

SuperValu TidyTowns Newsletter Issue 2020-6

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Caring for our environment

Administered by the
Department of Rural & Community Development

Supporting the
Sustainable Development Goals

Think Global – Act Local



Dear TidyTowns Family,

Welcome to our September issue of the SuperValu TidyTowns newsletter. September is usually a very busy and exciting month in the TidyTowns calendar, what with invitations arriving, trophies being polished and engraved and the Helix getting ready to welcome volunteers from every part of the country for the big announcement. Sadly, this September will be very different. That being said we must soldier on and do our best to keep the ethos of the competition alive and well in our communities. Some of our groups would also have been travelling perhaps for Entente Florale or Communities in Bloom ceremonies this month, hopefully this time next year, you will be getting ready to pack your bags.

We must continue to strive to make our towns and villages better places to live and work in and to visit, but in doing this, we must continue to be safe, to adhere to the public health advice, maintain a safe social distance and protect ourselves as best we can from the threat of Covid-19.

We want to thank all of you who keep us informed with your stories and work of the great projects being undertaken out there. If any of you have taken to writing poetry or taken up Art in these recent months, we would love to hear from you, send us a poem or a photo of your creative masterpieces and we will happily feature them here.

We wish all our Junior TidyTownners all the best as they return to school, it too will be different than before but we wish you all the best as you get back to meeting all your friends and teachers and learning loads of new things. If any of you want to tell us what it was like going back, feel free to get in touch.

Go raibh míle maith agaibh go léir!

National Heritage Week 2020



An Chomhairle Oidhreachta
The Heritage Council



National Heritage week 2020 ran from August 15th to 23rd. Its aim was to celebrate all things heritage. Bringing together communities, families, organisations, cultural institutions, academics and enthusiasts, to build awareness about the value of heritage and support its conservation.

Due to COVID-19-related restrictions on social gatherings, this year, rather than inviting communities to host Heritage Week events, the Heritage Council invited communities around the country to undertake projects that explore a topic associated with this year's theme – 'Heritage and Education: Learning from our Heritage'.

The new approach was designed to promote the sharing of experience and knowledge. Projects could comprise researching an aspect of heritage on your doorstep, sharing or re-learning a heritage skill, or exploring an aspect of Ireland's educational heritage.

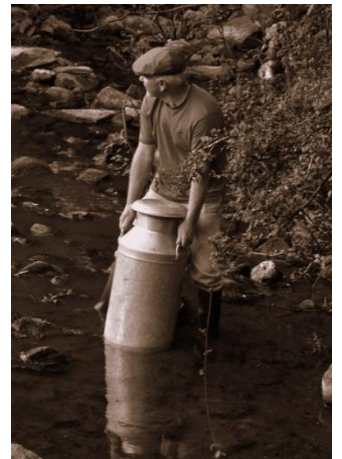
We would like to share a couple of this year's projects with you just to give you a feel of what you could be doing in your area to raise awareness of heritage in your area and how to support its conservation.

Tullahought TidyTowns – Back to the Past - Valuing Water in the Community

The Tullahought TidyTowns group have participated in Heritage Week for the past thirteen years by organising a Heritage weekend in the village.

The normal format would have included heritage lectures; demonstrations of skills or games from the past; displays of old photographs; a music; song, and story night; a guided tour of the heritage sites and biodiversity in the locality; and a hurling and camogie blitz for the younger generation.

The decision that Heritage Week 2020 would be an online event due to the Coronavirus Pandemic meant that we had to rethink our approach to the event. Just as the Heritage Council decided to go online to keep Heritage Week going, we in Tullahought also wanted to preserve our connection to the event.



As the theme for Heritage Week 2020 was "Heritage in Education, Learning from our Heritage," we decided to look to past generations and the lessons to be learnt with a particular focus on water conservation.

The village had previously won a Value Water Award in the TidyTowns Competition in 2017 for our work in protecting local water sources. The following summer of 2018 brought a heat wave with nationwide water shortages and hosepipe bans.



Householders who had already reverted to the old practice of harvesting rainwater in a water butt for watering flowers and vegetables found water reserves running low and realised that larger water storage facilities would be required into the future. The 40-Gallon (150 L) water barrel of the 1970's and previous generations is now being replaced with one or more 1,000 L IBC tanks or other similar containers.

We decided to make a short film documenting how former generations dealt with the difficulties of not having a water supply and how part of the everyday tasks involved a visit to the local well, taking the animals to the local stream or using the running water in the stream to keep the milk cold.

From here we looked at the changes brought about by the arrival of the community water scheme to the village and the sinking of private wells on the farm. We then moved to the present day where the practices of past generations are being re-introduced and improved upon in an effort to conserve the valuable resource of water and in particular drinking quality water, which is being used in many situations where untreated water would suffice.



When the idea and theme for the film was decided, the quest was on for information about old wells, past water harvesting methods, old artefacts, and a film cast. Information was willingly provided by the older generation. Old churns, buckets and other artefacts were available but needed repairs and the cast needed some gentle persuasion to go in front of the camera.



Richard Walsh completed the script writing and filming, then the script and footage was handed over to Claire Walsh and Paul Kavanagh who did the editing and voiceover. With a cast that ranged from Tullahought's oldest resident Paddy Egan to teenager Laura Doyle, and all ages in between this was a true community project, which generated great support and interest.

It is hoped that this film will encourage more households in the area and those from afar who have viewed it on social media to practice water conservation and continue the age old tradition of water harvesting. The film can be viewed by visiting;

<https://www.heritageweek.ie/projects/back-to-the-past-valuing-water-in-the-community>

N.B. for safety reasons it is best to use sealed containers that have been fitted with a tap.

Freshford TidyTowns – Heritage Map

Another project from Heritage Week, we would like to share with you is from Freshford TidyTowns in Co. Kilkenny.

“Welcome to Achadh Úr, the Fresh Green Fields”- A Heritage Map of Freshford that records the built and cultural heritage, both living and lost, of Freshford and its environs. It involved seeing the rich heritage surrounding Freshford, researching this and seeking out information about lost heritage subsequently uncovered. Following initial consultation with the Heritage and Conservation officers of Kilkenny County Council, a two-pillared approach was taken to excite the interest of both residents and visitors alike.

The bulk of the project was undertaken during lockdown and it proved to be a valuable conduit for communication between those involved. The focus is on the built heritage but it also references aspects of the cultural and natural heritage of the village and displays current amenities providing a wonderful resource for the community.

The organisers are using their social media as a display platform. They are planning a "Facebook mini Heritage Week" where they will post daily updates highlighting a particular section of the map and ask followers to share any photos, information or anecdotes they may have about the various buildings. They are hoping that it will be an interactive experience. They plan to have the map mounted and displayed on the village Green and hope to host a walking tour of the village in conjunction with the map and to eventually develop an app to complement it.



They will also present a copy to the local primary school to use as a learning tool for the "my local environment" section of the SESE curriculum.

Well done to all involved in this project.

To find out more about this wonderfully detailed map visit the Freshford TidyTowns Facebook page on <https://m.facebook.com/freshfordtidytown/>

Beautiful Bundoran in Bloom



Poet's Corner

We recall this Poem being recited at a TidyTowns event some years back and it is so fitting, in this year of 2020 more than ever. The very talented Edgar Albert Guest penned the poem. We thought we would share it with you all, as it really captures the can-do approach, the determination and resilience of TidyTowns volunteers. Not just those who are dealing with the challenges we face with the pandemic, but all those volunteers who put their shoulder to the wheel over the past 63 years, many of whom are no longer with us. You should all take a moment to read it and think of all you and your previous members have achieved, and yes, perhaps at times, you or others might have thought, "it couldn't be done", but you went and done it.

It Couldn't Be Done

Edgar Albert Guest - 1881-1959

**Somebody said that it couldn't be done,
But he with a chuckle replied
That "maybe it couldn't," but he would be one
Who wouldn't say so till he'd tried.
So he buckled right in with the trace of a grin
On his face. If he worried he hid it.
He started to sing as he tackled the thing
That couldn't be done, and he did it.**

**Somebody scoffed: "Oh, you'll never do that;
At least no one ever has done it";
But he took off his coat and he took off his hat,
And the first thing we knew he'd begun it.
With a lift of his chin and a bit of a grin,
Without any doubting or quiddit,
He started to sing as he tackled the thing
That couldn't be done, and he did it.**

**There are thousands to tell you it cannot be done,
There are thousands to prophesy failure;
There are thousands to point out to you one by one,
The dangers that wait to assail you.
But just buckle in with a bit of a grin,
Just take off your coat and go to it;
Just start in to sing as you tackle the thing
That "cannot be done," and you'll do it.**

TidyTowns Gaisce Case Study

Gaisce – The President's Award participants have a long association of volunteering in their local TidyTowns groups. Many Gaisce groups volunteer with their local TidyTowns group, to fulfil the "community involvement challenge area" of their Gaisce Award.

The community involvement section of a Gaisce Award provides Gaisce participants with the opportunity to give back to their community. Participants like Nicole Pugachenko who participated with her local TidyTowns group in Ennis as part of her community involvement for her Gaisce Award.

Nicole got involved in TidyTowns due to her interest in the environment.

"I am very concerned about the environment and I try not to pollute the environment as much as possible. Becoming a volunteer with my local TidyTowns to try and keep areas clean was an ideal opportunity to develop my interest in the environment."

Here we see Nicole volunteering with Ennis TidyTowns.



Cormac McCarthy, a committee member of Ennis TidyTowns, spoke about how much they have enjoyed and appreciated the volunteering work that Gaisce participants like Nicole have made to Ennis TidyTowns. "We have had an incredibly positive experience working with our Gaisce participants, like Nicole. She brought a wonderful energy and enthusiasm to our group. To have a mix of all age and social demographics is very important to us."

"Our Gaisce participants have always given 100%. We get the feeling that they are happy, enthusiastic and mix very well with our other volunteers. Their sense of community and giving back to their local area is tremendous."

Cormac found that working with Gaisce participants, can offer many benefits to a TidyTowns committees. "They help provide a viewpoint of young people and can advise on methods of communicating or project development which would better harness the younger volunteer resource in the community."

Nicole described how much she enjoyed volunteering and taking part in her local TidyTowns. "I really enjoyed it. I have been a volunteer for a whole year and I'm going to continue. At first, we had a small group of 5-7 people. They are friendly and sociable people working together for the environment."

Ennis TidyTowns carries out a wide range of work within their community, as Cormac explains. "We work with students not only on litter picking, but also within the school environment on dedicated sustainability and wildlife initiatives."

Nicole says that volunteering in her local TidyTowns in Ennis was her favourite part of her Gaisce Award. "I loved getting involved in the community. I have never worked in my community before and thanks to TidyTowns I was able to take part."

For Gaisce participants considering joining their local TidyTowns group, Cormac highlighted the great community spirit and how welcoming TidyTowns committees are to new volunteers. "Definitely give it a go. You will find a group of like-minded people who love their town/village, love being outdoors and at the end of each session you get a real sense of achievement and positively contributing to your community."

TidyTowns and Gaisce are looking to gather further information about groups working with TidyTowns Committees to achieve their Gaisce Award.

We created have a short survey for you to complete here:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/GaisceTidyTowns2020>

It should not take you any longer than 5 minutes and we'd really love to get your thoughts!

If you are in a school or organisation working with young people undertaking Gaisce who are interested in contributing to the TidyTowns efforts in your local community, you can find out more at www.tidytowns.ie For more information about Gaisce you can visit www.gaisce.ie and remember to follow us on Facebook (@GaisceAward), Twitter (@GaisceAward) and Instagram (gaisceaward).

LISTOWEL TIDYTOWNS

2018 was a year Listowel TidyTowns will remember forever. It was the year that the town scooped the title of Irelands Tidiest Town nationally in a competition of 883 entries from towns and villages throughout the country. That moment will be forever in the minds and hearts of the dedicated members of Listowel TidyTowns past and present. The feeling was electric. The sense of pride and achievement was next to none, however, this recognition didn't come easy.



The current Listowel TidyTowns group was founded in 1993 when a group of concerned individuals got together with the aim of working with the whole community to present Listowel to its highest potential. The work of this group was first recognised in 2004 with their first bronze medal, which gave them the enthusiasm that was needed to aim for bigger and better. Since then they have slowly, but with extremely hard work, been improving and encouraging more and more of the community to get involved.

To date Listowel are Gold medal winners in the National TidyTowns competition from 2008 to 2019. They won the title of Irelands Tidiest Small Town in 2015, 2016, 2018 and 2019 and of course their major win as Irelands Tidiest Town in 2018.



Following their win in 2018, Listowel was one of nine European finalists in the Entente Florale competition in Austria in 2019. Not alone did they succeed in winning a Silver there but were recognised for their beautiful Childers Park and Woodland.

Listowel TidyTowns success has transformed what was a small marketing town in north Kerry into a little gem in the Kingdom of Kerry. 2018/19 was a very busy and exciting year for the TidyTowns group and for the town of Listowel. In recognition of the fact that so many people played a part in Listowel's win, the committee made sure that, everyone got the opportunity to see and hold the beautiful trophies before they had to be returned at the end of the TidyTowns year. No school, care home, community group or organisation was forgotten, as the Listowel TidyTowns group explain that they are a community group working for and with the community.

There has also been a noticeable increase in the amount of visitors to our town. Even the President of Ireland Micheal D. Higgins and his wife paid a visit and unveiled the National TidyTowns winning plaque. This was a tremendous honour for Listowel and the people of Listowel. To add to our claim to fame RTE's Nationwide paid not one but two visits to our town.



The Listowel TidyTowns group have also had the pleasure of showing several TidyTowns groups around their award-winning town. This has all had a good knock-on effect on all the hard working businesses in Listowel who have always fully co-operated with the TidyTowns group whenever and where ever they can and keep their premises in tip-top condition. Listowel TidyTowns group were also honoured at a Civic Reception hosted by Kerry County Council whom they have a very close and co-operative working relationship.

However, when one gets to this standard in the National competitions it becomes more difficult to increase your points, keep up the momentum and stay up there at the top, especially as each year sees an increase in the number of entries. The work of TidyTowns is never plain sailing and like every other TidyTowns group Listowel are always appealing for new volunteers and new ideas.

At the moment the Listowel TidyTowns goal is to attract the younger generation to become more involved in the work of the group. When the Listowel TidyTowns group hold their annual local competitions they are always guaranteed to get a tremendous response from all the schools in the area. After all the young people of today are tomorrows future, hence, the introduction last year of the Junior TidyTowns schools programme which brings young children and teenagers on board and hopefully see the TidyTowns movement continue on into the future.

As Listowel TidyTowns, along with many other TidyTowns groups all over the country were making their plans for 2020 the dreaded Covid-19 hit Ireland and lockdown was introduced and with it came many changes. For the first time ever the National TidyTowns competition was cancelled, as was many other TidyTowns related competitions and events.

At first the Listowel TidyTowns committee were devastated as many of their members had to cocoon. However, every cloud has a silver lining. While everyone was adhering to Covid-19 regulations and people were cocooning, the sun shone, the grass grew, the air was clearer, the wildlife thrived and their bio-diversity areas boomed.

The Listowel TidyTowns group are very proud to be part of such a close knit community that work very well together. With many businesses and workplaces closed, many businesses revamped their premises and individuals took up gardening, giving a bright splash of colour to the town and in the many surrounding housing estates.

Even through the difficult times of Covid-19, members of the TidyTowns 'Dawn Crew' could be seen out bright and early doing their bit to keep things under control.

As we all return to a very strange 'normal' the Listowel TidyTowns group continue with their Tuesday and Thursday evening clean-ups, adhering to the Covid-19 regulations, of course. Their clean-ups are also very much a social event where many strong friendships have been made.



The people of Listowel have been bought into the theme of "TidyTowns" and hopefully this theme will continue into the future. The Listowel TidyTowns group would like to remind all other TidyTowns groups that Rome wasn't built in a day, stick with it and your Day will come too. *Stay Safe & Keep Well.*

Well done to all the gang in Listowel TidyTowns. Congratulations on all your success to date, make sure to keep up the good work and keep adding to that prize list.

All things Wild & Wonderful – Billy Flynn

Every Bug Counts

Studies have shown that our insect populations are in decline. This is very bad news if so. TidyTowns Groups are some of the best allies that our bugs have and all of the wildflower, pollinator-friendly and habitat projects that you do are having positive impacts on our bug life. Looking at populations on a national or even international scale is always very difficult so as much data as possible is needed to assess any declines or recoveries. The Flower-Insect Timed Count (or FIT Count) is a wildlife survey we can all do in our back garden or even roadside. All you need to do is watch a 50x50cm patch of flowers for 10 minutes and record how many insects visit. The survey is organised by the National Biodiversity Data Centre and the Northern Ireland Environment Agency and runs from April to September. It's really easy (especially if you bring a folding chair) and anyone can do it. You may not get fit but the results will really count. See www.pollinators.ie for more details.



Time to Appreciate...

Wildflowers on our Waysides

If there have been any upsides to the Corona virus crisis, one of them is surely that little bit of extra time we have to admire some of the wild species of our roadsides and laneways. Here's a few that are in flower that never fail to please the senses.



Ragged Robin

Everything about this plant is delightful, including its many names such as Meadow Pink and (my favourite) Wild Williams. Even its Latin name – *Silene flos-cuculi* – dances off the tongue. One of its Irish names is Plúr na Cuaiche or Cuckoo-flower. This derives from its emergence at around the same time as people might hear the Cuckoo calling and it shares this common name with another species*. It's rare that you can say to a non-botanical person that flower is unmistakable, (at least not with a clear conscience, anyway) but Ragged Robin is really like no other flower in Ireland. It's deeply cleft and 'ragged' looking pink petals can be seen brightening wet grassland, bogs, damp woodlands and many roadsides from May through to August.

Silverweed

This roadside flower often makes this author feel guilty for not appreciating it sooner. The fact that this plant is so common no doubt contributed to this oversight. Widely spread around Ireland, you'd be hard-pressed to find a stretch of roadside where it isn't found. Time was when it was much more valued. A hint to this is found in one of its several common names – Mashcorn – and refers to its roots having been ground up and used to make flour. Its Latin name *Potentilla anserina* derives



from when it was used as fodder for geese. It has a beautiful 5-petalled yellow flower – perhaps possibly confusable with a buttercup but the feathery leaves that give it its English name are unmistakable when turned over to show their downy and silvery underside. It has loads of Irish names including (confusingly) Blioscán and Brioscán. For a long time it seems that, it has been a plant of the wayside, as one folk remedy for tired feet involves Silverweed leaves placed in the shoe of the weary traveller. It's easy to imagine how the silky soft leaves thus inserted could be helpful. It's less easy to consider how another folk remedy involving this plant – a treatment for haemorrhoids – might have been carried out.

Oxeye Daisy

This is a flower that epitomises summer for the author. In folklore the Oxeye Daisy is associated with the Feast of St John (June 24th), a time when he'd usually be well into his Tidy Towns Adjudication duties (the author that is, not St John). This tall bright plant looks cheerful no matter what the weather. It is sometimes referred to as Dog Daisy and has a multitude of Irish names including Easpagán and Easpag Bán. Its Latin name *Leucanthemum vulgare* speaks to its widespread distribution around the country and indeed it is a familiar sight on roadways and motorway embankments. It is a good deal taller than most of our wildflowers – certainly than the flower that most children know as daisies – and most of the Asteracea, the large group of plants to which it belongs. On her wonderful Wildflowers of Ireland website, Zoe Devlin describes Oxeye Daisy as not being likely mistakable for any other Irish flower. However, if not for its relatively short stature, Chamomile (*Chamaemelum nobile*) might be a contender for confusion. One good sniff though will put you right as the sweet smell of Chamomile is hard to mistake.

Thank you Billy for this article and indeed for being a regular contributor to the Newsletter. We had hoped to feature this piece earlier, you might still see some of the plants Billy covers. Yes, we all can!

Emly Tidy Towns 2020-Our Story

Emly TidyTowns in Co. Tipperary like so many other groups around the country have found the past 6 months very difficult. Emly who won the competition in 2009 keep in constant contact with the unit here and one of their members Denis Heffernan has kindly shared his diary of the past number of months with us. We are sure you will find this piece touches each of you, as it did us, written from the heart with so much feeling.

Denis often shares his poems and thoughts with us, for which we are very grateful, we hope to feature some of these in the coming issues, so watch out for them. Over to you Denis.....



The month of **January** is always a tough one, dull days and long cold nights but I used my time to study our new plan, which Billy Flynn had completed.

February sees a stretch in the evenings so I clean out the tunnel and start sowing some seeds. I hear about the virus in China I don't like the way it is spreading. I always take an interest in all world affairs.

March the virus is spreading at a very fast rate I feel worried and stressed. The spring bulbs, trees and shrubs are all coming to life so is the virus I am frightened. The seeds in the tunnel are growing new life; I am really looking forward to another great year of TidyTowns. I love everything about the movement of the TidyTowns. I have been involved since the start in one way or another. Then An Taoiseach Leo Varadkar told us that the country was going in to lockdown. I sat on my chair and tried to hide the tears from my wife Mary, I was not able to move. Still on a positive note, it was only March.

April I planned my days I tended to a bit of my garden every day, I being over 70 I could only go to the local shop now and again. I would take a run down to the village every now and then almost afraid to look at things not to mention touch. Oh how I wanted to dig the Herbaceous beds cut the grass or do a bit of painting I felt I was cracking up.

May more lovely weather birds singing never seemed as good before. My wife and I said our prayers everyday and prayed that the virus would go away. I would sit in my garden and try to enjoy the sun but in my heart and body I wanted to be down the village. With bated breath, I waited for restrictions to be lifted, when it came I was like a greyhound out of the trap. The window boxes and tubs were filled but with social distancing, we could not work together so it was lonely work on my own. As was well known no one could get paint of any sort during the lockdown. But on a positive note Denis never threw away anything, so I had a house full of paint, rollers and brushes stored over the years. We have one great man named Paddy Ryan still in his sixties, well on his own he painted all over the village with all the left over paint I had. I mixed my own colors and used every drop of paint that was there and have a nice clean and empty shed now. Well done Paddy and thank you. The virus is still spreading worldwide I find it hard to remain positive. I supposed the worst of all was when

Michael Ring announced that there would be no TidyTowns competition for 2020 how much worse can it get I said to myself, I will put on a brave face and do my best for 2020. Of course no meetings, no fundraising event or no church gate collection, but we must do the best we can.

June all the window boxes go up, beds are planted and painting completed. Our aim is to keep the place as good as every other year.

July no trip to Killarney for Denis and Mary afraid to travel as my health is not great and can't afford to take chances. No Sunday drives with Jonas and Betty to see other towns and villages places like lovely Glaslough, Abbeyshrule, Listowel, Ennis, Kilkenny, Birdhill and many more and indeed meet all our great friends and exchange ideas.



August every place looking very well and then storm Ellen left a trail of destruction. The clean up just completed and then comes storm Francis all of the flowers destroyed and the evenings closing in.

September with no outing to the Helix, it is all over for this year roll on 2021 when we will all get cracking and please God good times will return once again. Meanwhile all mind yourselves stay safe and God Bless all for the great work you do.

Thank you Denis for sharing your thoughts with us and we wish you, Mary and all the team in Emly TidyTowns and the wider community the very best as we look forward to things getting back to normal very soon. Look after yourselves.

Castleconnell TidyTowns – Helix or Bust!!

As Castleconnell TidyTowns committee began to plan for their second year in the competition in 2009, we were excited about the possibilities that lay ahead. We had been blessed with a wonderful natural environment and we needed to work out how to build on that foundation. Over the next 10 years we made lots of good things happen across the 8 categories:

2009 – Landscaping: “A highlight was perhaps the landscaped gravel beds at Daly’s Cross where the planting provided lovely summer colour on this important approach from Limerick.”

2010 – Residential: “Meadowbrook estate looks superb with its bilingual name plates and floral display at the entrance.”

2011 – Built Environment: “The railway station was also observed and well done on your paint job during the year.”

2012 – Roads, Streets and Back Areas: “Your new ‘welcome to Castleconnell’ sign at Daly’s Crossroads was admired. This area was looking very well on adjudication day and creates a wonderful first impression of your town.”

2013 – Overall Development Approach: “Thank you for a most complete yet concisely written entry. For supporting information, you supplied a no-nonsense action plan, your sign inventory results, a beautifully hand marked up map and a copy of your heritage trail brochure. Your entry form may be the best in terms of layout that the adjudicator has seen this year.

2014 – Sustainable Waste and Resource Management – “The rainwater harvesting system was noted and should be praised.”

2015 – Tidiness and Litter Control – “Your participation in the Team Limerick Clean Up in such numbers is commended. The event was a great success throughout the county”.

2016 – Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities - “Congratulations on your 14 Stop Nature Trail this really is a fine achievement that will raise public awareness of and respect for wildlife.”



Just an example of one of our projects, here we see the great work done on the Village Pump, wonderful symbols of our Heritage and the way things used to be. Hopefully this gives the reader a sense of our efforts in the competition. We learned that if you wish to make real progress, you need to look at all 8 categories and undertake projects in as many as possible each year. The competition can have highs and lows, as some projects really appeal to certain adjudicators and others less so. We fully understand people have different interests and over time it does balance out.

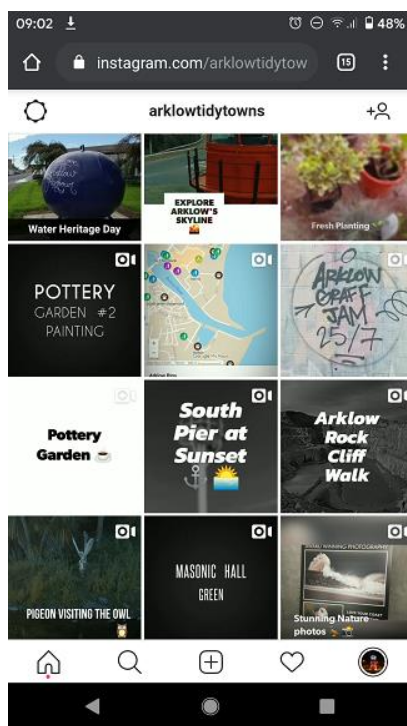
And so, to 2018 to our absolute delight, in early September, we got an invite in the post. The invite was announced at a committee meeting to huge excitement and lots of ‘what ifs. To reduce our carbon footprint, our committee took the train from our refurbished station on the Ballybrophy line to Dublin. As first timers, the atmosphere in the Helix was like something from the Oscars. When Castleconnell came up on the big screen of Bronze Medals Winners, despite Mary Kennedy’s guidance 😊, we let out a collective holler of excitement and deep satisfaction, we had done it, the Holy Grail, and our small group had managed in 10 years to go up 98 points, coming from

33rd place to 4th in Limerick. The feeling of pure joy and pride in the efforts of our community cannot be adequately expressed!! Suffice to say, all the hard work really was worth it.

If our community can do it, so can yours, whether ye are veterans or newbies. Over those ten years, in Category C, Lismore and Leighlinbridge continued to meet the gold standard, while Aughrim and Glenties achieved silver and bronze respectively. Kilsheelan and Coolaney/Rockfield came from the middle of the pack to achieve gold, a tremendous achievement. The National TidyTown competition has no glass ceilings or cleeks. Hard work and pride in your community pays off. To quote our tag line along the way, its Helix 2021 or bust!!

Well done Castleconnell, proof that hard work does pay dividends, onwards and upwards. Helix 2021....who knows.

Arklow TidyTown – Tell us "Your Story"



This year we decided to improve our social media presence by doing short 1-minute videos on Instagram to connect with younger members of community and share what can be done with other TidyTown groups. We post weekly videos of our Saturday projects and some of Tuesday evening clean-ups.

It started by doing a smartphone video editing course for community groups in August 2019. We had no experience initially but we have been improving our presentation skills over the last few months. We take around thirty short 5-second videos and pictures over the day on our smartphones. We then edit them using a free Quik smartphone app and post them to Instagram.

We have found it gives good engagement and helps show progress in our community projects and may aid the adjudication.

See examples on <https://www.instagram.com/arklowtidytown>
<https://www.instagram.com/explore/tags/arklowtidytown>



Rush TidyTowns – Fairy Trail

Last month Rush TidyTowns launched their new "Fairy Trail Ros-Eò". It is located at St. Catherine's woods off the Skerries Road in Rush adjacent to the entrance to St. Catherine's Estate. This enchanted wood is a hidden gem and they are delighted it will now become an important amenity for locals and visitors.



The genesis of the fairy trail was winning 60 fairy doors from the Irish Fairy Door company on Today FM. After that the result is the culmination of well over 100 hours of work by their hard working committee, along with local craftsman Frank Coleman who made the fairy houses, Ray Watts who made a series of copper doors and art student Aine Keogh who provided several fairy themed painted rocks for the trail.



There has been a wonderful reaction from kids and adults alike and the committee are now considering how the trail may be expanded.

This link is for a video shot by local photography company; Nua Photography. <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=336407334018816>

There is also more information on the Rush TidyTowns Facebook page.



Love This Place – Leave No Trace

Leave No Trace TidyTowns Award

The Leave No Trace TidyTowns Award is about honouring the invaluable contribution community groups and volunteers have made towards conserving our shared outdoor spaces and promoting personal responsibility in the outdoors. The Award was first launched in 2019 and engaged hundreds of community groups from across Ireland.

Each group should highlight one key awareness initiative or action in their community which makes a lasting and positive contribution to the environment and responsibility in the outdoors. Marks will be awarded for:

- Community involvement
- Actions for change
- Supporting sustainability

Judges will also award discretionary bonus marks for innovative and effective projects which could be replicated by other communities, to bring the same benefits to other areas. Make sure you watch out for this Special Award in the 2021 competition.

www.leavenotraceireland.org

Ennistymon TidyTowns – Water Pumps Conservation

In keeping with our feature on Heritage Week we would like to bring you a piece from Ennistymon TidyTowns in County Clare, who have been in touch to share with us some images of a project they did in 2019. There were some old water pumps in the town and the group set up restoring and conserving them. These are significant items from our past and it is important from a historic and heritage perspective that items such as these old water pumps are conserved.



Here we see one such example of the work done by Ennistymon TidyTowns. The image on the left is before conservation and then on the right in March 2019 after a new lid was fitted. An old brass tap was installed at some stage of its life.



Here again we see some fine examples of the tremendous work done by the group since enhancing and conserving these pumps.

Ennistymon TidyTowns were the national winners of the Heritage Award sponsored by the Heritage Council of Ireland in 2019 and won for their efforts a prize of €1,000. Have you considered entering some of the special awards? Great prizes to be won each year for work done as part of your SuperValu TidyTowns entry.

An Chomhairle Oidhreachta
The Heritage Council



My Waste & EPA Upcycle Challenge 2020.

We are all aware of reducing and reusing and recycling have you given much thought to upcycling? If you can find something old and renovate it or turn it into something completely different but still usable then this might be just up your street....

Applications are now open for the My Waste and EPA Upcycle Challenge for 2020. There is a specific category for Community Groups such as TidyTowns. The category is set so that if the entry comes from a particular group on behalf of the group, then any prize money will go to that group.

There is also an individual category so if you have members who would like to submit an individual entry, they can also do this under this category.

More information can be found by visiting;
<https://www.mywaste.ie/upcycle-challenge20/>

The closing date is Friday October 30th, great prizemoney up for grabs, good luck everyone. Please see the T&C's
<https://www.mywaste.ie/the-upcycle-challenge-2020-competition-terms-and-conditions/>



Sustainable Agriculture Webinars - Teagasc

Our friends in Teagasc have asked us to let you know about the "Signpost Series" of Sustainable Agriculture Webinars.

These will run on each Friday in September at 9:30 am and cover topics such as Biodiversity and measures to support our Pollinators.

To view previous webinars or to find out more information or register for the September Signpost Series, simply visit www.teagasc.ie/sustainableagriculture

The Signpost Series 'Pointing the way to a low emissions agriculture' Sustainable Agriculture Training Webinar Series

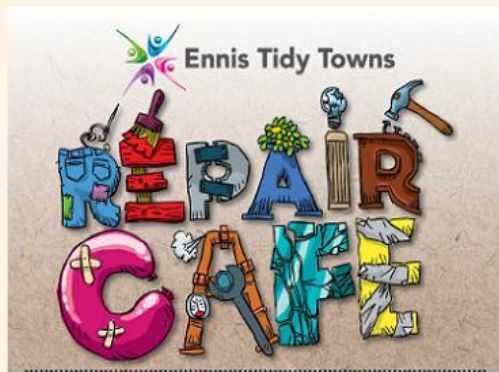
Register at:
www.teagasc.ie/sustainableagriculture



The series of Sustainable Agriculture Webinars aimed at Irish Agri Professionals taking place in September will focus on Biodiversity

Topics covered in September will be:		
Friday, 4 Sept 9.30am	Biodiversity <ul style="list-style-type: none">Nature of Irish HedgerowsQuestions and Answers	Speakers Catherine Keena, Teagasc
Friday, 11 Sept 9.30am	Biodiversity <ul style="list-style-type: none">Supporting Pollinators through Agri Environmental InterventionsQuestions and Answers	Speaker Lorna Cole, SAC, Scotland
Friday, 18 Sept 9.30am	Biodiversity <ul style="list-style-type: none">Biodiversity on farmland: current status, policy impacts, farm-scale responsesQuestions and Answers	Speaker John Finn & Daire OHuallachain, Teagasc
Friday, 25 Sept 9.30am	Biodiversity <ul style="list-style-type: none">Natural Capital on Irish FarmlandQuestions and Answers	Speakers Jane Stout, Trinity College

Ennis Tidy Towns – Sustainability Fact Sheet No. 4



November 23 | 2019 | 12-4pm
Glór Theatre

Small household appliances, jewelry, laptops,
clothes & bikes repaired

Throw It Away?
NO WAY!

Can we fix it? Bring your item
along and we will do our best!
If we can't fix it there and
then, we will advise on what it
would take to repair the item
(for larger issues).
All items must be taken away
with you.



REPAIR CAFE

ENNIS TIDY TOWNS

Ennis Tidy Towns

☎ 065-6842988, 0872787463

✉ INFO@ENNISTIDYTOWNS.COM

🌐 WWW.ENNISTIDYTOWNS.COM

📘 FACEBOOK.COM/ENNISTIDYTOWNS

📱 @ENNISTIDYTOWNS



BACKGROUND

Key to promoting Sustainable Living is through education and awareness. We wanted to show people that household items could be repaired or mended, not thrown away. It was felt this could be best accomplished through a Repair Cafe - a drop-in event where service providers would make FREE small repairs to household appliances, jewelry, tech, clothes and bikes.



HOW IT WAS DELIVERED

- We advertised the event through social media as well as local papers and radio.
- We accessed grant aid through Clare County Council and the Local Authority Waste Prevention Network
- We used the funding to hire the venue (our local theatre which had a large foyer - €155), poster and pull-up banner design (€60) and print (€530).
- We were overwhelmed by the willingness of our repair professionals to offer their service free of charge, but we still made a €100 contribution towards travel and other costs e.g. use of equipment and supplies. This was covered by the grant.
- It was held on a Saturday from 12-4pm. We also hosted a free upcycling kids art workshop to attract families at a cost of €100.



RESULTS

The project was very successful but in hindsight we would move it to a Sunday as it was very difficult to get professionals on a Saturday, as most of them were working that day. We also advised that all items had to be taken away - fixed or not. Finally we commissioned a blank version of the poster so dates and times can be edited for future events.



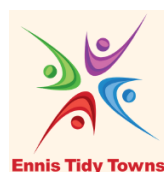
SDG'S
ACHIEVED



A big shout out to our friends in Ennis Tidy Towns who are continuing with their Sustainable Fact Sheets. This is the fourth in the series and what a great way to promote the theme of repairing items rather than replacing them. "Throw it away – No Way!" Perfect.

Here again we see how an idea can have multiple benefits to the community and once again a total of three of the Sustainable Development Goals have been achieved.

The images below show some Children enjoying the Upcycling Christmas Decoration workshop at the Repair Café and also some of the Ennis Tidy Towns volunteers with local bicycle repair man Noel Tierney at the Repair Cafe event



Keep in Touch

As the days begin to shorten, we hope that these stories might pass an hour or two for you some evening and bring you some courage and inspiration to push through these challenging times, remember, you are not on your own. All the groups featured here and so many more yet to be featured are also missing their weekly meet-ups and doing their best to improve their areas.

As a nation, we are indebted to the thousands and thousands of TidyTowns volunteers out there who give so generously of their time, their skills and their energy.

SuperValu
Real Food, Real People

We will select two more stories from the August and September Issue and announce the recipients of **SuperValu** gift cards in the October newsletter. We will have more **SuperValu** gift cards to give away before Christmas, so keep the stories coming in.

We are receiving such fantastic feedback from groups, sponsors, adjudicators and the wider public on all of your projects and initiatives, so you are helping your TidyTowns comrades and your TidyTowns family and the wider community to get through these difficult months by your encouraging stories.

So as always, we wish you well, stay safe, keep adhering to the public health advice. Look after yourselves and your older and vulnerable residents as we head into the darker evenings.

If there is anything we can do here in the TidyTowns unit, we are happy to help in any way we can. Please keep in touch through the website or social media or feel free to call or email the office, we would love to hear from you.

Anne, Helen, John and all the team in The TidyTowns Unit

Department of Rural and Community
Development
Government Buildings, Ballina, Co Mayo

Email: tidytowns@drcd.gov.ie
Tel: 076 100 6836

SuperValu 
TidyTowns
Caring for our environment