Tidy Towns Competition 2026

Adjudication Report

Centre:	**Blessington - Baile Coimín**	Ref:	**713**
County:	**Wicklow**	Mark:	**399**
Category:	**E**	Date(s):	**27/06/2026**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2025	Mark Awarded 2026
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	80	55	57
Streetscape & Public Places	80	48	50
Green Spaces and Landscaping	80	47	50
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	80	43	46
Sustainability – Doing more with less	80	36	38
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	67	68
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	55	46	48
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	55	40	42
TOTAL MARK	**600**	**382**	**399**

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.”Thank you very much for your entry to this year’s competition as well as including your 3 Year Plan, map and some lovely photographs of your work in action. In addition to your 10-core committee members it is wonderful to see that you can call on a veritable army of over 50 volunteers to help you in looking after your community. You have a very methodical approach to organising your work with regular monthly meetings supplemented when needed. Various work groups operate on different nights of the week with issues such as litter picking, landscaping, wildlife projects, maintenance etc. tackled by different groups. You enjoy strong support from local businesses which is surely a big help given the challenges of finding funding to support your work, and engage with a wide range of other statutory, voluntary and environmental organisations. You have very strong communications employing a wide range of methods such as social media, parish newsletter, noticeboard as well as your WhatsApp group to ensure swift communication to all your volunteers. Thank you for including some interesting insights into the reach achieved through your different types of media, a good way to confirm what is the most expedient way of getting your message out. It is wonderful to see such interest in your work by the younger members of your community with an active Junior TidyTowns committee as well as engagement with local schools on the Green Schools Programme as well as cooperation with Blessington Community College TY Classes, not to mention your involvement with the An Gaisce Awards as an official Gaisce Challenge Partner, great stuff!

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

Blessington benefits from a rich history and heritage with many fine buildings and architectural features to be seen throughout your town such as the Downshire Monument, the Horseshoe Arch, St. Mary’s Church of Ireland building, the Toll House and Threecastles Castle. Your plans to re-imagine the Market Square area is very exciting and included workshops, presentation and consultation, and although it will take some time for the project to go through the Part 8 planning process and then development it will be transformative for your town and we look forward to seeing it come to fruition in the near future. In the meantime, please continue with all the dedicated work that you do in maintaining the streetscape through litter picking, cleaning, painting, weeding etc. you are also doing fantastic work in minimising the negative visual impact of the few vacant and derelict buildings in the town through painting and adding window boxes etc.
The majority of commercial premises are presented to a very high standard and play their part in ensuring the visual amenity of the Main thoroughfares. Some of the businesses which were particularly eye-catching included VDA Coffee, The Wicklow House, The Credit Union Building, Gather & Glow gift shop amongst many others.

Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:

Although Blessington is a busy town with quite a bit of traffic there are plenty of lovely green areas to take a break from the hustle and bustle. The Community Park is a fantastic amenity area including walks, bowling, tennis courts, playground etc. with more in the works as part of the second phase of construction.
There is a lovely green area near the Blessington Men's Shed area with plenty of places to sit and rest. I loved the little illustrated Bee plaques showing local flora and fauna as well as their Irish origins, as well as the badger one, but just be careful how these are attached to the trees to avoid causing damage. There were some lovely benches commissioned by Blessington Tidy Towns outside St. Mary's Church, with some thought-provoking sayings such as the A.A. Milne Winnie the Pooh quote "sometimes I sits and thinks, sometimes I just sits" as well as the one dedicated to Dame Ninette de Valois who was born in Blessington.
You are careful in your planting to include pollinator friendly planting, perennials, as well as native shrubs and trees. Great work also being done on the roundabouts which were most attractive as well as your Spring Bulb. Planting regime. I have seen the 'Story Trails' idea in other towns, such a lovely idea, to combine nature and a child's imagination!

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

There is a most inspiring array of projects being carried out under this category, an area of work that you are strongly committed to.
Having received funding under the Community Climate Action Program, you have delivered many projects to help habitats, biodiversity, visual amenity through the planting of various fruit trees and bushes at estates and key areas in town such your Community Garden. A lot of work educating people on the wonderful world and work of bees through such actions as the Sustainability and Bees Community Learning Event, the Bee and Wasp walk in partnership with Russborough House, as well as Bee Posts. Other fantastic initiatives include the Fungi Fun with Delia, the Imbolc Festival which included a variety of workshops, the Native Woodland Trust events to name just a few. It was heartening to read of the enthusiasm and curiosity displayed by the students at St. Mary's Senior School and their Love Nature League.
The 'Invertopia – The Spineless Wonders Festival' sounds absolutely fascinating, and we very much look forward to hearing all about this in next year's entry.

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

Blessington is certainly embracing the concept of sustainability and the circular economy, it appears to be ingrained in all the work that you carry out with great engagement with your community, schools, Wicklow County Council, and other organisations and voluntary groups to help you to 'reduce, reuse and recycle'
Some of the many projects that you have been involved in have included the Household Electrical 'WEEE' Recycling event in partnership with other organisations such as Blessington Allotments, the County Council and McGreals Primary Care Centre, as well as an IT collection.
Well done on obtaining funding under the Community Climate Action Program and were able to use this to enable the planting of native Irish trees, fruit bearing bushes etc. at various estates in the town as well as your Community Garden and Orchard.
A lot of work being done in relation to education and awareness raising by you and other organisations. The Blessington Further Education Centre is doing sterling work through various initiatives and courses such as 'Environmental Sustainability in the Workplace' etc.
Other practical projects ongoing include various swap shops including everything from uniforms to Christmas and Halloween costumes, food waste reduction week, use of the plastic bottle and cans 'Return' scheme to generate funds, battery and vape collection to name just a few!
The lovely Community Free Library is a lovely way to encourage people to recycle books they no longer need.
Congratulation also to one of your local students and volunteer on being named runner-up in the Young Circular Star Category for his endeavours in relation to climate justice and community empowerment, a wonderful example of a young person making a difference.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

On the day that I visited Blessington it looked vary clean and practically litter free, no mean feat in a busy town your size and the fact that there were many people out and about enjoying the particularly fine summer that we have experienced this year. This is a testament to the amount of work that you, your volunteers and the wider community are carrying out and the pride that you take in the place that you live.
In addition to your awareness campaigns on social media, the stencils on pavements to remind people to pick up after their pups is a clever idea to raise awareness and hopefully ensure that people take heed. And well done on taking a proactive approach and speaking directly to dog owners, though as in a lot of these things, it is usually just one or two people causing the damage, with the majority of pet owners cleaning up after their pets.
Good work on keeping all your signage clean, all looked in great condition. The Recycling Bank area was spotless, well done, this is an area that often attracts debris from material put into the banks or illegal dumping beside the bins There is good weed control as well as maintenance of street furniture, and you also keep an eye out for graffiti and try and remove it in a timely manner. If you have not done so already it can sometimes be a good idea to carry out an audit of all the street furniture, poles etc. in your area to see if it is all needed or if any of it is contributing to visual clutter. Great work on the Blessington Canvas program and well done to those who paint them it is a joy to see these as you walk around the town. The work of Foroige Youth Services also deserves to be commended for their 'Bloom and Boom! Brightening up our Boxing Club' project, they did a fantastic job!

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

The various estates and residential areas all enjoyed a good level of maintenance and looked very tidy and clean with very little litter to be found.
It is great that so many areas are embracing the need to enhance green areas for biodiversity and habitats and are embracing the 'NoMow' policy and leaving some areas 'wild' to help our flora and fauna thrive.
Some of the estates visited included, Burgage Manor which have provided bee boxes and nesting habitats as well as including native trees and fruit trees as part of your Climate Change tree planting programme, good work also to Ashton Estate for the work they are doing for biodiversity and habitats including bug hotels, bird nests, bat boxes, a solitary bee stand to name a few initiatives. Beechdale, had an attractive stone name sign with some colourful planting in front of it, Lakeside Downs with an attractive name sign/planter, and there were some lovely cottages spotted near Lacken Road.
Blessington is expanding with some new housing estates coming such as the Torcaill Wood development, and we hope that this will also bring some new recruits to your work.

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

The black and white Welcome to Blessingtown sign looks very smart and is nicely complemented by the splash of colour from the low flower bed in front of it. Approach roads to the town looked well maintained, clean and litter free, and the various roundabouts were very attractive, and great to see that you are making a concerted effort to ensure pollinator friendly planting when possible and adopt the 'NoMow' ethos. Very good work being carried out on litter management, weeding, trimming of verges and general maintenance and upkeep of these areas. This includes trimming overgrown hedges where needed which are not only unsightly but can also pose safety hazards.
You keep an eye on the small details such as street furniture, signage, footpaths, manholes etc, and you also work closely with Wicklow County Council where appropriate to have these repaired or replaced when necessary.

Concluding Remarks:

Although I have driven through Blessington many times and had quick stops, it was lovely to spend a significant amount of time in your town and explore its history and see all the hard work that you are carrying out. Keep up the good work and best of luck with all your future projects.