

Tidy Towns Competition 2026

Adjudication Report

Centre:	Ballyhaunis - Béal Átha hAmhnais	Ref:	506
County:	Mayo	Mark:	362
Category:	D	Date(s):	14/06/2026

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2025	Mark Awarded 2026
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	80	49	51
Streetscape & Public Places	80	50	51
Green Spaces and Landscaping	80	51	52
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	80	45	48
Sustainability – Doing more with less	80	26	28
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	58	59
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	55	35	36
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	55	36	37
TOTAL MARK	600	350	362

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. Wonderful that Ballyhaunis has sustained interest in the Tidy Towns competition for 22 years and we read that this has encourage good community participation. You show through your clearly documented application that you are very successful at cross collaborating with other key community groups and can integrate your respective projects where these have environmental objectives. You place a premium rightly on including your school and young adults in your activities and value the benefits of being socially inclusive and involving your refuge and new residents in activities. You link well with local businesses, state and public bodies and are aware of aligning your plans and projects with the UN SDG's. You have a structured approach to your longer-term plan and have developed good experience particularly in relation to natural heritage and biodiversity. This guided the selection of your special project which is a continued Citizen Science group monitoring of the quality of the river Dalgan which commenced in 2023. In addition to print media, you use your website and Facebook to link with your community, great to see you have a good following and regularly post and keep this communication channel up to date, supported by great photos and information.

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

Ballyhaunis like many small Irish towns is suffering from a degree of dereliction, especially along Knox Street. However, it was great to read that positive change is happening and action being taken by Mayo Co.Co. on some under the derelict sites act. Having been included in the Town Centre First initiative will give focus for further improvements. We saw and admired all your referenced properties – Old Butcher, J Lyons and the Bank of Ireland conversion. These all looked great and reflect investment confidence in your core area. There were also a number of very nice shopfronts to mention a few, Finn Footware, Dillion Solrs., Paddy Philips and Eddie Murphys to mention a few. Great to see the range of both lower and upper elevations painted nicely. Market Square, remodelled under previous town renewal schemes is wearing well and when the refurbishment of adjacent buildings is finished you can get to enjoy it more. St Patricks Church contributes well to the streetscape as does the community centre and the nearly completed good contemporary primary care centre. It is sad to see the courthouse declining into a derelict state but hopefully it will lend itself to a new use soon. In the interim if the railings were cleaned and repainted and some floral enhancement installed it would improve its address to the street. You tell us also of the significant plans for the old convent buildings, it would be wonderful to see these historic community building transformed into good community uses again now that Mayo Co. Co. have acquired them. The Aldi development has included for very high quality hard and soft landscaping and nice resting spot too. In contrast the Supervalu supports quite a barren landscape that would lend itself to island trees and raised bed planting perhaps with less

formal planting along boundaries. The Community School is well designed especially with a layout that brings the building tight onto the path. The Mosque complex at Sherwood Avenue reflects your diverse community and adds interest to the general streetscape. The library area represents a nice hub of community activity with your discreet outdoor swimming pool to the rear. Great to have a train station so accessible to the town. The buildings here at the station date from mid-1800's and reflect the traditional fine attractive design in stone structures. Perhaps you could persuade the stationmaster to install some planters / baskets here to celebrate arrival in Ballyhaunis. In contrast the main street had a great array of floral planters and baskets which add great colour and vibrancy to the town.

Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:

Congratulations on preparing a BAP for Ballyhaunis. Hopefully it gives guidance to enhance all areas as well as the main park. This flexibility would be good to guide for new landscaping areas such as that at the new Primary Care Centre and also to help diversify planting at existing residential developments which are traditionally areas of ornamental planting and grass. That said it was a wonderful experience to wander around your large community park and the Friary grounds. It provides a great diverse natural amenity with loads of opportunities for both passive and active recreation. Wonderful to see the Hare's Corner space by the river and your orchard. The playground and MUGA facility are a great asset and are of a high standard. It is nice that the park is anchored by a historic complex including the Friary Church and graveyard, unfortunately the former was not open. It is wonderful that the former priest's house here has been adapted as a resource centre. We got to admire your great community garden which you tell us you have altered from individual plots to one community unit in the interests of efficient usage and to increase sociability. Great also that your park accommodates the Men's Shed and the community creche. Sorry to hear about the confusion regarding your endeavour to plant a mini forest garden at the church location in an effort to create a more diverse habitat. Hopefully you will see the rewards when you redirect these uprooted trees within the community. Perhaps the conservation management plan for this historic site when completed may accommodate some of your measures. Other historic graveyards have been persuaded to allow for less mowing and more wildflowers such as that at Shrúle. Smaller public spaces could do with improvement such as the southern section of the riverside walk which is heavily overgrown and not inviting. Also, the 1916 commemoration parklet needs some surface attention and more mixed planting on adjacent bed. In contrast the grounds of St. Patrick's Church are well maintained and offer a nice amenity short cut route within the town. The old market square area looked well with your generously tiered planters and sculpture. The trees in the boxes give verticality to the planting too and will be more appreciated when the building works are complete. Well done to the properties along the main streets who have hanging baskets they add to colour and ambience created by the planting in the public area including the baskets on the lamp standards.

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

You have a keen interest in Biodiversity and have approached enhancement through the structured process of preparing a BAP which is commendable. In this regard Dalgan River and your Friary Park are key focus points in your work to date. Your actions also include increasing awareness in your community through public events, talks and walks – all great. Your enclosed photographs and the posts we viewed on your Facebook page reflects your dedication to this approach. You have distributed native heritage apple trees to the local NS school and the community. Great to hear about the harvest when it arrives. You have particular focus on Friary Park where you are building on your work to date as we saw with the Hare's Corner project, your mowing regime, use of yellow rattle to encourage wildflowers orchard planting – all with a focus to diversify the habitats and increase pollination opportunities. It is great to see this evolution of ecological enrichment and the wealth of natural sounds heard and species seen on the day are testament to your great work. You tell us about your specially chosen project, which is ambitious and brave for a community to take on as a citizen science project – you are monitoring three locations on the Dalgan River which is classified as moderately polluted by the EPA, on a quarterly basis. Your group have had to acquire skills through LAWPRO, became acquainted with H&S issues and secured appropriate equipment. You are fortunate in having expertise within your group too. This is both a great learning experience and awareness raising exercise regarding the importance of preserving river water quality. Fantastic photographs and thanks for the links and wonderful that you have an opportunity to include young adults in this work. Well done too for achieving all your accolades including the Community Champion award. You also are keeping a watchful eye on invasive species which we see the most troublesome from your survey are Japanese Knotweed and Gunnera. Let us know next year of any follow up actions. As you saw from your entry both this category and Sustainability have been allocated higher points from this year, a recognition by the TT of our biodiversity crisis and for society to be more sustainable. You are certainly at the forefront of acting. Well done to you and all your volunteers and collaborators.

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

You tell us about all your great practices at your community garden that contribute to your commitment to be as sustainable as possible here. Firstly, the act of growing your own food offsets buying food that can come with travel costs. You have a number of sustainable methods for making compost and also avail of local agricultural manure and mushroom compost and use the residue from the summer planters also. You seed save, use commercial cardboard waste for weed suppressant and harvest rainwater and have innovative techniques for conserving water usage too. As this is a community garden you have opportunities to swap and share tools also. As your photos and our visit on the day tells, the garden is a great resource for all your community and a great opportunity for socialising and integrating. Your community centre is another area where you apply the principles of circular economy. You have opportunities for book swaps, Board Game sharing. I particularly like the idea of having a regular bike repair clinic and for broadening this into training on bike repairs to enable re-sale of donated bikes that makes profits to be reinvested in the centre. Do your local businesses have any good sustainable initiatives? Great that you have secured grants to encourage upcycling with your Foroige group. We noted your re-cycling hub in the town. It is a

credit to the town to be able to claim a number of sites that can facilitate EV charging. Are there any plans to encourage more active transport. I did use my bike on my visit but did find the traffic heavy along the main streets with no priority for cycles even along the route to the train station. Having said this it is wonderful that you have access to train travel – you might let us know next year of the level of usage and also about your bus service. You tell us that there has been a recent launch of Ballyhaunis Sustainable Energy Masterplan, and we see online that it was accompanied by promotional talks on SEAI grants and solar energy. We notice that a few of your recently renovated properties on the Main Street installed panels with their upgrade.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

You tackle litter through your main clean up at Spring and Good Friday and indicate that this is supplemented by regular litter picks and weeding. We noticed also that you have through your signs targeted dog fouling also. However, we unfortunately experienced a lot of litter and poor weed management on our visit which was disappointing as it wasn't just at particular locations.

The recycling area was particularly poor with a lot of discarded clothes, cardboard, bottles and cans. The route to the church from Supervalu site had pockets of litter lodged in a number of places. There was some although not substantial litter on the main streets also. The sundial area had sweet wrappings at the plaque, the grassed area at Lidl had a lot of litter. The weeds at the 1916 commemoration spot need addressing. Unfortunately, there was litter in the park coming down the stepped area too. The town appeared generally tidy apart from where there are derelict buildings – simple painting elevations could transform some of these if you initiated an enhancement scheme or requested Mayo Co.co. to take the initiative. It would be beneficial also to tidy and paint the vehicular entrance to the park; it would give a welcome to what is a fantastic community space. Despite the selfless work carried out on litter by your volunteers there is a need for more regular picks and an address of weeds. An awareness campaign might be necessary too and warning signs at locations such as the recycling hub in the car park.

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

It is great to read about the refurbishment of a number of properties that have resulted in additional accommodation opportunities. Hopefully this will continue with the generous national grants available for upgrading vacant and derelict properties. Residential areas overall looked very well. The housing along the approach roads and the terraces housing along the main streets look well maintained. St Gerard's Terrace has a particularly inviting entrance with gable stone walling and a beautifully planted bed. Hazelwood benefits from nice low stone boundary walls and good open space. The housing at Station Rise area has good accessibility to the town and train station, Abbey Vale here displayed good care and nice landscaping. Ashling Drive drew attention with its bespoke signage. It is good to hear that the number of residents association are on the rise from 9. You are encouraging this increase in associations in conjunction with your plans to re-allocate the trees removed from the Friary to residential areas which will enhance their environments. By next year you will be able to tell us of the progress of these mini woodlands and how you have organised residents to take ownership of the trees and benefit from this new amenity value.

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

Your approach roads you tell are maintained by the RSS and well done to them for operating a mowing regime that encourages increased biodiversity. Watch out for a number of commercial signs along these routes and good to keep the low planters at the sign maintained. You have well located car parks off Knox Road that allow for ease of access to the main street. You have given us a mock-up of the planned mural that a kind resident has agreed to and a business is sponsoring. It will give a good impression from the Charlestown approach and also reflect your interest in natural heritage and add to the nice murals already in the town. It is great to read that you have had a walkability study carried out and that the Active Travel Team in the council are embarking on reviewing design measures that will improve sustainable travel patterns. These when implemented have significant advantages for safety, health, business and the environment. We noticed the traffic calming and pedestrian crossing available near the Community School, it would be advantageous if cycle lanes could be manged to the school or a greenway link implemented. You tell us that you have lobbied for a number of safe separated access links which include footbridges and extensions of footpaths hopefully these will be included in the Active Travel Plan. You also mentioned IE proposals to lower the road at the railway bridge; this measure has been successful in providing paths /cycle lanes in other urban areas so hopefully this measure will go ahead. Your town has benefited well from a number of measures – Town Centre First funding, Storefront Enhancements schemes, Refurbishment grants and older urban renewal schemes. The revitalisation that this has generated is well matched by your and other community groups enthusiasm for making Ballyhaunis a great place to live, convey our appreciation to all.

Concluding Remarks:

Thank you for your well-ordered application, map guidance and Plan. The illustrative photographs were well chosen and a good reflection of you hard work and your significant interest in the natural environment. We enjoyed visiting your town and look forward to a return visit in the future to see more of your many positive plans come to fruition.