

Tidy Towns Competition 2026

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Ballinrobe - Baile an Róba** Ref: **887**
County: **Mayo** Mark: **350**
Category: **D** Date(s): **13/06/2026**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2026
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	80	51
Streetscape & Public Places	80	51
Green Spaces and Landscaping	80	43
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	80	43
Sustainability – Doing more with less	80	27
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	60
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	55	35
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	55	40
TOTAL MARK	600	350

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. Ádh mór. Thank you for your enthusiastic clear application. We enjoyed reading about the future projects in your Tidy Town Plan and reading about all the other enhancement initiatives that are ongoing in Ballinrobe. Your application was well documented with photographs and linked well to your associated enumerated map. You have a core of 7 diligent workers who meet regularly and can tap into a regular bank of volunteer support and can also call on others including your school community and the more spontaneous WhatsApp group for support. We were impressed by your Facebook page and Instagram account which have high patronage and is posted on frequently with great visuals and links. You also use the print media, outreach talks, shop displays and St Patricks Day parade to sell your message. You appear to have great collaboration with other community/sports groups, state agencies and local politicians. Sorry to have missed you last year but you are back with the great perseverance of Mayo people! You have long association with the competition and acknowledge the positive impact it has on your community and environment. You are particularly proud of your site visual improvement works at Shoe Corner and as you say it could pay dividends if it results in re-occupation of the vacant dwelling.

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

Ballinrobe reflects its historic legacy as a strong market town with a good network of 19th century streetscapes and some interesting historic structures. This has brought a mix of benefits. Many of the large two and three storey structures have been restored well and adapted to new uses. However, there are still pockets of vacancy and dereliction especially along Bridge Street. It was fantastic to see a reversal with construction at a number of locations showing buildings being restored, especially those undertaken by the local authority for housing. You tell us that the courthouse has also been acquired by the local authority and repair works on the roof commenced. This is wonderful progress as this fine building commands a great presence on a key corner site. Despite the challenges of dereliction and vacancy there are some lovely well-maintained shopfronts both old style and modern in the town where elevational painting, neat signage and floral displays create great vibrancy. We were particularly impressed by O Hare's pub, Petals and Bud Florist, Henaghan's butcher, Flannery's Skeldale Veterinary Clinic, Biggins with nice outdoor seating and Bereket grocery. The credit union building on Main Street commands a large plot and good address to the street as does the two bank buildings. More modern elevations such as Ballinrobe Dental, (maith thu with use of gaeilge) Dept. of Social Protection and Mongey Opticians. It is admirable that you have committed to restore the old Valkenburg Hotel on the Main Street into a theatre and community centre. We appreciate your patience as we have read in your attempts to secure sufficient grant funding for the project but good that it has advance to re-design stage. You have attempted to mitigate the vacuum created by vacant shopfronts

with historic information panels, this is a good idea, but they do need a refresh. Good to see the trail plaques also but these also need to be cleaned up a bit. Your murals of the lake, nature bottle top mosaic and Ballinrobe in Bloom give nice relief to the large plain walling. You have good reason to be proud of your key church buildings. St Mary's and the associated landscaped grounds looked immaculate. It was thrilling to view the Harry Clarke windows inside. Outside we noticed the partial installation of your stained-glass sculpture, a wonderful collaborative venture with your young community. Looking forward for a return visit to see it completed with the insertion of the glazing element. The library housed in the old church is a great community asset and with very accessible routes. The two schools on the Convent Road present very well and are good examples of modern institutional architecture. You tell us that you are pressing Mayo County Council to implement a signage strategy – assuming that includes removal of clutter. We think this would be a timely initiative for the streets where signage does need to be more disciplined.

Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:

It was a treat to walk the 3km stone boundary loop along the Bower Walk and great to hear that it is possible to extend it to the woods, however time did not allow on our visit. It is quite accessible from both the town and Creagh Road. Some additional planting in the beds along this access would improve the experience. In contrast the access from Creagh Road was well complemented by the planter display of flowers at the Felix Waitkus Monument and the abundance of planting at the bridge and steps. The Bowers walk was full of bird song, mature trees and wildflowers, a haven for nature. Any plans to add seating along the way or some information about the significant ruined infantry barracks near the site? Great to read your information on wildlife there, your geo park signage and see your new tree planting. Have you monitored the bird boxes? The bug hotel looks great. Lots of users, we would suggest that you think of giving the seats a refresh. It is great to have your active recreation space at the town parks and so accessible. We did notice the planning application to further enhance it with the popular sport of padel boarding. The willow sculpture was very overgrown; you tell us it might be time for renewal. The library grounds and historic graveyard is a delightful space and provides nice seating for dwell time. The old market space is given good civic status with your tree planting, paving, sculptures, statues bollards and planters. We noticed the John King statue had empty planters though (passing through at a later date these were filled). It would as you say be enhanced greatly with ground planting that would be more sustainable but also could afford plants with vertical impact which would define the space better. However, the multiplicity of giant planters, hanging baskets, pots plants elsewhere add great colour, vibrancy and enhancement of the main streets as did the planters outside shops and the Garda station and the inset planting at key junctions in the town. We saw the embankment near the community school which is cleared and ready for planting soon, a fantastic project to carry out with your school community.

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

As mentioned already your Bower Walk provides a high-quality rich biodiversity environment. You have supplemented this area with the additional attraction of bird boxes and the bug hotel. You mention the legacy of your swift boxes located within the town, it would be good to hear if they are successful in providing nesting opportunities and congratulations to your students in the YS competition, great to have linked projects. Wonderful that you have developed a Biodiversity Plan for the River Robe, you might let us know of the specific actions you are carrying out along this wildlife corridor. You host a number of talks on nature topics such as that on barn owls, pine martens for information and hopefully to effect behavioural change too. You collaborate with a local ecologist on species such as the carder bee, great that it has been located nesting in your area, your wildlife flowers must have an attraction. You hope to develop the embankment beside the school with an emphasis on wildlife and biodiversity, your biodiversity officer will be helpful in this venture, and the large scale of the mound will contribute to its success hopefully. The library provides for a lovely natural oasis well done on the planting and biodiversity management. Visiting the old graveyard on High Road was a delight as a restrained approach to mowing here is contributing to a receptive environment for nature. You also mentioned the verge outside the new graveyard where there is a deliberate approach to encourage the development of a wildflower meadow. It looked fantastic with the generous display of ox eyed daisies. Well done in encouraging this approach to landscaping at the entrance.

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

You are aware of the benefits of sustainability. You tell us that re-cycling is being embedded in the community through various actions. Your garden centre is willing to take back old plants, containers and compost from customers. You also promote through TACU recycling of furniture and initiatives to reduce food waste. Great stuff! Congratulations also to your Youth Reach students on qualifying for Junk Kouture, it is a great lesson in re-cycling. The use of a new anaerobic digester for your farming community will hopefully have a good impact on water quality and no doubt a contribution to the EU LIFE project on improving the quality of water in Lough Carra. It was good to see active travel being promoted through the development of your new Greenway adjacent to the schools, phase 2 will hopefully be initiated soon. Have you noticed a change in patterns of trip to schools? We also noticed EV chargers in the town car parks and recycling banks there too. The racecourse has tackled watering of the course through rainwater harvesting wise on a lot of fronts. The recycling hub in the car park was tidy the information sign above the bins is very tattered though. As noted earlier, signage remains an issue, particularly the clutter and the large, unsightly signs on the N84 pavement near the Cornmarket area. Despite these points for attention, the standard observed on adjudication day was very impressive. Well done to everyone involved.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

You seem very active in the area of litter control with your schedule of litter picks. This is an area where you motivate your young community to get involved frequently and hopefully embed a standard of respect for public spaces. The impact of this regime was apparent on the day of adjudication. Although not completely litter or weed free a good standard of care is being maintained. You might look at the access to the Bowers off the main street

where litter was spotted, dog fouling noticed despite ample bins. Sections of walling has collapsed, and beds here needed attention. Well done on painting the dramatically coloured wall at the Brothers and the Garda station boundary wall.

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

You tell us you were selected for inclusion in the Town Centre First Program and have developed a Public Realm Strategy. Hopefully, this will leverage more funding for key restoration projects in the town. As already mentioned there has been a spur of activity to rehabilitate properties by the local authority notably along the residential area along Creagh Street. As time only permitted a visit to some residential areas but these looked well, which included a nice small developed accessed off the Main Street where tree planting, open space looked well. The recent development off Bridge Street is advancing well and has a nice riverside location. A number of developments off Creagh Road and Convent Road, including your competition winners Hazel Court were well laid out, of a good standard and support generous open space. Great if you could encourage more set aside spaces not needed or suitable for active recreation for wildflowers spaces.

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

The N84 northern approach is well defined by your iconic racehorse sculpture and your pristine racecourse. Verges are well maintained along this route with a nice tree line, signage and planting. On the entry junction to the town on this side is the generously planted boat makes a strong contribution to Ballinrobe's streetscape. Another mentioned development is the extended pedestrian route to the new graveyard, further embellished by your wildlife planting. The improvements to the vacant site at Shoe corner have improved this historic approach junction giving better setting for your shoe sculpture. Your murals, both recent and earlier examples, are highly commendable and add colour, interest and enjoyment to the walking experience in the town. You might also consider a junction-box painting project, as this could bring further colour and visual interest. The Heritage Trail plaque is very attractive, and small information plaques at heritage sites may also be worth considering.

Concluding Remarks:

It was a pleasure to visit Ballinrobe and get an insight into the extent of your community activity and pride. Your application was clear and the map and photos facilitated ease of orientation. Thank you