

Tidy Towns Competition 2025

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Clonakilty - Cloch Na Coillte** Ref: **669**
County: **Cork(West)** Mark: **396**
Category: **D** Date(s): **24/06/2025**
23/07/2025

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2024	Mark Awarded 2025
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	80	57	59
Streetscape & Public Places	80	54	56
Green Spaces and Landscaping	80	51	53
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	55	43	44
Sustainability – Doing more with less	55	27	29
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	64	66
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	55	41	43
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	55	44	46
TOTAL MARK	550	381	396

Community – Your Planning and Involvement / An Pobal - Pleanáil agus Rannpháirtíocht:

Fáilte chuig Comórtas Bhailte Slachtmhara SuperValu 2025. Go raibh maith agaibh as bhur iarratas a chur isteach. Maith sibh don obair atá déanta agaibh in bhur cheantar go dtí seo - guímid gach rath oraibh i bhur dtionscadail amach anseo. Ádh mór.

Thank you for participating in Ireland's longest-running environmental project and helping to make Ireland a better place. We really appreciate all the great work that you do and the effort you put in, year on year.

Let us first comment on the high quality of your entry this year. This was very well put-together and nicely designed so it was easy on the eye as well as interesting. We liked the colour-coding of the categories and the little logos that you developed for same. Very nice. Your map was perfect for use. One suggestion would be that you fit a key onto the map itself which saves the explorer from having to switch between pieces of paper or files on a screen. The inclusion of Eircodes is a good idea and was appreciated. Congratulations on your unbroken competition entries since 1978. Clonakilty Tidy Towns is obviously part of the fabric of the town at this stage! Indeed, you are deeply involved in a wide range of initiatives across Clonakilty and your contribution to your community is acknowledged here. Thank you for including a copy of your 3-year plan. This was succinct but well detailed.

We note that your Key Project for this category is an environmental awareness initiative. This was a collaborative project that was aligned to the Sustainable Development Goals and was supported by National Parks and Wildlife Service, very good. This approach to community-wide upskilling is great to read about and so important for your community.

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

Continuing the theme of collaboration, engagement with Cork County Council was your first listed project for this category. The dedicated project group that you describe will be a most useful body for pursuing your priority initiatives and joint goals. We wish the team well. Thank you for the detailed update on derelict buildings and shopfronts in Clonakilty. You also list here the Clonakilty amphitheatre and playground development and the restoration of both your heritage trail and the iconic Jungle City animals.

Your shopfronts and other businesses really make the town of Clonakilty what it is. We were pleased to see so many traditional shopfronts being maintained. O'Donovan's Hotel is one such example. Opposite, Gearoidín's Café and the Clonakilty Food Co. also looked great. Outdoor seating areas really add to a summer streetscape and The Chunky Chip was encouraging patrons with its tables and well presented shopfront. There are so many examples of attractive shopfronts and other businesses that it is impossible to list them all but some of these were Mick Finn's

Pub, Casey's, Flourish and Be, Arís, Con & Maura's and Susu. De Barra's premises looked very inviting! Overall, Pearse Street looked great, despite the weather. Kerr's bookshop and MTM cycles are lovely traditional shopfronts, so too Kerrs. Nearby Stone Valley Coffee has great impact. The Supervalu looks very well, especially with a refurbished elephant at the front. Some really good planting was admired here. The Imperial Hotel looked freshly-painted and the Clonakilty Hotel looked well. O'Cruaíoch's is a lovely pub-front and Bert's Café looked really well. Art Studio 43 is a lovely shopfront to spend some time at. Omer's Barbers spotless premises must also get a mention.

It was felt that the Market House could be presented better. The Heritage Town historical signage outside is faded and is now in need of replacement. Scoil na mBuachaillí was visited and the ample grounds here admired, as was the little bit of landscape planting at the front of the school. We hope that Daithí and the Wiz was a hit. Very nice tree-planting and landscape planting was noted at the Aldi and Primary Healthcare Centre. Clonakilty Community College looked well. It seems that an area of the grounds have been left to go wild and that is great. Some benches in the car park here might be a welcome addition. The bowl planters here are in need of some love. The Long Quay waste water pumping station grounds and building could look much better. A little bit of painting and planting here would go a long way.

Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:

You begin this category with yet more collaboration – this time with your local Women's Shed and Men's Shed. Here, environmentally progressive actions such as reducing food waste are detailed. You also describe here your schools outreach programme that again features a range of environmental projects. While this adjudicator would consider this initiative better assessed in some of the following categories, your great work is acknowledged here. Your aim of developing new initiatives with the schools each year is ambitious but highly commendable. Your long-term aims are good. Your tree-planting this year was at Dunmore House, planting on average a thousand trees per hour. Pretty impressive! Well done to the County Council and all involved in the Chateaulin Orchard refurbishment. We got to visit this site and it was very pleasant. The benches and new wooden gate fit in really well.

Emmet Square was our first port of call and it is as gorgeous as always. It was great to see lots of benches and a water refill station was new to this adjudicator. Nearby a really well-kept Fuchsia hedge borders the church grounds very colourfully. We visited the playground off Kent Street but unfortunately didn't locate the new amphitheatre! The playground equipment was in good condition. We wondered if some of the grassed areas here could be left uncut for pollinators. The Clonakilty Sensory Garden was visited for the first time in a long time and it looked lovely. A little bit of maintenance will be needed here soon. There was gorgeous and pollinator-friendly planting at the Supervalu and its car park with Nepeta, Agapanthus and Verbena all looking lovely. Not far away is a little area that has been left to grow wild, which is good. The little park at Long Quay is a lovely place to sit. There is a really nice planted bed here with Crocosmia and Verbena. The Clonakilty Community Garden is just super! Despite its small size there is all sorts of examples of good practice to be found here. These include rainwater harvesting, GIY vegetable, composting and a wormery, zero-dig growing and a gorgeous little shed. It's great to see that our new residents have also been involved. Nice floral decorations were admired at the Courthouse.

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

Thank you for the detail on the pruning work on the trees of Emmet Square. Again, this project would be better placed in the above category but we were pleased to see such professional work being carried out. Thank you for your details on your commitment to local biodiversity and on your partnership with National Parks and Wildlife Service. Your work with Clochán Uisce on the River Feagle sounds exactly like the kind of local initiative we want to see to protect our vital but fragile watercourses.

We stumbled on your Celebrating Swifts mural. We hadn't seen this before and it's very effective with good quality information on the species here too. We also got to see the Clonakilty Birdwatching Enhancement Project and try out the binoculars on a cooperative Cormorant that was fishing nearby.

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

Here we revisit your Key Project – environmental awareness across the town of Clonakilty. We do hope that the talks and panel discussions went well and were engaging for all participants. Reducing food waste is a key environmental issue for you and rightly so. We would love to see more groups engage with this important aspect of our society's sustainability. Well done. Related to food waste is your 'Stop the Sachets' campaign. Fair play to the students of Clonakilty Community College. We do hope that this caught the imagination of your retailers and other outlets. The Clonakilty Apple Festival and the Apple Orchard Mapping are excellent initiatives. This is a heritage as well as environmental project! It was good to see signs up for the Clonakilty Bike Circus, a really worthwhile project.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

Thank you for the beautifully illustrated section here which shows so many of your volunteers out hard at work. It is great to see the newer residents of Clonakilty among them. You used the St. Patrick's Day parade as an opportunity to highlight your anti dog litter action. Well done to you all. Some of the 'Unless your dog can do this...' posters were seen on our visit. Your responsible dog-owners pledge is a super idea.

There were a few tidiness issues noted on our visit. Some of the street signage (finger signs) are in need of cleaning or repainting. The bike stand near the Market House is in need of a touch up. Watch out for heritage signs

getting faded or unreadable. Clonakilty wasn't entirely litter-free on adjudication day, but close to it. Some takeaway wrappers were among the few discarded items seen. Well done.

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

Your first project listed here is the estates competition – a great way of encouraging improvements through healthy competition! Make sure that estates are made aware of the masses of information available on pollinators and pollinator-friendly management from the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan. Healthy and active travel is key to your Bike-Friendly Town project. This is an excellent initiative and more towns should be thinking this way. On the day of adjudication few cyclists were noted. The not so great weather may have played a part in this, it is acknowledged. Safe cycle routes to school and work are crucial for towns like Clonakilty so please do pursue this as much as you are able. Good luck with finishing the garden at Teach Cairde, it sounds like a lovely project.

At Emmet Square, a full 'lap' was undertaken in order to appreciate the Georgian housing here. Doors and doorways were well painted and there were lots of floral decorations. Hanging baskets here also add to the appeal. The terrace on Crescent Street looked lovely with lots of examples of good gardening in small spaces. The newer apartments at Long Quay look well with all the floral decorations. Well done to the residents. There are lovely terraces on Casement Street and again great gardening in modest plots.

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

The street utility box project will bring colour to the streets. We are pleased to see that you are choosing locally-relevant themes. Thank you for the information on the Kent Street regeneration and on the your ongoing street survey. It's super that your lovely Greenway is being expanded. These projects bring so many benefits apart from creating new routes of travel.

We were pleased to see how well your laneways and back areas are kept. These can often be neglected. Not so here with gates and doors well painted and a lack of clutter. Little mural projects such as The Shack and the Clonakilty Community Youth Centre add great colour and vibrancy. Volunteers were working on the roundabout on Connolly Street during our visit. On the N71 (Bandon side) it was noted that there was a sign missing. It is great to see that Clonakilty is an autism-friendly town! The Fairtrade sign was in need of cleaning. Watch out for some of the older signs on your approach roads that are getting past their best. Some commercial signage could probably be removed. The roundabout in front of the Supervalu looks fantastic, well done to all involved. The roundabout on the N71 (sponsored by Donnelly's Coaches) looks lovely. Around the junction there are some impressive tiered planters and the tigin is beautifully planted up.

Concluding Remarks:

This was a really enjoyable and interesting first visit to Clonakilty in a long time. It's great to see so many improvements. You are so obviously an important part of the town and are responsible in so many ways for how good it looks. Well done everyone.

Second Round Adjudication:

It was a real pleasure to visit Clonakilty for this second-round adjudication and to see the town in full summer colour. The energy, pride and care shown by the community were evident from the moment I arrived. It's clear that your Tidy Towns group continues to be a vital part of the town's identity, and your ongoing commitment is impressive. I appreciated the very clear, concise and professional application form and map and the very useful eircodes. Thank you for the warm welcome and for helping make the visit both enjoyable and informative.

1. COMMUNITY: YOUR PLANNING AND INVOLVEMENT:

Clonakilty's long and consistent involvement in Tidy Towns since 1978 speaks volumes about its community spirit. Congratulations on winning the overall award in 1999 and your consistent Gold Medal success. Your group, with its 10 core members and over 50 volunteers, remains one of the town's most active and enduring community organisations. The variety of initiatives, from youth engagement to environmental awareness, is impressive. Your continued participation has contributed to a better environment and a strong community connection. The emphasis on sustainability and alignment with the UN Sustainable Development Goals across all Tidy Towns categories is encouraging. It is also positive to see your success in securing funds from Cork County Council and local businesses to support your work.

2. STREETScape AND PUBLIC PLACES:

Your collaboration with Cork County Council has resulted in a multi-year plan and the formation of a Project Group, which will help support your future efforts. Dereliction and traditional shopfront signage are being tackled, with four properties newly added to the Derelict Sites register. The Amphitheatre at the Playground adds a welcome new feature for local schools. On adjudication day the playground was very busy and this entire area looked very well. I admired the new amphitheatre and also the nearby outdoor exercise equipment. The planting here was lovely and the picnic tables were freshly painted. The bike stands were good to see as was the new seating but it would be preferable if benches had arms fitted for the elderly. Enhancements to the Clonakilty Heritage Trail, including

multilingual QR coded signage, are well considered. It is also heartening to see your work to revive the Jungle City Trail and secure sponsorship for "Nellie" the elephant. Plans to relaunch an online trail map are promising.

On adjudication day, the town centre was lively and full of character. The heritage buildings and Irish language signage on traditional shopfronts enrich the streetscape. Some areas, however, could benefit from improvement. O'Donovan's Hotel had notices stuck onto its windows, which detracted from its historic appearance. A mounted noticeboard would look better. Sandwich boards on Ashe Street (and other streets) created minor obstructions, and bicycles from a nearby bike shop were locked to public fixtures, which was not ideal. A better storage solution could be found. A creative use of a printed image to cover a derelict window greatly improved the look of the area and could be considered elsewhere. AEDs were clearly visible around the town and are a valuable public resource. Likewise, I was impressed to see disabled, autism and age-friendly car parking bays in many places throughout the town. The many murals (Swifts, 11-July-1921, Old Linen Hall, Croppy Garden) throughout the town also added character and atmosphere to the Streetscape.

3. GREEN SPACES AND LANDSCAPING:

Your connections with the local Women's and Men's Sheds continue to enhance green space projects and anti-litter efforts. Collaborations with schools remain strong, with fruit gardens and water harvesting systems now included in long term planning. Your annual tree planting saw over 2,000 trees added in Dunmore in 2025. The Chateaulin Orchard refurbishment was impressive. I used the QR code on the new gate to access your website and environmental material. A litter bin and cigarette butt collector in the park might be useful, as some litter was seen on adjudication day.

In the little 1798 garden (Croppy Park) near SuperValu and opposite the Croppy Quay there were a few picnic benches that could benefit from a re-paint. However, the garden itself was well cared for and the planting was good. The mural was nice except for a bit of graffiti. In the John F Kennedy garden, the area was well cared for and it was nice to see the modern public water dispenser.

Your efforts to focus on perennials, seed collection and wildflowers to reduce maintenance are welcome. Advocacy led to careful pruning in Emmet Square, balancing visual and ecological needs. On adjudication day, green areas throughout the town were well presented. Pollinator friendly planting was noted at SuperValu, The Waterfront and Aldi, with Aldi also providing bike stands and a red cycle path. The Fire Station also had nice pollinator planting. A red floral bed surrounding a pump on the Skibbereen side of town looked very well. Trees planted in pavements and roadside verges added much to the town's charm. Verges on the Bandon approach were colourful and welcoming. The green space at the playground, now featuring the amphitheatre, is a valued amenity. The picnic area near the Town Hall was very popular. My visit to Dunmore House (thank-you for the Eircode!) revealed stunning views across the bay and Inchydoney Island – the Irish Riviera!

4. NATURE AND BIODIVERSITY IN YOUR LOCALITY:

It is great to see the work being done to protect local wildlife and to raise awareness of the natural environment. The nesting box for the Peregrine falcon and protection of the palmate newt show how local species are being supported. Your cooperation with the National Parks and Wildlife Service has added expertise to your biodiversity work. Participation in Clochán Uisce and the monitoring of the River Feagle is another positive step. The booklet "The River Feagle" is a lovely production that tells an important local story.

The Waterfront and Aldi car park planting and the red cycle path are thoughtful touches that also serve biodiversity aims. As mentioned by the first-round adjudicator, the pollinator-friendly planting at SuperValu looked especially well. These small interventions contribute to a nature-aware town setting.

Bennett's Mill biodiversity garden was one of the highlights for me on adjudication day. The pollinator-friendly planting, seating and picnic tables, clear and clean signage and newly planted native trees, by the Women's shed, just brought nature and the whole area to life.

5. SUSTAINABILITY: DOING MORE WITH LESS:

Environmental awareness seems central to all you are doing in 2025. The Environmental Awareness Initiative workshops linked to the UN Sustainable Development Goals are a good example. I enjoyed viewing the Environmental awareness videos and presentations on your website which were very professional. Your 'Waste Not Want Not' programme with VOICE Ireland ran 70 workshops and reached many groups. The 'Stop the Sachets'

project is an impressive campaign, with 85% of food outlets now free of single-use sachets. I had two meals in Clonakilty during adjudication and not a sachet in sight! It is a great achievement that this initiative was promoted widely and gained national media attention. I first heard about it on an RTE radio programme long before I arrived in Clonakilty as an adjudicator! Congratulations on launching the Clonakilty Apple Festival and mapping project, which is preserving rare varieties and celebrating orchard heritage.

The clothes banks at Aldi had several dumped bags nearby. More regular emptying might prevent this. I was pleased to see the E-Charger stations at SuperValu and at Aldi (wheel-chair friendly!) on adjudication day. However, in housing areas, I was surprised by the low use of solar panels despite modern house design. Few commercial or public buildings had visible solar either. I would suggest you consider applying to SEAL to become a Sustainable Energy Community. You might qualify for full funding for an Energy Master Plan. A Solar Meitheal could be helpful to residents and businesses, making solar installations more affordable.

6. TIDINESS AND LITTER CONTROL:

Your approach to litter control is well structured, with student involvement and weekly clean-ups all year round. The increased volunteer numbers and enhanced schedules ensure good coverage. Your St Patrick's Day award-winning float promoting dog fouling awareness was a creative idea. The catchy graphic posters were also a good touch. Your 13th KWD Spring Clean, in collaboration with the Men's Shed, extended your reach. The online pledge for responsible dog ownership is a useful campaign. However, on adjudication day, some dog bag dispensers were empty.

The town looked well overall. Kerbs and approach roads were clean and weed free, which shows care and regular maintenance. Litter bins were well placed. As mentioned earlier, the dumped bags beside full clothes banks need to be addressed. A simple monitoring routine might help.

7. RESIDENTIAL STREETS AND HOUSING AREAS:

It was good to learn that you help maintain housing estate appearances and encourage local involvement. Acting as estate ambassadors helps build pride and address environmental concerns. The upcoming estates competition for 2025/26 is a positive idea. Efforts to improve Clonakilty as a bike friendly town are welcome. Funding proposals for the Community Bike Scheme and bike-friendly infrastructure are good steps forward. Your work with Horizons on the garden and outdoor space at Teach Cairde is also appreciated.

Sruthán Beag (Clogheen) was very impressive. On adjudication day it was clean, with young trees, good planting, lighting and benches. There was no 30km/h sign on entry. As noted under Sustainability, the lack of solar panels was disappointing. However there was strong biodiversity awareness in this estate.

Oakwood had no speed sign either, but a bilingual name plate, a neat green and a very small amount of kerb weeds. Seating could be added. Parkview had good trees, laneways, a speed sign, bilingual name plate, dog bag dispenser, and seating, though one bench needed repair.

Millgrove lacked a speed sign and bilingual name plate. The road surface was rough. Presentation of houses and planting was excellent. Railings at cul-de-sac could be repainted.

Casement Park had a bilingual name plate but no speed sign. The dog dispenser was empty. Some lamp posts were rusty and there were very small amounts of litter and weeds. A mini-orchard and newly planted saplings near the Samara Community Care Centre looked very well. The Centre's solar panels were a good example of sustainable practice. Opposite, a small car park had very attractive pollinator planting.

8. APPROACH ROADS, STREETS AND LANES:

The proposed utility box art project is a creative way to reflect local character. Collaboration with the Council on the Kent Street regeneration is encouraging. Your street audit earlier this year gives you a strong base for planning future improvements. Your continued work on litter removal, refurbishing street furniture and making areas more pedestrian friendly is making a difference. The extension of the Clonakilty Greenway and your transformation of Gullane Lake with 4,000 native trees planted is a lasting legacy. Again, thanks to your eircodes, I was able to visit

this extension to the Greenway from the Technology Park on adjudication day. It was being well used by walkers, runners and cyclists and the surface and surroundings were in excellent condition.

The Bandon approach showed both strengths and weaknesses. Planting on verges gave a good welcome, but signage clutter was an issue. A few unused metal poles could be removed, including two near the autism friendly town sign. Some zebra crossings throughout the town were faded and would benefit from repainting.

Conclusion:

Clonakilty continues to shine as a town where community, heritage and the environment come together so effectively. The range and quality of work underway across all Tidy Towns categories is a credit to the dedication of your volunteers and supporters. You have much to be proud of, from local biodiversity to clever awareness campaigns and well-cared-for public spaces. While there are always a few small areas to improve, the overall picture is a very strong one. Thank you again for all your hard work and for your generous spirit. It was a privilege to visit.