



The TidyTowns Unit in DRCD extend a very warm welcome to all readers to our Christmas 2023 issue of the SuperValu TidyTowns Newsletter. We hope this issue finds you and your families, volunteers and wider community safe, well, and looking forward to celebrating the festive season.

It has been a challenging few years for everyone especially this year with the increase in living costs and adverse weather conditions.

The TidyTowns Unit has also undergone a period of transition and we thank you for your patience and co-operation over the last year as we all adjust to the changes in personnel and unit structure.

We hope that this festive will be a special time where you and your family and friends spend some quality time with each other and reflect on the year past and years yet to come.

This time of year can be a joyous time for so many but can also be a difficult time for others, thinking of loved ones who are living away from home, who are unwell or remembering those who are no longer with us. As we light a special candle this year, we remember all of you and send you our very best wishes for Christmas and the New Year.



In this issue of the newsletter, we bring you a message from our Minister.

We are continuing to engage with all groups and are doing everything possible to ensure your well-deserved cash prize will be issued to you in early 2024.

Pobal will continue to administer the TidyTown funding package of €1.5 million recently announced by the Minister for Rural and Community Development, Ms. Heather Humphreys TD.

As in other years, we will present the medals and certificates at our four regional awards ceremonies; these will hopefully take place in February 2024, more information on these in January. The remaining 2022 South East Regional Awards ceremony will also be held early next year.





Dear TidyTowns Volunteers,

I was delighted to meet so many of you at the SuperValu TidyTowns Awards ceremony in October and to welcome you all to a very fitting new venue, Croke Park, which epitomises the community spirit at the core of TidyTowns.

This year we celebrated the 65th year of the SuperValu TidyTowns competition, and on the day, Abbeyleix, Co. Laois was announced as Ireland's Tidiest Town for 2023. I am delighted to see the competition go from strength to strength, and the dedication and enthusiasm shown by communities and TidyTowns groups in recent years is nothing short of inspiring.

At the ceremony, I was delighted to announce a funding package of €1.5 million to support you, the TidyTowns volunteers, in the year ahead as you all prepare for the 2024 competition. This will bring the total funding provided by my department since 2017 to €9.6 million. This demonstrates the value Government and indeed, my Department has on the work TidyTowns groups carry out in making our towns and villages more attractive and sustainable places to live.

I look forward to launching the 2024 SuperValu TidyTowns competition in the New Year and to working with our sponsor SuperValu who will continue their sponsorship for the competition out to 2027.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you the volunteers once again for your support and to wish you and your families a very happy and peaceful Christmas. I hope 2024 is a healthy, happy and prosperous year for you all.





## SuperValu TidyTowns Awards Ceremony 6th October 2023

We were delighted to welcome you all to Croke Park for the 2023 SuperValu TidyTowns awards ceremony.

On this sunny October day, Abbeyleix, Co. Laois were announced as Ireland's Tidiest Town for 2023 – and what worthy winners they were! Congratulation to Abbeyleix, and indeed to all our winners on the day. We also encourage all our groups to continue their fantastic efforts, come rain, hail or snow, in ensuring our towns and villages thrive and continue to remain clean, sustainable places to live and work.

Huge thanks to our resident poet, Denis Heffernan for his heartfelt recap of the day.





## Award Memories 2023



*Autumn winds blow gently,  
leaves fall on the ground,  
morning mist is slow to lift,  
early darkness covers the sky.*

*Another year of Tidy Towns  
has come and gone once more,  
The time flew by so quickly,  
Oh, where did the summer go.*

*Our day in Croke Park was wonderful,  
the excitement it was great,  
Abbeylax you are beautiful,  
And a worthy winner indeed.*

*Killarney I must mention,  
I knew it would be a winner,  
It always looks so lovely,  
In Spring Summer Autumn or Winter.*

*So to all who took part this year thanks to  
everyone,  
Take note of what the judges said and take  
action if you can,  
Rest a little while now and then start anew,  
And who knows next year indeed it could be  
you.*

*Denis Heffernan  
October 2023*



# Roscommon TidyTowns

## Roscommon's 'Living Green Wall'

“Being a member of Roscommon TidyTowns Association has opened up a world of wonder in nature over the years as we work together on various biodiversity projects. This Summer has brought us rewards in various displays, especially this picture of Roscommon Castle in the grounds of Loughaneane Park. It's wonderful how nature on its own can put on a display forming a living green wall”.

John Larkin, Roscommon TidyTowns Association





## Rush TidyTowns



Saturday 30th of September Rush Tidy Towns held two fantastic sustainability themed Community Events in Rush Community Centre.

The first was a Clothing Repair Cafe organised by Annette Fuhrmann who runs the Zero Waste Community Rush group, an offshoot of Rush Tidy Towns. Annette said that "This is our second Clothes repair cafe and it has been a huge success with many items of clothes being repaired or altered giving those items a second chance of life". Through expert guidance from local dressmaker Anna McGuire and Zero Waste Rush Volunteers, participants carried out the repairs themselves which is a very fulfilling experience.

Sewing machines and various tools, equipment and accessories were available to make these repairs. What was particularly satisfying was the interest from the younger visitors with some taking to using the sewing machines. One participant remarked "I am delighted that my favorite jeans are repaired and I am very proud that I did this myself." Annette added that "There was a real buzz in the room with everyone helping each other making their repairs. We would love for the repair cafe to become a regular event".





# Rush Tidy Towns

The second event was organised as a result of Rush Tidy Towns being appointed Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) Champions by the government earlier this year. Brendan O'Reilly, Chairperson of Rush Tidy Towns stated that "For SDG Week, Rush Tidy Towns, organised a talk on the Sustainable Development Goals with fellow SDG Champions ECO Unesco. This was a very informative talk giving the participants of the well-attended event an overview of these Global Goals. Through interactive games and discussions, the participants recognised the importance of these goals to achieving a more sustainable and better world for all and how we can contribute to these at an individual and local level"

Annette Fuhrmann, SDG advocate and event organiser in Rush Tidy Towns said that "It was great to see so many people interested in learning about these important goals and how they fully engaged with the discussions. "

One participant remarked : "If we don't have quality education, we can not tackle No Poverty, Zero Hunger, climate action, reduced inequalities and all the other goals. I never thought about it in this way before."

Brendan O'Reilly added that "Buoyed by the interest in our inaugural event, we will definitely continue our promotion of the SDG's in this interactive and fun format"





# Rush TidyTowns

## Rush TidyTowns Volunteer of the Year Barbecue and Awards

Rush Tidy Towns held their annual volunteer of the year awards and barbecue in the sun soaked Rush Sailing Club on Sunday 8th October. The event was attended by about upwards of 100 volunteers and guests. Fingal Mayor, Councillor Adrian Henchy presented the awards with assistance from Councillors Brian Dennehy and Rob O Donoghue.



Big winners on the day were volunteers of for year, couple Tony and Catherine Hickey.



Also taking away the big award were the Barn Owl Project and the team who painted a large wall beside St. Maurs Church. Newcomer of the year was Marie Armstrong.





Several adult volunteers were presented with certificates, and younger volunteers who are part of our Tiny Towns brigade took away certificates and sustainable goody bags.

Brendan O'Reilly Chairperson of Rush Tidy Towns said "The committee really look forward to this annual occasion where we get to pay tribute to our army of hard working volunteers and put on this fun and happy event". Prizes for the competition were sponsored by The Harbour Bar in Rush. Congratulations to all the winners.





# Poetry Corner

In this, our final newsletter of 2023, we are delighted to include 2 poems submitted to us from Ballinruane and Kilmeedy TidyTowns groups. We hope you enjoy the work of some of our very talented volunteers!

## Ballinruane TidyTowns

### BALLINRUANE

As I sit here at the cross, neath Ballinruane,  
I think back to the days, before I was a man.

I'd lie back and listen, to birds whistle and sing,  
Then from Feenagh and Kilmeedy, I'd hear church bells ring.

I'd watch baby rabbits, hop around, play the fool,  
And it's then I remember, I should be at School.

But whilst someone's coming, down there by the house,  
So I'd hide in the trees, as quiet as a mouse.

I'd sit back on the bank, when the intruder had gone,  
And I'd think to myself, School will be out before long.

I'd lie back, close my eyes, and I'd dream and I'd plan,  
Of all the things I would do, when I was a man.

So if you're passing this way, stop, rest, take your ease,  
And sit yourself down, beneath the green trees.

Dream, close your eyes, maybe sleep if you can.  
Tis a peaceful old place, this Ballinruane.

## Kilmeedy TidyTowns

### Kilmeedy Tae

Well they're talking about Porter, Vodka and Beer  
Oh that stuff is bad for yer health  
And what's worse it's mad dear  
If you want a drink that'll fix you for the day  
Then go for the stuff they call Kilmeedy Tae.

Tis made in the homes and tis made in the Hall  
I know, for I've tried it and for a second mug you'd call  
Better still sure it costs nothing, tis their giveaway  
Next time you ramble to Aras Ide  
Try the Tae they make in Kilmeedy.

Plenty of food there, sweet toothed or not  
Oh that "Spotted Dick's" tasty and fills you a lot  
There's great tae in China, ah sure that's too far away  
So stay nearer home lads and sample Kilmeedy Tae.

Sean and Dan told me that they knew a man  
Who went to heaven long ago  
And on the way he met a Rambler  
Saying "Up here they're too slow"  
Then Peter shouted out "Move outta the way"  
And let in that man with the Kilmeedy Tae.

When the man he got in, he got cheers from the Gang  
Sure the news around Heaven, twas heard with a bang  
Well they drank and they sang all night and all day  
And guess what, that kitchen in Heaven is now called  
Kilmeedy Tae.





# BSBI New Year Plant Hunt



## Botanical Society of Britain & Ireland

During the festive period, BSBI is inviting local groups, families and individuals across Ireland to join in their annual New Year Plant Hunt. This is a remarkable citizen science venture that seeks to unveil winter's floral secrets and shed light on climate change. Warmer winters may be changing the flowering times of plants, but BSBI needs your help to track this.

Perhaps surprisingly, many plants are still flowering in midwinter, with nearly 500 different species recorded during last year's Hunt. Many of these are widespread, common and easy to identify, but we will provide a handy spotter sheet to help everyone, including total beginners, recognise the top 20 species recorded in previous years.

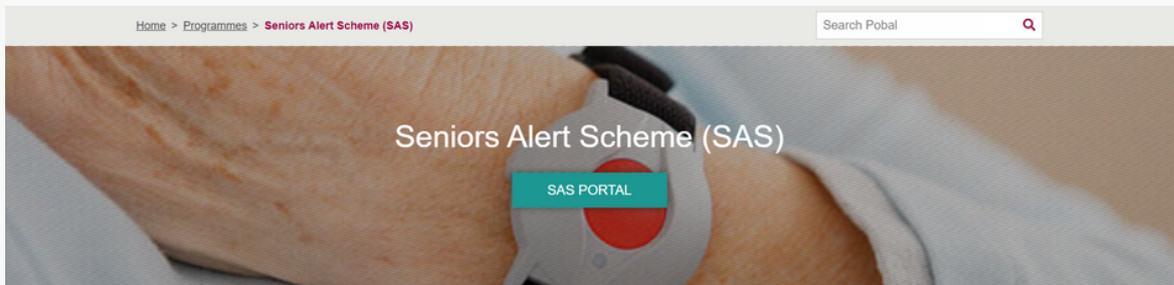
It's easy to take part. During the four days around New Year, 30th December - 2nd January, take a short, leisurely walk outdoors, noting wild flowers in bloom. Submit your finds via our online form and you'll be contributing to vital climate research.

Embrace winter's beauty, learn more about our wonderful wildflowers and make a difference by participating in the New Year Plant Hunt. Start 2024 by joining the journey to uncover nature's response to our changing world. Register now at <https://bsbi.org/new-year-plant-hunt>





# Seniors Alert Scheme



## Seniors Alert Scheme (SAS)

The SAS is managed by Pobal on behalf of the Department of Rural and Community Development. The scheme provides free personal alarm equipment to persons aged 65 years or older who meet the eligibility criteria. The cost of the monitoring service for the first year is also covered by the scheme.

Applications can be made via 640+ SAS registered organisations – these are local voluntary and community-based organisations across the country.

An SAS leaflet is available with information about the equipment provided, how it works, the eligibility criteria for the scheme, and how to apply for an alarm.

Further Information and contact details

·SAS webpage: [www.pobal.ie/programmes/seniors-alert-scheme-sas/](http://www.pobal.ie/programmes/seniors-alert-scheme-sas/)

The following information is available:

- oList of the SAS registered organisations by county – includes contact details. There is also an interactive map available.
- oSAS leaflet - this can be printed. Alternatively, the leaflet can be ordered by contacting the Client Services team (details below). Multiple copies can be ordered, if required.

oA three minute video on how the scheme operates

oHow to register as an SAS organisation

- Queries & Issues: Contact the SAS Client Services team at:
  - §Email: [onlinesupport@pobal.ie](mailto:onlinesupport@pobal.ie)
  - §Telephone: 01 5117 222

Opening hours

Monday – Tuesday 9am – 5pm

Wednesday 10am – 5pm

Thursday – Friday 9am – 5pm



# Deposit Return Schemes



The Deposit Scheme for PET bottles and aluminium cans is going live on the 1st of February.

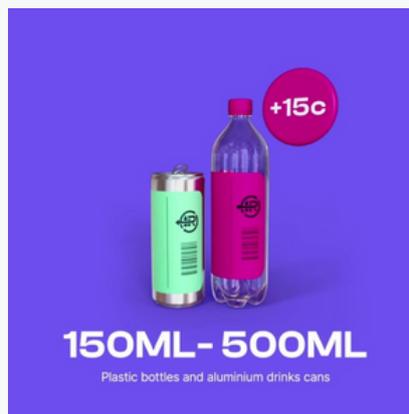
Deposit Return Schemes (DRS) are used as a way of encouraging more people to recycle drinks containers. They work by charging anyone who buys a drink a small deposit for the plastic bottle or can that it comes in. The customer gets this money back when they return the drinks container to a retailer or other collection point to be recycled.

The deposit will be 15c for bottles/cans <500mls and 25c for those >500 mls.

Deposit Return Scheme Ireland (trading as Re-turn) was approved by the Minister as the operator of the DRS and are responsible for the establishment and management of the Scheme. Re-turn is a not-for-profit, industry-led body representing beverage producers and retailers.

Re-turn is working with all relevant stakeholders to prepare to go live in February 2024.

For more information about the new deposit Return Scheme please visit the FAQ's Section of Re-turn webpage [www.re-turn.ie](http://www.re-turn.ie)





# Keep in Touch

As we come to the end of the final newsletter of 2023 all in the TidyTowns Unit wish to thank you for your co-operation and patience throughout the year.

It has been a pleasure to connect with you at the events and awards ceremonies during the year and we look forward to seeing you all again in 2024.

Please take the time to fill in the grant form if you are one of the 985 eligible groups that entered the competition in 2021, 2022 or 2023 and get it back to us by the end of February 2024. Pobal will administer the grant on our behalf and will be in contact with you soon with all the details.

Thank you to all of the TidyTowns volunteers around the country who give so generously of your skills and your time. Thank you to our sponsor SuperValu and to their network of retailers who assist so many groups around the country. Thank you to all our special award sponsors for their loyal support and to our national panel of TidyTowns Adjudicators who report on all your work. We look forward to doing it all again in 2024!

We finish by wishing you and yours a very happy Christmas and prosperous New Year.

Remember to keep in touch and continue to send us in article ideas, poems and stories in 2024.

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