

Tidy Towns Competition 2026

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Ballycroy - Baile Chruaich** Ref: **505**
County: **Mayo** Mark: **304**
Category: **B** Date(s): **06/07/2026**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2025	Mark Awarded 2026
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	80	44	46
Streetscape & Public Places	80	41	43
Green Spaces and Landscaping	80	34	35
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	80	31	33
Sustainability – Doing more with less	80	18	19
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	57	59
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	55	29	30
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	55	38	39
TOTAL MARK	600	292	304

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. Thank you for your clear, comprehensive application form accompanied by your map and demarcated projects. These facilitated easy orientation and review of projects. You are a small committee of only 3 but are clearly ambitious for your community having read about your future projects and looked at your new Biodiversity Plan. You tell us that you have good support from your 15 volunteers who often bring extended family to help out at events. You have regularity to your meetings but are flexible to ongoing demands and focus on getting support for calendar events. You collaborate with a number of state agencies, your local authority, local schools/preschool and businesses and have developed a good mutually beneficial relationship with Ballycroy Visitor Centre (BVC). You communicate to your community in a number of ways including conventional and through your Facebook page. You selected your newly transformed playground which is recently completed as your special project. You indicate that participation in the Tidy Towns competition has given the village both environmental and social benefit, which is great to hear.

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

Ballycroy although on the N59 is solely contained on the eastern section with a vista out over extensive pasture and bog lands with the horizon dominated by the majestic Slieve More. Most of your community facilities face this road with some housing, while other residential uses are located on the access off the N59 where there is a calmer less trafficked environment. This access also provides the main entrance to Ballycroy Visitor Centre for the Wild Nephin National Park. Other key community buildings include your NS school Naomh Bride, your large community centre at the main junction and your Holy Family Church. This year you have added a fantastic playground to your community facilities. It not only provides great fun opportunities but also acknowledges your commitment to inclusivity and safety being an inclusively designed space with safe surfaces. It adds to the public realm and has the advantage of passive surveillance from adjacent housing – it is both an asset for the community and to tourists. Noticed some there on our visit, the children were squealing with delight using the facilities. You also have had recent street upgrades which include for 'access for all' standards and a good, linked pedestrian network. Your looped lanes also encourage sustainable movements in a pleasant natural environment giving access within the village and to the Visitor Centre. As the Dark Sky standard now becomes the benchmark for villages near the Dark Skies Park you have transitioned to LED lighting. Are there other measures afoot to assess community lighting standards in the village such as that of the church or community centre or GAA pitch? You tell us that you maintain the willow sculptures – it really is worth it as they are striking features along the access route to the park. There are a few derelict buildings – it would be good to paint the one at the entrance to the park as it is a visual distraction.

Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:

You are rightly proud of your parkland area surrounding your community centre. It is evolving as a lovely village green. You have had a number of planting events over the years including native hedging and fruit trees behind the centre and most recently more trees planted during Tree Week. You tell us that you are nurturing a wildflower grassed area here too, although the grass appeared managed there were not many wildflowers. It may mean a more conservative cutting regime and encouragement with more native seedlings especially yellow rattle to suppress the grass more. You have lovely bedding in the village and now this is further complemented by your thoughtful boundary planting to the playground. We noticed your trees, verges and hedging along the N59. As you indicate the transition to ground planting is now your plan and to phase out planters – this will save you time and money well done. The success of bed planting was noticed in particular at the entrance to the school showing a great selection of pollinators and planting beds of a scale that can have dramatic impact. The church grounds provide a nice mediative oasis with beautiful, mature trees and sweeping views. Your tree dedication in this area is both unique and touching. The GAA pitch has a number of embankments that could be managed for wildlife and add character to this location. We visited the Ballycroy Visitor Centre, it is a gem to have this so accessible to your community. It provides such a varied landscape combining lawns wildflower meadows, paths boardwalks and as you mention the accessible sensory garden where we sat for a while absorbing the atmosphere. You tell us of your cooperative work with the NPWS on areas like this and your involvement in the extensive 600 young native trees maintenance. A great reflection on both of you to collaborate like this and to nurture community ownership of this national yet local facility.

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

You tell us of your Biodiversity Plan which is an impressive guidance document for you for the next five years with lots of interesting, proposed actions to build on your natural heritage. You have very able and busy pre-schoolers. They nurture your orchard and are grow saplings from seeds you tell us also that they take nature rambles though the BVC, convey our praise indeed. Hopefully, they appreciate the contribution they are making to encourage pollination, nesting and the creation of habitats. Let us know of the progress with the bird boxes and bug hotel next year. Your seed harvesting is impressive keep it up. As mentioned, the tree wilding, sensory and moon gardens at BVC are all supported by your volunteers. It is great to have such a location as the park area to carry out butterfly and bee surveys – valuable information to upload to the biodiversity data centre too. We had an interesting read about the bees in the visitor centre, which is a great place for community learning and gathering.

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

You have lots of initiatives to share in this category. You tell us that some of your planting is supported by rainwater harvesting. Native seed harvesting has been very rewarding for you too. You do not use chemicals to tackle your weeds. You are supported by a shuttle bus for visitors to the Dark Skies park – a great encouragement for a more sustainable transport option. We noticed you support bike parking in the village and are near greenway routes. Does your school participate in walk/cycle to school practices as the school has a path connection to the village? LED lighting has been installed which has a reduced energy impact. You tell us too that for all your events you include for sustainable measure such as no single use plastics, reuseable cups only and waste is segregated – well done. It is commendable also that opportunities for re-use of materials applied to the playground construction.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

In this category you tell us that you have a twice monthly litter patrol schedule, you also monitor bin on the lane during high season and also discourage dog fouling. You incorporated waste control and segregation into the planning of the playground. It is not clear if you participate in the national spring clean – great for an environs collection and also for communitywide involvement. Notwithstanding this your village is very clean and tidy. Like last year we see the upgrading of the boat and associated seating area as an important part of street furniture needing improvement. We also noticed that the streetlamp standards along the N59 really do need a painting. Your recycling area was very clean, but the sign needs to be replaced. Great to hear that you audit redundant fixtures and that MCC react quickly.

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

Ballycroy has a range of house types detached single storey, two storey and a nice crescent of cottages facing the play area. We can see that the residents take pride in taking care of their respective properties with freshly painted walls neat gardens, trimmed lawns and nice bedding and trees. We saw a similar consistency of high standard on the homes we passed along the main approaches too. Well done to the householders for their beneficial efforts to address the public realm. Derelict properties are a problem for all small villages although you are not blighted that much by dereliction, but it is important to keep monitoring such sites.

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

Ballycroy enjoys a great sweep of natural landscape from the Mulranny direction on the N59. Approaching close to the village we saw a nice tree line with low hedging. You tell us the verge cutting has been reduced in the interest of biodiversity, and we saw evidence of this good management. Cafferkey's Bar and car parking area along this approach looked well maintained. The adjacent property which we assume was once a shop is well painted, if the old fascia were repainted it would be a nice reminder. The approach from Belmullet includes for the nice planters at the school and a connecting footpath that provides safe access to the village. It too supports an attractive line of trees and timber fence along the roadside boundary. As the fence extends for a considerable length it would be

enhanced if a native hedge were planted behind the boundary to camouflage and break up the long linear access to the village. We observed the upgrades to the road in the village that have enhanced pedestrian access and priority. Your continued maintenance and upgrade of the amenity along the loop laneways make them more of an attraction to use than to drive to the park at BVC. The approach from the L5277 needs a bit more care. Access to the GAA pitches should be more defined and identified. The graveyard is well maintained, good if footpaths were extended to this facility and the general boundary area upgraded. We noticed an empty sign frame at the entrance to BVC, it should be removed or populated. Great to see your use of bilingual signage elsewhere and we particularly liked the nice finger post design for the lanes.

Concluding Remarks:

Despite the cloudy weather during our visit, we got to enjoy the essence of the village and learn about all your community's hard work and view the results of your investment. It would be good if next year you had a structure Tidy Town plan prepared for a 3-to-5-year period – a biodiversity plan alone will only cover some elements. This will give you more focus for the competition, note projects should be aligned with the 8 categories. The plan and also can be useful to leverage supports and resources from other agencies.