

Tidy Towns Competition 2026

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Westport - Cathair na Mart** Ref: **366**
County: **Mayo** Mark: **411**
Category: **E** Date(s): **17/06/2026**
30/07/2026

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2025	Mark Awarded 2026
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	80	59	60
Streetscape & Public Places	80	56	58
Green Spaces and Landscaping	80	52	54
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	80	46	48
Sustainability – Doing more with less	80	30	32
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	67	69
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	55	38	39
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	55	50	51
TOTAL MARK	600	398	411

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 the first visit to Westport in the role of adjudicator which was an awakening to all the wonderful things the Tidy Town Committee is involved in. Previous visits included a degree of pain while participating in the Westport Marathon/half /10k.. Even this running route gives a grasp of your beautiful landscape setting with views over Clew Bay, the majestic backdrop of Croagh Patrick and the historical anchorage of Westport House Demesne which influenced the planned nature of your town. You have to be commended for your excellent work in continuing to expand your network. You have shown a capacity to capture a broad reach of involvement from community, business, education, voluntary and state bodies which has resulted in an ever expanding and enjoyable programme with a vision that fits well with the UN SDG's. With a committee of 20 you can rely on 150 volunteers for your work and show impressive organisation to engage in litter rota management supported by clubs and businesses. Amazing to see your exponential growth in followership on social media, now at 4.5k rising from 3.7k referenced in last year's report. This combined with your other means of communication reflects your sustained 68 years of participation in the Tidy Towns, winning accolades galore and infusing a strong sense of pride of place and community confidence in your work. You are obviously invested in a succession plan to continue your work into the future through the Junior Tidy Towns and the strong engagement and collaboration you have with your school population. It is noted that you have selected your joint schools Sunflower Power project for special recognition. It is admirable that together with your business community you have an annual celebratory event to mark your 10,500 voluntary hours invested in your town and also that you give special credit to your volunteer of the year. Congratulations Michael for the 2025 award. We appreciate that you took on the advice on the application submission from previous years adjudication. The application was clear, well-structured and included good illustrations. The supporting map worked well although there was little opportunity to use the interactive aspect during our visit. The adjudicator managed to see most of the mentioned sites and viewed your inclusion on RTE Nationwide through the link provided, great that they selected your Fr. Angelus Park project for mention.

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

Westport has successfully preserved the legacy of its carefully planned townscape. You especially celebrate the mall, flanking terraces and three bridge crossings with good maintenance and abundant floral planters. Your recent inclusion of Paddington Bear statue overlooking the mall at the Fairgreen, which I read online is part of the Paddington Visits Trail, adds humour and was noted to be a popular location for photo opportunities. The streets support a range of building types and represent well the architecture of different historical periods. The Octagon plaza and the Clock monument space give strong definition and focus to the core area layout. You have managed to

wonderfully animate the surrounding streets through good conservation practices in buildings especially shopfronts, careful control of new interventions and abandon use of vibrant colour. The experience of the streets has been enhanced further by traffic calming measures which motorists have adapted well to and achieves a great balance in favour of pedestrians. What other outcomes has there been from your accessibility audit? Also notably is the development of backlands for use as car parks and small retail units, you tell us the one at High Street has been resurfaced recently. The cumulative impact of all your current and past work is a lovely streetscape environment. You have drawn attention to a number of recent property renovations like that at the West Bar, Kymo and the dramatically altered Westport School of Music & Art and restoration works on Bridge St. All of which were admired, there were many more frontages that impressed such as Aodhs's, Cobbles Bar, Boutique Collette, Clock House Café, Servd and the Wyatt Hotel, the list is really endless. Your civic buildings such as the Market House, St Mary's Church, the Anglican Church, the railway station all contribute impressively to townscape setting. You mentioned that the fine 19c courthouse is to be redeveloped to house the Clew Bay Heritage Centre with flexible uses that's wonderful. Hopefully your distinctive P.O. on the Mall will soon find a good re-use also as this streetscape already has vacancy, though well disguised by your floral insertions. In general, there is a small amount of dereliction in the town but low compared to other similar sized towns. You tell us that MCC have issued derelict site notices, the imminent new derelict site legislation might help accelerate positive change too. Great to see the advancement of the restoration of one of these properties on Quay Road that you have highlighted. In this area also you are lauding the completion of the well-designed Western Coast Guard Station. A stroll further on brought us to your changing and shower facilities which you have upgraded you tell us since recent storm damage. Low tide prevented a tempting swim, next time. The most significant addition to your town centre will be the heritage led regeneration of the large convent site. You tell us that the redundant buildings and curtilage site will have a renaissance and ultimately provide key community infrastructure including a library, community hub, civic office and some social housing. Undoubtedly this will add to your public realm and with what appears from your illustration to include for a significant amount of preservation of buildings that will embed an element of the town's history. On that note last year's adjudicator mentioned the notion of an historical trail. Having experienced the benefit of these in other locations, it would be ideal for Westport to develop heritage story maps which can be created with audio guides. Many of these have been funded by the Heritage Council, an ideal companion to your planned courthouse heritage centre re-use.

Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:

Our visit gave us a taste of the extensive range of green (and blue) spaces in Westport. These include the acres of woodlands at Westport House demesne, sports facilities, school grounds, open sea access, riverside mall, greenway and residential open spaces and smaller pocket park areas. In conjunction with this you tell us that 45ac of grassed area is managed in a biodiversity friendly way with a staggering 13ac left uncut to develop as meadow. You tell us that through collaborative planning with businesses and MCC, the authority provides 428 baskets of pollinator friendly planters to distribute to premises and public spaces throughout the town. This provided us with a dazzling display on our visit from the tasteful baskets on the bridge to niche locations on businesses premises and walls. Well done to yourselves and the municipal staff who were seen busy carrying out maintenance and erecting even more baskets with a cherry picker in the town. You mention the Octagon planting which is a wonderful space with judicious planting combining colour and verticality. It provides a delight and combines well with the activities at the adjacent Clock memorial space where we found a good spot for outdoor dining and a small market. You tell us you are involved in an Edible Landscape Project and support this work with awareness raising and your project at Fr. Angelus Park which is a great success with the residents. The Fairgreen presented well, anchored by your dramatic sculpture, seating, giving a commanding view of the mall with dwell time added since Paddington arrived. Your regeneration project close by includes for a public realm space, will you be involved in the landscape planning there? You also have a nice open space area at the Quay and a good destination point at the seafront with your swimming facilities, car parking space and picnic areas. Well done on refreshing the anchor planter near the entrance to Westport House. Have you much engagement with the owners of the demesne regarding the planned restoration and development here which we read on local media includes for significant conservation and landscape works? It would be good to align with your own biodiversity enrichment approach. Great to hear about the huge scale of tree planting at your golf course, great for biodiversity climate resilience and wellbeing. Do you have an ongoing policy of increasing tree planting in public spaces? Really enjoyed the smart landscaping scheme at the entrance to your recently refurbished Grace Hotel. We visited the skatepark and MUGA located conveniently beside the greenway. Nice to see how it is attracting young adults and well done on the little orchard on the bank. Applaud for you, the CE workers, MCC and your dedicated member Elsie.

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

It is heartening to hear about all your endeavours at ecosystem restoration and biodiversity enhancement and the relevant expert knowledge that committee members Pat and Olivers bring to your work. This is enabling you to take advantage of all the wonderful natural resources in Westport. Evidence of this is everywhere in the town. You tell us that along with other community and local authority experts you prioritise a focus on increasing knowledge awareness and participation by the community through free workshops, seminars and events. The Testing the Water on the Carrowbeg River project that occurred in 2025 reflects your confidence and belief that environmental change starts with community engagement. Using an art piece to provoke interest and citizen science testing of the river water you indicate has increased public awareness and challenged visual perceptions of what constitute ecological rich good quality water. Do you intend in the longer term to continue using the citizen science approach to pressurise authorities into taking actions to improve water quality? We note your grant from LAWPRO to do a school water quality project. Regardless we can see the value of your project to raise awareness and act as a model that can be replicated in other communities. Thank you for all the supporting photographs. Have the temporary management for nesting swifts that you tell us about been successful at the Convent Site this year? We know that

they have been of great interest to all especially your school community. The living wall planters and bird box were much admired, with generous trailing colourful plants set off by the brightly painted wall the adjacent mural. Are you able to use these in seasons other than summer? You express great interest in the Edible Landscape Project. You tell us that this includes small tub planting of veg and salads at random locations to legacy planting of orchards as we saw at the Skate Park and of course your successful Fr. Angelus Park niche allotment development which you tell us you have plans to replicate and promote in other communities, great stuff! It was thriving on the day of our visit. As was the Quay Community Garden, wonderfully located and so accessible in the middle of a residential neighbourhood. Great to read on local media also that this Community Garden has received a climate action grant this year to replace the damaged polytunnel and to extend their composting. Congratulations are due. There are great opportunities for hands on learning on all these community projects, do you repeat your schedule of workshops on growing skills every year? Is there any update on the biodiversity trail mentioned by a previous adjudicator – plenty of richness to choose from. Your Sunflower Power project sounds an amazing way of learning about the cycle of nature and environmental benefits of pollinators. Well done on initiating this and for achieving notable recognition at the Young Scientist Exhibition. Unfortunately, when we visited the Town Hall to view the exhibition we couldn't see it – possibly displaced by the art and Prime Minister Carney exhibition?

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

You indicate that sustainability is embedded in all your actions and are proud to be part of the One Westport network. You tell us that One Westport, which represents a range of town stakeholders commits to collective action on achieving best use of planet resources – a key goal under the UN SDGs and an exemplar for other towns to follow. You will be delighted that the Tidy Towns has raised the marks in this and the previous category recognising our biodiversity and climate crisis. As advocates of the circular economy, you showcase what can be done at local events such as reuse of materials for your St Patricks Day, (fantastic creation) and other calendar events, Well done with the creativity as well as the waste reduction. You tell us of other initiatives in the community such as re-gifting, clothing /toy swaps and at the shop Pax, as we noted on visiting, practices sustainable retailing. Plastic Free Reek Day is a great initiative; do you have a refill station in the car park area there? Are there many water re-fill stations in the town, schools sport clubs? We observed your re-cycling hubs in the car park and at the Quay but did not manage to see your book swap – your second-hand shops are inviting with such lovely shopfronts and well organised interiors encouraging purchases. The new solar-powered defibrillator at the Train Station is welcome on lots of grounds. You tell us also that a number of local authority properties have had energy retrofits. The greenway is a fantastic network to encourage active travel and there is a fantastic range of cycle racks in the town. Has any research been conducted to measure carbon reduction since the introduction of the greenway – good to see if year on year it is reducing car usage for local short trips. We visited your recent flood mitigation measures at Cois Abhainn, a good adaptation to climate change but wondered why apartments were constructed so close to the river in the first instance. Your campaign to “ change one thing “ you tell is working too in conjunction with all your other initiatives to influence behavioural change in the context of being more sustainable. You have embraced this category which many applicants find challenging, and it is comforting that you show us what can happen through community activism and small actions done consistently. Thank you.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

Well despite your modesty not mentioning all your anti-litter awards you do deserve recognition for your military precision scheduling of maintenance and of your litter patrols. The virtual litter free status of the town is a great testament to the considerable efforts of your volunteers, clubs and your CE and local authority. Getting a local business to 'adopt a road' is a great scheme and good luck with extending this to other businesses as they all gain from your mighty efforts. As you relay and your photographs and Facebook page attest to, your cleaning is extremely thorough and extends to weeding, road maintenance and painting. No doubt as you say your community appreciate and contribute willingly to your efforts sharing your enormous pride in the town. We did notice small pockets of cigarette butts along the main streets and lanes, but these were not of scale to really detract from the trojan efforts of your litter control. Read about your children's 'painted tins' to be used as receptacles but did not see any, maybe these are only out in the evenings. In general street furniture was in excellent condition, bins, bike stands, signage etc and we see also that you have commenced the refurbishment of seating well done it may take a while to complete all. Recycling areas were spotless which is always a challenge and the car parks at the Leisure centre and High Street looked very smart. There was some litter in the lane near the Citizens information Office and the lining at one of the tree bases on the mall needs attending to. You tell us you had occasion recently to address wanton graffiti tags however your resilience in reacting quickly to remove them has no doubt sent a message of your determination and is normally the most effective deterrent. Some weeding required at exercise machines in Skate park but otherwise this location was very tidy. Good to see that you control signage so well by confining advertising signs to the lane walls – a practical compromise. Overall, you have to be applauded for presenting such a pristine public realm area, your volunteers, TUS and RSS workers deserve great praise for their commitment.

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

It is great to hear that you have 27 estates participating in your resident's area competition and that the competition criteria include for a focus on pollination and wildlife. You indicate that you support the competition through advice and guidelines, good for motivation and learning. We commend your work with Fr Angelus Park which is a delightful location with good mature planting, a variation in topography gives it drama and the diversity of open space use now that there is an ongoing Food Forest project which was a great platform to launch the sunflower project. Cedar Park was well maintained, many lovely gardens, verges, trees and a great open space area that accommodated lovely wildflowers planted integrated with grassed areas, playground and trees. Hard to resist noting St. Mary's Crescent which is a delight with its beautiful clean curved alignment. We did note that Chestnut Close need more care to the

access road, street sign and verges where there were a lot of weeds collecting. The Ashwood estate although very neat and clean would benefit from an introduction of more colour through landscaping. Woodpark on Quay Road has a nicely landscaped entry and houses presented well reflecting the overall general standard throughout Westport, more trees here would be a good addition.

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

The Castlebar Road approach (R309) is a delightful arrival point into the town. The tree line, the generous bedding the distinctive Failte sign and good accessibility for pedestrians makes a good first impression. The Ballinrobe approach (R336) is similarly attractive with the extensive tree line, grass verges and compact development. As this merges into Altamont Street where we note arrival from the train affords direct pedestrian access. As you indicate when your regeneration project is completed the approach to the Fairgreen area will be improved. The N5 no doubt has brought improvements to traffic management and accessibility but the approach is very dominated by harsh road infrastructure. You tell us that procurement has been sought for next stage roundabout design that will bring a more aesthetic treatment. Notwithstanding the biodiversity case made for the N5 Newport roundabout it is considered that perhaps an art piece with selective planting might be better suited to give a more memorable impression of arrival. You mention all the new murals on the linking laneways and car park areas; these are a visual treat a big applause for your young community. They complement the existing ones which give great animation to otherwise functional spaces. Your information panels and orientation maps at these locations were all clear, clean and welcome too. Watch out for an element of dumping at the car park off Bridge Street and some weeds and graffiti legacy in the route from the steps at the Leisure Centre car park to Bridge Street. In general, though the streets, linked laneways, short alleyways presented well, with colour, interest, activity and pedestrian convenience. You are anticipating a schedule of projects that will be distilled by your recently produced Active Travel Plan. This would be welcome particularly at pinch point at the Octagon, Clock Memorial and bridge crossing from the Mall to Bridge Street. The Quay area has developed a distinct character with anchorage from the hotels and bar and wide pavement areas that accommodate the vibrancy that comes from outdoor dining. Arriving off the Greenway has the great advantage of a number of links providing almost immediate access to the bustle of the town.

Concluding Remarks:

Any trip to Westport would leave pleasant memories. To visit as an adjudicator gives a more insightful knowledge of the cumulative community investment to make the town a great place of pride and also to appreciate the scale of voluntarism and collaborative effort by all stakeholders to continue to pursue areas for environmental improvement. We also have to acknowledge the clarity of your application, the diligence of reviewing report observations, the supporting map and great photographs. Good luck with all future actions you have outlined in your 3-year plan.

Second Round Adjudication:

It was wonderful to be back in Westport once again. It was especially good this time, as Westport and indeed all of County Mayo was in the throes of celebration! The busy streets of Westport were even more thronged than usual, with more pedestrians than this adjudicator had ever seen here (and so many in green and red!). Our approach to Westport was so typical of this fantastic Tidy Towns centre. We passed a volunteer carefully cutting a narrow strip beside uncut grassland on the N5 verge. Next, we paused to allow a gaggle of cyclists across the road from where they had exited the great Western Greenway. We did see some minor items on the way that would warrant attention. There was a broken bike for hire sign and some recent litter. Like many places nowadays, traffic was heavier than previous visits. It was also quieter with a higher proportion of electric vehicles now on the streets. The good humour of the town was possible and all drivers and pedestrians showed great courtesy as they all got about the town on this sunny day. We noted that the road markings at the green are not in great condition and are in need of re-doing.

The business premises of Westport are themselves one of the attractions of this town. This year they somehow managed to look better than ever (and it wasn't just the green and red bunting and flags!). Whilst we couldn't possibly list all of the splendid shopfronts that we saw, a few that stood out where is savoir-faire, the bookshop, the Old Grain Store, Krem, Matt Molloy's and Heweston Bros. Our sincere thanks to all of the business-owners, managers and hard-working staff for keeping the streets of Westport so colourful, interesting and alluring. An IT premises on Mill Street seemed to be missing an 'i.' There was a number of premises that were new to this adjudicator: SERV'D, Market 57 and Wild Atlantic Wear – all of which (although very different) looked great.

An unusual aspect of this visit was an increase in the amount of litter on the streets. On inspection it was seen that the greater majority of this was serviettes, pieces of tissue paper and children's sweet wrappers that had been dropped by accident. It was further noted that the litter was never there for a long time, clearly indicating that the Westport antilitter team was on watch all of the time! Indeed and early on the morning of our first overnight, we could see that jackdaws had accessed a litter-bin and created something of a mess in one of your car parks. Two hours later (and we are talking not long after dawn) everything was cleaned up and it was as if it had never happened! Well done.

It would be a shame to visit Westport and not to travel some of your gorgeous Greenway. We have to admit that this is showing its age in some places. Very close to the town we noted a fence that has been collapsed for some time and that really doesn't look great. Way-finding instructions were also lacking. Some of the road markings are worn and a new look at the directional signage is needed. It is acknowledged that improvements to the Greenway are literally underway but in the meantime helping first-time visitors to get on the route to Achill could be done much more clearly and safely. A few other things caught the eye. Garden waste was found dumped opposite the

commercial facility on Golf Course Road. Nearby, the sign for Carraholly is in very poor condition. While we acknowledge that this is outside of Westport town – it is on an approach road and really not that far outside it. A discarded mountain bike was found in a housing estate beside the Greenway. It was sufficiently covered with vegetation to let us know that it has been there for some time.

These negative points aside, our overall impression of Westport this year was overwhelmingly a positive one. Estates (including at least one that was new to this adjudicator) consistently looked great, no businesses were found to be coming up short, town signage was almost all clean and well presented. Leaving here, this adjudicator is in no doubt that Westport deserves all of the points awarded by the first round adjudicator. Well done Westport.