Tidy Towns Competition 2026

Adjudication Report

Centre:	**Straffan - Teach Srafain**	Ref:	**385**
County:	**Kildare**	Mark:	**408**
Category:	**C**	Date(s):	**22/06/2026**
			26/07/2026

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2025	Mark Awarded 2026
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	80	52	53
Streetscape & Public Places	80	48	50
Green Spaces and Landscaping	80	53	55
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	80	49	51
Sustainability – Doing more with less	80	24	25
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	76	78
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	55	45	46
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	55	49	50
TOTAL MARK	**600**	**396**	**408**

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.

This was was my first visit to Straffan, one of the most outstanding small towns it has been my pleasure to visit.

Given your location in the centre of a mix of larger towns Straffan is a relative oasis of calm.

In setting out your committee and volunteers numbers, you have also retained your essential sense of humour in your submission - congratulations to all irrespective of their age who made a difference to Straffan.

Over 50 years of participation in the Tidy Towns competition is a very rare record and it is no surprise that you have gathered many awards over the years and judging by this year's entry the energy and enthusiasm continues.

Your flexible approach to meetings, scheduling and division of work, and communication is certainly delivering an excellent environment for all. As you put it, most of the volunteers just get on with it - at this stage you perform like a well-oiled machine. Your proposed development of a web-site will add another layer of communication to your array of tools.

Your presentation of your impressive list of local supporters is very clear and concise, thank you, all are making their contribution. You appreciate that it is essential that you continue to engage with the schools, the Gaisce students, and the youth groups, especially as Straffan develops and new energy, ideas and innovation come into the community.

Without exception all of the entrants from Kildare 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 engagement with the Kildare Tidy Towns Network and membership of the County Wide WhatsApp group for Kildare Tidy Towns Committees can only help your future work.
Your maps and attachment to your entry are clear and were of great help on the day of adjudication. However your submission is lengthy and it appears to repeat much of the information and detail from previous submissions that may be no longer relevant to your current entry. Hopefully Covid will not make a return.
We look forward to the development of your next 3 year plan and your continued engagement with the Tidy Towns programme. May you continue to celebrate your community with lavish tea-parties for many years to come.

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

Straffan offers a unique collection of public heritage and space, all overseen by your two church buildings, the former RIC baracks, the barely visible church tower ruins, and the cemetery, clustered around your town. The thumbnail photographs included in your entry proudly set out your extraordinarily rich heritage.
The development of housing in the town is also very welcome, towns are for living in,
Your decoration of the town with the eye-catching mural at the community centre wall adds to the vitality and sense of place. The submission included some very interesting photographs of the work in progress at very stages.
You have listed out and illustrated a wide range of very impressive buildings and features that certainly contribute to your town. Every corner turned offered a new visual treat, The old post box at the shop could possibly be improved by removing the stickers, and might look better with a fresh coat of paint, it certainly is a feature of your heritage that should be treasured.

Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:

The various locations throughout the town are very well presented particularly the following : the gardens to the community centre, the verge beside bus stop nr. 133841 at the Barberstown Road, the planted hard standing outside Scoil Bhride National School, the neat green area and stone-walled garden at the New Road corner, and the equally impressive green space at Lodge Park.
The decorative bike parked at the flagpoles to the community centre is a nice touch with planted baskets. Also the planters on the wall to the school adds to the landscape, well done to the school community.
You might reconsider the positioning of the planters on the steps to the community centre entrance. You have indicated that the site of Straffan GAA Club forms part of you future plans and there is certainly scope for landscaping and green development here. Well done to new sub-committee who have commenced well on their green journey. Tús maith leath na hoibre.
Your use of LED decorative lights for Christmas is mentioned.
It is suggested that the stakes and supports to trees and also decorative lighting fittings draped on trees should be inspected so as to ensure that the growing trees are not being damaged. Please also be aware that light pollution over a sustained might impact on our native birdlife.
You have also brought some colour to the town by having numerous planters placed at key positions, you have also made use of native perennials, a practice that is always encouraged.
You have recognised the necessity to sow at the right time of the year, and the need to select the right plants for the right soil types. Well done on your avoiding the use of pesticides.
The constant need to water, thin out and and weed around is key to the ongoing presentation of your green spaces and landscaping.
Thank you for the work in keeping all the green spaces distributed in Straffan 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.
The preparation and detail of the GAA Green Plan in conjunction with Straffan Tidy Towns is a monumental piece of work and when delivered will make a significant contribution to the biodiversity of your town. The grounds have such potential and they deserve an ambitious plan.
Your neighbouring K-Club is a centre of nature and biodiversity including woodlands, parklands, gardens, trees, planting and the river Liffey flowing through it all. Your engagement with the K-Club is also noted.
The grounds of Straffan Church and the ruins as well as the graveyard are very attractive features for any bird-watcher or anyone interested in any aspect of nature. Has there ever been a survey of the trees in Straffan.
The mature chestnut tree at the entrance to the Coarsemoor estate was magnificent in full leaf on the day of adjudication - hopefully it will last for many more years. One can only wonder how many birds and insects have thrived under it's shelter.
Your engagement with the bat survey also contributes to our understanding of nature.
Kildare County Council's Draft Biodiversity Action Plan for 2026-2031 is an excellent document that might assist your future work. The document specifically identifies Tidy Towns as partners who might actively investigate opportunities to improve community biodiversity actions - the opportunities are there for you. The Publications Section is especially informative.
Best of luck with your future projects and programmes under this heading.

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.
You have also identified a number of local initiatives which come under the sustainability heading.
In particular you mention swap shops for books and school uniforms, scrap metal weekends, provisions of compost bins to the graveyard, recycling of electrical goods, and collection of used sneakers and runners for re-use.
You have properly recognised the value of our domestic water supply by promoting the use of push taps in the school, the GAA Club and the graveyard. Reducing the water used in cisterns is another positive step in our drive for water conservation. This is an area often overlooked by other Tidy Towns Committees.
Congratulations on using the Return facility in the Community Centre to generate income for the Drama Group -well done there.

The most visible drive to sustainability in Straffan are the newly installed 24 solar panels on the Community Centre and the solar panels to the original national school building, hopefully this good example will be followed by many others in the town.
The K-Club and Barberstown Castle have also indicated that they will be making every effort to operate a sustainable approach to their facilities and operations.
Your active promotion of public transport is also very welcome.
The journey to a Sustainable Straffan is very much underway. Thank you.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

Staffan Tidy Towns have carried out a comprehensive and detailed programme of litter and rubbish collection, and ensured that Straffan is an excellent example of a community coming together to ensure that their town is in top class condition.
Your commitment to the wider community is further demonstrated by your participation in the Council's Green Kilometer project.
This adjudicator observed a very high standard of tidiness and litter control in all of the public areas visited.
Congratulations on your work - you continue to perform exceptionally well under this heading.

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

The housing and residential areas of Straffan seen by the adjudicator were maintained to a very high standard.
While much of the housing are in relatively new developments, the adjudicator was particularly impressed by the garden of Straffan Cottage, complete with half door and climbing roses and by the terrace of 4 single storey cottages at Church View, with The Old Dispensary house at the start of the terrace, in Flemish brick and the reminder of cut stone with decorative barge boards, and stone rubble boundary walls. Again these homes made use of hanging baskets and planters to enhance their appearance.
Your use of the K-Club hollow cores to rebuild the banks at Coarsemoor sounded a very interesting project, and your planting at Straffan Gate and Lodge Park are significant additions.
The homes, gardens, roads, green space and trees of the various estates including Straffan Gate, St. Bridget's Terrace and The Darley were very well maintained and a pleasure to visit. The stones and entrances to the estate were generally easily visible.

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

Initial entrance to Straffan was by way of the R406 Barberstown Roundabout and followed the main street leaving over the classic Straffan Bridge, stopping to take in the weirs on the Liffey.

It was surprising to learn that 18,000 vehicles pass the roundabout every day - a significant volume of traffic for any town.

Both entry and exit were in good condition with good clear signage. The only minor exception to this was that the visibility of the Failte Straffan sign from Barbertown was somewhat obstructed by a very colourful growth of roses.

All approaches had neatly trimmed grass verges and well maintained hedgerows.

The general condition of roads and paths was excellent and it was a pleasure to visit Straffan.

Concluding Remarks:

This adjudicator was impressed with the presentation of your town and the work the committee has carried out.

You have a broad range of activities on your programme and you have fully engaged with the wider Straffan community.

I look forward to visiting Straffan again -it is a wonderful town.

Go raibh maith agaibh go léir.

Second Round Adjudication:

The visit to Straffan for the purpose of a 2nd round adjudication took place on a warm sunny day in late July. We had visited Straffan many times before, but this time as adjudicators, we were looking with more critical eyes. We were initially struck by the setting of the village nestled between farmland and woodland and close by the beautiful grounds of Barberstown Castle and the K-Club. Before our visit we printed your maps. These were quite poor and need to be improved. The Google satellite map was blurred and the colour of the Legend (a brown?), when printed, was illegible. Your map should fill an A4 page – a hand drawn map is quite acceptable. We suggest you use the new Heritage Trail Map as a basis but omit the photos of the structures as they aren't necessary for the purpose of the Tidy Towns' submission. Make two legends – one indicating a few key structures of the village (numbered A, B, C, D, etc) and the other legend is to be a list of your projects. In the application form number the projects/activities as New (N1, N2, N3 etc.) or Maintained (M1, M2, M3 etc.) and use these numbers on your map. Remember we're not expecting a long list of new projects every year as the maintenance of existing ones is of equal importance.
Entering the village from the north along the R406, the superb presentation of this approach to the village, with the distinctive roundabout, attractive birch plantings and neatly maintained grass margins, was particularly admired. We

also admired the metal village name sign – simple, clear and easily read by the motorists. Good to see it was in Irish as well as English. Compliment to KCC on the design of the roundabout at the R403/R406 junction. The tall standing stones and planting bed of evergreen ground cover and tall grasses looks great and acts as a focal point for the motorist. Perhaps increase the size of the planting bed – the large expanse of gravel should be reduced. We noticed two concrete pyramidal bollards at the entrance to a field …. is this the entrance to a walkway? We walked in a little bit but we hadn't time to investigate further into the field. We admired that footpaths extended well outside the 50k limits as this facilitates your community to be safe when walking or running. Pavements, road surfaces and markings in the village core are, for the most part, presented to a very high standard. The rumble strips, dipped kerbs and raised table junctions were admired.

The overall presentation of the streetscape and village core in Straffan is outstanding. Residential and commercial properties are maintained and presented to the highest standard, with freshly painted and colourful shopfronts and building facades, attractive window displays, and colourful window boxes and floral displays. Numerous properties are worthy of special mention, but it is perhaps not necessary at this point to repeat the comments included in the first-round adjudication. We will however comment on the new mural adjacent to the RC church depicting the natural and manmade heritage of your village. The pictures seamlessly blend giving a wonderful image of what surrounds us. This mural and your Heritage Trail are very worthwhile new projects.

You have a number of planting beds on the entrance roads and along the streetscape. The ones at Barberstown Castle were very beautiful – lavendula hidcote, rudbeckia, verbina bonariensis, echinacea, etc. The beds were buzzing with pollinators when we visited. Mature trees abound in your village and surrounding landscape. With climate change these trees will be even more important as locations of shade from the summer sun in addition to protection from winter rain.

New residential developments located on the outskirts of the village are beautifully designed. They layout has ensured a successful integration of those new developments into the very scenic streetscape of the village. The new estates had a variety of tree lined entrance roads - poplar (Populus), mountain ash (Sorbus acuparia), lime (Tilia), maple (Acer), plane (Platanus), etc. We admired that those along the main entrance road had boundary walls of stone, maintaining the tradition of your village. The artistically painted housing estate names are beautiful – compliments to the artists.

We also admired the artistically painted utility boxes – refresh them where it is needed. We recommend that all the utility boxes along your streetscape are artistically painted, which can be undertaken over a period of a few years. Select a theme which reflects your village – the River Liffey, historical structures, golf, etc. and those in or near planting beds could have colourful flower themes. Some of the signs were dirty and your 'Pardon the Weeds' sign (and pole) should be removed. At this stage the community know the reason for the long grasses and wildflowers. You have diverse areas of wildlife habitats - mature trees, green spaces, stone structures, etc. - for your insects, birds, mammals, amphibians and invertebrates. In addition you have the great wide River Liffey flowing along your boundary and here we find a variety of fish – salmon, trout and eels and aquatic birds – dippers, herons, egrets etc. Suffice to say your community can be very proud of what has been achieved this year. The popularity of the village with tourists and visitors has been well earned and is a fitting testament to your ongoing work and dedication, and this wonderful achievement. We thoroughly enjoyed our visit to Straffan and encourage you to keep up the good work which is reaping it's just rewards.