Tidy Towns Competition 2026

Adjudication Report

Centre:	**Donard - Dún Árd**	Ref:	**262**
County:	**Wicklow**	Mark:	**343**
Category:	**B**	Date(s):	**07/06/2026**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2025	Mark Awarded 2026
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	80	52	53
Streetscape & Public Places	80	41	42
Green Spaces and Landscaping	80	49	51
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	80	37	39
Sustainability – Doing more with less	80	18	20
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	66	67
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	55	30	32
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	55	37	39
TOTAL MARK	**600**	**330**	**343**

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 into this year's competition and providing your 3/5 Year Plan as well as map, greatly appreciated. You have developed strong connections with a wider variety of organisations, including statutory bodies such as Wicklow County Council, Pobal as well as local businesses, as well as voluntary groups. You use a variety of communications methods, including social media such as Facebook, Instagram, posters as well as public meetings. It is great to read that your younger residents are also playing their part with classes of all ages involved in the 'Picker Pals' initiative as well as the Green School Code and Green School Committee.

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

Donard is a lovely village with a rich history as evidenced by the centre of it having an Architectural Conservation Area (ACA) designation. The Heritage Trail signage is excellent and the QR codes are a great way of letting people find out more about the story of the area.
It is such a shame that you have several vacant and derelict buildings in the village, an all-too-common occurrence throughout many towns and villages in Ireland unfortunately. It is good to keep engaging with Wicklow County Council, and hopefully with the various grants now available for these types of buildings it will not be too long before they will be brought back into usage. Good work on doing what you can to reduce the negative visual impact of these buildings.
There are not too many commercial premises in the village, but these are well presented, including Toomey's Bar, Moynihans's and O'Keefe's Country Store.
Donard Hall which contains the Hub and the 'Meeting Place' café is very at the heart of your community and looked very smart with the lovely window boxers and planters etc. which you take care of and maintain. It is great to see that the National School is involved with the 'Creative Schools' initiative and well done to all the children involved in painting the fence, it looked really lovely!.

Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:

You are fortunate to be living in a very scenic area surrounded by greenery and rolling hills which serves as a beautiful backdrop to the village.
The central garden area is very much the focal point of the village landscape, and you have done great work here in keeping it that way, it looked most attractive when I visited, and great to see that you are making sure to incorporate pollinator friendly planting here. The landscaping around the statue of Mary and the rest of the green is lovely and

the Ogham stone is a striking feature. It is heartening to hear that the school children have taken an interest to gardening and are planting seeds and have a vegetable garden.
You are doing great work on the maintenance in the Old Graveyard, areas that sometimes get forgotten about, and well done on the updating of the Conservation Plan for the ruined church and it is great to hear of the second Grant Award, it will be fantastic to see the graveyard when the you have been able to repair the broken part of the wall.

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

Donard is an area rich in wildlife with birds such as the Peregrine Falcon, Woodcock, and Great Spotted Woodpecker amongst them, as well as many species of bats as well. Have you had any bat walks? These can be a really fun way to learn more about these creatures and the younger members of the community are usually very excited about these, you could contact Bat Conservation Ireland or look at their website for more information or ideas at https://www.batconservationireland.org/
It is great to see that you have plenty of accommodation for the bugs, bats and birds through the bug hotels, and nesting boxes etc. that you have had installed throughout the village and environs, in addition to the many walls in the village that make for great habitats for insects and bugs.
You are also very keen to ensure that the next generation are raised to have an awareness of environmental issues and the importance of biodiversity and reducing the causes of climate change and managing negative impacts through sustainable behaviour.
We are glad to hear that you are getting expert advice on how to deal with the invasive Japanese Knotweed, as incorrect removal of this can actually cause more harm than good and spread the plant even more.
We note that you are currently investigating the ides of a Community Garden, perhaps talk to neighbouring Tidy Towns groups to get ideas or look at the TidyTowns handbook which also should give you some useful information, and we wish you the best of luck with this.

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

There are a lot of practical initiatives in place in this category all contributing to a more sustainable community and show your commitment to the circular economy. It is fantastic to read that there is an excess of electricity being generated by the Hall and this helps the “Meeting Place” café to facilitate the use of this by the various community groups that use it to meet and mingle.
Congratulations to Donard Community Enterprises on their first place in the Wicklow County Council Sustainable Development Awards in the Energy Award Category.
Food always tastes better when it is fresh local organic produce and you are lucky to be able to purchase a wonderful array of goods such as fresh sour dough bread, free range eggs as well as baked goods.
The participation in the Walk on Wednesdays (WOW) is a good way to encourage healthy habits as well as reduce carbon emissions caused by cars especially for short journeys and helps both parent and student realise that it is not always necessary to drive everywhere.
The ‘free library’ bookshelf in the Hall where books can be exchanged is a simple but very effective way to reduce landfill and perhaps be introduced to your new favourite author. Are there any plans to extend this concept to swapping of school uniforms, sports equipment etc. that have outgrown their use to go to a new home elsewhere?
The composting area in the old graveyard was also noticed, another sustainable way of reusing materials and avoid having to buy new.
In addition to the energy savings at the Hall, have individual residents looked at how their own homes may be more efficient? The Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland have a wealth of information on grants that may be available, at www.seai.ie

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

On the day that I visited Donard it looked pristine and free of litter apart from some very minor items. There is obviously a strong sense of community pride for the place that you live and in addition to the regular mid-week litter pick, residents also pick up any stray pieces they see when out for a stroll.
There is also great maintenance work done on footpaths, and kerbs etc. to make sure that these are weed free as well as looking after trees and plants.
We are very happy to see that you avoid the use of chemical herbicides and use manual labour. Have you also tried using a solution of water, vinegar and salt and liquid dish soap?
Do you participate in the An Taisce National Spring Clean initiative?
Great work on your involvement with the ‘Pure Mile’ project which is a great initiative to help keep the areas in between towns and villages clean and free from litter and illegal dumping, area that can easily be forgotten.

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

With a population of just over 200 people, Donard is a small village with limited housing stock. The small Palladius Park development is the only residential ‘estate’ in the area, although there are many charming individual houses as well as the lovely terrace of houses as well. Palladius Park was kept to a very high standard and looked very neat and clean on the day that I visited, many with beautifully tended colourful gardens, though I think there is scope for maybe a few ‘wilder’ or meadow areas to be incorporated into the green space. It has a fine green area to add visual amenity and for children to play along with a nice stone wall frontage.
We note that there are two new residential developments that have obtained planning permission, and good to know that the associated construction work will not deter you from your work, and hopefully you will be able to recruit some of the newcomers to volunteer! In some areas local Tidy Towns groups have sent letters to any new members of their community to let them know a bit more about the area, the work they are carrying out and when litter picks and other work happen along with a call that anyone who would like to volunteer is welcome.

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

The black and white Donard sign as you approach the village was in excellent condition and clean, and the planting at the base added a nice splash of colour and interest. The various approaches to Donard were very well presented with some fine mature trees, hedgerows as well as very attractive stone boundary walls. You are very conscious of the need to protect habitats and encourage biodiversity and retain ‘wild’ swathes of vegetation to help wildlife and pollinators and follow a ‘No Mow’ policy. We note that you have some problems in relation to pedestrian connectivity in the village but engage with Wicklow County Council to try and resolve these.

Concluding Remarks:

This was my first time to visit your charming village, and although it may be small there is plenty of interest set in beautiful countryside. Well done on all the work that you are carrying out for your community and we wish you the best in all your future projects.