

Tidy Towns Competition 2026

Adjudication Report

Centre:	Castlebar - Caisleán an Bharraigh	Ref:	512
County:	Mayo	Mark:	408
Category:	F	Date(s):	21/07/2026

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2025	Mark Awarded 2026
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	80	58	60
Streetscape & Public Places	80	53	55
Green Spaces and Landscaping	80	55	57
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	80	48	50
Sustainability – Doing more with less	80	31	32
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	64	66
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	55	40	42
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	55	44	46
TOTAL MARK	600	393	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 - guenon muid gach rath oraibh in bhur dtionscadail amach Ádh mór. Thank you for your enthusiastic and diligent entry to the competition this year. You certainly invested huge energy in producing a well-designed entry accompanied by a vast range of supporting illustrations, photographs and individual affirmations on the value of your work. To top this and aid navigation of your projects you have supporting links available too. Some were availed of as time is limited in the adjudication process however we appreciated your efforts with this and the map. Your 5- year plan is clear and conveys a focused approach to all 8 categories and an associated understanding and application of the UN SDG's. You tell of your awards received this year which have recognised your valuable work, a big congratulations. All this is steered by a committee of 6 with up to 50 core volunteers and numerous others including over 30 different nationalities, who rise to the challenges of your various initiatives. Your works captures a wide network with whom you collaborate with and avail of advice and resource. These include local community and voluntary groups, state bodies, businesses, schools and youth organisations. This reach reflects your broad appeal and capacity to build effective partnerships. You value good communications not only in the functional sense but also use your award night to acknowledge participants work and you give guidance on good environmental practices. All this is particularly clear from your social media pages and your latest communication venture, which is the setting up of your dedicated website, an initiative you have selected as the specific project that you invested particular effort in this year. You have stayed with the competition for 31 years which you say has increased community social cohesion, pride and delivered environmental improvements in the town. These are not easy wins, and we commend you for all your long-term dedication.

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

In this category you tell us of lots of imminent projects which are at planning stage. This includes for a gentle regeneration of the Mall and Green which is a very attractive historical public space. It was full of activity with a hurling skills camp ongoing. Recreation on The Green provides a nice balance with the formality of the institutional buildings including the Courthouse, Council buildings and Christchurch flanking this lovely space. Street furniture, trees, bedding and monument all looked well. The vacant terrace of building on the NE side is a great detractor, but you tell us that the old Imperial Hotel here and the adjacent barracks buildings are now funded to advance regeneration. This will be great to see in the future. Dereliction and vacancy do impact your streetscape. You tell us of the good news for some sites with housing refurbishments and demolition and new housing imminent. Especially great to see works advancing on Ellison Street and it is a delight to see the lovely old P.O. being transformed into a youth hub. (what will happen the old historic Foroige building ?). Our visit to Market Square was another experience

of a prime public space that provides for good opportunities to dwell regardless of the weather with your canopied seating and sheltered hubs. This public space is anchored well by Hastings modern building and enhanced by some lovely premises such as Cannon's and Caroline's Café. The sculpture, lovely landscaping including the planters and baskets gives it a nice ambience and a desired destination spot. Other shopfronts admired while wandering the streets were Blue Serenade with its sharp colour scheme and Al Muretto's on Tucker Street. Parsons on Market Street makes a strong impression on the streetscape with all floors and elevations colour co-ordinated and Castle Books here too impressed with nice signage and stone facing. Other shopfronts along this street that caught the eye included Bru and Pat Faheys. G. Mc Guire's has a nice frontage, but poor visual presentation on the upper floors detracted visually. Within the town there are many distinctive buildings that add to the character and sense of place. Notables are the collection on Chapel Street including the Church, Parish Hall Monastery and Family Centre. The old converted Linenhall Building nestling in the heart of the town is a gem and well adapted for cultural uses. In general, your shopfront competition is delivering good results with lots of colour, good signage and upkeep. However, what is notable is the abundance of signage and structures on the main commercial streets which does give an impression of clutter and impacts legibility and orientation. You tell us this is on your agenda to tackle so good stuff.

Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:

Here in this category, you tell us that you have embraced pollinator friendly species and in particular perennials in your bedding and other planting, all guided by your Biodiversity Plan. Colour and animation are objectives too and annuals deliver well - the combination of all this was quite apparent on our visit. The key public areas and businesses supported landscaping and floral ornamentation, these were noted especially on The Mall/Green, Monument Market Square, Castle Street wall, Rock Sq. and the Library area complemented by numerous flower baskets and planters along the main streets and on business premises. Your spring bulbs as seen from your photos and reels bring great colour too, make sure to include for grape hyacinths and crocus, good pollinators. Your street trees add to both visual and wildlife amenity and we noted the flowers and signage at the base of many. You tell of having good expert advice on all planting – great advantage. Thanks for the photo collage. You specifically reference a number of new projects. Fantastic to see respect through maintenance of the Aghlish Graveyard and great that this included your young community participating. The restoration and upgrade of bedding and planters/boxes at the train station provide a lovely welcome to all passengers and being appropriately added to by train staff hoisting Mayo flags on the day of our visit. The bedding and seat at Snugboro junction add another nice landscaping gesture to approaching visitors well done. We spend some time at Lough Lannagh and can tell from all the footfall it is obviously a treasured amenity for all the community. It offers a great combination of both active and passive recreation, we visited your new garden, the playground, skatepark and that the lake which was in use for kayaking courses. Noted many dog walkers too, none in the dog park, too hot maybe. We visited the periphery of the castle for which you have conservation plans. Nice touch also to see the tree dedication near the car park for the tragic coastguard rescue crew. Overall, an amazing amenity and wildlife environment with beautiful views. We did feel that it needed a bit more management to ensure biodiversity is nurtured and also to make it to more accessible to all, some routes had very steep gradients – this will probably emerge from your imminent masterplan. Great to see the Town Park too, so accessible to housing and Gaelscoil Raifteari. We admired your recent work on the pollinator beds and what a lovely meadow – with an additional 270 native trees too. These will all provide a lovely natural setting for the park playground, courts and outdoor gym and you still have lots of room for more ideas too including public toilets perhaps?

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

There is a lot of unavoidable overlap between this and the previous category. You have told us of your emphasis on pollinator friendly native species in your landscaping. You also mention the expansion of your no mow, wildflower meadows, grass cutting regimes for wildlife. You are also embarking on seed harvesting and non-chemical treatment of weeds – super looking machine the Foammaster, saw the reel of it in action. You obviously also recognise that a very important aspect of management for biodiversity is to raise the awareness of the people living in the vicinity and also of visitors to that area. This you are doing through engagement with schools and through information and your weekly “notes from the neighbourhood” on your Facebook page and now your new website too. We noted the many guides to nature at Lough Lannagh, at the riverside and multiple bee pollinator promotion signs. You also promote Citizen Scientist projects such as the FIT and Bee counts – what are the results and any notable sightings in Castlebar? We saw your new bug hotels at Lough Lannagh and dead hedges too – any potential to link with a school project? It is a boast to have a river and a Greenway running through the town, both hosting great ecosystems. Our amble alongside the river showed a healthy riparian zone which is important to support a diverse range of plant and animal life. The wall of bird nesting boxes was an interesting discovery – do you monitor the usage? We note that you have lots of future plans in this category and are following the actions in your Biodiversity Plan with good expert guidance too.

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

You convey a lot of understanding in relation to sustainable practices and also choose to lead by example as you tell us of all your own relevant actions in your work, very impressed by the old golf carts turned TT carts. You also are using your social media and the new website to promote ideas and behavioural change – very good. The Green Week and the Climate Action Week provide for good community learning also you tell us. It was interesting to review your QR Facebook links especially the Biodigester story from Breaffy House which meets so many of the UN SDG's, solar powered from food waste and supported by the IPAS community. Does this solely supply all your fertilising needs? You also tell of the edible gardens at the Town Park and Lough Lannagh Orchards – off setting food miles as well as enhancing biodiversity and the community garden off Chapel Road. We saw your solar tree

resting by the lake waiting for Christmas, nice idea and you tell of the town Christmas lights being of the LED variety now. You indicate that you are advancing your SECP in conjunction with SEAI and mentioned some key uptake in sustainable energy actions – are these being monitored in some way to give an estimate of equivalency in carbon emissions reduced? Recycling is important to you, and you participate in the Ghana book & furniture re-use project. Do we know you support re-fill stations but did not notice any around the town /parks ? Perhaps we missed them but needed during our recent hot spell. You tell us also that you segregate waste following litter collections – well done. Let us know too if your ATU campus or other institutions have become following promotion disposable cup free zones. We noted some good infrastructure for cycling throughout the town including stands, new rest spot, greenways, signage and availability of bike rental. We assume you have some good local link services too. We see in the MCC office window public notice canvassing for participation in the design of the next phase of your active travel plan – all good news. You tell also of your school's participation in the Green Schools Program and your supporting guidance in this regard.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

You have a very focused litter control regime. Two Spring cleans one for 12km of peripheral area and a local town clean up too, we commend all your volunteers and MCC staff– hopefully, the scale of litter is reducing over time. You also operate a weekly in winter and biweekly during the summertime litter pick. You can rely on help from a wide range of volunteers including your school community, Foróige and Scouts. You have produced a great record of their work, especially the before and after photographs and reels. The Foammaster, Blower and Street weeder are working magic on your streets and paved surfaces, the latter are always a particular challenge, but you seemed to have cracked it. The paving at the Town Park was singularly impressively clean as was that on Market Square and Duffy roundabout. Your bins were clean, seating, signs, bollards and light standards in relatively good condition. We did mention that there is a need to reduce signage and clutter on the streetscape though and improve street sign plates for legibility. Also, some of the lanes need a refresh and bin storage to be removed from them too (Market Street). On litter, the town fared very well there were a few areas where litter was noticed, and as you already acknowledge the issue of random tagging and graffiti. The riverside walk had some issues with litter. The tunnel near the riverside walk was impacted greatly by graffiti which was also noted at the swimmer's shelter at Lough Lannagh. You tell us of your efforts to educate and discourage this through schools' competition. Why not investigate a graffiti wall that can be blanked as needed for subsequent use and/or a structured street art project. You acknowledge the particular need for litter clean ups after events which is essential and you are reviewing the introduction of greening of festivals which will reduce the single use plastics and other disposables. Not much dog fouling was in evidence a bit at Lough Lannagh – your discouraging signs were very apparent and must be working .or was it the Underdogs? .

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

You approach this category with the confident experience that achieving a good town environment requires the inclusion of the whole of the community, especially the residents and their residential environment. Your initiatives here include having an annual estate competition and a best garden competition which ultimately nurtures environmental care of neighbourhoods and also has the attendant social benefits of strengthening community cohesion, well done. To cap this, you have annual awards recognition which attracted a good attendance, certainly a great way to foster civic engagement and pride. Lots of smiling proud winners in your photographs. We admired many housing developments on the periphery of the town and nice terraces along the streets. Pontoon Drive, presented well, with neat verges green space, housing is well kept and boundary paintwork fresh and garden landscaped. The open space is quite extensive and would benefit from additional planting and perhaps a set aside portion or edging for biodiversity. The Oaks off Turlough Road was a very attractive estate of large, detached housing with open front boundaries. It has a lovely landscaping entrance and tree lined circulation routes nice hedging with some frontages planted with shrubs or grassed. We admire the cottages along Newline which reflected good care also. Nice detached well landscaped properties on Ballinrobe Road these can enjoy the advantage of close proximity to the train station and an active travel route too. Loads more we could admire. Amazed at your capacity to judge over 102 estates challenging work indeed.

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

You didn't hold back in this category as there was lots to talk about. You tell of the specific focus of the Annual Clean-up on 12km of approach roads, including the N5 with great help from the Castlebar Mitchels and IPAS residents. Why stop....you also have recently overhauled five roundabouts with Kilkenny Cross due a makeover soon too. They do look super especially the inclusion of pollinators in the mix in some. We like that you have given yourself credit too as seen at the Tesco one. The Duffy one with the sculptural piece bears testimony to all that hard work to remove weeds and clean surface. All these approaches looked well and had no trace of litter. The junction planting on the Newport Road at Snugboro is a nice touch along this road and all planting was well in bloom when visited, great to see the footpaths extending out along this road too. You also tell of the planting maintained on the N5 on the various approaches and the upgrade to footpaths, road marking and lane upkeep. All this can't be easy, fair play to volunteers and MCC staff. We did note that the lanes off the main street, which are very effective for maximising circulation and access to car parks need a little more TLC. We know you are maintaining them as they are clean but tackled as a unitary project with a design link and signage would give them a bit of a renaissance. One very striking thing in Castlebar is the extensive areas dedicated to exposed surface car parks both in the centre and on the inner relief road associated with the box retailers. It would be a good long-term project to attempt to achieve more enclosure with soft landscaping and reduce their dominance. We walked a good portion of the riverside and got to enjoy your new link from the river to Newtown – small piece of infrastructure but great contribution to a pedestrian/cycle network and linkage. The design is attractive too with nice brash orange colour on plant containers,

loads of pollinator perennials, good safe lighting and little rest spots as well. Ticking a lot of positive boxes.

Concluding Remarks:

Thank you so much for your hard work in submitting all the details and supporting visuals. You also have to be applauded for endeavouring to make the adjudicator's work as logical as possible with your mapping and legend identification. All is much appreciated and we can see that as a committee you recognise the value of improving the environment for all while also strengthening your community ties. Best of luck with all your future plans.