Tidy Towns Competition 2026

Adjudication Report

Centre:	**Rathangan - Ráth Iomgháin**	Ref:	**383**
County:	**Kildare**	Mark:	**404**
Category:	**D**	Date(s):	**29/07/2026**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2025	Mark Awarded 2026
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	80	62	64
Streetscape & Public Places	80	47	49
Green Spaces and Landscaping	80	55	57
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	80	58	60
Sustainability – Doing more with less	80	29	31
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	64	66
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	55	34	36
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	55	39	41
TOTAL MARK	**600**	**388**	**404**

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.

Rathangan Tidy Towns is very welcome back to the National Tidy Towns Competition, you has been a long time entrant in the competition you have now been entering for a very impressive 41 years.

You have been a serial winner in this competition, congratulations on taking a gold medal in 2025.
For 2026, Tidy Towns have entered into Category C Small Town population between 2501 and 5000.
Your current active committee of 4 elected officers and 8 volunteers work regularly on your projects. Given the relatively small number in your group and the size of your town you have done an incredible of work.

You have acknowledged the widespread participation of your community in supporting the work of Tidy Town, including the many organisations, agencies, and local businesses who you have worked alongside.

Without exception all of the entrants from Kildare, including Rathangan 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.

Your entry includes a very lengthy and detailed list of community groups operating in Rathangan who have been part of your efforts to keep Rathangan as an excellent place to live. The interesting feature of the Rathangan groups list is that there is something in your town for everybody and so many people and groups make their contribution in their own way.

Particularly important for your town is the help and energy of your younger groups, the efforts and work of the 7th Kildare Rathangan Scouts Troop [not too many Tidy Town groups have their meetings in the Scout Den] and the Rathangan Football Club Under 18's stand out. The new 2025 crest for the football club is a great design.

Your relationship with the schools is also critical for the future of the town. Well done to to Bunscoil Bhride and Ardscoil Ráth Iomgháin on keeping up their Green Flags programmes, and best of luck to St. Patrick's Boys' National School on the various initiatives they have undertaken.

Again your presentation of your methods of communication covers all possibilities and is also very well set out.

Particular mention must be made of the excellent Tidy Towns page on the Community web-site, well done to your local designer, please make sure to keep it up to date.

Finally your survey and follow up meeting on the smart village strategy is a great way to meet good neighbours and improve an already strong sense of community - well done on that initiative.

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

Rathangan is a historic market town located at the intersection of the R401, R414, and R419 regional roads. The Slate River and the Grand Canal run through the town. It is a growing town with a number of new housing developments surrounding the historic hub.
The main centre streetscape is generally in good condition despite a number of vacant buildings, and has several landmark buildings which add to the character of the town.
Market Square is the centre of the town and includes a pump and trough that is somewhat stark surrounded by 4 columns and chain - there is an opportunity here for something more colourful especially given that there are planters across the road at the vacant Dillons premises and there is a tree adjacent.
Many of the shopfronts are excellent, including The Burrow, Ma's Kitchen and Julia's Drapery, the Village Pump and the excellent Lynch's Hardware amongst others.
The main street of Rathangan is lined with stepped terraces of many fine houses, generally well maintained but with some in need of renovation, but they have great potential either for use as housing or for a wide range of other mixed uses.
The Credit Union building at one end and the Garda Station at the other end of the village are very well maintained.
You have a community centre building which was the original St. Patrick's Church until it was refurbished, whose car-park is lined with murals depicting the historical figures of the town. The new adjacent Catholic Church has recently had it's roof renovated, the expanse of tarmac car-park to the front of the church also offers opportunity to possibly place some planters or consider how to introduce some softer landscaping.
The Church of Ireland at the other end of the town, beside the eye-catching renovated Old School House fronting onto the street, is approached up an excellent tree-lined avenue of mature deciduous trees, with a graveyard dating from the 1700's, was in very good condition and is certainly a landmark on the Rathangan heritage trail.
Rathangan has many interesting features including the Mary Lavery garden and the twinning stone at the green space at the R401/ R409 junction.
Finally it was very encouraging to see that Sophia Housing are currently remodelling and developing 24 age-friendly housing units at the former St. Johns Convent building - this will help bring additional life back to the town. The National Development Plan proposes that 40% of new housing should be built in towns and this is exactly the type of project that will address housing needs and bring regeneration to a town.

Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:

The many excellent photographs included in your 2026 entry together with the inspection visit confirm your expertise and work in looking after your town's many green spaces, large and small. You have chosen well in relation to choice of flowers and plants, planting and maintenance of spaces and landscaping throughout the town.
You have chosen your flowers for colour, and also critically for their roles as pollinators, and also taken the need to take account of all 4 seasons of the year in your planting and maintenance programme.
In particular your decision to leave dandelions go into full bloom in flowerbeds in April/May is very much appreciated. Also your approach to limited mowing and not using herbicides are all steps in the right direction even if there is some initial resistance to these options in some communities.
Significant amount of research shows that longer grass supports beetles, spiders, and butterflies. A wide variety of bees, flies, butterflies, and beetles feed on dandelions when they bloom in early spring. The bees that feed on dandelions include endangered species of solitary bees as well as bumblebee queen bees and honeybees. Nettles are food for butterfly caterpillars, it is all linked.
The various locations throughout the town are very well presented particularly the following: the Maura Laverty rose garden, the garden with the beech tree and stone marking the twinning of Rathangan with the wonderfully named town of Freehold, New Jersey, and the excellent planting of trees and shrubs at the playground, and the heather planting at the willow sculpture.
In addition you have carried out extensive planting work at the approach signs to the town which have added greatly to the colour of the town.

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.
Rathangan possesses great natural amenities such as the river, canal, woodland and bog area in close proximity to the town. In particular the Tannery Parks has everything that any town would hope for from a woodland and river bank relatively close to the centre. The park has a winning combination of native woodlands and shrubs, trails, uncut wild pollinator-friendly areas and well maintained paths, with the necessary facilities including seating, and some car-parking available so as to encourage use of the facility.
Unfortunately you have lost a mature ash tree at the William Byrne memorial but you have plans to work on this area. It is suggested that the lettering to the memorial stone and also the Tannery Park sign be worked on and improved as part of the proposed works.
Your proposed audit of trees is an excellent project, very necessary, and the results of that audit will inform your future course of action in terms of maintenance, removal and new planting.
The involvement of volunteer citizen scientists who count bats and butterflies and report in a structured fashion on

designated sites to a central point such as the Kildare Bat Group or the Biodiversity Data Centre and Butterfly Conservation Ireland will be crucial to providing the necessary information so as to inform future policies in relation to the protection of nature and biodiversity. The monitoring of the water quality of the River Slate over the year and the public availability of the results is also a serious undertaking, the decline of our water over the years has been well documented - well done to your volunteers on linking up with Earthwatch Europe.
Currently, your most exciting project is the commissioning of Digital Nature to develop environmental corridor mapping for Rathangan - that is a very ambitious undertaking and it will be very interesting to learn more as the project progresses.
Congratulations too on the installation of the bat boxes in Tannery Park, the work on the food hedges in the boys school, the girls school hedgehog project, your lobbying on hedgerow protection and the Kildare Biodiversity Action Plan, your wildlife education in the forest school, and the Cubs and Scouts evening walks in Killinthomas Wood.

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.
Sustainability is a very broad term. However, many groups are very active in encouraging community members to make their area more sustainable by their actions. Energy, water and transport are the three main themes under which savings can be made.
Rathangan Tidy Towns has set done a very comprehensive list of the actions and projects undertaken by the Rathangan community in pursuit of a sustainable community.
This report has not been able to comment on every one of your actions in the Tidy Towns application under this category, it is an impressive demonstration of a proactive community at work but they have all been taken into account in the adjudication process.

The Community Centre monthly market, the schools uniform swap, and secondary school auction, the local shop repairing and altering uniforms for re-use, and the Church of Ireland community and the Acorn Business Park fruit and vegetable shop selling local produce and second hand goods are practical demonstrations of a local circular economy that delivers social and monetary benefits to the whole community.

An emerging trend is that many sports clubs are making serious efforts to recycle jerseys and playing gear as much as possible. There is no reason why so many jerseys end up in landfill after a year or two of wear. A standard sports jersey takes between 20 and 200 years to decompose because it is made of synthetic plastic fibers like polyester or nylon.

Food security is becoming an increasingly important issue and reduced dependency on imported and mass produced food by growing our own vegetables and fruit, preferably organically, is a small step towards food independence. The Ard Mhuire residents vegetable boxes certainly look very healthy - well done.
It is very encouraging to see the number of solar panels installed in your community, especially the public buildings with good roof area including your community centre and the girls school. The SEAI are very interested in working with any community who want to use power from clean, renewable sources like offshore wind and solar power.
Rathangan has demonstrated that they understand the true value of water by trying to reduce waste by having water butts and rainwater harvesting systems in place at the church, the day care centre, community greenhouse, primary school, and private residents. It is anticipated that this will become an increasingly common feature of many communities as prolonged periods of dry weather become the norm.
Thank you to all who are taking the small steps that will lead to a sustainable community. Small actions taken together can create real change

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

Rathangan Tidy Towns Committee and the volunteers together with the employees of Kildare County Council and the TUS workers assigned to Rathangan and other stakeholders have ensured that Rahtangan and surrounds has a good standard of tidiness and litter control in all of the public areas visited.
The only exceptions noted to this good standard was some evidence of anti-social behaviour and litter left behind at the grass verge at the entry signs on the R401 route, and also some traffic cones and assorted debris dumped in the river downstream of the bridge. These isolated instances were not typical of the general condition in Rahtangan and it is clear that the combination of voluntary and local authority effort has been very effective.
All litter bins in the town were empty and available for use. Again, and as last year's adjudicator noted, the walks along the Grand Canal Barrow Blueway were in very good condition.
Along with many other Tidy Towns groups, you have taken part in the An Taisce National Spring Clean Up initiative to get the year under way.
Your observations on reduced littering ties in with what this adjudication observed on the day of inspection. Thank you to all who have made their contribution.

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

It is acknowledged that it can be difficult to keep pace with the changes and needs of a developing community.
It is an advantage to Rathangan that many of the estates closer to the centre are mature estates and have enjoyed the benefits associated with time in terms of tree cover, and general enhancement works over the years. You also have a good mix of house types with one-off houses, small terraces, single-storey bungalows, and grand town houses all adding to the combination.
You have highlighted in particular the works at Ard Mhuire and Temple Mills estate, the fruit trees planted by the

football club earlier looked in good condition.
Many of the homes seen had very well maintained frontage with colourful gardens, some with flower boxes and hanging baskets. The green spaces, many with trees to the estates, were generally very looked after. The new development at Spencer Demesne appears to have been well planted by the developer with trees and ground planting and generous landscaping evident.
It is clear that the residents and the residents association have taken excellent care of their homes and estates. It is noted that some of the residents associations have donated trees and seeds for use in public spaces. As the town expands, Tidy Towns might consider trying to put in place a structure, possibly through the community association so that every estate has a representative on an expanded committee so as to co-ordinate particular projects.

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

The approach roads into Rathangan are overall very clean, with clear signage and markings and well maintained. It was encouraging to see your winning Tidy Towns sign and Mid Kildare Tourist route sign prominently displayed.

The praise of last year's adjudicator for the Bog Cross roundabout and unique willow sculpture is repeated.

Some of the traffic calming ramps are probably due for a maintenance re-visit. The appearance of the cobble-lock ramp at Market Square has not been helped by what looks like a temporary repair.
All approaches had neatly trimmed grass verges and well maintained hedgerows. The information sign boards are good. Cycle way entries into the town along the canal greenways are excellent.

Concluding Remarks:

This adjudicator was very impressed with the presentation of Rathangan and the brilliant work the committee and residents have carried out. It is hoped that you will continue to engage with the Tidy Towns Competition - there is so much potential in Rathangan.

Congratulations on yet again increasing your score.

Go raibh maith agaibh go léir.