

Tidy Towns Project Scheme 2026

Introduction

The Tidy Towns Project Scheme is a funding scheme which is administered by the Community Support Section of Louth County Council. Its purpose is to support the hard work of our dedicated Tidy Towns groups in improving the marks received in the National Tidy Towns Competition.

The dedicated volunteers in our Tidy Towns Groups throughout County Louth can take great pride in their efforts. The continued success in local and national competitions is due reward for their excellent work over many years. Their combined work also acts as a springboard for the local community and business sector to promote their area as a visitor destination. In recognition of the achievements of Tidy Towns Groups, Louth County Council is delighted to announce its funding scheme for groups to carry out small scale capital type improvement works in their town or village during 2026.

Each year, the National Tidy Towns Competition judges visit each town in Louth that applied, and award marks based on several criteria. They write a detailed report, outlining how each town could improve and what they should be working towards going forward. This report is what should be taken into consideration when applying for the Tidy Town's Project Scheme in 2026.

Projects should reflect at least one of the National Tidy Towns categories and indicate how the proposed works will contribute to potentially increased marks in the particular category of the competition. The overall total fund available in 2026 is **€80,000**.

2026 Scheme

As part of the Council's commitment to strengthening participation in community led development, the **Tidy Towns Project Scheme 2026** will focus on improving the marks awarded to participating groups in both the National Tidy Towns Competition and local competitions.

Projects will be required to commence in February 2026 and be completed by the end of May 2026.

A total of **€80,000** is available for projects in 2026. Groups may submit a maximum of two projects for consideration. Each project cannot exceed a request for €9,000 in funding.

Application Process

The **Tidy Towns Project Scheme 2026** will be funded by Louth County Council and administered through the Community Section of the Council.

Selection of projects will be by means of a competitive process. Final project selection will be made by the Community Section based on proposals submitted by the groups. **Applications must be submitted by Monday 05th January 2026.**

Types of Activities

As outlined above, the objective of the **Tidy Towns Project Scheme** is that projects should increase marks awarded in the National Competition and this should be demonstrated in your application form. Measures which are undertaken should have a sustainable and visible impact on the area.

The following are indicative types of activities that can be supported (the list is not exhaustive)

- ❖ Provision /enhancement of leisure amenities
- ❖ Tourism initiatives
- ❖ Particular weight will be given to projects that will make your area more sustainable and reduce your environmental impact.
- ❖ Projects that will enhance the public realm.
- ❖ Projects with a strong Biodiversity/Pollinator friendly or Climate change theme

Selection Criteria

The following is a guide to the criteria which will be applied by the Community Section in the selection process:

- ❖ Successful proposals will include works which demonstrate clear positive impacts on increasing marks awarded under the lowest-scored category from the National Tidy Towns Competition.
- ❖ Successful proposals will demonstrate consistency with adopted Tidy Towns or other local plans for the area.
- ❖ All project proposals will outline the consultation process followed with local community and business interests.
- ❖ **All project proposals will have been successfully negotiated with relevant council Area Engineer and Planning Section, if relevant.**
- ❖ Additional weighting will be given to projects that make your area more sustainable and reduce your environmental impact or demonstrate Biodiversity/Pollinator friendly or Climate Change benefits.
- ❖ Value for money

Grant Level

Up to 90% of the total cost of the project under the **Tidy Towns Project Scheme** may be provided for an individual project. The minimum grant which is available is €3,000 and the maximum grant is €9,000.

A minimum cash contribution of 10% from the group will also be required.

Tidy Towns groups may submit a maximum of two separate projects for consideration.

Scoring Framework

	Maximum Score	Quality threshold
Demonstration of clear positive impact on increasing marks awarded under competition categories.	25	15
Consistency with adopted Tidy Towns plan or other local plans/health check	5	-
Consultation process with local community and business interests and Louth County Council Area staff (if relevant)	10	5
Value for Money	15	5
Sustainability, Biodiversity and reduction in your environmental impact	25	15
Overall enhancement of your area	20	-
Total	100	40

Procurement

Please note that EU and National public procurement procedures must be followed.

All appropriate financial, Public Procurement and accounting rules/guidelines and regulations must be complied with, and each grantee will fully account for the funding received in a timely manner. The procurement process must be in line with EU Public Procurements Requirements (EU Directive 2014/24) and National Procurement Guidelines published by the Office of Government Procurement. All projects must satisfy the requirements of the Public Spending Code – the relevant links are provided below.

- **EU Directive 2014/24:**

<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32014L0024>

- **National Procurement Guidelines:**

<https://ogp.gov.ie/national-public-procurement-policy-framework/>

- **The Public Spending Code**

<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/public-spending-code/>

Please note that, while contactors who share common ownerships or directorships with Project promoters are not precluded from supplying works to the Projects concerned, if there is any possibility, however remote, that such contactors may be used on the Project for which grant aid had been sought, you must ensure that Louth County Council is made aware of such relationships. Failure to provide this information may result in subsequent expenditure being considered ineligible.

Grantees should retain all records relating to tendering/procurement/contracting/sub-contracting, for audit inspection for a period of 3 years after the completion of the project.

Please be advised that the following tables outline what is required and what is required on the amount you have been awarded. The tables below show a summary of procurement thresholds and actions required:

Goods / Supplies and Services

Thresholds (Exclusive of VAT)	Contract Type	Procedure Overview
Less Than €5,000	Goods/Supplies & Services	Seek verbal or written quotes from one or more interested & competent suppliers. Best practice is to seek a min. of 3 written quotes. Retain all documented evidence (paper and electronic) of having sought these and of responses. PLEASE NOTE THAT WHILE QUOTES MAY BE SOUGHT VERBALLY, A RECORD OF VERBAL REQUESTS MUST BE RETAINED AND ANY RESPONSES MUST BE OBTAINED IN WRITING.
€5,000 to <€50,000	Goods/Supplies & Services	Seek a minimum of 3 written quotes. Retain all documented evidence (paper and electronic) of having sought these and of responses. May advertise on eTenders/European Dynamics. Should advertise on eTenders/European Dynamics if near the upper limit.
Between €50,000 & €215,000	Goods/Supplies & Services	Public Advertisement (Open Procedure) – eTenders/European Dynamics. Public advertisement on OJEU is optional. Retain all documented evidence (paper and electronic).
Above €215,000	Goods/Supplies & Services	Public advertisement - eTenders/European Dynamics. Public advertisement on OJEU is obligatory (eTenders/European Dynamics) Retain all documented evidence (paper and electronic). NOTE: The EU threshold changes every two years and the current EU threshold, applicable from 1 st January 2022 to 31 st December 2023, for supplies / goods and services is €215,000.

Works

Thresholds (Exclusive of VAT)	Contract Type	Procedure Overview
Less Than €200,000	Works	Seek a minimum of 5 written quotes. Retain all documented evidence (paper and electronic) of having sought these and responses. May advertise on eTenders/European Dynamics. Should advertise on eTenders/European Dynamics if near the upper limit.
Between €200,000 & €5.382m	Works	Public Advertisement (Open or Restricted Procedure) – eTenders/European Dynamics. Public advertisement on OJEU is optional. Retain all documented evidence (paper and electronic). NOTE: The EU threshold changes every two years and the current EU threshold, applicable from 1 st January 2022 to 31 st December 2023, for works is €5,382,000.

Works-Related Services

Thresholds (Exclusive of VAT)	Contract Type	Procedure Overview
Less Than €50,000	Works-Related Services	Seek a minimum of 5 written quotes. Retain all documented evidence (paper and electronic) of having sought these and responses. May advertise on eTenders/European Dynamics. Should advertise on eTenders/European Dynamics if near the upper limit.
€50,000 - €215,000	Works-Related Services	Public Advertisement (Open Procedure)– eTenders/European Dynamics. Public advertisement on OJEU is optional. Retain all documented evidence (paper and electronic).
Above €215,000	Works-Related Services	Public advertisement - eTenders/European Dynamics. Public advertisement on OJEU is obligatory (eTenders/European Dynamics). Retain all documented evidence (paper and electronic). NOTE: The EU threshold changes every two years and the current EU threshold, applicable from 1 st January 2022 to 31 st December 2023, for works-related services is €215,000.

A copy of all quotes that have been sought in relation to these works must be retained on file.

The “most economically advantageous tender” is the preferred basis of award. The basis of award must be stated in writing when making the contract award. In keeping with the Climate Action Charter, green criteria should be considered in developing the specification and awarding the contract. In particular, lifecycle analysis and costing and the circular economy should be considered. See Appendix 1 for details on green procurement.

All information relating to the procurement process will be held on file by Louth County Council.

IMPORTANT NOTES

- **Please note that Louth County Council require groups to submit written evidence/proof of quotations and evidence of the responses for goods/supplies & services thresholds.**
- Please note that any funding amount that has been awarded, must be spent on what was approved. No substitutions may be made.
- All requested documents must be received from your group before payment will be made by Louth County Council.
- The deadline to apply for this scheme is 05th January 2026.

- The deadline for works to be completed is 31st May 2026. No payments will be made to groups until after this date. Any groups with all the required documentation submitted will be paid after this date.
- The last date of payments for this scheme will be 31st July 2026. No documentation will be accepted after this date and no payments will be made after this date.

Appendix 1

Green Procurement

At a minimum, suppliers must be asked, as part of the procurement process, to provide information on their carbon footprint and on the sustainability practices and steps they plan to take to reduce its' impact.

Terminology Explained

Life Cycle Analysis and Costing: The total economic and environmental cost of the product/solution over its' lifetime, not just the cost at the time of purchase.

Circular Economy: The use of fewer raw materials, designing products for long life and recyclability, sharing products, using products for longer and re-using and repairing where possible. Recycle as much material and product as is possible and only dispose what can't be recycled.