Kildare, and judging by this year's submittal future awards await.
The cover of your 2026 entry opens with a great kingfisher mural and that set the tone for the rest of your concise and comprehensive submittal. The presentation, photographs and graphics are excellent.
You have also attached a brilliantly hand-drawn coloured and annotated map, which usefully cross-references your entry highlights and your recently updated 2026-2029 Multi-annual plan.
Given the amount of excellent work completed it is surprising that your committee is a very tight 3 members but obviously the 15 volunteers bring many talents and skills to your group. The fact that you are also a very social group of friends contributes to your efforts and success.
Your commitment to the health and safety of your volunteers is also noted - this aspect of your work has to remain a priority for all who take part in any activity. Well done.
You have highlighted that many organisations and numerous committed individuals have contributed to the work of the Tidy Towns group.
Without exception all of the entrants from Kildare, Including Caragh 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.

Again your presentation of your methods of communication, particularly your use of social media. covers all possibilities and is also very well set out. You have also made an effort to engage with the national school, and also second level students from schools outside of Caragh.

Your continued engagement with the competition for the last 10 years has resulted in a very apparent sense of community spirit and pride.
Comhghairdeas le bhur bhfoireann ar fad.

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

Caragh is a typical ribbon-development built along the R409 route between Naas and Edenderry which has expanded over the recent years to include a number of newer housing estates and community facilities including the out of town Raheens GAA pitch and community centre and the local playground and Fr. Kinsella Park which is accessible by public pathway.
The village of Caragh is bookended at one end by the very impressive church and by the classic stone 1834 Victoria bridge over the Liffey at the other end. There is also the Malone's railway bridge running over the R409 carriageway.
The main route is lined by a mix of housing of different types and a number of prominent buildings and businesses, including the well maintained Caragh Pharmacy, the neighbouring CUC Clinic, the 2-storey stone building of Cooks Pub and adjoining Fox and Hare restaurant, the more modern Caragh National School complete with striking monumental sculpture, the local Centra shop and Applegreen filling station, a mix of businesses and houses at Old Chapel Court. and a number of well presented housing estates.
The church and bell tower is the dominant building for the town but is set back from the road and public path by raised wall and railings and is lined by a row of fine mature oak trees and wild meadow within the grounds of the church.
It is more than likely that this adjudicator missed the wooden logs at the Victoria Bridge on the day of the visit, hopefully they have not been disturbed again. Your work in repainting the school barrier was also noted.

Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:

Your current entry and indeed last year's adjudicators report accurately identify the Fr. Kinsella Park and playground as the jewel in the crown of the town's green space, it has everything that any town would hope for from a park relatively close to the centre accessible by path, and also with more recentl solar lighting installation. The playground was fully occupied and in use on the day of the adjudicator's visit.
The park has a winning combination of trails, uncut wild pollinator-friendly areas, stunning collection of oxeye daisies on one side, and well maintained lawns and paths, with all facilities including great murals, heritage signs, information boards. seating, bike racks, and car-parking all available so as to encourage use of the facility. It is very well connected to the town and the school even though it is at some remove from the town.
In addition to your native tree planting programme, the primary focus of your efforts this year relate to the not insignificant work of installing Ben's Corner, in the park, certainly creating a wonderful memorial for the Wallace family and anybody fortunate enough to visit and enjoy this fantastic piece of work - so many people and companies have made their contribution to this flagship project, they can all be justifiably proud of this work, it is brilliant. On the day of the visit the lavender and petunias were in full purple array.
It is suggested that Larry Stanley would be especially pleased to have a long jump pit in close proximity to his very fine memorial.
You have also brought some colour to the town by having numerous planters placed at key positions, as mentioned previously the use of perennials is always encouraged. Special word of mention for the planters on the Mae Campbell bike memorial.
Thank you for the work in keeping all the green spaces distributed through your town so well maintained and attractive for all.

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.
Caragh Tidy Towns and the wider community have fully engaged with the need to promote nature and biodiversity in all it's forms in your town.
Amongst many examples, the following highlighted projects were initiated and undertaken in the last year, each one resulting in a positive outcome for your environment and the relevant eco-systems.
The work of the group looking after the parish church biodiversity garden is detailed in your submission, with a very beautiful instagram reel taken in March 2026 showing the work in progress, thank you to the church community for facilitating this work. The church grounds have retained their formal setting alongside the pollinator friendly no-mow strip. It is striking that the number of churches and congregations across many religions nationwide are engaged in the promotion of nature based projects, and the number appears to be increasing year-on-year.
Water is the starting point for all of nature, it keeps us alive and yet it is often undervalued and taken for granted. Your engagement with the DCU citizen science programme and your collection of three separate water sampling sets at Newhall, Caragh Liffey Bridge and the Awillyinish next to the park will provide accurate and current data and information relating to water quality.
Back to Fr. Kinsella Park, you have been proactive in trying to reduce or preferably eliminate the use of herbicide spray throughout, and especially at the wildflower corridor. Particular praise to the Transition Year student who undertook the significant work of removal of the many weeds by hand from a 300m section of pathside growth near the Awillyinish Stream.
The amount of bird life heard and seen in walking the surrounds of the park is incredible. For that experience alone the park is worth the visit.
Your Caragh Multi-Annual Plan (3 Year) updated in May 2026 presents a very ambitious plan under the Nature and Biodiversity heading - it will be a very exciting time for Caragh.

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.
Judging by the “Refill Rot Replant Restore Rethink Reduce Reuse Recycle” plates on the boundary wall of the Caragh National School for all to see the sustainability message is front and centre for your community.
Your continued use of free mulch provided by O’Neill Tree Services in Fr. Kinsella Park is an excellent example of a sustainable development action, reducing waste for a great outcome. Judging by the photograph of the mulch delivery there was a serious quantity of mulch to be redistributed.
Congratulations to the team who decided to use the cardboard and mulch combination as a possible weed suppressant for your fruit trees, and also the fact that you looked at the work and outcome to see if it could be improved shows you are constantly rethinking, which is what is needed in so many areas.
The planting and maintenance of the orchard trees is another move towards sustainability, hopefully this year’s crop of apples will add to your collective food security.
The recent installation of 43no. Solar Lights at Fr Kinsella Park / Caragh Community Park for those active walkers using the park’s paths is also to be welcomed. It was also noticed that a number of houses in Church View and Caragh Lawns had solar panels installed.
The presence of clothing bank recycling facilities in the town and at the GAA club were also noted.
In terms of sustainable travel, better connection with the Sallins/Naas rail station and indeed with the railway in Caragh would be a prize worth pursuing.
Your continued communication with Kildare County Council and your interaction with other like-minded ambitious Tidy Towns groups will lead to great exchanges of ideas and initiatives. Please keep up your great work.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

Caragh Tidy Towns Committee and the volunteers together with the employees of Kildare County Council and other stakeholders including a number of very active individuals who offered their time, services and equipment for particular tasks and other stakeholders have ensured that your town continues to have a high standard of tidiness.
The Tidy Towns advertise the various Kildare County Council initiatives where they are relevant to our message, including the waste mattress return event and domestic paint recycle Schemes.
Along with many other Tidy Towns groups, you have undertakend to maintain three kilometres of roadside verge in the Caragh village and outlying area under the very successful KCC “Green Kilometre” initiative.
Your bi-weekly pick-ups and your Spring Clean have maintained your very high standards. Good to see that you have Tidy Towns Working road signage available and in place when you are on the job.
You have highlighted the scourge of dumping of the gas canisters which unfortunately is not unique to Caragh, or indeed to Kildare. This is a major problem across the country both in urban and rural settings. Thank you for your observations and comment.
The only exception noted to this high standard were some bags left at both clothes recycling banks, but in fairness the clothing bank in the town was cleared out on the date of adjudication. This dumping stood out because it was very much the exception to the rule in Caragh and surrounds.
Congratulations on your work

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

In addition to the main street already mentioned, the residents and communities of the various housing estates continue to maintain and keep their homes, gardens and streets to a very high level.
In early 2026 Kildare County Council planted a number of trees in the green space to the housing estates of Church View, Caragh Lawns and Old Chapel Wood. In time these trees prove their worth in improving the quality of the various estates. The magnolia trees planted and staked in Church View will be magnificent. Trees offer so much in all seasons for their life-span from flood attenuation, carbon store, shade from the heat, shelter from rain, and a habitat for many species from bugs to birds. It is wonderful that Caragh has such a great number of trees and different species. Some cotoneaster was spotted in one of the estates, while their flowers attract bees and the berries feed birds, it is an invasive species and needs to be controlled.
Also worth mentioning very positively is the planting and maintenance of the lengthy cooper beech hedging to the side boundary wall at Caragh Heights from the church down towards the park. There is still some block screen wall visible here down to the bus-shelter with a grass verge here which offers potential.
Without exception all of the residential streets and housing seen in Caragh were in good condition - there is an obvious pride in place in this town.

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

This adjudicator arrived into Caragh by the R409 route from Edenderry. It was a very pleasant entry into the town with good clear signage and markings throughout.

The nature and narrowness of both the Victoria bridge and the Malone Railway bridge have the unintended benefit of acting as speed control measures on traffic entering from the other end of R409.

All approaches had neatly trimmed grass verges and well maintained hedgerows. The entrance signs were clearly visible and not impacted by any overgrowth of foliage.

The general condition of roads and paths was excellent and it was a pleasure to walk around the community.

Concluding Remarks:

The adjudicator has not been able to comment on every one of your actions in the Tidy Towns application, but they have all been taken into account in the adjudication process. Caragh is an inspiring example of how a small

community can have a large positive impact across Kildare and beyond. Finally, congratulations to the Eire Og Corra Choill Camogie team on their success in the Feile.

Go raibh maith agaibh go léir.