Tidy Towns Competition 2026

Adjudication Report

Centre:	**Newcastle - An Caislean Nua**	Ref:	**1037**
County:	**Wicklow**	Mark:	**367**
Category:	**C**	Date(s):	**13/07/2026**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2025	Mark Awarded 2026
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	80	48	49
Streetscape & Public Places	80	42	43
Green Spaces and Landscaping	80	44	46
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	80	45	48
Sustainability – Doing more with less	80	24	25
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	68	69
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	55	42	43
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	55	42	44
TOTAL MARK	**600**	**355**	**367**

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 for including your 3 Year Plan along with map and legend as well as plenty of photographs of the work that you are carrying out. You have extensive engagement with a wide range of different organisations including statutory bodies, voluntary groups, local businesses as well as individual members of your community who help support the work that you do. Communications include social media such as your Facebook group, WhatsApp to communicate with volunteers as well as the Community Notice Board visible to everyone in the town. In addition to your local National School, St Francis who organise an annual beach cleanup, you have also got additional help from TY pupils from East Glendalough and Kilcoole to assist. It is heartening to read that your participation in the competition has helped you plan and create a vision for the place that you live. And to this end you have taken a strategic approach to future planning with the Village Health Check. It is fantastic to see that this includes close collaboration with neighbouring groups, and are joining forces to help tackle common issues such as litter on the outskirts of each respective town, and possible economies of scale that might help with funding projects.

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

Congratulations on obtaining a substantial grant from Wicklow County Council towards the upgrading of your local playground to be used in conjunction with additional funding that you are currently in the process of raising. You have some exciting plans for the upgrade, which will cater for all through the provision of inclusive/sensory equipment, an adult gym, picnic tables as well as a community planted garden, and we look forward with anticipation to seeing this when complete. Great news also on being able to obtain the timber needed for the fence at the Little Vartry River through the generosity of a local business (Abwood) as well as paint donated by members of the community, along with labour from the local GAA Club, wonderful team spirit. There is plenty of heritage to be seen in the town with the Heritage Walk sign showing various points of interest such as the beautiful Church of Ireland building, Castle and the Pack Horse Bridge. I also noticed from your plan that you appear to have carried out an audit of all your signage and what is needed here regarding replacement, maintenance and use of Irish language, well done.

Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:

There is some lovely landscaping to be seen in Newcastle, I particularly admired the flower bed beside the petrol

station, and the area surrounding the traditional black water pump looked splendid with some very attractive landscaping at this area to complement it. It is great to see a lovely little area with seating just beside the Racefield Estate with the brown and blue half barrel planters, however I feel this area has more potential with perhaps some fresh paint on the bench and planters and a small bit of weeding. You are actively monitoring and maintaining the current stock of trees as well as planting new ones, and planting drought resistant perennials and pollinator friendly flowers, great work.

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

There is a lot of great work being carried out in this category. You are using signage in the community garden area to educate about biodiversity, especially in relation to our important Bee population. The Pesticide-free zone signs were spotted as well as the solitary bee post and some signage showing the various birds that are to be seen in the town and surrounding environs, as well as moths and Dragonflies etc. The QR code at the Protecting Nature sign is a great way of encouraging people to delve deeper and find out more information. I spotted some of the bird, bat and swift boxes that you have installed, and good work on the planting of native hedging and trees on the Sea Road.
The engagement of younger residents of the community is particularly strong, with visits from the 'Biodiversity for Schools' organisation to hold classroom events as well as a library of outdoor photos on the school building of wildlife.
The 'walk and talk' events sounded fascinating with experts covering topics amongst many others as amphibians and pond building, gardening for wildlife, botany, bees and bats!

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

Some of the practical ways that you are practicing sustainability include the use of rainwater harvesting from the water butts at the Community Centre. I spotted the 'Little Free Library' was gorgeous and very well stocked up with books for anyone to take or leave. You are producing your own compost, which is being used to feed your Raspberry canes as well as growing plants from seed.
Have you looked at energy efficiency in the town? There is some very useful information in relation to sustainable issues, and grants available for both commercial and residential premises to be found on the website of the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland https://www.seai.ie/
Other ideas you could look into in this category would be having 'swop shops' for preloved items such as old sports gear, books, clothes etc. Also, you could engage with local cafes and restaurants about encouraging the use of 'keep cups ' or refilling water bottles to avoid the use of single plastic ones which often end up in landfill.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

On the whole Newcastle had very good litter control on the day that I visited your town, obviously a lot of hard work goes into keeping your town looking so clean. There was only the odd piece of litter to be seen as I walked through the town, and the Recycling Bank had a few odd pieces lying about in front of the bins, including an old pair of children's slippers!
To help raise awareness and educate some of the younger members of your community you organised 'Leave no trace Ireland' hold some events in the local National School.
Great work on the annual beach clean-up, a lovely way for families to work together and take pride in the place that they live.
Do you take part in the An Taisce National Spring Clean? If not, perhaps this is something that you could consider in the future.

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

The residents of Newcastle obviously take great pride in their town and their own abodes, with the majority of homes and residential areas seen looking very smart and well maintained. I admired the beautiful stone cottages with some fantastic, matured gardens.
The Racefield estate was very well kept with an attractive stone pillar entrance as well as the lovely woodland area. Other areas visited that all looked well maintained included Seacourt (there is a lovely granite name sign here that I think could look even better with a splash of colour), Castle Manor and Hunters Leap. The fact that all of the housing estates have resident's groups that take care of the cleaning, tidying and maintenance of their areas must definitely help and it is great to read that there is such a pro active approach to becoming more pollinator friendly and doing what they can to increase biodiversity.

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

Good maintenance of the approach roads to Newcastle which looked well maintained, clean and litter free, well done. You are making sure to be conscious of biodiversity and pollinators, so please keep this up and ensure a good balance between neat and wildflower areas. There were some interesting features to be seen on the roadside as you enter the town such as one of the old Milestones showing he distance from your town to Dublin Castle. The 1798 Memorial as well as the Millennium Capsule sign, and although these were clean and litter free, perhaps these could be a future project as I think they have potential to be lovely features with maybe a bit of TLC and some fresh planting. We note the delay in the completion of the new development at Chancel Way which must be disappointing, however great work with your engagement with the developer with regards to the landscaping which will take account of biodiversity and pollinator friendly planting here and at the Riverine pathway.

Concluding Remarks:

I had never visited Newcastle before, and really enjoyed my visit and seeing all the great work that you are doing, keep it up!.