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SuperValu Tidy Towns Newsletter

Issue 2023-1

- Welcome
- Greystones Tidy Towns
- Mullinahone Tidy Towns
- Tidy Towns Grant Funding
- Planting and Care of Trees
- Poets Corner
- 2023 SuperValu Tidy Towns Competition
- 2022 Regional Awards
- 2022 Cash Prizes
- Keep in Touch

Hello Friends,

Welcome to our first newsletter of 2023. We hope the New Year is off to a good start for all of you and that as we begin to see some small signs of spring, our focus turns to the imminent launch of the 2023 SuperValu Tidy Towns competition. This year we celebrate the 65th anniversary of the competition. In those years, thousands of loyal volunteers have made such a tremendous difference to our villages, our towns and to our Country. We are indebted to all of them and to all of you, who still work tirelessly to make your place a better place.

Speaking at the awards ceremony in 2022 in The RDS, Minister Heather Humphreys T.D. praised you all for your commitment and dedication and for your resilience in recent difficult years. At the event, the Minister announced a funding package of €1.5 Million and we would encourage all eligible groups to ensure they avail of these funds.

We would like to keep you informed as best we can. If there are any particular areas that you would like to see featured here in the newsletter, please let us know and we can collaborate with our Sponsors and our Adjudicators and bring you the most up to date information available.

We would also love to hear from you on any initiatives or projects you are working on or planning, together with any poems or stories you would like to share with the wider Tidy Towns family. Thank you all for your continued efforts and we look forward to working with you all during the 2023 competition.



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



<https://twitter.com/TidyTownnsIre>



<https://www.tidytownns.ie>



Greystones TidyTowns – Supporting Ukrainian friends.

In April of 2022 Greystones Tidy Towns commenced a campaign to Turn Greystones Yellow in support of our new Ukrainian neighbours. We purchased seeds and compostable pots from local garden centres and embarked on a Facebook social media campaign to inform the community about this initiative. The campaign reached over 10,000 people organically through our Greystones Tidy Towns Pages.

“Turning Greystones Yellow” was a four-pronged initiative”



1. Growing thousands of sunflower seeds to plant in key public areas in Greystones in May 2022. This involved a number of children and adults planting the seeds in early April 2022.

2. Contacting local schools, community groups and churches to see if they would like to be involved in this initiative. All schools and local organisations wanted to be involved. Greystones Tidy Towns commenced distribution of the sunflower seeds to these organisations for planting. Some of those on board included St Kevin’s Primary School, Templecarrig Post Primary School, St Patricks Church, Greystones Scouts, and Knockeevin Montessori. Greystones Tidy Towns supplied the seeds and compostable pots to the schools and other local community organisations.



3. Involving our new Ukrainian neighbours. A group of Tidy Towns volunteers spent a morning planting over 1,000 sunflower seeds with our new Ukrainian friends. The Ukrainians were delighted to be involved and many were expert at growing sunflowers.

4. Selling sunflower seeds and seedlings to raise funds for local Ukrainian families. Tidy Town Volunteers sold over 250 sunflowers to the local community so that they could help to “Turn Greystones Yellow” in support of Ukraine. The money raised was used to purchase vouchers for a local store for use by Ukrainian families. A local registered charity distributed the vouchers.

By August 2022, sunflowers were blooming throughout Greystones in gardens and in public places. We plan on continuing this initiative in 2023.



Mullinahone TidyTown's River Clean Up

As part of our 3 year plan we decided to tackle the small river which flows through Mullinahone Village and clean it up. The river is a tributary of the River Anner which is mentioned in the poem " The Irish Peasant Girl" by Charles Joseph Kickham native of Mullinahone.

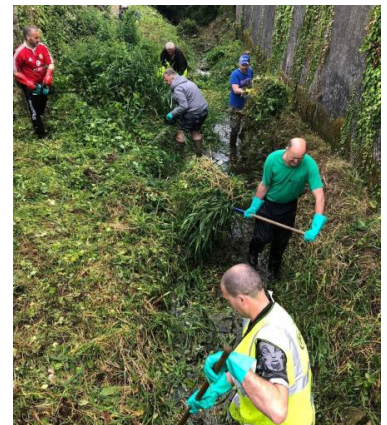
" She lived beside the Anner at the foot of Slievenamon"

The river was very overgrown and unsightly. The foliage was gathering rubbish and debris along the banks and had become an eyesore. The river was so overgrown that over the past years it had led to flooding within the village and particularly to dwelling houses built beside it.



With advice guidance from Paddy O' Dwyer, Tipperary County Council & assistance from LAWPRO & Carrick Municipal District we set a date for works to commence. We put out an appeal for volunteers and on Saturday 9th July, 2022 one of the hottest days of the year numerous volunteers arrived. Decked out wellies with and with an assortment of tools we set to work.

We cleaned away as much of the debris and foliage as possible, cut back the vegetations and removed ivy from adjoining stone walls and created deflector areas for the river to run through. We were amazed at how much work we completed, leaving the river looking so much cleaner. It was back breaking work but we were thrilled with the end result! The works were completed in a safe manner so as not to disturb the river bed. Our hope is that the clean river where oxygen bubbles are swirling around once more will encourage biodiversity and provide an important habitat for native plants, fish and wildlife.



We plan to keep maintaining the river and to put some bird perches to attract native birds back to the river and some signage showcasing the history of the river. Even in periods of heavy rain our river is running freely which is wonderful to see.



We would like to dedicate our article to our dear friend and helper Evelyn Morrissey who passed away last October. Evelyn's family are all valued members of our committee and we loved to see Evelyn on our weekly meet ups where we enjoyed her good humour and suggestions. May Evelyn's sweet gentle soul rest in peace in the gardens of heaven.

Thanks to Áine Brett for sharing this with us and for dedicating the piece to Evelyn. The images show the before and after, well done everyone, fantastic work.

TidyTowns Funding



An Roinn Forbartha
Tuaithe agus Pobail
Department of Rural and
Community Development

At the 2022 SuperValu TidyTowns awards ceremony, the Minister for Rural and Community Development, Ms. Heather Humphreys T.D. announced a €1.5 Million funding package for TidyTowns groups around the country.

This funding is available to any TidyTowns group that entered the SuperValu TidyTowns competition in either 2021 or 2022. Funding of €1,000 is available to Village entrants with €2,000 available for those in the Small Town category. Large Town entries will qualify for €3,000 and Large Urban Centres will be eligible to apply for up to €4,000.

Pobal is administering the funding on behalf of the Department and all eligible groups have now been contacted. If you have not received an email, can we ask you to check your “Spam” or “Junk” folders, if there is nothing there, please get in touch with us as soon as possible as the closing date for submitting applications for this funding is February 28th.

The funding announced by Minister Humphreys in October brings the total amount of funding provided by the Department of Rural and Community Development since it was established in 2017 to €8.1 Million. This funding has provided support to in excess of 1,000 TidyTowns groups across the country.

We would encourage all eligible groups to avail of this funding to help you prepare for the 2023 SuperValu TidyTowns competition or to maintain or progress some of your wonderful projects and initiatives. Funding can be put towards a range of items and initiatives, all of the categories are listed in the material issued by Pobal in later December 2022.

The Planting and Care of trees

An extract from the TidyTowns Handbook

Choosing the right tree species

When planting new trees in towns and villages, there is a wide selection to choose from. Both native and introduced species can be suitable for urban settings. Generally, it is preferable to use native species, such as oak and alder, on the fringe of settlements as they blend well with the rural environment and create a more natural, informal effect as well as promote biodiversity.

Knowledge of what grows well on similar sites nearby is a good guide. Some introduced species, especially beech, chestnut and lime, can also be suitable on the fringe of settlements or where required to retain local character. Other introduced species are more suitable for planting within the urban area, in the streetscape, green areas and other public spaces.



An elegant avenue of lime and hornbeam trees on the approach to Ballingarry, Co. Tipperary.

Some introduced species may endure exposed coastal locations better than natives, such as the evergreen oak (in areas not liable to severe frosts). Trees that form shallow, surface roots, such as ornamental cherries, can disrupt footpaths and paved surfaces and are best suited to planting on open spaces and green areas. Where trees are planted to create an avenue effect along approach roads and other transport corridors they should be of a single species at a consistent spacing along a route.

Other factors to consider:

- Sufficient space available for root and crown spread at maturity. Roots spread beyond the branch area of the tree with most roots found in the top 45cm of soil and most absorbing roots found in the top 15cm of soil.
- Many Irish place names are associated with or derived from trees and this may be reflected when choosing tree species e.g. Glenbeigh, or in Irish, Gleann Beithe, means valley of the birch trees

- The future height and width of a tree should be considered to ensure compatibility with the scale and character of a space and surrounding buildings at full maturity.
- Colour: Trees with distinctive coloured foliage such as purple hazel and copper beech, variegated maples should be used sparingly as the vibrant colours can appear over-whelming. Rows of trees with crimson leaves should usually be avoided as they can be visually oppressive while trees with variegated foliage often appear gawdy and unnatural. Trees of strong individual character (e.g. copper beech) are best used as specimens with plenty of space around them.



Norway maple trees grow tall and provide good autumn colour

- Seasonal interest: select trees that can bring year-round interest, i.e. trees with attractive bark, vibrant autumn leaf colour, flowers, catkins or berries, and evergreen species in appropriate locations.
- Fruit, berries and nuts: Trees such as horse chestnut, hawthorn, mountain ash and whitebeam, all produce attractive displays of fruit or berries. Although highly suitable in green areas and parklands, fruit-bearing trees may not be suitable in streets or in pedestrian areas for safety and cleansing reasons.
- Trees are subject to an increasing number of pests and diseases. Avoiding over reliance on a narrow range of species will limit the impact of these threats. The resilience of our tree population can be enhanced by increasing the diversity and variety of new trees planted. However, where the same type of tree species creates an avenue or clearly defined group within part of a street, new and replacement trees should be of the same or closely matching species in the interest of visual continuity.
- Use large canopy trees wherever space allows. Large-growing tree species confer much greater environmental benefits to urban areas than small trees
- Wildlife and biodiversity value - many trees, such as lime, sycamore, horse chestnut and willow provide excellent bee forage.

Some key points to remember when planting are:

- Do not let the roots of bareroot trees dry out in transit or on site. Keep them wrapped in plastic or covered with moist earth.
- Make sure the planting hole is big enough to take the roots fully spread out.
- Do not plant too deep. Keep the 'soil mark' at the base of the stem at ground level.
- Always water the plant immediately after planting.
- Staking is necessary for any newly planted tree, over 2m to prevent wind-rock and movement of the roots which can slow down establishment.
- A double stake is used for staking containergrown and root-balled trees. Two stakes are inserted opposite each other and secured to the trunk by long ties or a timber crossbar and tie. This method is also useful on windy sites.
- An angled stake is used for trees planted on slopes. Drive a stake in before or after planting at a 45-degree angle, leaning into the prevailing wind.

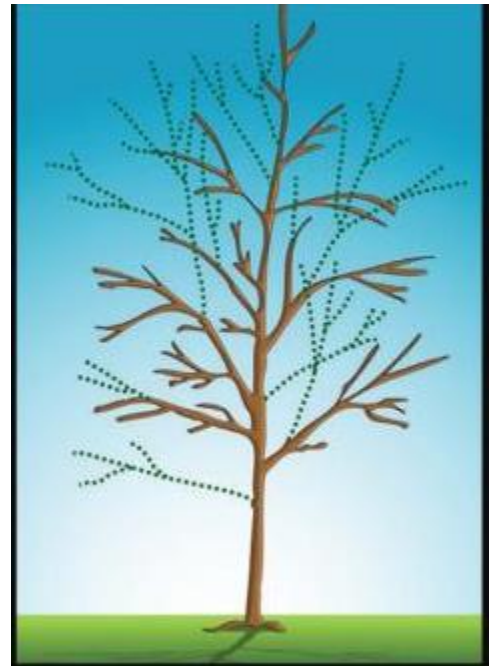
Aftercare of newly planted trees



- For a tree to become established, a maintenance programme should be followed for at least the first two growing seasons, and ideally for five years after planting. It can be based on the following;
 - Watering - carried out regularly during the first two growing seasons. There is often a dry period from April to June and many newly planted trees die at this time through inadequate watering. During prolonged dry weather, the soil around young trees should be soaked thoroughly at least every week. For semi-mature specimens continue deep watering for five years after planting.
 - A single stake is the standard method for staking bare-root trees, with the stake inserted before planting. The stake should be about one-third the height of the tree and is inserted on the side of the prevailing wind so that the tree is blown away from the stake.
 - Tree stakes and ties should be checked regularly. Tree ties may need adjustment where they have become too tight, loose stakes should be firmed and broken ties replaced as soon as possible to avoid damage to the tree. Ties and stakes should be removed after two or three growing seasons, or once a tree is stable.
- Control weed growth keeping a circle around young trees, for an area of at least 1 metre in diameter, clear of grass, weeds, or other plants. This reduces competition for moisture and nutrients and also helps to protect tree trunks from lawnmower damage. Applying 50-100mm of mulch will keep soil temperatures cool, retain water, and discourage weeds. Top-up and replace mulch as needed.
- Apply fertiliser if absolutely necessary. Never fertilise stressed trees.
- Remove dead or injured branches immediately.

Formative pruning:

- Young, immature trees benefit from pruning in their formative years. This should be carried out in accordance with good arboricultural practice.
- It involves removing crossing branches and potentially weak forks to encourage a good natural shape and reduce the need for major pruning when the tree is mature.
- Once established, the requirement to prune trees should be minimal, to remove diseased or dead branches or carry out crown lifting.
- The branches of wider canopy trees can be gradually removed, ideally over the first 6-10 years, as the trees grow taller to lift the crown and provide an eventual clear stem of 2.5m in pedestrian areas, 3m on cycleways and up to 4.5m on streets and vehicular routes.
- All pruning should leave trees with a well-balanced, natural appearance.



Care of established trees

Old, mature and established trees significantly contribute to the unique character and identity of a landscape setting and often hold a special place in the hearts of local people. For this reason, they require careful management to ensure their longevity. While the majority may require little or no intervention, the following are considerations in their management:

Protect tree bark from damage: Avoid using weed trimmers or lawn mowers around trees which can cause damage to the bark. Hand-pull weeds instead or mulch the area around the base of the tree to avoid this problem. Alternatively leave longer grass around established tree groups to reduce the amount of grass cutting. Do not fix signs, flags or other items to the trunks of trees as nailing anything into a tree is intrusive and every wound creates a potential entry point for decay • **Disease:** Be vigilant for any signs or symptoms of disease, stress or decay and, where necessary, seek appropriate advice from a qualified arborist.

Avoid planting at the base of trees: The practice of planting annual bedding plants or other planting at the base of trees is discouraged, as the root zone of the tree is disturbed annually by cultivating the soil and digging planting holes. Bedding plants also compete with the tree roots for air and moisture. Built edges/ planter walls around trees are also discouraged as building up soil around a tree can suffocate its roots and cause a tree to decline.



Ivy on trees: Ivy provides a sheltered habitat for a range of wildlife and is a great source of autumn nectar for insects and late winter fruit for birds. It is not parasitic and does not directly affect the health of the trees it climbs. However, where ivy has taken hold on young, weak or mature trees, it may compete for water and nutrients and suppress healthy growth. The density of its bushy growth can obscure cavities or defects from view and increases the tree's vulnerability to wind damage. In these limited situations, removal of ivy may be deemed necessary for risk management purposes. Ivy should not be removed as a matter of course. It is a native plant and woodland species.

Removal of sucker growth: Some trees such as limes are prone to sucker growths that appear from the root system at the base of the tree. This can detract from the health of a tree as energy is put into producing these shoots. On roadside trees, suckers can be a visibility hazard for road users. Sucker growth should be removed as part of annual maintenance.

Pruning: Older trees do not tolerate pruning as well as younger trees and substantial or unnecessary pruning should be avoided. No branch should be removed without a good reason. Seek the advice and services of an insured tree care professional for large pruning jobs, hazard trees, and insect or disease problems. Non-professionals should never prune near utility wires



Topping of Trees: Do not top trees to reduce height as this is not good arboricultural practice. It causes large wounds, exposing trees to decay pathogens and causing their long-term decline. A topped tree is an ugly tree, disfigured even when it regrows as well as being potentially unsafe. Regrowth resulting from 'topping' will often be denser than the original crown and be weakly attached to the branches it develops from.

With sincere thanks to Dr Christy Boylan who has prepared this piece to support groups with regard to the proper planting, care and maintenance of trees, which are one of our most valuable assets.

Further information can be found in the TidyTowns Handbook by visiting the website at www.tidytowns.ie

Poets Corner

February Energy

February is here, I say yippee,
Daffodils and snowdrops everywhere I see,
Dandelions and primroses next on the list,
While big bumble bees fly from their nest.

Winter behind us now, gone with the wind,
I hope you all rested and are now back to be tested,
A new Tidy Town Year 2023,
Look forward, not backward, and you will feel free.

First on the list, check out your plan,
Make sure it is up to date if you can,
Then check out last year's report,
And then you know you are ready to go.

Don't get stressed with too much to do,
Plan your work, don't be leaving it to a few,
Ask for help from around the town,
You might be surprised with the help that's around.

Keep it simple, especially the planting,
Not much begonias, petunias or pansies,
Herbaceous plants are top of my list,
Then some herbs, they are great fillers in
in tubs or boxes they all look great,
So play your part, and make that change.

So now to finish & wish you all luck,
Pace your work and don't get stressed,
Enjoy what you do, just one last thing,
Forget pesticides, they kill every living thing.

Denis Heffernan,
February 2023.

Thank you as always Denis for sharing your words with us, some very encouraging and wise words here for us all to ponder on. Keep up the good work Denis.

2023 SuperValu TidyTowns Competition

We hope to launch to the 2023 SuperValu TidyTowns Competition in March. As usual we will give 6 to 7 weeks in which to complete the entry form. Entry this year will be by electronic means only and late entries cannot be accepted.

We would encourage groups to be pulling material together at this stage remembering to have a clear map outlining all of your projects for 2023. The map can be a hand drawn one and does not have to be over elaborate, just include a few landmarks so that the Adjudicator will be able to navigate through your town or village with ease and

be able to find all of your projects. It would be helpful also if you indicated parking and rest rooms in the location.

A three or five year plan is also part of the entry requirement. This again need not be over complicated, it is about you demonstrating an awareness to your Adjudicator of what the competition is about, what are the challenges you face and what are your key areas where you plan to complete improvement works or projects in the short to medium term.

This year as always, we have a number of special awards; the closing date for these will be 3-4 weeks after the main competition to allow you time to give serious consideration to entering some or indeed all of them. There is fantastic prize money up for grabs with these special awards so make sure and give some through to them.

2022 Regional awards Ceremonies

We are working on finalising dates for the regional awards ceremonies at which we will present all of our winners with their certificates and medals following the 2022 SuperValu TidyTowns competition. We hope to be in contact with the relevant four locations in the near future after which we will start to issue invitations to the groups concerned. Once we have our dates confirmed, we will share them with you all here in the Newsletter, these will not be taking place before St. Patrick's Day so we are looking at later March and into April.

2022 Cash Prizes

We have made great progress in issuing cash prizes following the 2022 SuperValu TidyTowns competition. 85% of prizes were processed before Christmas; we are currently at 92% of all prizes paid out. New Revenue guidelines require all groups receiving payment to be registered. Some of our winners in the 2022 competition were not set up on our financial system, as this was their first prize. We would love to get all prizes paid out to groups as soon as possible, so if you have yet to receive your cash prize, please engage with us with regard to getting your groups set up. We have been in touch with all groups but some have yet to respond, so we will continue to work with you in the coming weeks to get the required material in order for us to process your well-deserved cash prize. Congratulations to all our winners.

Anne, Helen & John

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