



Rialtas na hÉireann  
Government of Ireland



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Department of Rural & Community Development

Supporting the  
Sustainable Development Goals

Think Global – Act Local



## SuperValu Tidy Towns Newsletter Issue 2020-8

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Greetings Tidy Towns Friends,

Welcome to our November issue of the SuperValu Tidy Towns newsletter. It is regrettable that as we prepare this issue, we find ourselves as a country, back in lockdown as we try to combat the Coronavirus.

We want to encourage you all to play your part by adhering to the public health advice issued by the Government of Ireland. We appreciate it is difficult and as the longer evenings come in we have to remain positive. We look forward to Christmas and hope we will be in a better position to enjoy the festive season with family members and friends.

It is a very difficult period for our small businesses, many of whom now find their doors closed with huge stock in anticipation of the busy run up to Christmas. We need to remember to support these local businesses in the same way they support Tidy Towns and all voluntary and charitable events throughout the year. If your local shops are offering click-n-collect or online services, do your best to support them, like the saying goes, “the rising tide, lifts all boats”, together we can all work our way through these difficult times and emerge a real community on the other side where we all look out for and support each other.

As was the case earlier in the year, each Local Authority has established a helpline that vulnerable people can phone if they are looking for basic services such as delivery of food or meals, or transport for essential trips. If you need to talk to someone or are looking for emotional support, you can call ALONE on 0818 222 024. Contact details for your local Covid-19 Community Response Forum helpline are contained below. Please share these details with your wider community and know that there is help there if anyone needs it.

We need to be mindful of our most vulnerable in our community, those in remote areas, elderly residents, those living alone, and those who care for family members or people who may be concerned about being out in public due to health concerns.

Even a phone call to these members of your community might be just the lifeline they need to keep connected and know that they are being thought of. Community is at the heart of TidyTowns and we encourage you to play your part as you always do and we thank you for your ongoing support, commitment and dedication.

Well done.

COVID-19 Community Call Forum - Local Authority Helpline Numbers and Email Addresses		
Your Local Authority	Number	Email Address
Carlow	1800 814 300	<a href="mailto:covidsupport@carlowcoco.ie">covidsupport@carlowcoco.ie</a>
Cavan	1800 300 404	<a href="mailto:covidsupport@cavancoco.ie">covidsupport@cavancoco.ie</a>
Clare	1890 252 943	<a href="mailto:covidsupport@clarecoco.ie">covidsupport@clarecoco.ie</a>
Cork City	1800 222 226	<a href="mailto:covidsupport@corkcity.ie">covidsupport@corkcity.ie</a>
Cork County	1800 805 819	<a href="mailto:covidsupport@corkcoco.ie">covidsupport@corkcoco.ie</a>
Donegal	1800 928 982	<a href="mailto:covidsupport@donegalcoco.ie">covidsupport@donegalcoco.ie</a>
Dublin City	01 222 8555	<a href="mailto:covidsupport@dublincity.ie">covidsupport@dublincity.ie</a>
Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown	01 271 3199	<a href="mailto:covidsupport@dlrcoco.ie">covidsupport@dlrcoco.ie</a>
Fingal	1800 459 059	<a href="mailto:covidsupport@fingal.ie">covidsupport@fingal.ie</a>
Galway City	1800 400 150	<a href="mailto:covidsupport@galwaycity.ie">covidsupport@galwaycity.ie</a>
Galway County	1800 928 894/091 509 390	<a href="mailto:covidsupport@galwaycoco.ie">covidsupport@galwaycoco.ie</a>
Kerry	1800 807 009	<a href="mailto:covidsupport@kerrycoco.ie">covidsupport@kerrycoco.ie</a>
Kildare	1800 300 174	<a href="mailto:covidsupport@kildarecoco.ie">covidsupport@kildarecoco.ie</a>
Kilkenny	1800 326 522	<a href="mailto:covidsupport@kilkennycoco.ie">covidsupport@kilkennycoco.ie</a>
Laois	1800 832 010	<a href="mailto:covidsupport@laoiscoco.ie">covidsupport@laoiscoco.ie</a>
Leitrim	071 965 0473	<a href="mailto:covidsupport@leitrimcoco.ie">covidsupport@leitrimcoco.ie</a>
Limerick City	1800 832 005	<a href="mailto:covidsupport@limerick.ie">covidsupport@limerick.ie</a>
Limerick County	1800 832 005	<a href="mailto:covidsupport@limerick.ie">covidsupport@limerick.ie</a>
Longford	1800 300 122	<a href="mailto:covidsupport@longfordcoco.ie">covidsupport@longfordcoco.ie</a>
Louth	1800 805 817	<a href="mailto:covidsupport@louthcoco.ie">covidsupport@louthcoco.ie</a>
Mayo	094 906 4660	<a href="mailto:covidsupport@mayococo.ie">covidsupport@mayococo.ie</a>
Meath	1800 808 809	<a href="mailto:covidsupport@meathcoco.ie">covidsupport@meathcoco.ie</a>
Monaghan	1800 804 158	<a href="mailto:covidsupport@monaghancoco.ie">covidsupport@monaghancoco.ie</a>
Offaly	1800 818 181	<a href="mailto:covidsupport@offalycoco.ie">covidsupport@offalycoco.ie</a>
Roscommon	1800 200 727	<a href="mailto:covidsupport@roscommoncoco.ie">covidsupport@roscommoncoco.ie</a>
Sligo	1800 292 765	<a href="mailto:covidsupport@sligococo.ie">covidsupport@sligococo.ie</a>
South Dublin	1800 240 519	<a href="mailto:covidsupport@sdublincoco.ie">covidsupport@sdublincoco.ie</a>
Tipperary	076 106 5000	<a href="mailto:covid19@tipperarycoco.ie">covid19@tipperarycoco.ie</a>
Waterford City	1800 250 185	<a href="mailto:covidsupport@waterfordcouncil.ie">covidsupport@waterfordcouncil.ie</a>
Waterford County	1800 250 185	<a href="mailto:covidsupport@waterfordcouncil.ie">covidsupport@waterfordcouncil.ie</a>
Westmeath	1800 805 816	<a href="mailto:covidsupport@westmeathcoco.ie">covidsupport@westmeathcoco.ie</a>
Wexford	053 919 6000	<a href="mailto:covidsupport@wexfordcoco.ie">covidsupport@wexfordcoco.ie</a>
Wicklow	1800 868 399	<a href="mailto:covidsupport@wicklowcoco.ie">covidsupport@wicklowcoco.ie</a>

## **Update on the 2021 SuperValu TidyTowns competition from Minister Heather Humphreys TD.**

Minister for Rural and Community Development, Heather Humphreys T.D. has given a firm commitment that the SuperValu TidyTowns competition will proceed in 2021.

Speaking in Dáil Éireann last night (November 3<sup>rd</sup>) about the cancellation of the 2020 competition Minister Humphreys said;

“The decision to cancel the competition this year was taken in line with public health advice and in collaboration with the competition sponsor SuperValu. This decision was made in April during the first period of severe restrictions when essentially the advice to everybody was to stay at home”

“Many of our TidyTowns volunteers and Adjudicators were very limited in what they could do earlier in the year. As we have moved through different stages of living alongside the pandemic, the TidyTowns volunteers have demonstrated that they can continue to do some of their activities while still following all of the necessary public health precautions”

Looking ahead to next year, the Minister said;

“As we look forward to next year, I want to assure all of the TidyTowns groups and their volunteers, that there will be a SuperValu TidyTowns competition in 2021. We may need to alter and adapt our approach to delivering the competition next year given the on-going constraints posed by COVID, but we can retain the ethos of the competition that has stood the test of time so well.”

The Department is currently considering the format the competition could take next year, having regard to restrictions on gatherings at each of the five levels of the Government’s Plan for Living with Covid-19, and the paramount need to protect the health and wellbeing of volunteers and adjudicators.

Details of any changes in the competition will be shared with TidyTowns groups well in advance. The Minister went on to assure that the Department, our sponsor SuperValu and the Government is absolutely committed to the SuperValu TidyTowns competition and we look forward to encouraging more and more towns and villages to join us in future years”.

## Cloontuskert TidyTowns, Co. Roscommon

Transformation of the 'Old School', a way to highlight our past as an original Bord na Móna village and tackle its state of dereliction

The village of Cloontuskert, Co. Roscommon, as we know it today, sprung into being as a result of the extensive tracts of bogland located in the area. The Turf Development Act of 1946 established the semi-state company, Bord na Móna, and soon after, the development of the bogs in the Lanesborough area began for power generation as a result of the roll out of industrial peat-harvesting in the area. An increasing pressure on Bord Na Móna to provide housing for men and their families, who came from all over Ireland to gain employment on the bogs, led to the development of the Cloontuskert Bord na Móna Housing Scheme, the only one of its kind in Co. Roscommon.

Seventy houses were built by Gallagher, Furlong and Roarty contractors under the vision of famed architect and town-planner, Frank Gibney, who rooted their design in the civil-style of Beaux Arts tradition. This style can be seen in Cloontuskert today in the use of unique circular ring roads, creation of prominent public buildings and their setting. The methodical and practical planning that Frank Gibney devised in Cloontuskert highlights his architectural brilliance to this very day.



The official opening of Cloontuskert housing scheme took place in 1953. In addition, the first Scoil na Mainistreach was set up in the

village in 1955 to facilitate the education of the children of the Bord na Móna workers in the area. Now known as the 'Old School', the building's original use was intended for that of two shop units. The School opened with 34 pupils with principal, Mr. John Frost. The current School building is now located across the road from 'the Abbey' (the colloquial name for our Bord na Móna village) and was officially opened on 7th September 1998.

The prominence of the 'Old School' remains an integral part of the architecture at the heart of Cloontuskert village today, however, the building became an unfortunate causality of time and lack of proper management as the 'Old School' was allowed to fall into a great state of dilapidation over many years. In 2014, a renewed sense of vigour was found in the community, which led to Cloontuskert TidyTowns, tackling the dire appearance of the building at this time.





With great effort, vision, and local fundraising, the front of the building was painted. The group did not just stop here, however, and went on to bring a further face lift to the 'Old School' by the painting of a shop scene on the numerous boarded-up windows and doors on the 'Old School'. With this, 'Cloontuskert Shopping Centre' was now open for business showcasing a few local merchants who it appeared in the painted scene to have had expanded their operations.



Hanlon Art Works, Lanesborough, Co. Longford completed the works and did a wonderful job in bringing such vibrant colour to the front of the 'Old School', which was previously drab and colourless in comparison.

A little while later, due to the age of the boarding, the shop scene was now peeling off and in need of replacement. We got our thinking caps on once more and decided to showcase the unique history of Cloontuskert by the completion of a major project to replace the previous shop scene with historical photographic murals, which signify our past as a Bord na Móna village and deep-rooted connection to the bogland surrounding our area.

The murals feature the original advertisement seeking to attract workers, with the promise of a job and a home in Cloontuskert. The practice of cutting of slane turf, aerial photography of the former Bord na Móna hostel and workshop located in Ballyglass, just up the road from Cloontuskert, which housed Bord na Móna workers before the village's construction, and various types of machinery used previously in the industrial process of peat harvesting on the surrounding Bord na Móna bogland. The project was very kindly sponsored by Bord na Móna, who have been a tremendous help to our group, and by Wards Quarry, Kilglass, Roscommon.



We would also like to thank XLNT Signs, Roscommon, for their excellent work and Shane Healy, API Mechanical, for fitting the signs.

All of this work would not have been possible without our volunteers who gave an outstanding contribution to see this project to fruition. Since completion of these works, we must also note, that we have had our road resurfaced in 2019, which has also made a huge difference to the appearance of the village. Thank you to all involved in Roscommon County Council as this has made a massive difference.

If anyone is ever passing by Cloontuskert, please feel free to stop in and take in the heritage of Cloontuskert for yourself. Your children may enjoy using the Pokémon GO game to interact with our local heritage on which we are placing a great emphasis.

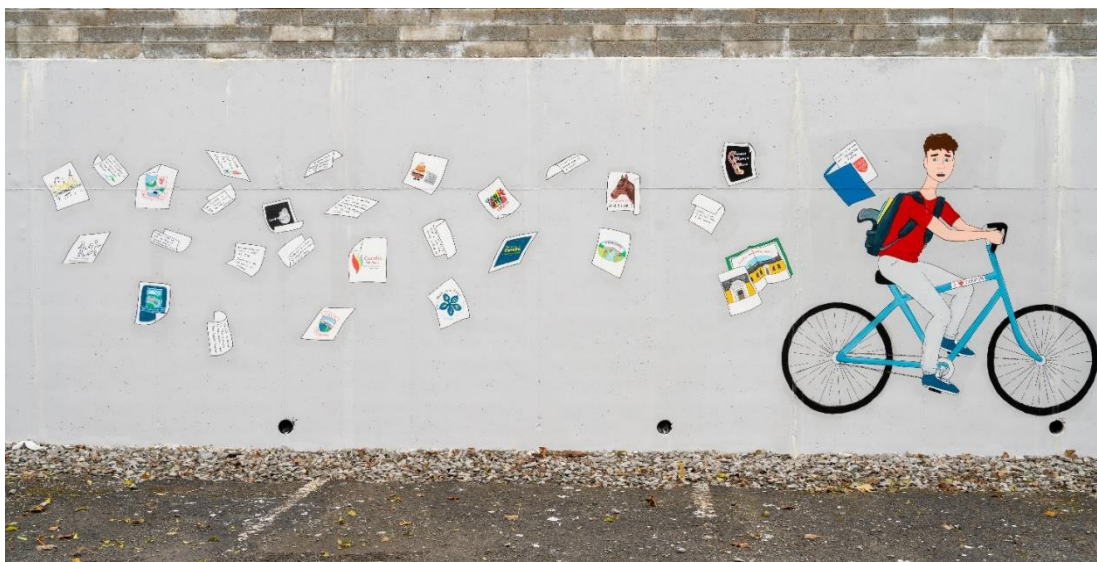
Thanks very much to Nollaig Feeney, Heritage Officer with Roscommon County Council, who has been a terrific help to our group in helping us to further showcase our unique heritage. We have also created a unique Heritage Sculpture Garden in Cloontuskert, previously featured in Issue 3 of the TidyTowns Newsletter 2020 that we would invite you to come and enjoy.

The Sculpture Garden is also featured on the Pokémon GO game.



## Teens team up with Corofin TidyTowns in Co. Clare

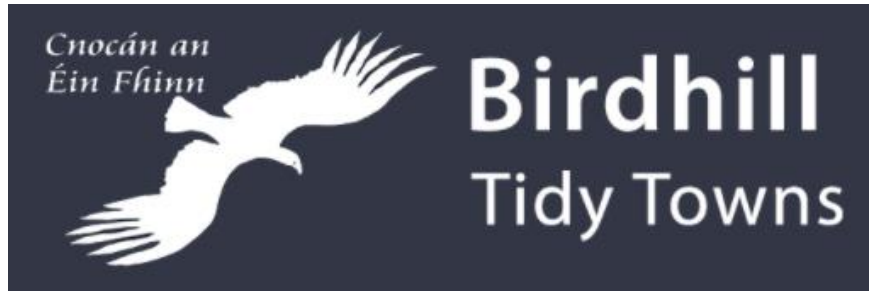
Corofin TidyTowns recently commissioned a 16 year old local teenager Conor Farrell to complete some public wall art. The result is brilliant. Local teenagers prepared an unsightly wall in advance. It depicts Finn leaving Corofin Library on his bicycle with a couple of books in his rucksack. Some pages are falling out and each page reflects a local community group, a club, or a fact about the village. He did a fantastic job. Praise is also due to his parents Eileen and Tony who assisted and brain stormed with us. Chairperson Joe O'Connell hopes Conor can complete more works in the future and stated that the group have had a very busy year despite the pandemic.





## Birdhill TidyTowns & Gaisce

Seven local TY students approached Birdhill TidyTowns in October 2019, seeking to do some community work as part of the 'Volunteering Section' for their Gaisce Awards. One of the parents set up a WhatsApp



group to facilitate communication for tasks, dates and times. Among the jobs they undertook were litter-picking, clearing containers of summer bedding plants, harvesting and potting begonia bulbs, gathering leaves for composting, planting trees, conducting a survey on Sustainability, assisting at the Santa Evening in the Park, selling tickets and manning stalls at the fundraising Sale of Work.

When Covid-19 intervened with the planned schedule, some of them came back to complete their hours by doing some painting at Easter. Birdhill TidyTowns Committee was delighted to avail of the students' help, especially since we do not have any personnel available under community employment schemes.

Some statistics from the Sustainability Survey carried out by the TY students among a random 70 houses in the Birdhill area:

- ❖ 37% did not use public transport during the past year;
- ❖ 38% produce/grow some food;
- ❖ 65% use wheelie bins to dispose of waste, 55% recycle and 24% compost;
- ❖ 27% would be interested in car-pooling;
- ❖ 38% walk or cycle regularly;
- ❖ 24% know the BER of their home.

In conjunction with National Tree Week, each student planted a tree to mark his or her Gaisce Year. TY student, Colm, plants a fruit tree in Birdhill Community Orchard to mark his TY Gaisce Year

Another student, Niall, commented, "As part of working towards our Gaisce Award in Transition Year, we did some work with Birdhill TidyTowns. From painting to weeding, planting to Sale of Work, it is something I really enjoyed as I got the chance to work with and meet new people from the community that I hadn't come across before."



## Coping with Covid

While the Covid-19 pandemic put paid to the TidyTowns Competition, Birdhill Tidy Village Committee continued with the usual programme of planting and maintenance in 2020. Reducing some summer annuals in favour of perennial shrubs, although the same level of maintenance was required during the summer. Working in isolation was not to everyone's liking, but the work continued "for the sake of the little village."

The committee coordinated the community response to the Coronavirus and volunteers were assigned and have been available in each townland to assist where and when required. Our Committee's weekly online newsletters provided information and advice on Covid-19 and suggested activities for parents and children to help cope with the 'new normal.'

Restrictions posed difficulties in arranging meetings, but we availed of Zoom to hold a meeting in May and an outdoor meeting in the Park in early June had an almost full quota of committee members in attendance, with members anxious to meet and chat, even at a distance. We used Zoom to host a Quiz aimed at family groups in June and a Concert for Culture Night in September focused on all things local with songs and poetry all about Birdhill. With new restrictions now in place, we are looking at options for our Annual General Meeting. Life goes on and TidyTowns will continue to serve the community.

Well done to all in Birdhill TidyTowns, continuing to rise to the challenges presented to them. That determination "for the sake of the little village" that saw them scoop the national award of Ireland's Tidiest Town in 2017.



<https://www.facebook.com/OfficialSuperValuTidyTowns>



<https://twitter.com/TidyTownsIre>



<https://www.tidytowns.ie>



**Remember to share the Newsletter with your wider TidyTowns group and volunteers through your own social media or through email. It's good to keep everyone in the Picture!!!**



## Ennis TidyTowns – Factsheet No. 6 – Tree Planting

Thank you once again to our friends in Ennis TidyTowns for bringing No.6 in the series of TidyTowns Factsheets.

This month we read about Tree Planting. Trees are such an important part of our lives and the right tree in the right place, cared for properly is so important.

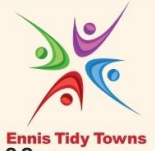
We learn here otherwise useless materials can be used to suppress weeds and used as ties.

This month we are delighted to see four Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) being achieved by this project. We also see how willow stakes that were considered “dead” sprouted new branches and roots, nature really is amazing.

Thank you as always to Ennis TidyTowns for their sustainable initiatives and for sharing their knowledge with us all. Keep up the good work guys.



### TREE PLANTING ENNIS TIDY TOWNS



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@ENNISTIDYTOWNS



### BACKGROUND TO IDEA

Not a novel or unique project to Tidy Towns Ireland committees, but there are ways by which we can enhance the impact of tree planting even more! We have used this approach for normal tree planting as well as for orchards



### HOW IT WAS DELIVERED

- Locally sourced trees - support local
- Recycled cardboard to suppress weeds
- Mulch from local tree surgeon
- Reused tree stakes along with old bicycle tyre tubes as ties
- Assisted by other local volunteer groups



### RESULTS & LESSONS LEARNED

- We partnered with Macra na Feirme and Garden of Eden Projects Ireland to plant orchards. These orchards now provide free apples to the local community.
- We have planted hundreds of other trees by signing up to National Tree Week and initiatives like Plant a Million Trees in One Day.
- Our local Lidl store supplied the cardboard to suppress weeds, very important when planting apple trees. This also naturally decomposes over time.
- Old bicycle tubes are gentle on growing tree trunks and were donated by our local bicycle shop, Tierneys of Abbey Street.
- **HOWEVER...** at one site we used 'dead' willow stakes which ended up sprouting new branches and roots (middle photo), impacting the new trees. Lesson learned!

### SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDG) ACHIEVED



## **Belmullet TidyTowns – Cleanathon.**

We were delighted to hear from Belmullet TidyTowns in Mayo who told us all about a clean-up operation they are taking on.

We are having a 6-hour Cleanathon on Thursday, 5 November, and we are hosting an online fundraiser. Hopefully, we will be able to raise enough money to match funds for grants, or pay up-front for projects. Like many other volunteers around the country, we are badly in need of funds.

We love to see new members joining our group. Three-year old Rebecca is one of our youngest. She is carrying on the tradition of her grandparents – Eva Reilly and Noel Reilly (RIP). Noel was our dedicated chairperson for many years.



Is breá linn nuair a thagann baill nua isteach sa ghrúpa. An duine is óige, Rebecca (3 bliana d'aois) – agus ní ón ghaoth a thug sí é! Is í Rebecca garíníon Eva agus Noel Reilly (RIP). Bhí Noel mar chathaoirleach díograiseach ar ár gcoiste ar feadh breis agus 30 bliain. Suaimhneas síoraí dá anam.

Well done to all in Belmullet and in particular to Rebecca, hopefully she remains a loyal TidyTowns supporter like her late grandparents (RIP).

## **Tulla TidyTowns Co. Clare**

In September 2019, Tulla TidyTowns, Chairman Tim Humphries volunteered to join representatives from other community groups in the East Clare village to brainstorm ideas, formats, responsibilities and ultimately the programme of events for the Tulla 1400 celebrations, that were to take place throughout 2020.

The Tulla 1400 celebrations mark the 1400th anniversary of the establishment of the first settlement on the Hill of Tulla, in the year 620, by Saint Mochulla. To this day, the site of this settlement is still marked by the village graveyards, old and new, and church ruins but most importantly by St Mochulla's Well. This site has been a focal point for TidyTowns volunteers in conjunction with other groups, like Tulla Scouts for the purpose of cleaning up the well in time for the year 2020.

During the preliminary phases of planning for the 2020 events, various fringe ideas were presented that would be of interest to those engrossed in the main events planned for the four big weekends to be held during the year. One such fringe event suggested was a treasure hunt, either on foot or in cars, in a traditional one day event format. At this time, the focus group were introduced to "Geocaching".....



What is that? They asked!!

Geocaching for anyone new to the concept is, in short, an online, interactive, worldwide "Treasure Hunt", that you can access from the palm of your hand, in any country, anywhere in the world. All you need is a mobile device and a thirst for adventure. The beauty of Geocaching is that "Hides" are very often hidden in plain sight and to the casual passer-by, they remain unseen. Once you are registered as a Geocache user, the world is quite literally your playground, no matter where you go the map will zone in on your location and show you roughly where the hides are nearby, after that its up to you, to use the hints provided and your keen eyes to find them. Once found, you log it on the app, and continue on your Geocache journey.



From a TidyTowns and Tulla 1400 perspective this was the ideal platform to promote our lovely village for 2020 and beyond. Being less than a kilometre off the main Ennis to Scarriff road, Tulla is often hiding on the road less travelled, as visitors drive by to other tourist hotspots in the Banner County. The Tulla Geocache Trail is a means of bringing new visitors into our village to explore its riches, of vistas, culture and heritage. So together we set about familiarising ourselves with what a hide could consist of by going on a treasure hunt one September Sunday afternoon to find the nearest hides to us in the region. This was an eye opener to some, not knowing that such things could exist in plain view. After that we developed our trail of hides that would bring the visitor through the village, stopping to take in the hide, read its history and at best stop and take in other offerings in our village. We agreed upon 3 locations that gave a broad spectrum of the village's history, and give the visitor the best we have to offer, plus a surprise location at the end, if they found all three!!

Finally we designed our hides, including trinkets to swap and take away or leave as you find them! Once the hides were checked by Geocache, local reviewers they were given the green light and published on the website and mobile app. Since then we have had numerous hits and visits from the Geocache community, and while we live under pandemic restrictions, the breadth of our potential visitor base remains yet to be realised, however, in the meantime we have had numerous staycationers come in and explore our village. The reviews left behind only serve to illustrate that the Trail is doing what it was designed to do.; "Thank you for bringing us to this amazing location...., we only came here because of your caches and it was a great day"



Little did any community group know what 2020 held in store, but we are hopeful for the future and that the hides will be long serving in our quest to share our village with visitors for many years to come. Roll on Tulla 1401...!!!!



## The Forge, Ballinaboy, Kiltewan, Co Roscommon.

In 2018, Kiltewan TidyTowns restored an old gate, which was hanging in the grounds of Kiltewan Community Centre. During the process we found the words Kelly, Ballinaboy, emblazoned on it. This led us to find and research Kelly's Forge. We found evidence that the Forge was here since 1837 and that three generations of the Kelly family had worked in it.

The building was unoccupied since the early 1970's and looked forlorn. The current owner gave us full permission to give it a face-lift. Kiltewan TidyTowns got to work at preserving the façade and marking this piece of local heritage. To our delight, a local donated an original horseshoe, which was forged in the building. We placed it on the entry door. We did not expect to find out what the implement on the wall was for, nor did we intend including that in our project, but local senior wisdom taught us all.

This led to a lot of local talk about the Blacksmith. He was considered one of the most important tradesmen in the community. His skills were used for shoeing horses, making gates, repairing sleáns, scythes, plough irons, spades, shovels, or making and repairing farm implements.

Amazing how one project can lead to another. All in all, a very worthwhile and enjoyable project. Most importantly, very much appreciated by the entire community.

Before....



Before.....



After...





## Poets Corner

We are so impressed with the talent that is emerging among our TidyTowns volunteers, this month we bring you a beautifully worded poem by Gerry Kennedy from Corofin TidyTowns in County Clare.

We currently hear so much about the Coronavirus but Gerry reminds us of another virus in our midst, that virus of Litter, and indeed, like the Coronavirus, it is in our hands to take action and combat it.

Thank you Gerry for your wonderful use of words, so well put together, plenty reference to the competition categories, also to the current struggles we are all facing with the pandemic.

Any other poets out there willing to share your thoughts with us, we would love to hear from you, poetry is such a wonderful way of connecting and conveying your message, it really is an art in itself.

### **LITTER IS A VIRUS TOO**

A pandemic is rare or so we're told  
But when its' here your life's on hold  
Stay Home, Stay Safe, takes some persistence  
But you have to keep your social distance  
You can do a lot of things from home  
Meet up on Zoom or use your phone  
Work remote with broadband cover  
Ask Alexa, Google or whatever  
At Level Five your world's online  
And the internet will do just fine  
But virtual won't do the trick  
When you need to do a litter-pick...  
For that, on people you depend  
Your partner, neighbours or a friend  
The volunteers who rally round  
For pride of place they can be found  
Estates, approach roads and the street  
They like to keep their village neat  
With common sense they do it smart  
Working together - but staying apart.  
Living with Covid is what we do  
And litter is a virus too  
But this is one that's our own fault  
And one we have the power to halt  
To stop the spread of Covid 19  
Will take more than a Spring Clean  
But consider others before one acts  
And we stop this litter-bug in its tracks!

## **An Adjudicator's Thoughts and Tips for the Future**

One of our independent Adjudicators, Nora Darcy got in touch with us recently to share some thoughts and tips for the future, in a year like no other.

It feels strange to me that the end of summer was not marked by the annual TidyTowns awards ceremony. It has been such a major part of my life for so many years. Currently as a Tidy Towns Adjudicator but previously, as a member of my local TidyTowns Committee. I am the poacher turned gamekeeper, so I thought this time of year might be a good time to share some of the insights that I have.

I often say to people that when I moved counties with my husband and young family I was not just looking for a house I was a looking for a home, a place to put down roots and feel part of the community. I soon got involved in my local resident's association in my local estate and through chance came in contact with my local TidyTowns committee as they were replanting trees that had being vandalised near our area. I saw a group of hardworking committed people who had a "can do" attitude into how they could improve our committee. It matched with what I was looking for, a way to get involved in my community and help shape the type of place in which my young daughters would grow up.

It was the start of many years serving on my committee, with litter picks and other projects. It was my entry into the world of biodiversity and sustainability. I would love to say that it was an altruistic entry but in truth, we saw other areas getting marks in these areas, we studied their adjudication reports and it provided the impetus to focus more on these areas too.

In 2015, TidyTowns advertised for new adjudicators due to steady annual increases in numbers of entries. It was an interesting leap to say to least. Immediately, I was surrounded by so many experts in a variety of areas that are not just interested in sharing that expertise, but have provided a top class environment of participation and innovation to a competition that we are all so passionate and proud to be associated with.

I will just jot a few points down here that may help you on your TidyTowns journey.

### **The Handbook**

To be honest with my time on the committee I didn't really read the TidyTowns handbook in depth, but it would have saved me so much time and effort as I wrote my submissions if I had. My young daughters are now at leaving cert stage and so I have an added insight into ensuring that it is important not just to answer questions, but also to ensure that you answer them in such a way that shows the examiner that you have understood the requirements in order to achieve maximum marks. It is the same with TidyTowns. I would encourage those involved in writing the submissions to have a relook at the concise help under each category to help guide you.



## **The Map**

This is such an important part of your submission and is often overlooked. Remember the adjudicator has probably never been to your area before. It does not have to be professionally drawn up. Many groups use existing maps provided by other groups such as country councils or tourist boards. Hand drawn maps are more than sufficient if they are legible and have all of the relevant landmarks on them.

Don't forget that a map can be reused. I have seen great examples of maps photocopied from previous years and new stickers on them to indicate where the current projects are.

- A numbered legend on the same page is of great benefit.
- The use of the TidyTowns recommended categorisation of projects really does help showing if a project is New, Maintained or Future. On some, difficult to read maps time is often spent looking for a project not realising that it is a future project. The adjudicator really does want to ensure that the maximum amount of time is spent on the projects that you wish to highlight.

## **The Submission**

I know that a huge level of work goes into each submission. TidyTowns wants to ensure that it showcases the work you have performed with the minimum amount of effort.

Do not forget to include any project that was carried out in your area even if no TidyTowns committee members were directly involved. Your job is to reflect all of the work done in your area and the submission provides a record to promote this. If for example an Active Retirement association spruces up a premises all they need to do is let you know.

A project should be kept as short as possible. Using headings can help;

- Name of project
- People involved
- Relevant Date

A few lines of a description. Bullet points are sufficient.

Before and after photos (if relevant). A picture says a thousand words! **and** remember to check if any project could be entered for a TidyTowns Special Award.

## **Reaching New Volunteers**

Getting people to help with TidyTowns is a constant issue. Have you considered using WhatsApp groups as a way of getting the message out for help that is quick and cheap? Consider partnering with your local school through GAISCE (The President's Award <https://www.gaisce.ie/>) to try and get some younger members involved. Ask

other groups to simply let you know what projects they did that are covered under 1 of the categories without having to join the committee.

### **Celebrate your achievements**

In the GAA many counties are disappointed that there is a “long wait” between All-Irelands (for those lucky enough to reach them) and that’s with a maximum of 32 counties entered. TidyTowns has approximately 1,000 active groups so entering solely with the expectation of victory in the main categories can lead to disappointment. TidyTowns has a section that’s asks what your group has gotten out of the TidyTowns competition. If you were anything like me, this was just filled in to tick a box. However, I do think it is worthwhile for groups to truly reflect on what entry in this competition brings them. In this time of global pandemic, the local has become more central than ever. Sustainability and environmental issues are not just discussed by experts but by wider society. Helping your community from an economic point of view by shopping there for example helps sustain us all.

The aims of TidyTowns in caring for our environment, encompasses our natural, social, physical and economic environments, which are now more important than ever. I wish all of the TidyTowns groups continued success with their own groups while we work collectively to ensure greater success for our country.

Thank you Nora for those insights and helpful tips for our groups. Great to see such commitment from a committee perspective and then from an adjudication point of view, I like the term, “poacher turned gamekeeper”.

Just to point out the TidyTowns Unit are currently working on redrafting the TidyTowns Handbook, it is hoped this will be available in time for the 2021 competition; we will keep you updated on progress. It is also worth noting that we featured some advice on your TidyTowns Map in issue 5 of the Newsletter.

### **Carrickmacross TidyTowns Irelands First Recycle and Reward Reverse Vending of Plastic Bottles - Free Online Seminar**

We would like to remind you all about the online information seminar that Carrickmacross TidyTowns Committee have scheduled for Wednesday, November 11th next at 7.30pm which will cover all aspects of the Reward Revers Vending project that they have successfully pioneered in the town.

The webinar can facilitate up to 500 participants, you can register by visiting;

<http://zoom.us/meeting/register/tJwqfuyqpjojGdTWRdtTRU3-NzCfb-WBbWax>

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about the seminar. Thank you to all involved in Carrickmacross TidyTowns for sharing their experience and expertise with us all.

## Calling all our budding Photographers

# Cheese!

We are delighted to report that there has been fantastic interest in our Photography competition that we announced in last month's newsletter.

We are looking for all you photographers out here, perhaps you are a dab hand at the photography or maybe you like to take the odd picture on your smart-phone. Autumn is such a colourful season and for the photography minded amongst us, we are given some wonderful opportunities, berries, golden leaves, evening skies, the list goes on.

Our TidyTowns Photography competition is still open, so we want to hear from you. We are looking for you to submit photographs to us, which capture the ethos of TidyTowns or perhaps a project that your group have brought to fruition, or maybe just a view of your town or village looking its best.

We have some cash prizes to give away to the lucky winners. Details on how to enter etc. are as follows;



- Photographs should be emailed to [tidytowns@drccd.gov.ie](mailto:tidytowns@drccd.gov.ie) stating which TidyTowns group you are from or if you are entering the junior element.
- Photographs should not contain close up images of other people unless you have received their permission to take and submit the photograph to this competition.
- The TidyTowns Unit will judge all entries and prizes will be awarded as follows;
- For TidyTowns groups or individual entries a first prize of €150 and second prize of €75 will be made to the TidyTowns group associated with the entry. There will also be a first prize of €75 and second prize of €50 for junior entries from the 12-18 years old age group. The prizes for the junior entries will be paid to the individual themselves.
- The TidyTowns Unit may use photographs submitted for social media or publications going forward.
- The closing date for entries is Friday, November 20<sup>th</sup>.
- Results will be announced on Social Media and in the December Newsletter.





## Keep in Touch

We hope you find the articles and initiatives featured in this month's newsletter interesting; perhaps they may inspire you to pen a poem or take a photograph, if so we would love to hear from you. Previous issues of the newsletter are all available on the TidyTowns website.

We would encourage you to share the newsletter in your community, perhaps you have a WhatsApp group or a Facebook page, they would be great ways to let the rest of your group or the wider community know about the great things that happen in TidyTowns. It may motivate or encourage some new members to your group.

Please keep the stories, poems etc. coming in and now with the competition; we hope to see all your photographs too. We will select two more stories from the October and November Issue and announce the recipients of **SuperValu** gift

**SuperValu**  
Real Food, Real People

cards in the December newsletter. We will also announce the winners of our Photography competition at that time also. Thank you to **SuperValu** for sponsoring these gift cards, we will have the December winner's prizes out in time for Christmas.

Until next month, please continue to adhere to the public health advice, stay safe and look after yourselves. If you have any queries about works you are planning for next year, or have any queries regarding entry into the competition, we are here to help and provide any support we can. Please keep in touch through the TidyTowns website or on our social media.

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

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