



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland



SuperValu Tidy Towns

Caring for our environment

Administered by the
Department of Rural & Community Development

Supporting the
Sustainable Development Goals

Think Global – Act Local



SuperValu Tidy Towns Newsletter Issue 2020-9

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A Chairde,

Bhur gcéad fáilte chuig eagrán na Nollag den nuachtlitir Bailte Slachtmhara. Bliain dhúshlánach a bhí ann, ach gabhaimid buíochas libh ar fad as bhur dtacaíocht agus an méid cúram a thugann sibh do d'phobail áitiúla.

Welcome to our bumper December issue of the SuperValu Tidy Towns newsletter. It has been a challenging and difficult year for all of us but as we approach Christmas, we look forward to happier times and hope that 2021 will be a better year for Tidy Towns and for all of the volunteers and their families.

As we emerge from lockdown we anticipate the coming weeks will be busy and as always, we encourage you to look after your own, search local, shop local and support local. Farmers markets,  craft fairs and our local retailers have so many wonderful offerings, by buying and supporting Guaranteed Irish products and local producers, we will help sustain and create employment opportunities here at home.

Give an Irish gift or a local gift this Christmas. During the Christmas period, we all still have to play our part by adhering to the public health advice issued by the Government of Ireland. It will be difficult to celebrate with loved ones and we think of families, whose loved ones cannot visit this year, or for those who have lost family members or friends during the past year, rest assured your Tidy Towns family are thinking of you all.

We hope you find the stories featured this month interesting and we look forward to hearing many more in the months ahead.

Christmas Greetings from Heather Humphreys TD

Dear TidyTowns Volunteers,

In what has been a most difficult year for you all, I want to compliment you on your dedication and commitment to your towns and villages.

Despite the Covid-19 Pandemic, so many of you have continued to look after your localities.

Your support through the Covid-19 Community Response Forum is a testament to your community ethos and the care you have for your wider community.

Last month, I spoke in Dáil Éireann and confirmed that the SuperValu TidyTowns competition will take place 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.

I look forward to launching the competition in the New Year and indeed to working with you all in 2021. I would like to take this opportunity to thank you once again for your support and to wish you and your families a very happy and peaceful Christmas and the very best for a healthy, happy and productive 2021.

Heather Humphreys



Glaslough TidyTowns – One year on!

What a strange year this has been! Like everyone, 2020 will be a year, we will never forget. With the main topic for conversation, Covid-19 has dominated almost everyone's conversations and made changes in what used to be our normal lives.

No one could have ever imagined such an event, not least the volunteers and people of Glaslough village where less than five months previous to the start of the pandemic, were celebrating winning the National TidyTowns competition on September 30th 2019 after 41 years!! What a jubilant and exciting time this was. In the days and weeks that followed visitors flocked to see the village and groups of TidyTowns committees from across the country requesting tours of Ireland Overall Tidiest Town. Indeed, at one point there was even a short visit from the now Taoiseach Michael Martin!



This was a well-deserved celebration and wonderful time for residents, volunteers and business owners and one that had been hoped for, for many years. Monaghan County Council held a civic reception in November and the National TidyTowns Regional Awards ceremony was also held in the Oakland Centre which invited all prize winners from the North West and West to collect their prizes.



Glaslough winning trophies were brought to both St Mary's and Billis National schools and to other events following the win. As the months progressed plans were put in place for 2020 with great excitement. The build up to Christmas 2019 was wonderful as the TidyTowns invested in lots of additional decorations for the village and even supplied small living Christmas trees around the village, which residents looked after throughout the season. After the Christmas season, the next big event was the St Patricks day parade in Monaghan town.

A wonderful float was prepared during January and February, by volunteers and the CE participants but unfortunately, this was not to be as the cancellation of the parade was just the beginning of the pandemic and lockdown.

Throughout the lockdown, the committee were very limited in what they could do but simply communicated like many through zoom and WhatsApp calls and messages and through social medial platforms. Volunteers managed to keep the village clean, tidy and as attractive as ever working mostly on their own managing the specific areas allocated. Younger members helped some of the cocooners with shopping and other activities at the time also and free masks were handed out to residents.



In March, the committee started the Close Knit Community group an online group which aimed at knitting as many scarves as possible to donate to the homeless charities and the care homes and front line workers. They also applied for a Guinness World record for the greatest number of scarves donated by volunteers! Over 350 people got involved from across Monaghan and further afield.

Approximately
1,000 scarves

were knitted and crocheted by the volunteers for this project.

People were so thoughtful and delighted to be involved and the standard of craftsmanship was



second to none. People of all ages got involved and there was great craic and banter between members on the online forum. Just this week the delivery of the scarves began.



Some other projects this year included relocating the community library to the old phone box in the diamond area of the village. The construction of a gazebo booth for the junior/senior tidy towns to operate from. The repainting of the Oakland Centre, installation of the ramps and handrails were joint projects with the GDA and the construction of a new handball wall in the Oakland sports courts, painted by Ann Mc Kenna. This not only added a new facility for residents but it depicts all the community groups in the village. The sports courts were also resurfaced during the summer, which was funded under the sports capital grant.

One of the main highlights of the year was RTE Nationwide's visit to the village and the airing of the wonderful program that followed on July 22nd. This really boosted the tourism in the days that followed and helped to put Glaslough firmly on the map. A local man also donated 20 beautiful chestnut trees to the TidyTowns committee during the summer. These were planted in October at locations around the village and at St Mary's NS.

A new wildflower meadow/garden was created in the viewing area over the lake in the Village Green estate. Helen Irwin, committee member and director/resident, managed this project. Other projects included a BioBlitz, which was held on the estate and funded under the Catchment Care scheme a cross border initiative with Glaslough TidyTowns and Castle Leslie estate. These projects seek to promote and add to the local biodiversity in the area. A small team of volunteers managed growing all the village flowers throughout the lockdown, which were then donated, to Ardbanagher, Lisbanagher, Culbanagher, Tullyree, Cottages, Village Square/Green estates and other areas throughout the village.

Like every other TidyTowns group around the country, many of the volunteers missed the camaraderie and the coming together to work on projects, activities and other events. The cancellation of President Michael D Higgins visit to Glaslough to unveil the



TidyTowns winning plaque was a real disappointment however hopefully at the end of the pandemic next year he will be able to visit and 2021 will be a much better year for everyone. Speaking in Dáil Éireann recently (November 3rd) 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”

Well done to all in Glaslough TidyTowns for keeping the ethos of the competition alive, our current national title holders of Ireland's Tidiest Town really demonstrate what the competition means to them. As the adjudicator who visited Glaslough in 2019 put it, “A community in absolute unity”. What a wonderful comment to be attached to any area. Keep up the good work Glaslough, we look forward to hopefully attending your celebration day in 2021 with President Higgins.



Season's Greetings to all our TidyTowns Volunteers from





It was the night before Christmas



Kate Flannery was busy doing the last preparations for the great day. She had spent the afternoon touching up the whitewash walls outside the front door of their thatched house.

Jimmy her husband, she had sent to town in the evening to collect the goose, 2 black puddings and 1lb of sausages for the breakfast on Christmas day. The smoke was billowing from the turf fire as Kate fussed about thinking everything would be right for the dinner on Christmas day. With her hands on her hips she counted the special willow pattern plates on the dresser. She only took them down for Christmas and with six children she was wondering if the plates would be safer left on the dresser.

Still it was Christmas and it was a very special time of year. The plates were there since her grandmother's time. Jimmy her husband had married in to the small farm, but Kate always held the reins, mind you Jimmy wasn't the brightest spark, still he was able to father six children, 2 girls and 4 boys. Kate had hushed all of them off to bed before 9.30, after all Santa Clause could come any time after the dark.

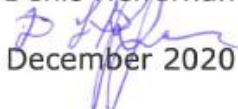
Rosie wanted a doll with blonde hair, Jimmy who was six years wanted a mouth organ, Nellie wanted bubbles to make magic balloons, Paddy wanted a Benoit comic, Mick a ludo game and Henry a new school bag. Kate looked at the clock on the dresser 10.30 no sign of Jimmy she would brain him with the poker when he came home.

As the clock stroke 11 she heard the latch lifting on the door and in wobbled Jimmy with a red face and his britches falling down over his wellingtons, I am home Kate said he, I am as drunk as a lord. Don't you be taking the Lords name in vein says Kate and she blessing herself, she was on fire, I will finish you off once and for all with this poker.

With all the noise and commotion hadn't Santa came and left all the presents in the porch. Jimmy sat in the big old bedsit under the hob and fell fast asleep, just as well he sat so near the chimney because with the wind coming out his mouth and coming out somewhere else every time he moved. Kate finally woke him and got him to bed at 1.30. All of a sudden she thought of the goose, the pudding and sausages they were nowhere to be seen, well she fussed about and couldn't lay an eye on them.

Then she suddenly went to the front door and opened it she gasped at what she saw, Jimmy's raleigh bicycle knocked over and the canvas message bag blown around with a small bit of brown paper, no sign of the goose, pudding or sausages. Kate looked at the stars in the night sky and prayed for God to give her patience. From the distance she heard the howling of a fox, Kate said to herself may the harm of the year go with the blasted goose, the sausages and puddings. She went inside and makes herself a cup of tea very soon it will be Christmas day.

Denis Heffernan


December 2020

Thanks as always to Denis Heffernan from Emly TidyTowns for sharing this lovely story with us, keep a watch out for more from Denis throughout this month's issue.

Tallow TidyTowns – Alone but Together in Covid

What a year 2020 has turned out to be and yet we are all getting through it despite our worse fears when lockdown was first announced. Here in Tallow we have a wonderful team of determined people from all walks of life. We are also across all ages from 70's to age 9. The disappointment when it was announced there would be no Tidy Towns 2020 competition was evident, however the fear our members had was that there would be no TidyTowns, no flowers, no interaction. Some are working full time, some retired, some recovering from serious illness. How would people cope with isolation, lockdown, not meeting people?

TidyTowns is a way of life for the members and volunteers not just for the town but the surrounding rural areas. We have volunteers who are prepared to go out and do the work but not get involved in committee and that is fine. You are never alone when you are involved, winter and summer there is always something to do. Some of our members had to cocoon and we kept in constant contact with them on FaceTime. If shopping was needed, it was done and they were never isolated.

Waterford Council delivered the bedding plants and we planted in 2's at a distance. We encouraged residents and businesses to sweep outside their doors and if they were okay to pick litter to do so. We set up WhatsApp group for our meetings and when lockdown was over, we had our coffee/meeting at 2m distance in the car park. All the planting was done and each week we updated everyone in Tallow with the TidyTowns Notes on the local paper. Projects were undertaken and completed; including a fantastic new Wild Flower Area around our new park, as I write this, it is still blooming.

Residents of the town got on board in their individual gardens with a bee/butterfly area left wild and most had beautiful floral displays for the summer. It lifted the spirits of young and old and the town looked beautiful for the whole summer. So remember join your local TidyTowns team and do a lot for your town and a lot for your mental and physical wellbeing,

Get going for TidyTowns 2021. Stay safe we will all see the end of this together.

Such encouraging and inspirational words there from Gerty Murphy who is the Chairman with Tallow TidyTowns in County Waterford. Here we see the youngest member of the group, Katie Lou McCarthy out helping with the activities. Keep up the great work Tallow TidyTowns and we look forward to hearing from you and Katie in 2021.



Tell us your Story – Recent Prize Winners

In what has been a difficult year, the encouraging stories that you have all shared with us have helped to keep the ethos of the competition very much alive. In recognition of your hard work and your willingness to share with us, together with our sponsor **SuperValu** we are announcing two further recipients of gift cards to award groups whose stories featured in recent issues of the newsletter.

SuperValu
Real Food, Real People



Last month in Issue 8, we bought you a fascinating article from Tulla TidyTowns in Clare about their Geocaching - online, interactive, worldwide "Treasure Hunt" that you can access from the palm of your hand wherever you are. This came about while the group were planning for their upcoming 1400th anniversary celebrations. This is an interesting concept and can really put your village or town on a worldwide platform. In collaboration with our sponsors **SuperValu**, we would like to present this month's €100 **SuperValu** gift card to Tulla TidyTowns.

In issue 7 in October, we featured a piece from Geashill TidyTowns in Offaly on Biodiversity and Pollinators which saw the group involved in a fascinating project with master hedge layer Eoin Donnelly who re-laid a large section of hedge behind their local school, giving the children a great insight into the importance of native hedging. They also rolled out a Pollinator Promise barrel project. Barrel planters were offered to anyone who didn't have a grassed front garden on the understanding that they were to be planted with pollinator friendly flowers and shrubs. We are presenting a €50 **SuperValu** gift card to Geashill TidyTowns.



We are most grateful to our sponsor, **SuperValu**, who have been sponsoring the competition now for nearly 30 years and in acknowledging and applauding the great work you are all doing, **SuperValu** gift cards have been presented to six more groups this year.

Thanks to our colleague Joe in the Department for selecting our two very worthy winners from recent issues.

Avoca TidyTowns – Answering the Community Call

Avoca is a village with a lively community spirit in the best of times, so, unsurprising that within twenty-four hours of the Covid-19 shutdown announcement, a huge number had volunteered their time and assistance to anybody who needed help.

Bernie Ivers and Mary Bolger lead the Avoca TidyTowns group in the village. They have more than two thousand followers on their Facebook page, so as Bernie explained, it was easy to get the call out quickly. They were overwhelmed by the response: offers of help from residents, GAA club, Avoca Juvenile Camogie, Avoca Scouts and the Avoca Senior Citizens Committee among others. Bernie co-ordinated the volunteers.

A list of vulnerable people in the village was drawn up. Working with Arklow Meals-on-Wheels, the volunteers started to deliver meals to people



who were cocooning. Initially they were delivering to fifteen people, but this number grew to thirty-two, and continued seven days a week for ten weeks. Thanks to generous donations from those listed above, all of these meals were delivered free. Volunteers also worked with Arklow Resource Centre, a confidential service to provide food parcels to families who needed them.

Easter eggs were donated and delivered to residents, along with letters written by local children. Cakes baked & delivered. Groceries purchased and dropped to doors, prescriptions were collected. Mary ran a paper round, delivering newspapers every morning to cocooners. Of course, as well as the practical help, the volunteers provided huge social support. They were often the only face the cocooners might see each day.

As the restrictions ease, some activities such as Meals-on-Wheels will stop, but the Covid-19 Volunteers will remain active, food parcels will continue, and Meals-on-Wheels might look to resume if needed in winter.

Looking back on the past ten weeks, Bernie says that nobody in the village became ill with Covid-19, and that is the true measure of the volunteers' success. She also notes that the whole experience has, had real benefits for the community, bringing everybody closer together with the shared goal of looking out for one another. This is hopefully something that can be built on when the current crisis is over.

Anybody wishing to contact the Avoca volunteers can call Bernie (087 145 7973) or Mary (087 938 78 71). On behalf of everybody in Avoca, huge thanks go to all the volunteers for all they have done.

We would also like to acknowledge and appreciate the work put in by Bernie, Mary and all in the group in Avoca, real community spirit on show here, well done to all involved.

Bray TidyTowns

The following photographs show some of Bray Tidy Towns (BTT) events and activities over the past few months involving different age groups. Working in safe outdoor locations such as estates and parks, helps attract various age groups.

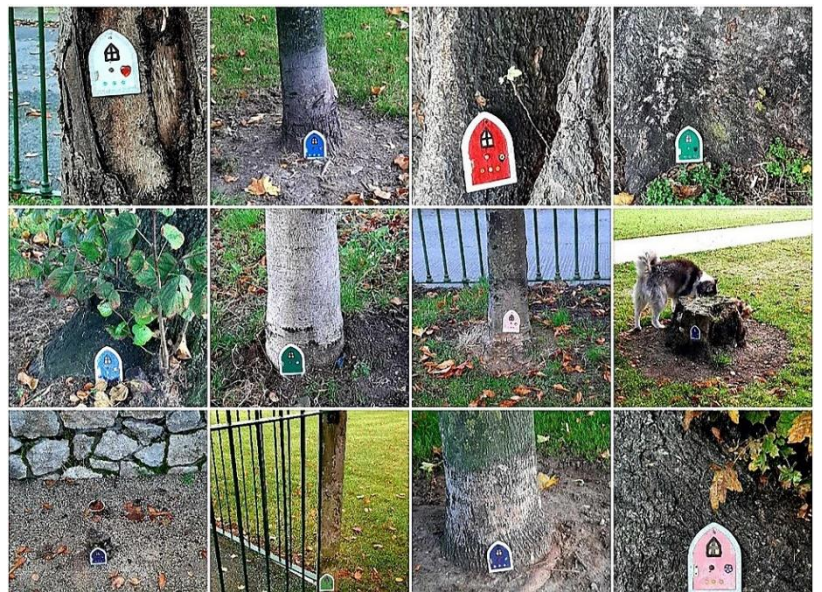


Gaisce students because of COVID restrictions have taken the initiative to complete their community work under supervision by a parent or working in pairs. Bray Municipal District have cooperated in the collection of rubbish bags when the work has been completed.

Here we see some work done on Fairy Doors, where Bray TidyTowns sprinkled a little bit of magic on some of the local walks. Fairy doors made a bright and sparkling entrance into the world of our younger members. The local Men's' shed rowed in to design some of the doors and others were painted by members of the group.



Upwards of 50 Fairy, doors were given new homes in locations such as Bray Head, People's Park, the Library, and the Albert Walk around the town to great acclaim. BTT were surprised by the positive feedback and this will encourage us create more fairy dwellings around the town.



Local playing fields needed clean ups during springtime. This was identified through a number of complaints lodged through a local Facebook forum. BTT together with a local junior football team rose to the challenge and tackled this task successfully with enthusiasm with input from volunteers of all ages.



https://www.facebook.com/Braysbarbie-115258420225675/?_tn=%2Cd%2CP-R&eid=ARBMSneAMhWxydN8D2VX02URnSX1h7sT0rKtyjAQG1YQlrkXI3mhVV4qyIt_8yxfHP_U7CwkaOtKCtHK

The Famous Award Winning BRAY BARBIE, avid supporter of all Bray Tidy Towns Endeavours



Bulbs being planted by Bray Tidy Towns volunteers in People's Park to bring a splash of colour to the place.



A local botanist working with Bray Tidy Towns was very enthusiastic about the abundance of biodiverse plants growing on the shingle bank at the Harbour end of the Seafront. BTT with the help of Bray Municipal District, members of Na Snamhini a local swimmers group, and others agreed to remove the invasive weeds from this important biodiverse location.

This committed group of all ages worked with great vigour over six balmy summer evenings to remove stubborn well-rooted invasive weeds. A sign listing the wild plants and highlighting others, which were growing on this shingle bank, was designed and erected. This has attracted very positive attention and was reported in the local media.



Here we see a list of plants on shingle bank with some of them beautifully illustrated.

Here we see some Art that has been created from recycled waste, great sustainability initiative here.



This is a video of some fun at People's Park

<https://www.facebook.com/BrayTidyTowns/videos/1273530316324887/?t=1>

This video was shown during National Volunteer Week

<https://www.rte.ie/learn/2020/0923/1166933-bray-tidy-towns/?fbclid=IwAR3tLUhpeI8TYenF5B0CxdQvZXdi9XnGJwJjTCUNHvTM75IGNKXb-mpBTjo>

Bray TidyTowns shared so much of their recent activity with us, here we give you just a small flavour of all the work they have been doing. Keep up the great work everyone. Looking forward to hearing more from you in 2021.

Student Volunteer



We have been contacted by Student Volunteer to inform you all about the service they provided.

[StudentVolunteer.ie](https://www.studentvolunteer.ie) is an easy to use, one-stop-shop portal connecting higher education students with civil society organisation volunteering opportunities. For community-based organisations, the website allows you to:

- Advertise long-term, once-off, local, national, international volunteering opportunities;
- Connect and recruit students in Irish Higher Education Institutions all across Ireland;
- Manage activity online and
- Access how-to guides and useful resources.

[StudentVolunteer.ie](https://www.studentvolunteer.ie) is a network of Irish Higher Education Institutions that have come together to create an online resource to connect students and community groups, charities, schools, hospitals, public bodies and NGOs across Ireland. [StudentVolunteer.ie](https://www.studentvolunteer.ie) is funded by each higher education member institution and Campus Engage. Visit their website to find out more.

Homeless But Not Different

Where shall I go today that is different from yesterday,
A street where I won't be known or the park where I can sit alone'
Everyone talks about Covid 19 and the way it affects their lives,
But for me alone hungry and frightened wondering will I survive the night

You have a clean bed to lie on enough to eat each day,
A shower to freshen up and friends to share your day,
I too once was like you with family and friends galore,
But things in my life happened and now I am feeling so broke.

At 45 my life is not bright my feet are hurting this cold wet night,
In my chest I have pain my heart is so sad,
I am your brother please remember that.

Denis Heffernan Oct 2020

Please help the homeless this winter



Some
thought
provoking
words

here from Denis that call us to remember those who have fallen on hard times and may not experience the season of plenty that is sometimes associated with Christmas. We should remember to help those who are less fortunate and support charities that care for the needs of those less fortunate in our communities.

An Adjudicator's Note

Nollaig Shona dhíbh go léir!

I had an idea spinning around in my head in recent weeks - that I would send a Christmas card to each of the centres that I adjudicated in 2019 (anonymously through the TidyTowns Unit of course) However time slipped by and Christmas is upon us. But the good people in the Unit suggested that instead I send my greetings and thoughts through the newsletter - and of course this now includes all centres and volunteers!



2020 has been a most difficult year for the entire world - for individuals, families, organisations - for everybody. We hope that you got through the year in good health and in as good spirits as you could muster! Somebody recently described the last 9 months as “everybody in the same storm but in different boats” - how true! You missed entering the competition and we all missed you too. The inspiration we derive from seeing your enthusiasm and hard work on all our visits left a big gap in our year. We know that you did all you could in accordance with guidelines throughout the year. But we also know that you did more. We read about your novel ideas and ongoing commitment in the newsletters, and as we revisited your Facebook pages, websites and read some local media coverage, Well done all! I particularly kept up-to-date with the developing commitment of the centres I visited last year. But as Adjudicators, we often revisit web and Facebook pages from centres we visited in previous years too. We don't forget you!

Now some of you may feel that you did not achieve as much as you wished. Please don't be despondent. Each centre and volunteer probably has had a precious gift - of time to think, reflect and plan. We are sure that many imaginative ideas floated around in your heads from time to time during the last twelve months. Time to sit and ponder, time to reflect! In the busyness of everyday living we can get so caught up in the day-to-day that we miss opportunities to reassess and evaluate. You will have the opportunity of crystallising these ideas into the coming years. So relax and look forward!

Nobody knows yet what the next few months will bring or what exact form the 2021 competition will take. The TidyTowns Unit and our sponsors SuperValu have been busy and continue to work very hard to motivate you all, to keep us Adjudicators up-to-date, and to try to make plans insofar as is humanly possible. There is hope on the horizon and a competition is planned. I for one cannot wait to be part of that! Bring on 2021!

Ath Bhlian fé mhaise dúinn go léir!



Swords TidyTowns

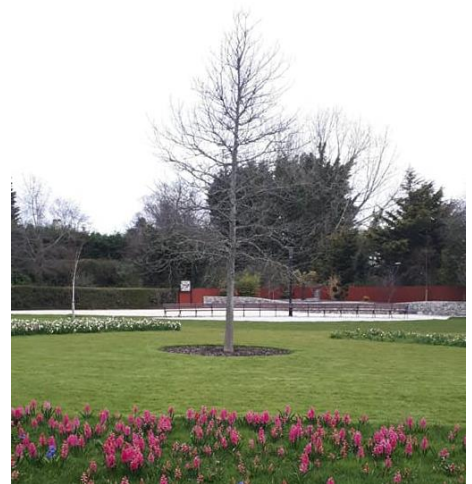
Community Green Flag for the Rock Garden

Swords TidyTowns are very pleased to announce that they have been awarded a Green Flag for the Rock Garden on the Rathbeale Road.



The Rock Garden once a Local Rock Quarry in the 1940's was converted into a children's playground but fell into disrepair in the 1980's. It was surrounded by a very ugly boundary and by late 2016; it had become a litter black spot and an area for anti-social behaviour. At that, time there were rumours that it was going to become yet another carpark. Swords TidyTowns had a better idea and approached Fingal County Council with the proposal that we turn it into a garden for all the community to enjoy. The council met the idea with enthusiasm and they said that if we got support from the residents and local businesses they would be very amenable to supporting us in this endeavour.

Our Chairperson Ken Duffy and our Secretary Teresa Cosgrave called personally to each house and business and received overwhelming support for the idea. Swords TidyTowns worked closely with Fingal County Council throughout the whole process especially the Operations Department. Two of our volunteers Matt Cullen and Mary Maxwell contributed to the design of the Rock Garden, their contributions and suggestions were taken on board and incorporated into the final design. Swords Heritage Association was also consulted in the planning stage.



Work started on the Rock Garden in autumn 2017 and the garden was opened in April of 2018. The result is an oasis of calm in what is broadly an urban setting. It is used by a broad spectrum of the community, our senior citizens meeting for a chat on the benches, office workers having their lunch on a sunny day,

children playing and joggers and walkers.

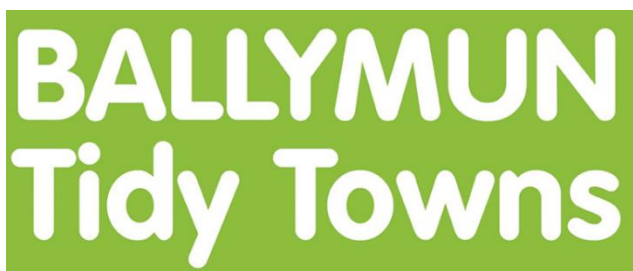
In addition to plants and trees, the Garden also contains some items of our heritage. A Tonge and Taggart water pump made in the early 20th century by two brothers living in Swords. An Edward the 7th Post Box and a lovely wooden sculpture made from a tree that was blown down in a storm at Newbridge House.

A granite gatepost recovered from Swords Castle during excavation works serves as the name stone at the entrance to the Garden. The name stone is engraved with the name of the garden in Irish and the ancient Irish alphabet of Ogham, which dates back from the 5th century.

This is the first time a Green Flag has been awarded in Fingal for a Community Project, which makes the award very special to our dedicated volunteers. We are so pleased to be awarded this in 2020.

We wish to express our heartfelt thanks to Fingal County Council for their unwavering support for this project. A special mention must be given to the wonderful crew of the Operations Department whose hard work helped to create this wonderful amenity.

Ballymun TidyTowns – Better Ballymun



There are approx. 20,000 people living in Ballymun. Even with such a large population, it feels like a village. Everyone knows everyone else and we take the time to say hello to our neighbours and make sure they are ok. People from all walks of life live and work in Ballymun.

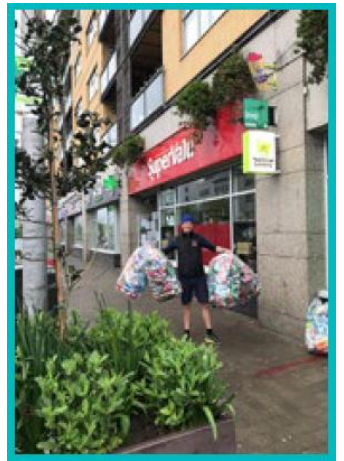
We also have so many great community groups covering all ages and interests;

- Ballymun TidyTowns,
- Small community environmental groups-Global Action Plan
- The Rediscovery Centre - the national hub for the circular economy
- The Axis - a haven for theatre and the arts
- The Reco - run by BRYR as a hub for our youth
- The Horizon building - a centre for people in recovery
- The Ballymun Child and Family Resource Centre and
- The Sillogue Neighbourhood Centre - run groups covering primary school children and the elderly,
- 3 community gardens, Poppintree Park won a Green Flag this year,
- GAA clubs, football clubs, boxing clubs, music clubs and a Mens shed.

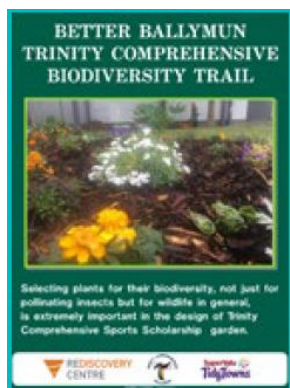


Most of these groups engage in litter picking, painting, recycling and biodiversity planting projects, which enhance our area and make it a beautiful place in which to live.

In their first 2019 report, IBAL labelled Ballymun as a litter blackspot, coming 40th on the national list. This was very disheartening for our community. This year, Ballymun was classified as Moderately Littered, moving up to 32nd on the list and Main Street was given a Grade A. This shows how Ballymun can come together and work to make a negative into a positive. The negative IBAL report in 2019 sparked off the Better Ballymun Day of Action project, which is now going from strength to strength.



The first Better Ballymun Day of Action was held on 28th February this year. This project idea came from the students in Trinity Comprehensive. It involved 700 students from our primary and secondary schools, 60 teachers and SNAs, volunteers from 3 sports clubs, Ballymun TidyTowns and local environmental groups. We all came together to tackle 36 sites, which were planted, painted, litter picked and more.



It lashed rain but that didn't stop us getting stuck in. We had great fun teaching the students about gardening, digging and generally getting very mucky! This was a brilliant day and the sense of pride we felt looking at our community, young and old, coming together was overwhelming. This project continues during Covid on a much smaller scale and socially distanced, but we keep on going, bringing positivity, joy and fun to everyone in Ballymun.

The Better Ballymun project was nominated for the 2020 IPB Pride of Place Awards 2020 but sadly did not receive an award at the recent awards ceremony; however, Ballymun TidyTowns came first in the DCC North West Area City Neighbourhoods Competition in the Mixed Use Street category for Main Street, Ballymun.

Congratulations to you all, keep up the good work, great to see so many groups coming together, both young and old to collectively improve your area.



<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!!!

My First Job

At 13 and a half I was too young to leave school so my family got me a transfer to Anglesboro National School where I only went for two days. So that was my secondary education, reason for same I was going working for a farmer in Ballyduff Ballylanders.

Danny Kelly was the farmer's name. The house was approached by a short drive from the main road. At each side of the graveled drive there was a mature laurel hedge and a long slated house grey in colour. Danny his wife Ann his two daughters Alice and Margaret and Danny's elderly mother lived in the farmhouse. The wonderful great memories I have of my first job I still cherish today.

From the moment I arrived in the dwelling I was made to feel like one off the family. But at such a young age I was very lonesome and I missed my own home and family. No mobile phones then so no contact it was like been miles away. When I went there it was the month of February the cows were starting to calf so I learned how to milk my first cow. Soon I got the hang of things as spring went by; next up was the challenge to go to the creamery.

The pony was brown and the cart had rubber wheels. On Sunday I would tie the pony to a street pole while I went to mass. I would have to put the pony's reins around his neck as he could shake off the winkers. One Sunday morning I forgot to put the reins around his neck, so when I came out he was gone cart and milk cans and the winkers left hanging on the pole. So up the street as fast as I could run and my heart in my mouth. Sure enough out the road I caught up with the pony grazing along the side of the road and the cart and milk cans behind him. I tell you he went home to Ballyduff very fast that morning.

Danny's mother was a small woman she always wore black clothes. She had a high timber chair with high arms, we all wanted to sit on it. I remember myself and the girls trying to make her dance around the house with us, on one such occasion she had a shortness of breath we helped her out in the yard to get her breath.

I had my own room just off the kitchen I remember sometimes we would say the Rosary. Danny kept greyhounds; I can't remember how good they were. Sometimes he would give them raw eggs for to get them fit. He would make me drink the raw eggs he told me it would help me grow, it worked I grew out but not up as people know.

The summer came quickly and we had great times in the meadows and the long evenings, the cuckoo and the corncrake could be heard till darkness. Still I missed home and my family my first trip home was the end of April. I couldn't believe how different my own boreen was with all the wildflowers what a difference the couple of month made.


Then, to have to leave home again. Their motor car was a black Volkswagen now a memory. Many a time they took me visiting to Danny's brother in Kilbehenny we also used to visit Katie Ryan in Cappawhite, where we got lovely big cream sponge cake and green jelly and mixed fruit.

Sometimes I would be left minding Danny's mother if she wasn't feeling well. On one such occasion she was in bed, it was winter time so we only went to the creamery every few days. I decided to make a small bit of butter, I put the cream from the top of the churn in to an Andrews liver salt tin and shook it until I had a lump of butter and a small sup of milk, not been happy with that I put it on the fire with the lid on. Well after a few minutes it blew off the fire and there was bits of butter stuck to the ceiling, the red open dresser and to myself and I was stuck to the chair with the fright of it. Mrs Kelly senior below in bed asking what happened as if I could tell her with the shock I was in.

I didn't like breakfast time because Danny and his mother always had boiled eggs, they liked them lightly boiled the sight and smell of them to this day I can remember with disgust. Dinner I loved flowery potatoes from their own garden and white cabbage with a lump of butter and a mug of separated milk. My memory of this and the sun shimmering in the window is like it only happened yesterday. Sometimes at night we would have a bit of marble cake for our late tea. Sometimes we would have coco. I remember some of the people who lived nearby, Fitzgeralds, the Martins, O'Dwyers, Tommy Lane and the Dunne family who lived across the yard. Mr Dunne played the bag pipes with Anglesboro Pipe Band they were a very quiet family.

Autumn, hay in the barn and generally a time for tidying up. I remember cutting timber with a cross cut saw one of us at each end. I felt I was a real man doing such work, Danny showed me how to breast a ditch with whitethorn something I still love to see done today. So I came to the end of my year in my first job, it is sixty years ago but my thoughts of the great times I had at the start of my life. The friendship with Margaret Vaughan nee Kelly and her sister Alice is still a great part of my life today. Many jobs have I had in my life but none holds the wonderful memory of my first job at Danny Kelly's in Ballyduff Ballylanders Co Limerick.

A true Story
Denis Heffernan
October 2020



Stay Healthy this Christmas

Christmas is a time of celebration and as such, there is the tendency to treat ourselves to some of the nicer things in life, and why not, after the year everyone has had, the few treats are more deserved than ever.

It is important though to think about what we are eating and to do our best to eat healthily, remembering our 5-a-day and to exercise every day to keep us healthy both in mind and body. We hope the following helpful hints might be of use to you in the run up to Christmas and indeed beyond.

Healthy Ireland

2020 has been quite a year, and we all need a little help to get us through. Starting with a plan to do one small thing that will keep you well is a great way to look after your mental health and wellbeing. Find ideas from all our partners on what you can do and what's available in your local community please visit; <https://www.gov.ie/en/campaigns/healthy-ireland/>



Shop Local

This year more than ever is the time to Shop Local when buying products or services this winter, you will be helping local businesses, supporting local jobs, and your community. Check out your Local Enterprise Office for more information of local suppliers' *#LookForLocal*.



Remember to buy Irish, not just at Christmas and in doing so your support will make such a difference to our economy.

As we enter the festive season, our thoughts turn to food and delicious treats. There are some great websites with loads of hints and tips on food not just for Christmas but all year round, with meal planners, vegetable seasonal calendars etc.

<https://stopfoodwaste.ie/>



STOPFoodWaste.ie

Planning & Shopping

By making small changes to how we plan, shop and prepare food we can cut our food waste and save money at the same time. Reducing food waste should start before we even go to the shops! Please see attached link for more details regarding planning your shopping & making a meal plan.

<https://stopfoodwaste.ie/resources/planning-shopping>

Tidy Towns & Community Groups

They also have a section dedicated to Tidy Towns & Community Groups, to help spread the word about food waste prevention, also included is a section on home or community composting. Please see the attach link for more details

<https://stopfoodwaste.ie/resources/communities/tidy-towns-community-resources>

Christmas

There is also a section on Christmas, tips to help survive the Christmas Grocery Shop, a Christmas Recipe booklet to download and tips on what to do with the Christmas Leftovers

<https://stopfoodwaste.ie/?s=christmas>

Safe food

This is another valuable resource regarding food safety & healthy eating, this website also contains tips on batch cooking, how to improve your kitchen skills and loads of recipes. Maybe check out their 30 minute dinner sections and if you feel like something tasty while you sit and write some Christmas cards, why not try their Yuletide Iced Muffins or Spicy Christmas

Biscuits, they do look very tasty.

<https://www.safefood.net/>



Unwanted Gifts & Packaging

With all the extra packaging and wrapping and the few treats, we must remember to dispose of all the waste material in a proper manner.

Recycle as much as possible, separate your waste out for your bins and make use of your compost bin if you have been provided with one. Visit www.repak.ie to find out what you can recycle. Many towns and villages have community compost facilities; check them out in your area.



Bottles and jars are widely recyclable, if you visit your bottle bank and they are full, please be responsible and bring your items away with you and try it another day, this time of year, they can fill up very quick, be patient, it will be worth it knowing you have done your bit. Think about upcycling also, I recently saw where old Delph teapots were mounted on timber supports and used as bird feeders and bird-boxes, remember to feed the birds too especially during any colder spells.

Check out Birdwatch Ireland <https://birdwatchireland.ie/> for hints and tips on feeding Garden Birds

<https://birdwatchireland.ie/irelands-birds-birdwatch-ireland/garden-birds/>



I'm sure many people and Tidy Towns Groups are participating in the Irish Garden Bird Survey which runs from 30th November to February 2021, please see details

<https://birdwatchireland.ie/our-work/surveys-research/research-surveys/irish-garden-bird-survey/>

Unwanted Gifts

It can be a time of plenty for some but not for others, so if you have received gifts you do not have use for, perhaps consider donating them to charity, your local charity shop would love to receive your unwanted items which they can then turn into cash to support those in your community who are in need.

Ennis TidyTowns – Factsheet No. 7 – Water Bottle Filling Station



WATER BOTTLE FILLING STATION

ENNIS TIDY TOWNS



☎ 065-6842988, 0872787463

✉ INFO@ENNISTIDYTOWNS.COM

🌐 WWW.ENNISTIDYTOWNS.COM

📘 FACEBOOK.COM/ENNISTIDYTOWNS

🐦 @ENNISTIDYTOWNS

💡 BACKGROUND TO IDEA

1. We sought to develop an initiative that combatted single use plastics.
2. Committee members highlighted the impact of plastic bottles and how we had just developed a project on reusable water bottles for our local Athletics Club.
3. Others commented on how Ennis used to have a number of water pumps when they were growing up and how it would be wonderful to have these again.
4. This led us to the idea of researching modern, safe outdoor water dispensers.
5. In consultation with Clare County Council it was considered that a water fountain could have health and safety implications so a water bottle filling unit was chosen

📋 HOW IT WAS DELIVERED

- Unit, Elkay LK4400BF, was sourced from an Irish company for €3,936
- We used the Tidy Towns Pobal grant aid to fund the project
- It was located in a central location beside an existing public water supply
- The unit was installed by Clare County Council
- The Council also ensure the unit is subject to a regular cleaning regime

📊 RESULTS & LESSONS LEARNED

- Early engagement with your local authority is key to ensure everyone knows what is being planned and what is 'possible'.
- Where a NEW water connection is required you need permission from Irish Water.
- Whilst a very worthwhile venture, it requires a lot of negotiation - be steadfast in the persistent, but respectful, pressure you apply!

**SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT GOALS
(SDG) ACHIEVED**



Sincere thanks to Ennis TidyTowns for yet another sustainable living Fact Sheet. No. 7 deals with the issues around plastic bottles and recognising their earlier initiatives on reusable water bottles and their Community Cups project, which we brought to you in their first fact sheet in Issue 3 of the newsletter earlier this year.

Making great use of funding from their TidyTowns grant the water station was placed in a central location beside an existing public water supply.

Collaboration is very evident here with Clare County Council. Good work everyone.

This project is so beneficial on many levels and provides a wonderful service to locals, tourists, recreational users etc. This month again we see how one project can meet more than one of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG'S), in this case, four of the goals are delivered upon.

Thank you as always to Ennis TidyTowns for their sustainable initiatives and for sharing their knowledge with us all throughout 2020, they have really given us plenty to think about. Well done to everyone involved in these different initiatives.

Poets Corner

How much we took for granted.....

Oh yes, how much we took for granted, so many of us say
when we think of times of freedom before Covid-19 came our way
you'd stroll through towns or villages as carefree as you please
but then this Covid-19 swept through Ireland like a breeze

The Ploughing, it was cancelled, the Eurovision too
The Leaving Cert and our TidyTowns to name another few
we must stay six feet apart; Social distance - we hear so much
But thanks to Zoom and Skype calls, we can all still stay in touch

Our litter picks were hampered, our projects put on hold
Our activities all curtailed unless, essential, we were told
But TidyTowners can't be beaten, we are a tougher crew
Determined, strong, together, we will see this problem through

Stay it seems to be the word, that is so much on our tongue
Stay safe, stay home, stay separate, but most of all, stay strong
At times, it can be frightening; you might think you're on your own
But please remember, we are in this together, you are not alone

It was great to hear the Minister say, the competition will proceed
We long to get back to our activities, that is all we need
We'll plant and paint and tidy with sustainability in sight
TidyTowns groups are determined to get everything just right

Sadly there were no trophies or medals handed out this year
oh how we all missed the build-up to the Helix atmosphere
onward you will venture and look forward to the day
when the 2021 entry form is full and sent on its way

But for now we must remember to give each other space
To wash our hands and mind ourselves and cover up our face
But Christmas is approaching and it's time to take a rest
To all the volunteers and their families we wish the very best

Look forward to working with you all in 2021
The TT unit.

Thank you to everyone who sent in poems to us during the year.

We are happy to feature them here in the newsletter and have been very impressed with the talent out there among the hard working volunteers.

For the festive season and with the year we have all had in dealing with the pandemic, we decided here in the TidyTowns unit that we would have a go ourselves.

We hope you all enjoy it. As the saying goes, we won't give up the day job just yet!!!

Denis from Emly has shared his poem "Go for it 2021" with us and we are sure it will sit well with you all. Thank you Denis, you are so talented.



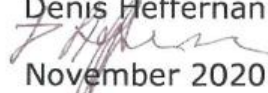
Go for it in 2021

20-20 is nearly gone,
But Tidy Towns we just carry on,
So for a winter's day please check your list,
And see what's best for next year's test.

May I first suggest you check your plan,
To see where you can improve your marks,
Check each section and make a plan,
Of what you can do for 2021.

Always remember small things count,
Things you can do without stressing out,
Keep your work load simple and always be safe,
Wear a high vis vest so you can be seen.

Top of my list is keep your place green,
It is not as hard as it may seem,
God bless you all for the work you do,
Don't fret about things you cannot do.

Denis Heffernan

November 2020



Celebrating our Budding Photographers

Cheese!

In recent issues, we alerted you to a photograph competition we were running. We were overwhelmed with the level of interest in this with several hundred photographs submitted.

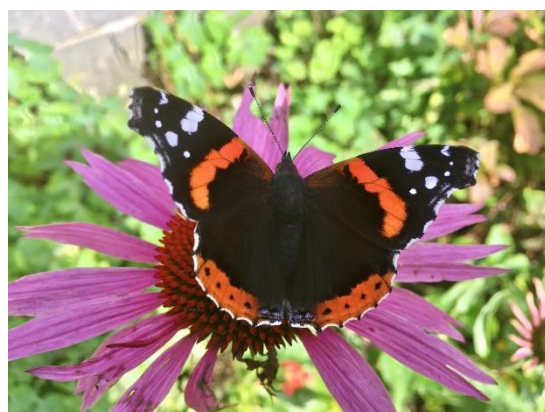
Here are a sample of some of those that made it to the shortlisting process.



Belmullet TidyTowns



Boherbue TidyTowns



Claregalway TidyTowns



Strokestown TT



Ballycotton TT



Creggs TT



The Naul TT

Such wonderful images of community work, projects developed and scenes of nature at its finest. There were so many to choose from but a number of judges all selected the following entry as our runner up.

Congratulations to Mullaghmore TidyTowns in Co. Sligo.

Photograph taken on October 18th, 2020 during clean-up of their local beach, Mullaghmore Beach, Co Sligo. Submitted by Mullaghmore Active Community Group. (which incorporates the local TidyTowns group)



The Judges unanimously selected the entry from Clarecastle in Co. Clare as the national winner of the 2020 TidyTowns Photography Competition.



Picture taken By Christy Leyden from Clarecastle TidyTowns.

Title for Caption is as displayed on the Mural – “Never underestimate the power of a Planted seed”

This picture says a lot about the spirit of TidyTowns, in building community pride and displaying the various talents we have in our community.

Junior Competition

We also featured a junior element in the competition and the following picture submitted by Fhionn, aged 13. His entry is of his sister and dog Tynan. Fhionn tells us that “He thinks it shows how nice our countryside is and how clean our local amenity for locals to enjoy. Glaslough and Emyvale TidyTowns are in this area and it shows how the locals appreciate the lovely scenery and how well it's kept”



The TY group from Bailieborough Community School submitted our winning entry in the junior element. In the picture are Nikolay Hlyavyn, Mark Monaghan, Ryan Smith, Thomas Cahill, Aran O'Hanlon, Tadhg Barry and their teacher Mr. Donohoe. The boys were on their weekly litter pick up around the lake in Bailieborough on a misty morning. Our TY Community Group carry out litter picking every Thursday

with their teacher, Mr. Donohoe.

They tidy up the area around the Town Lake weekly and the local walkway there. Cavan County Council provided litter pickers and Hi Vis vests earlier in the year.



They boys have arranged to plant trees and shrubs at the roundabout in Bailieborough in spring 2021. They planted spring bulbs at the statue of Mary on the school grounds as everyone can see them as they drive into the town. Many students then regularly help in their own communities.

Congratulations to all our winners and thank you to all of who entered, such fantastic pictures. Prizes will be working their way to you as soon as possible. Well Done.

Keep in Touch

Well that brings us to the end of the newsletter for this month and indeed for this year. It has been a strange one. We want to thank all of our contributors for their input and for sharing their stories with us, thank you to the poets and the photographers and to our sponsors and adjudicators for your input and support during 2020.

We hope you found the articles and initiatives featured during the year interesting and informative. Please continue to share with us and we can spread the TidyTowns message even further. The Newsletter issues to close on 1,000 groups every month, we encourage you to share it further in your communities through notice boards, WhatsApp groups etc. We also share it with all our sponsors, the national panel of TidyTowns Adjudicators, Heritage Officers, PPN's and a range of other bodies who have expressed an interest in it, not to mention the TidyTowns website, Facebook and Twitter. So you can see by sharing your activities with us, the potential for getting your message out there is endless.

We would like to close for the year thanking you, the TidyTowns volunteers for your constant support and dedication to your towns and villages and to us here in the TidyTowns unit. We very much look forward to engaging with you in 2021 and to delivering the competition after our short break, who knows, the break may result in some new ways of working and in a greater appreciation of the Trojan work put in by volunteers in creating sustainable communities the length and breadth of the country.

We wish you and yours good health, happiness and peace this Christmas and hope that 2021 is a healthy, productive and prosperous year for you all.

Guímid Nollaig shona oraibh féin agus ar do theaghlaigh, agus sláinte mhaith do 2021.

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

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Government Buildings, Ballina, Co Mayo

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Tel: 076 100 6836



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

