# Tidy Towns Competition 2026

## *Adjudication Report*

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Centre: | **Rhode - Ród** | Ref: | **286** |
| County: | **Offaly** | Mark: | **354** |
| Category: | **B** | Date(s): | **07/06/2026** |

| | Maximum Mark | Mark Awarded 2025 | Mark Awarded 2026 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Community – Your Planning and Involvement | 80 | 46 | 47 |
| Streetscape & Public Places | 80 | 50 | 52 |
| Green Spaces and Landscaping | 80 | 49 | 50 |
| Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality | 80 | 27 | 28 |
| Sustainability – Doing more with less | 80 | 21 | 21 |
| Tidiness and Litter Control | 90 | 62 | 64 |
| Residential Streets & Housing Areas | 55 | 43 | 45 |
| Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes | 55 | 46 | 47 |
| **TOTAL MARK** | **600** | **344** | **354** |

### 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, two photos and a map. The map was hand drawn and truthfully when printed it was EXTREMELY difficult to read. You need a new map on white paper which is drawn using black ink (yours appears to be on blue paper and drawn with blue ink). A hand drawn map is perfectly acceptable … we just need to be able to see it. We also noted that it was dated 2021. We opened your Facebook page and see that you have 318 followers. The more you post, the more your community will see your activities and follow you. We were delighted to see that you update it regularly. This is very important for social media feeds so that the local community keep interested in you. Hopefully in time, some will become part of your volunteers. You are a committee of 10, and you have 20 volunteers who assist you with various activities and projects. You list three bodies/ businesses who have supported. We also see (from reading further in your application form), that you are engaged with Offaly Co Co - the area office, heritage officer, biodiversity officer and climate action officer. We know that these are extremely helpful and encouraging to all voluntary groups. You have participated in the SuperValu Tidy Towns competition for 11 consecutive years and we have no doubt that participation has supported the social, environmental and economic aspects of the village, in addition to strengthening community pride.

Please see Concluding Remarks for advice on filling out the Application Form

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

Your neat, tidy village centre with its wide footpaths gives a very good first impression to the visitor, but it lacks trees along the streetscape (see below in Landscaping). The village consist of a mixture of single and two-storey vernacular houses, with commercial premises concentrated at the cross roads in the village centre. Within this vernacular architectural there is great variety of architectural styles which give character to your village. Many of the building had been recently painted and presented well in recognition of your work. Please thank the many businesses who had made an extra effort with planters, baskets and window boxes full of colourful pollinator-friendly flowers.
You have some fine flat iron and wrought iron gates in the village and surrounding area which add to the character of the village. The work to install the church bell was admired – compliments to all concerned with the fundraising and with the construction, and we are delighted to see that it is now reinstated in the church grounds. The disabled parking bays in the church grounds were noted. The school wall is in need of repainting, is this something you and your volunteers might undertake? Compliments to the artist(s) for the murals on the school walls which are a

reminder of your location – Croghan Hill and the peat-fuelled power station cooling towers (sadly now demolished).

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

We visited your Village Park and loved that play offered to children in your playground is both natural and manmade. Your use of timber to construct various items of playground equipment was also admired. The location in a sylvan setting with benches where supervising adults sit is ideal. The RHODE planting bed on the Edenderry attracts the eye of the motorist. Make sure to keep it well trimmed so that the name is clear. We admired the raised stone surround bed on the bend in the road – next year add some trailing plants for added interest. Elsewhere your planting was admired – planting beds, loose planters, hanging basket etc. We loved your herb/vegetable planter inviting the residents to 'please help yourself'. It would be good to expand this next year – perhaps the whole length of the wall. We noted your wheelbarrow. Truthfully it's not nearly big enough to make an impact in this location. This is a large corner on your streetscape and needs either a permanent planting bed or a number of planters to make an impact. As stated above (Streetscape), the village centre lacks trees. You have wide footpaths, which we admire, but we feel that the addition of trees would greatly improve the visual attractiveness of the your village. The benefit of trees to mental health and wellbeing is widely known. In addition, you help reduce pollution, improve your surroundings, improve the appearance of your community and increase the value of your property. Trees provide food for insects and food, roosting and nesting sites for birds. And now we have the additional benefit in terms of shelter from the sun which will be needed more and more due to global warming. Do you know if your local faith community has signed up to 'Havens for Nature'? This initiative, introduced by the Heritage Council, is to ask Faith Communities to support biodiversity in Faith Grounds. Check the Heritage Council website for information.

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

Habitats of value for nature and biodiversity include trees, hedgerows, woodlands, and stone walls and in Rhode you have your share. Close by you have the Grand Canal with its riparian banks which add to the biodiversity habitats of Rhode. As you are a village with farmland surrounding you, you also have the benefit of these additional habitats. We read that you have been grant funding to carry out a Biodiversity Action Plan for Rhode Village. You mentioned that you will install 'an information display' but we caution you in this, as remember that signage is clutter and detracts from a streetscape. This/these information displays should be well designed and carefully sited so that they add to the beauty of your streetscape. We are delighted to read that a qualified professional will undertake your study, and in the meantime, we encourage you to carry out your own surveys which will be of assistance to the consultant in time. We noted some block walls in the housing estates which would benefit from planting to create biodiversity corridors. Where block walls exist in your village they are ideal locations for plants such as ivy, pyracantha, honeysuckle, wisteria etc. which will not only benefit nature, but will also look good in the streetscape and eliminate the necessity of keeping the walls painted.

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

This category confuses many Tidy Towns groups, but it is just about being aware of our use of the planet's resources. This category is about looking at how the community as a whole can reduce waste and save on water, energy and transport. Food waste is one area where savings can be made by looking more carefully at shopping habits and maybe even making small reductions in purchases would help. Harvesting of rainwater which can be done by the wider community is also good. Perhaps large containers to be installed at the church where there is a large roof? The use of energy saving bulbs and solar panels where possible is also recommended - these are all superb saving measures which can be undertaken by the wider community. Something simple for you to arrange is a Plant Swop Day. Ask those who have gardens to put the plants which they are dividing into pots and make them available for other gardeners. There is something simple to organise, and it could be done on an annual basis by you. We are delighted to read that you engage with the newly formed Men's Shed – hopefully in time they will make you bird boxes, bat boxes etc which you can install. We see that there is the possibility of a circular walk around your roads which would bring you along Woodville Manor, through the windfarm and back out to the R400. Is this a possibility? All you can do is ask! Do you know what the local pub and shops do with their waste coffee grinds? Many of your gardeners would be happy to get these as they are wonderful for acid-loving and nitrogen-hungry plants such as blueberries, hydrangeas, azaleas and roses. Spread a thin layer of coffee grinds around these plants and then rake it into the soil – this provides a gentle nitrogen boost, and also helps maintain the soils acidity. We encourage you to become involved with the local school and to help the children to grow vegetables and to make compost. It would be wonderful if every child in Rhode knew about vegetable growing and the delicious taste of homegrown vegetables before they left National School.

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

We assume that you take part in the All Ireland An Taisce Spring Clean Event? We encourage all Tidy Towns groups to sign up for this event where volunteers, in their high-vis jackets, are seen by the whole community doing work - picking litter, removing weeds, and doing general maintenance along the approach roads, and in the village or town itself. We see that you have the help of CE scheme workers who carry out twice weekly litter pick-ups. In addition, the Junior Tidy Towns also litter pick with your volunteers. It's good to see this involvement as it will teach them to be mindful of randomly throwing litter on the street. When we visited, there was very little litter and so we commend all the volunteers and CE scheme workers. Weed growth was noted which was a pity, as this distracted a little from the streetscape. We recommend that you ask your volunteers to bring a spade, hoe and stiff brush with them and to remove weed growth in addition to picking up litter. The ivy, which almost covers the sign of the 1816 Chapel in the church grounds, should be removed. We noted chemical weed control has been used in quite a few areas. This is no longer acceptable. Please advise your CE scheme workers, your volunteers and also your residents.

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

As stated above, your village is comprised of single and two-storey vernacular houses of mixed architectural designs. We were delighted with the standard of presentation of individual houses on the main streets, on the approach roads and in the residential estates. It is obvious that home owners are very proud of where they live and keep their front facades, road frontage, gardens and boundary walls well-presented and neatly maintained in support of your work. A small number of garden boundary walls in some of the estates need attention where walls have become weather stained. We admired the well painted flat iron gates and four bar railings along the boundary of one of the gardens. Many of the houses on the approach roads had been recently painted and presented extremely well. Some had colourful herbaceous borders which were full of pollinator-friendly flowers. Others had neatly trimmed shrubs planters or specimen trees which added to the streetscape. We also visited your housing estates, and here too we saw well maintained gardens – Priory Lawns, Hillview, Village Crescent, Woodville Manor, and Laurencetown Estate. The name stones for some of the estates (e.g. Hillview) were dirty – a brush and some water are all that's needed to clean them. We recommend that additional trees are planted along the streetscape and along the edge of the communal open spaces in almost all of the estates. Perhaps also a few picnic benches could be installed? Don't forget to encourage the residents to grow pollinator friendly flowers from now on. Have a look at the website https://pollinators.ie/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/Garden-Pollinator-Guidelines-2022-WEB.pdf for ideas for the garden.

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

Your village name signs are well displayed on approach roads and we admired the neatly trimmed grass margins which give motorists a warning that they are entering a settlement and so need to reduce speed. We were delighted to see that footpaths extend beyond the 50K limit making it's safe for residents to access the village on foot. We noted the small length of footpath near the canal. it would be wonderful if this could join up with the footpath at the school so that the canal and the nature there could be easily accessed by the teachers and school children. We encourage you to engage with Offaly Co Co and see if this is possible. Some of your road surfaces were poor – edge break up, potholes, and areas which had been previously repaired are now unravelling. In addition, road markings were quite worn and at some road junctions were missing completely. Something for you to bring to the attention of the area office. You have quite a number of new concrete paths and we noted the new dipped kerbs and rumble strips at some of the road junctions. Will these be installed at all road junctions? These are needed to help those who are visually impaired, those using wheelchairs and mobility scooters, those pushing buggies and young children cycling, to cross the road in safety. We particularly liked that at some of these junctions there were two white lines painted across the road, indicating the road crossing. This is a wonderful idea and it would be lovely to see it on all of your road junctions.

### Concluding Remarks:

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

- Quite a number of your projects which you described as (N) are in fact, Future Projects. These projects are the ones that you put in your Five-Year Plan. The only activities/ projects which should be included in the application form are those which have been completed and so are New (N), or those that are being Maintained (M). Don't worry if you don't have a long list. You are a small village so we don't expect you to have lots and lots of projects.
- It would be lovely to see some before and after photos of your work inserted into the various categories in the application form. We suggest that you ask a youth to be your PRO who will look after this for you if you don't know how to do it. PRO for Rhode Tidy Towns will look very good on their CV.

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. It was a pleasure to visit and adjudicate Rhode, a village we have passed through many times. Keep up the good work and we look forward to our return visit.