Tidy Towns Competition 2026

Adjudication Report

Centre:	**Shannonbridge - Rachra**	Ref:	**850**
County:	**Offaly**	Mark:	**337**
Category:	**A**	Date(s):	**17/06/2026**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2025	Mark Awarded 2026
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	80	47	48
Streetscape & Public Places	80	49	50
Green Spaces and Landscaping	80	47	48
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	80	35	37
Sustainability – Doing more with less	80	16	16
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	54	55
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	55	38	40
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	55	41	43
TOTAL MARK	**600**	**327**	**337**

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 completed application form, map (which was very basic but we did manage to locate the projects) and photos. Next year add the map (maybe a new one?) and photos to the end of the application form as this will make it easier for the adjudicator to negotiate your application. If you don't know how to do this ask a youth - PRO for Cadamstown Tidy Towns will look good on their CV. We opened your Facebook page and see that you have 718 followers. In this day and age that number of followers is quite small for a TidyTowns group. We then delved deeper and see that the last posting was in October 2025. In order to keep followers interested and to gain new followers, you need to post regularly on Facebook. Another job for your new young PRO. Your committee of 5 is small, but truthfully, sometimes that's all that you need. But having volunteers to help is vital and we read that you have 10. You list those you engage with which includes Offaly Co Co and Roscommon Co Co. As many of your projects cannot be undertaken without the assistance of the LAs this connection is extremely important. We also noted that local businesses and community groups support your work and assist you. This is your 30th year entering the SuperValu Tidy Towns competition and we hope that our reports have assisted you with ideas for your village. We read that the streetscape has vastly improved and that residents are now proud of where they live.

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

The village is an elongated village which crosses the River Shannon and where counties Offaly, Roscommon and, Galway nearby, meet. You have numerous historical structures in your village which adds to its character. Probably the most famous is the sixteen-arch stone bridge built in 1757 making it one of the oldest surviving structures crossing the Shannon. In addition, historical structure of interest include the three-storey Shannonbridge Battery, walls of the Infantry Barracks, the Lock Keepers house, St Kiernan's RC Church and Oliver Plunkett National School. Like many small villages and towns you have your share of unoccupied buildings and derelict buildings. It is wonderful to read that some have been recently purchased and works are now proceeding. An increase in residential occupancy would be beneficial to your village – we see the population has decreased in recent years. Compliments to the many business whose budlings were well presented in support of your work. Many had been recently painted and were bright and welcoming. We note a few mural which added to the streetscape. There are some gable walls along the streetscape where additional mural could be considered – they would certainly add colour to the streetscape. The colourful hanging baskets, planters and window boxes, adding to the beauty of the streetscape.

Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:

The small community park and playground at the road junction was visited. Remove the timber planters, and instead put the plants directly into the ground. in locations such as this, it is always better to plant directly into the ground. Planters are used where this is not possible and to make an impact on a streetscape. We read that the callows is to de developed with a boardwalk and public area. This will totally transform this area of the village. Do you know when this will take place? We noted that some of your trees, like many we have seen in other towns and villages, are suffering from ash dieback. These need to be monitored in order to ensure their health as they are along the road edge. You have a number of beautiful, well-maintained planting beds along your roads, where you have selected pollinator-friendly perennials. Many of these planting beds have now matured and are imposing features on your streetscape. There are some planters which also caught our eye and we recommend that you add some trailing plants to these next year for added impact. The planting bed along the road at St Kiernan's estate is particularly beautiful. This has created a biodiversity corridor, which allow animals to move safely and find food, in addition to disguising a large rendered block wall. This corridor continues along the adjoining planting bed and when we visited it was buzzing with insects. We commend the residents for this work. The marina area is very beautiful – a wonderful asset to have in your village.

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

You have a diverse range habitats in Shannonbridge for insects, birds, mammals, amphibians and invertebrates – the broad Shannon and it riparian banks, the callows, mature trees and hedgerows, stone buildings etc. We see that there is a distinct lack of trees on your main street. We suggest that buildout are made along the streetscape and trees, suitable for an urban environment, are planted in these. This has been undertaken successfully in other villages and towns. Yes, you will lose some parking spaces but the benefit to the community and to your nature far outweighs this. The main structural elements in the landscape and one of the main structural elements in a streetscape are trees. Trees are known to have a positive impact on mental health and wellbeing. By planting and caring for trees, you help reduce pollution, improve your surroundings, improve the appearance of your community and increase the value of your property. In addition, they provide shade for humans, food for insects and food, roosting and nesting sites for birds. The Roscommon embankment was full of wildflowers when we visited. This meadow area is developing well. In order to ensure that the Celtic cross is visible you will need to trim the area around it.

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

This category is one where many community struggle. It is just about being aware of our use of the planets resources and how we can, in our daily lives, cut down on waste. You, and other groups in Shannonbridge, probably do quite a number of actions daily but you need to tell us about them. We see that you have a bowser where you take river water to water your flowerbeds thus conserving water which has been treated. There are many simple actions which you can undertake in this category. You could organise a plant swap with those who have gardens. When they remove unwanted plants or divide those which have overgrown, ask them to put them in a pot and then these can be swapped with other gardeners. This could be organised for a date in October every year. Another project you could undertake is to organise a foraging walk where children and adults learn about the food that nature provides for free along our hedgerows and in our fields - elderflowers, elderberries, etc. Your local heritage officer or biodiversity officer could perhaps help you with this. Good to see a walking route around the GAA pitch and we are told that two laps equals 1 km. It's always good to know the distance of a walk. We suggest that one or two apple trees are grown in your small park and perhaps also some fruit bushes. You could also have herbs growing in some of your planters as opposed to flowers. Is there a Men's Shed? If not maybe start one?

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

If you haven't already done so we encourage you to sign up and take part in the All-Ireland An Taisce Spring Clean Event. When the local community sees your volunteers in their high-vis vests picking litter, removing weeds and clearing debris from the river it reminds them to be attentive to their own waste disposal methods. Let us know next year if you are now part of this event. You have a large number of visitors to your village due to the River Shannon and also your location as one of the few crossing points. These additional visitor numbers can bring with them litter problems. We are delighted to report that when we visited, the village was virtually litter free. Unfortunately weeds were noted in a few areas which detracted a little from a streetscape. We see that you have quite a lot of cobble lock pavements and these unfortunately are difficult to keep weed free. A shovel, hoe and stiff brush are all that's needed – but it must be done on a regular basis. We're not in favour of 'Christmas Lights' being in left in position all year round. If they we're lit nightly we could excuse it, but if not then they should be removed as they are very noticeable in the skyline and they detract from the beauty of the bridge. We see that you have help from Tús workers, which is wonderful. How many assist you daily? We noted a sign for Shannonbridge National School on the boundary wall of a house. We wonder why was it put there? Also the lettering needs to be picked out in white so that it is legible. Remove the blue planter at the grotto in the church grounds. It's totally unnecessary as the flowers in the planting beds are sufficient and truthfully it clutters the area. We were delighted to see that there was no signage on the piers and gates at the GAA entrance and so the architectural form which they create, can be appreciated without clutter.

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

Your residential accommodation in the village intermingles seamlessly with businesses and consists of vernacular single, and two-storey houses. Some if these had been freshly painted and were very presentable. We note that some were unoccupied and we hope that this is reversed soon as an occupancy very quickly leads to dereliction.

Some residents had adorned their houses with colourful floral displays. Have you thought about providing window boxes for your street residents which they maintain i.e. water? We have seen this in other small villages and it seems to work well. They pay a minimum charge for the window boxes and so consistency of pollinator-friendly planting is carried through the streetscape. The well- maintained, thatched, one and a half storey cottage with the bright red gate, was admired. Colourful window boxes and adjacent planting bed with evergreens and dog roses, adding to the beauty of this building. Is this a new build/ re-build? Either way it adds to the streetscape. We visited St. Kieran's Park where many residents had recently painted the properties, garden walls, piers and gates. Neatly tended lawns, with herbaceous borders and colourful shrubs were present in many gardens. The communal open space was well maintained. We recommend that trees are planted around the perimeter of this open space and also a coppice of say, silver birch (Petula pendula), be planted at the southern end. The colourful planters at the name stone where admired, but we suggest that instead of planters, a permanent bed surrounding this name stone would be more suitable. Here we suggest that you plant English lavender, rudbeckia and verbena, all of which are perennials and pollinator-friendly. Be generous with the size of the bed so that it create an impact as the motorists/pedestrians enter the area. We suggest that the blank block walls in Raghra Park estate are planted with a mix of ivy, pyracantha, honeysuckle, clematis Montana etc. which will not only cover the blank wall, but also provide a biodiversity corridor for nature and a pleasant environment for the residents.

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

We entered the village from the east on the R357. The approach roads into Shannonbridge from both Offaly and Roscommon have wonderful mature trees on both sides of the road along with well-maintained natural hedge rows. We were delighted to see that footpaths extend out along your approach roads, making it safe for pedestrians to access the village on foot. The tarmacadam footpath and wide concrete kerb were admired. We also noticed that the grass margin on the approach roads was edged with a concrete kerb (Offaly side) which gave us an expectation of what to expect in the village, and we weren't disappointed. We recommend that additional trees are planted along this grass margin, which would complement those on the opposite side and increase the sylvan effect of this approach. Rumble strips and dipped kerbs exist at some of the junctions. Do you know if this is planned for other road junctions? The well maintained stone walls on both sides along the Roscommon approach road was admired – compliments to the farmer and monastery. The Shannonbridge looped walk on the Roscommon side look interesting – a reason to return. Does anyone use the picnic benches along this wall? Theres no parking and no access. Steps need to be provided from the path and a pedestrian crossing made from a new roadside parking across the road.

Concluding Remarks:

Thank you for entering the SuperValu Tidy Towns 2026 competition. It was a pleasure to visit and adjudicate Shannonbridge, a village we have visited previously as a tourist.
In addition to the above suggestions we recommend that next year you add some additional information to your application as it was VERY sparse. e.g. what advise/help do you give to other voluntary groups who have undertaken work, or what improvements were made by the Local Authorities which you initiated/requested, etc. As of reading this report, keep a diary of the activities/projects undertaken by you and others … you'll be surprised as to how much is being undertake annually. It order for us to award marks we need to know of activities/projects that have been carried out where you have contributed.
We also suggest that you prepare a Five-Year Plan with projects listed under each category and a time-frame so that you have targets. Don't make it too onerous – just add projects which you know are feasible to achieve. You can add partners to this plan who will help with the projects. Ask for advice/ help from the Heritage Officer in Offaly Co Co.
Keep up the good work and we look forward to our return visit.