

Castlebar: 6th out of 40 towns / cities surveyed.

Another very strong showing from Castlebar. The approach routes presented well, creating a positive first impression of Castlebar – this was sustained for the majority of the remaining sites surveyed and there were no heavily littered sites. Clearly a careful eye is kept on the various closed down / vacant premises along Bridge Street / Market Street as there was no litter directly associated with them – the attractive paving presented very well. As a general note, there was plenty of evidence of Tidy Towns activity throughout e.g. colourful planter boxes at Market Square; planting at Lough Lannagh Car Park and the Tidy Towns cart parked along Newport Approach Road, beside the Educate Together school.

R309 Approach from N5 Dublin direction: Grade A. A well-presented route, creating a positive first impression of Castlebar. Road surface / markings / signage were all in very good order. Attractive 'Welcome' signage and planting looked well.

Bridge Street / Market Street: Grade A. There were several closed down / vacant properties along this main shopping thoroughfare, with little done to reduce the visual impact of same. But clearly an eye is kept to ensure there is no litter directly associated with them. The bookshop is very well presented, brightly painted and a lovely feature along the street. The wide paving and seating create a great impression. This whole area was excellent with regards to litter.

Lough Lannagh: Grade A. Waterside lake walk & park. A beautiful expanse of green space along the shores of Lough Lannagh. What the photographs don't capture is the wonderful array of birdsong - according to the Merlin Birdsong App, up to six different varieties could be heard! All aspects of this area were in very good condition e.g. seating, signage, life-belts, PE equipment, playground facility etc. This is a fantastic amenity within walking distance of the town centre. Evidence of Tidy Towns activity included colourful planting at the car park. Also noted were binoculars for public use - what a great idea. Humorous dog fouling signage – 'Want to start Yoga? Start by bending over and picking up your dog poo!'

Market Square: Grade A. This is an attractively laid out town centre environment, with Tidy Towns activity very much in evidence with colourful planter boxes. 'Seating Pods' (a throwback to Covid times) were still in use. There were plenty of litter bins throughout. The area appear to be well used but apart from cigarette butts, it was spotless.

Deposit Return Scheme, Aldi: Grade A. A standalone facility, outside the main shop premises. Excellent facility - it was spotless. There was a regular bin just in front of it.

Tesco: Grade B. The main car park area was fine with regards to litter, but it was the items at the base of the mature trees along one perimeter which primarily brought down the litter grade. Cigarette butts were also a feature at parking kerbs.

Bring Facility, Castlebar Swimming Pool: Grade B+. The Recycle Bin units were fine but there were too many bottle tops / lids of jars on the ground and cardboard beer cartons for the top litter grade.

R309 Westport Approach Road: Grade A. This pleasant tree-lined approach route, with an abundance of greenery throughout, was very much deserving of the top litter grade. There were no visible litter issues throughout.

R311 Newport Approach Road: Grade A. While there was a very obvious Tidy Towns presence throughout many of the survey sites, it would seem that the Tidy Towns 'Cart' was in situ, beside the Educate Together at time of survey. There was a derelict / run down building close to the town on the left-hand side (after a series of houses) - there didn't appear to be any obvious litter associated with it.

Manor Village: Grade A. Residential development on the right-hand side as one approaches Castlebar on Westport Road. A large site, with extensive green space, some of it under construction with further development. There were several interconnecting roads throughout. The whole area was absolutely spotless - well done to all concerned.