Tidy Towns Competition 2026

Adjudication Report

Centre:	**Wicklow - Cill Mhantain**	Ref:	**244**
County:	**Wicklow**	Mark:	**408**
Category:	**E**	Date(s):	**20/06/2026**
			30/07/2026

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2025	Mark Awarded 2026
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	80	57	59
Streetscape & Public Places	80	58	60
Green Spaces and Landscaping	80	52	54
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	80	45	47
Sustainability – Doing more with less	80	29	31
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	68	70
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	55	44	45
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	55	40	42
TOTAL MARK	**600**	**393**	**408**

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 for your entry into this year’s competition, and for providing your Five-Year Plan as well as map. If possible, it would be lovely to also see some pictures of all the good work that you are doing in your form as well, even a few of them as an appendix to the form if that is practical for you. Although it is great to have a reliable cohort of up to 10 people who volunteer on a regular basis, there is a lot of ground to cover, so we wish you luck in your endeavours to attract more volunteers. For those people who may not be able to commit on a regular basis, I have seen some TidyTowns groups advertise a ‘power hour’ where people can turn up at an appointed time to do a ‘blitz’ of a particular area or project, or something similar may be worth considering, though we can see from your entry that you are already pursuing a variety of options and also work well with other organisations who are also canvassing on your behalf. Collaboration and communication with other voluntary groups, commercial entities and state agencies is important, and you appear to have established very strong connections which shows the regard the local community has for the work that you carry out. Some of the many organisations you engage with include Wicklow County Council who awarded you a grant under the Climate Action Fund, Pobal, the local Lions club, traders, the Beavers Sea Scouts amongst many others. Good work in encouraging the participation of the younger residents of the town through the local schools and U15 rugby team.

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

Some of the commercial premises that looked particularly attractive included The Bridge Tavern, John Flood Menswear with very fresh blue and white striped awnings, Vogue Image Design, and the Kilmartin Arts Centre. I liked the traditional style signage and vibrant green of Hannah’s. Some of the Public buildings that caught the eye included the Town Hall which had some lovely floral displays, Wicklow Gaol, and the former Court House.
Some of the lovely murals that I spotted around the town included the Swan one beside Bridge Street Books, the Dancing Couple, and great to see that Wicklow’s history and stories are being represented through the Wicklow Wander Walls Trail, they offer a fascinating glimpse into the lives of those who have lived and worked in the town throughout the ages.
Unfortunately, there were some vacant and derelict properties to be seen in Wicklow which is a pity as many of these would have been very fine buildings before they went into disrepair.
There was some very good quality signage to be seen as I strolled around giving lots of useful information about this part of Ireland’s Ancient East, including lovely illustrations and information about your Heritage Trail. The Doctor’s Steps area is intriguing with its arch ironwork and steps down, and another lovely mural here. The landscaping including the donated boat is a really good way of acknowledging the importance of your marine heritage.

Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:

The ‘Orchard’ area was charming, and I also spotted the lovely ‘Bugratty Castle’ bug hotel, a lovely way to get children interested in their environment and biodiversity. The Cross sculpture with the Ogham marking on the side was very striking, though would benefit from some careful cleaning. The landscaping in the Obelisk area surround the Robert Halpin monument was very attractive.
The refresh and revitalisation of the maritime bed was great, especially that you could utilise nautical themed objects such as an anchor to reflect the marine heritage of Wicklow. I really enjoyed a short stroll along the river, a tranquil place to spend some time with some really lovely landscaping around here. It is great to see so many of your landscaping schemes incorporate pollinator friendly plants, and make sure to take a look at the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan if you need any more ideas or information at https://pollinators.ie/
You have done a really lovely job at the landscaping at the Whitegates area, with a beautiful mix of harmonious pink and purple flowers. I also admired the work done at the Abbey carpark area, it was looking full of colour and I also spotted the cute straw Hare hiding amongst the foliage. Similarly, fantastic work being done at the Barrow Green area, you are really doing a huge amount of work in this category, and I am sure it is greatly appreciated by all those whose walk around the town is a little bit brighter because of it.

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

Well done on your work planting native hedgerows and trees along the riverwalk a few years back as part of Earth Day, and great to see that you are continuing of with this work and planting more each year. The numerous trees you have planted includes Crab Apple, Blackthorn, Hazel, Rowan, and Willow amongst many others. As well as enhancing the visual amenity of this area, it also helps improve biodiversity and help the habitats of the local wildlife. More planting includes the edible bed at Barrow Green, where the produce includes black currants, gooseberries and apple trees. You have mentioned that you do not use chemical weedkillers, and although this can be labour intensive you are to be commended for taking this approach. The solar powered duck feeder at Bachelor’s walk is a great way to educate people on what foods can be safely eaten by ducks as well as swans, is there any way to find out how often this is used?
‘Bugratty Castle’ charming, a lovely way to get the younger residents of your town interested in nature and biodiversity and possible setting up their own bug hotels.

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

Well done on all the work that you are carrying out with the retrofit of the Pastoral Centre. So far you have completed insulation of the ceilings and cavity walls, new heating controls, provision of solar panels, and the provision of a rain forest garden (it would be lovely to see a picture of this and of some of your other work if possible). The centre is also doing its bit for the circular economy through the reuse of children’s clothes and toys, books as well as unwanted food to avoid waste. I Spotted Lauren’s Little pantry where people can ‘take what you need, and give what you can’
Great work also on your Energy Awareness Days to include practical information on how to be more energy efficient including heat pumps, solar panels, Electrical Vehicles etc. was this carried out with any assistance from the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland? The SEAI are a great resource of information about energy efficiency as well as the various grants that can be taken advantage of. You are making sure that all the work that you do is as sustainable as possible with the reuse of cloth bags for green waste collection, segregation of litter for recycling, as well as endeavouring to use perennials where possible in your planting, as well as the use of recycled materials for the memorial bench at the harbour.
Other things to help with sustainability include encouraging cafes to introduce ‘keep cup’ schemes to reduce single use coffee cups, a little ‘free library’ in a public space where people can leave or take a book, clothes swaps, passing on sports equipment that is no longer used etc.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

Although you have had issues with graffiti, it is great to read that the murals project has helped with this, and it was a joy to see many of these around your town adding a splash of colour and character.
Wicklow is a popular town and hosts many popular events such as the Round Ireland Yacht Race, the Leinister Fleadh, Tast of Wicklow etc. and you are conscious of making a focussed effort to ensure the town looks it’s best when welcoming large influxes of visitors. You carry out regular litter picks, and it is encouraging to see that you work in conjunction with local businesses to help with keeping the town clean. The Recycling Bank to the rear of SuperValu was clean and tidy on the day that I visited.
There was unfortunately a bit of litter on the main street on the day that I visited, caused most likely by the number of people out and about enjoying the sunshine, but this doesn't take away from all that you are doing to keep Wicklow clean and tidy. Also, please persevere with your war on weeds, we understand it can be a tough battle sometimes, especially if not using harsh chemical weedkillers

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

A lot of hard work being done by the residents of Wicklow to ensure that where they live and work is looking its best, with a very active role taken in maintaining housing estates. Well done on the amusing signs at Seafield estate playground to try and prevent dog fouling in this area, and of the support that you provide to the Meadows and Marlton Hall estates to assist them in obtaining pollinator friendly plants to help our bees and bugs.
I was sorry to read that dog fouling is an issue in the Seafield area, but hopefully the playful posters to encourage dog owners to pick up after their pups will help.

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

The various approach roads to Wicklow create a good first impression and all looked to be maintained to a good standard. There is very good signage throughout the town helping the visitor find their way and also highlighting points of interest.I have already mentioned the boat landscaping as well as the maritime bed, complete with anchors and buoys which reference Wicklow's maritime legacy. Along with some good quality landscaping, a good sign to welcome all those who visit Wicklow, there are some lovely stretches of trees, and hedgerows as you enter the town. Great work done on the Whitegates area, and the coastal route from the R750 is a pleasure to drive with some lovely vistas. The Roundabouts were all of a high standard and well presented, and we look forward to seeing the Peter O'Connor sculpture come to fruition.

Concluding Remarks:

It has been a while since I last visited Wicklow town and I really enjoyed walking around and seeing all the great work that you are doing, and it is heartening to hear that your involvement in the competition and the visibility of all your volunteers is helping instil greater pride in our town and appreciation for all that you are doing.

Second Round Adjudication:

Thank you to Wicklow Tidy Towns so much for all the work that went into your entry into the Large Town Category E section of this year's National Tidy Towns Competition. Your 19 page entry was very clear, concise and sufficiently detailed to allow the adjudicator make an assessment of your activities throughout the last year. As advised by the first adjudicator, you might consider if the inclusion of some thumbnail photographs in your entry might be of use in future submissions.

You have also included an indexed hand-drawn map of Wicklow, referring to a grid, which was of great assistance on the inspection visit. It is suggested that coding or colouring of the named projects could be used to identify them as either new or maintenance, and also to allocate them to their relevant categories.

You have also included a succinct but ambitious five year plan for the period 2026-2031. Has there been any review or look-back on your previous plans and programmes?

You have prepared your submission methodically and prepared a sufficient and satisfactory response to all the various category headings requested.
While you currently have some turnover of active volunteers,, you do enjoy a significant amount of support across the wider community and your value is recognised. The support of the Wicklow Municipal District and the County Council in particular is especially valued.

In common with most other towns of your size Wicklow is a mix of streets, buildings and public spaces, with sloping topography generally down to the Leitrim River estuary entering into the fine harbour, which was a centre of activity on the very sunny day of this adjudicator's visit, with the importance of marine activities and heritage for Wicklow town being readily apparent. The Wicklow Rowing Club were at the hub of it all.

There was work underway at the landmark Wicklow Gaol which obviously impacted on the appearance of the surrounds. The stepped Market Square and Town Hall with the Billy Byrne 1798 memorial remains a centrepiece of the town away from the coast line, with many fine buildings including houses, retail untis and hospitality businesses lining The Mall, Main Street, Abbey Street and the other streets, roads and lanes of the town. The modern Library building is an excellent example of infill development fitting into a historic town. The East Coast Credit Union headquarters, complete with clock is another noteworthy new building. Away from the town the fine Leitrim House at Leitrim Place, the Marine House and the modern Government Offices and the curved roofs of the swimming pool at Station Road all caught the eye. St. Patrick's Catholic Church built in the Gothic style in the 1840's is a dominant feature of the landscape. Dereliction and vacancy is an issue for Wicklow as with many other towns of this size but the town appeared to be busy and generally thriving on the day of adjudication.

Wicklow has a number of green spaces and landscaped areas and also uses planters throughout the town which require constant maintenance and care so as to keep up the standards. The unique setting of town with hills, cliffs, coastline, river and marsh offers a unique environment. The first adjudicator's report commended your decision not to use weed killers and that is the right approach even if it does require a significant additional effort from the Tidy Towns groups nationwide.

In terms of sustainability and in addition to the recycling opportunities offered by the recently upgraded pastoral centre and the charity shops in the town it was very encouraging to see a Second Chance Furniture premises operating on the north quay in the town. The initial adjudication report suggested that opportunities should be explored for recycling sports gear - many sports clubs and parents of players and athletes have proven receptive to clubs providing opportunities to cut down on unnecessary expense and unnecessary landfill. Wicklow Town is also home to An Tairseach Ecology Centre.

You have done well in your efforts to keep Wicklow free of litter and refuse, your 9th place in the well regarded IBAL survey is particularly noteworthy. The areas around recycling bins were generally clean and tidy and free of dumpint. The litter bins around the town and environs were also emptied and available for use. Unfortunately on the day of inspection the Market Square was heavily littered, and it appeared as if the Doctor's Steps had not been cleaned in some time. It might be possible to include these iconic steps in your future power washing programme.

It was also encouraging to see that along with many other towns Wicklow has made provision for outdoor seating and dining facilities on the streets, most notably on Market Square and Fitzwillaim Square. While this option presents challenges to every town and needs to be managed, it will encourage increased pedestrian traffic and result in increased footfall for all businesses in the town.
Fitzwilliam Square is a superb example of a vibrant public space, well finished hard surfaces and details complementing the historic importance of the Halpin monument and railings surrounding the green space.
As Wicklow town expands and new housing estates develop and take root, the communication of the mission of the Tidy Towns to new residents is essential. While you are already working well with many of the housing estates you have identified the need to identify and make contact with some of the emerging residents associations. While the members of most residents associations are primarily interested in their own estates, the Tidy Towns may become an umbrella group for a network of residents who share similar aims for the whole community. The housing estates in and around visited by this adjudicator were generally in good condition, well maintained, good green areas, many with trees, and some with playgrounds.

The approach roads to and from the town were well looked after, generally with good signage and road markings, traffic calming measures in place and planting to verges where possible.

Wicklow Tidy Towns have been in existence for over 30 years, and have been taking part in the National Tidy Towns Competition for over 20 years. Wicklow Tidy Towns have established a very proud legacy especially since 2019.

Well done to all involved in this year's submission on the completion and more importantly the ongoing good maintenance of some wonderful amenities for both locals and visitors to enjoy. We wish you every success going forward to 2026 and beyond.