# Tidy Towns Competition 2026

## *Adjudication Report*

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| Centre: | **Kilcormac - Chill Cormaic** | Ref: | **287** |
| County: | **Offaly** | Mark: | **267** |
| Category: | **C** | Date(s): | **09/06/2026** |

| | Maximum Mark | Mark Awarded 2025 | Mark Awarded 2026 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Community – Your Planning and Involvement | 80 | 37 | 39 |
| Streetscape & Public Places | 80 | 37 | 39 |
| Green Spaces and Landscaping | 80 | 37 | 39 |
| Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality | 80 | 28 | 31 |
| Sustainability – Doing more with less | 80 | 16 | 18 |
| Tidiness and Litter Control | 90 | 46 | 49 |
| Residential Streets & Housing Areas | 55 | 24 | 26 |
| Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes | 55 | 25 | 26 |
| **TOTAL MARK** | **600** | **250** | **267** |

### 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.
Welcome to the SuperValu Tidy Towns 2026 competition and thank you for your application form, map, photos and excellent Strategic Plan. We love your KDA Tidy Towns logo! Next year it would be good if the legend on the map not only indicated the location/name of the area but also noted the project in addition to a number. We see you have four social media feeds – you have a very a busy PRO. It's crucial that all are regularly updated regularly in order to keep your followers. Your application is very long – 53 pages is VERY large for a town of your size. Perhaps don't take such a long time in responding to the Adjudicators' comments? The adjudicators are just trying to assist communities to improve. Your committee of 7 has the help of an additional 42 volunteers who meet weekly for project work. You engage with a large number of state and semi-state organisations in addition to local businesses and community groups whom you list. We were delighted to read that you have a dedicated School Liaison Officer who engage with your local schools. You have participated in the SuperValu Tidy Towns competition for 6 consecutive years which is excellent and we are delighted to read that participation has 'delivered lasting social, environmental and economic benefits, strengthened community pride and driven sustained local improvement.' Hopefully you've had a bit of fun too! Well done on receiving the County Endeavour Award for the fourth consecutive year.

Please see Concluding Remarks for advice on filling out the Application Form and producing a Map.

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

Your neat, tidy streets give a very good first impression to the visitor. The topography of the village with the road network makes for an interesting layout of streets. The streets are very well presented with very attractive shopfront signage and very artful window displays; it is refreshing to view shop window merchandise clearly with the absence of big posters that can clutter the window. Wonderful to see that a new lease of life has been given to such a large building as the Fiesta Ballroom which is now the headquarters for Offaly Local Development Company. It's prominent location at the junction of three roads makes this a very important building on your streetscape, so this is a good news story for the town. We admired the planting which has been introduced. The street heritage-style signs were admired – it's important to identify streets and having Irish included in the sign is commendable. We visited the Parish Car Park and loved the mosaics. Please applaud those who have brought such beauty to your streetscape. Please also applaud the Men's Shed for the innovative archway using the reclaimed spoons from a peat harvester celebrating 'Kilcormac's strong historical connection to the peatlands'. The SVP on the Ballyboy Road was noted – we hope this is part of a Heritage Trail? The design of the lights on the central paved area on

Main Street suit the area and these along with the sculptures were admired. The area itself needs landscaping – see below. We were very happy to see that the beautiful piers and gates to St. Joseph's Cemetery were devoid of signage. Very often we witness these with a conglomeration of signage which is extremely unpleasant. Please commend the business owners who had recently painted their premises and added colourful flowers and plants to their façades, which added to the presentation of the streetscape.

### Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:

The new Sensory Garden in the town park which was developed using reclaimed and recycled or donated materials and planting was noted. It will be wonderful when the sensory planting develops making this a marvellous space to visit. It good to hear that you are continuing with your tree planting and this year you planted over 300 trees. What varieties do you plant? The trees in the central square appear to have been severely pruned, which is a pity. This area really needs to be 'softened' and would benefit greatly from larger tree canopies. We also recommended that a permanent planting bed is installed in this area, with planting of varying heights and colours. This too will help improve the appearance of the area. The green area at the junction of Fairgreen Street and Kinnety Road with its mature trees, pedestrian walkway and seating is very pleasant. Perhaps a little colourful planting to the side and back of the name stone could be considered? We loved the planting which has been carried out along the GAA wall. Truthfully where block walls exist in your town they are ideal location for plants such as ivy, pyracantha, honeysuckle, wisteria etc. We're not too sure about 'hedging' as this will require considerable maintenance. Let us know the areas where the 'Adopt a Patch' which began in 2025, is carried out. The planting around St. Cormac's Well was admired. We didn't walk St. Cormac's Heritage Walk but it looked interesting – 2.6Kms.

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

Habitats of value for nature and biodiversity include trees, hedgerows, streams, woodlands, stone walls and wetlands and you have them all. Your location with the Silver River flowing through the town, and the mature trees and hedgerows in the town and along approach roads, along with stone buildings and walls provide habitats for birds, insects and mammals. Close by is the rehabilitated peatland of Lough Boora Discovery Park. It is clear to the adjudicators that you have a good understanding of biodiversity and have done many projects that relate well to this criterion. Having the local Men's Shed providing you with bat boxes and swift boxes is admirable. Let us know the success you have with these in next year's application. You may need to install swift lures/callers to encourage swifts to use them. Your 6 year Biodiversity Action Plan informs your work. Around the town the planting is now focused on pollinator friendly flowers, shrubs and trees which is admirable – some of these planting areas had weeds which detracted for them a little. Good to see that you have used a vacant premises window to display information on various aspects of biodiversity and sustainability. We note that you attended various workshops which focused on aspects of biodiversity. It's important that you share the information which you learned with the community so that all can benefit. 'No Mow May' can always be adapted and some areas can be 'No Mow June' while others can be 'No Mow July'. In this way, we have wonderful wildflower available throughout the summer months. Perhaps you should try this with the community next year and see the results. The leaf cages are a great idea – we suggest these are also located in your parks where your volunteers can use them. Perhaps the Men's Shed could make some for you.

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

This category was introduced some time ago and originally many communities struggled until they realised that it's just about being aware of how we use the planet's resources. It important that Tidy Towns committees lead by example on how we can, in our daily lives with our actions, cut down on waste. Wonderful to read of the sensor lighting in some of your walking areas. We have noted this in a few towns and this advancement in sensor lighting is welcomed. With the help of the Hare's Corner initiative, you have developed a mini orchard. Are you planning to expand this? Windfalls are a wonderful food source as they provide a crucial late season sugar, boost to insects, small mammals, and birds. Particularly ground feeding mammals, such as mice, badgers, and hedgehogs feed on these. Due to your rural location another projects which might suit you is to arrange foraging walks. Foraging walks are wonderful – children and adults learning about the food that nature provides for free along our hedgerows, in our woodlands and in our fields – blackberries, elderflowers, elderberries, mushrooms, sloes etc. Flower/plant sharing and vegetable growing are all superb saving measures of waste which can be undertaken by the wider community if you advise them. We noted the other activities and projects in your application form and compliment you on them. We are aware that the Offaly Way passes through Kilcormac but didn't see any sign of this along your streetscape. This walkway should be publicised by the town with a map, distance routes in addition to the difficult, marked on it so that the visitor and indeed the local community can take part.

### Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

We are delighted to read that you take part in the All Ireland An Taisce Spring Clean Event. This is a wonderful way for the whole community to be alerted to litter and fly-tipping. When your volunteers are seen in their high viz vests, it focuses the attention of the community on the need to be vigilant on litter, fly-tipping and weed growth. It also reminds them to be attentive to their own waste disposal methods, which is what we need. How often do your volunteers meet and collect litter and remove weed growth – once /twice a week? It's best if the volunteer litter pick is programmed, as in this way you will know the areas that have been attended to. In addition to your volunteers you also have CE participants who operate four days a week in litter pick-up and weed control. We recommend that you ask the business premises to remove litter and weed growth from outside their premises and also to sweep the footpaths. While all won't help, some will, and this will ease the work load on you volunteers. In a town as big as Kilcormac we assume that dog fouling is a problem. We recommend that where you have noticed this problem you

paint ‘Clean Up After you Dog’ on the footpath, or indeed make up a pictogram, instead of installing signs. Remember, signs are clutter and detract from a streetscape. We’re delighted that you have adopted the nationwide policy for dog litter - ‘Any Bag, Any Bin’. We strongly recommend that ivy growth IS removed from stone walls and structures. Ivy roots penetrate between the joints and make stone structures unstable which it time lead to their collapse. We have taken many photos over the years of such problems. Remember that stone structures themselves are habitats for insects, small birds and small mammals.

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

Kilcormac has a mixture of vernacular two storey houses located on the Main Streets, while those on the approach roads have small, generally well-tended gardens. It was good to see that the majority were occupied as vacancy leads to dereliction in a very short space of time. There is an air of horticulture excellence in some gardens which were well-designed and attractively planted. Many residents had wonderful displays of colourful pollinator friendly planting which added greatly to the streetscape. Lovely to see the bilingual sign at St. Cormac’s Park. Truthfully all housing estates should have bilingual signage – you might advance this. The floral and shrub growth in the planting beds at Clonown was admired but remove the lavender growing in front of the estate name. We couldn’t read the name as we walked along the road. We also couldn’t read the Meadow Lands sign – here too the foliage needs to be cut back. The layout of St. Cormac’s park is quite unique. Built by Bord na Móna for their workers , the houses are located around large communal green spaces which over the years have developed and now have wonderful mature trees with colour all year round starting with the cherry blossoms in the spring. We admired the treatment of the communal green spaces where those not needed for ball play were allowed to grow as meadows which had wonderful grasses and wildflowers. Perhaps cut some paths through the large spaces where children can run – almost like a maze. Where you have block walls along entrance roads and at the boundaries of Communal Open Spaces we recommend that you plant creepers on these walls. They will not only remove the need for maintenance/painting of the walls but also be wonderful habitats for birds and insects. We read that the Residents’ Associations work in maintaining the communal open spaces. This is good to see as it encourages neighbours to meet. We see that Pride of Place is awarded - compliments to those who won. In most of the communal green area seats/picnic benches are needed. We suggest these are located in two’s or three’s and in areas not required for ball play. Seats are important in a communal area as that they are used not only by the elderly but also by the youth to gather in an area where they feel safe. The name stone ‘Pairc Naomh Cormac’ needs to be cleaned – just soapy water and a stiff brush. Don’t be tempted to sand blast it.

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

You are located on the very busy N52, half way between Tullamore and Birr and we saw that traffic volume through the town is high. We are delighted to report that when we visited the majority of the motorists had reduced speed, making it safe for pedestrians. We note that the grass areas on the approach roads are maintained by your volunteers. It’s good to see grass margins trimmed and the area beyond allowed to grow and produce wildflowers and grasses in addition to being habitats for nature. We recommend however, that the margins be trimmed for approximately 50m beyond the speed signs – the 50K signs on the Ballyboy road were barely visible above the tall grasses. Driver Speed feedback signs work well and we regularly see vehicles responding to the flashing red speeding light – it will be good when you have them installed. Some of your road surfaces were quite poor – edge break up, potholes, and areas which had been previously repaired unravelling. In addition, road markings were quite worn and missing completely at some road junctions. Something for you to bring to the attention of the area office. We noted the new dipped kerbs and rumble strips at some of the main road junctions. We love when footpaths extend as far as the 50K signs – is this one of your aspirations? Maybe something for a long term plan?

### Concluding Remarks:

Thank you for entering the SuperValu Tidy Towns 2026 competition … we have a few suggestion for 2027

- In terms of your Tidy Town’s application form you will have seen that we request applicants to number their projects as, new projects (N), or improved/maintained projects (M) and all ‘future’ projects should only be included in your 5-Year Plan and NOT in the Application Form. Give each action/project a number as New (N1, N2, N3 etc.) or Maintained (M1, M2, M3 etc).
- This same numbering system is to be used to indicate the locations of the projects on a map that you wish us to visit– N1, N2, N3 etc and M1, M2, M3 etc. This is to help the adjudicators to negotiate their way around your town and see the various projects or locations of projects.
- There’s no need to summarise your work at the end of each category – we will already have noted it in the projects/actions in each category. This will also help to reduce the number of pages in the application form.

We wish to state that this is not a criticism of your work but to explain to you that as adjudicators we rely on a clear application form and accompanying map to inform us of your projects and make our visit rewarding. We would appreciate if these points could be taken into consideration when preparing your 2027 application. It was a pleasure to visit and adjudicate Kilcormac, a town we have passed through many times, so it was a pleasure to take the time and visit the surrounding streets roads and see the riches there.