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of Rural & Community Development

## SUPERVALU TIDYTOWNS NEWSLETTER ISSUE 2021-8

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TidyTown Family & Friends,

Welcome to the August edition of the SuperValu TidyTown competition. We hope to find you and your communities all well. The year is passing by so fast, but still plenty to do and no doubt you are all so busy. Judging by over 840 entries received to this year's competition, you have been very busy indeed.

We are truly delighted with the response to the competition this year, we provided a three week extension for the special awards part of the competition and the level of entries has greatly increased here too, so thank you on behalf of all our special award sponsors for your interest and support.

We would encourage all groups who have entered to please ensure your town or village is registered. You can still view the full list by visiting the TidyTown website and checking under your County to see if your area is listed. If you have entered and are not on the list, please get in touch with us immediately. Use the link below to check for your entry;

<https://www.tidytowns.ie/competition/registered-entries/>

Adjudication is well on its way at this point and many of the results are coming in, still a few weeks to go and then we will engage with the Adjudicators to get their final results for the 2021 SuperValu TidyTown competition. All will be revealed in November, but we are unsure of the format of the awards ceremony as yet. As soon as we know more on this, we will share it with you. We will be guided by public health advice and what is safe and manageable in the current situation. Regardless of the format in a few short months, we will be announcing who is Ireland's Tidiest Town for 2021.

Keep up the great work, look after yourselves and each other and remember to stay vigilant and adhere to the public health advice, it is only when everyone works together, that we can get beyond these past difficult months and get back to living our lives as we used too.

## Poets Corner

Here again this month we are delighted to feature not one but two poems sent in by our readers, we hope you enjoy them.

Our first poem this month comes from Raphoe in County Donegal. This was penned back in 2004 by Martin Laird from Raphoe TidyTowns.

### **Raphoe**

This is my town  
My own hometown  
A place they call Raphoe  
A City it was once renowned  
I'd like you all to know

Its Castle, Cathedral, and Standing Stones  
Are famous sites to see  
And living here for all my life  
Means all the world to me

Surrounded by God's beauty  
In river, wood, and tree  
And proudly founded by a Saint  
That's in our history

St Columba and St Eunan  
In days long long ago  
Where proud to come and pray here  
In the Monastery of Raphoe

When summer days are drawing in  
And the swallows flying low  
And harvest fields are gold and brown  
In our townlands round Raphoe

Just take me to my own dear town  
And let me take my rest  
Along those lovely country roads  
For it's there I love the best.

Here Martin gives us such a sense of the pride we all have for "Our Place", that pride of place is key to all the TidyTowns groups do around the country. I think these words will encourage readers who have not visited Raphoe to pop it on to their itinerary for their next trip to the North West. Thanks Raphoe TidyTowns for sharing this with us.

In our second poem this month Coon TidyTowns and Heritage Group in County Kilkenny, they tell us about the confluence of the Dinin and Black Rivers, tributaries of the Nore, is at Coolcullen Bridge- below the Village of Coon, Co. Kilkenny.

***Gliding snakelike through the rushes,forming pools below Rossmore***

***probing,rushing,gushing onwards for a date with sister Nore.***

***Restless now its progress hindered by ten thousand Sitka Spruce***

***muddied water losing moisture,snarled branches, tangled roots.***

***Slower now and brooding anxious flows more slowly on past Coon***

***to a joyful meeting with its twin below the weir.***

***Then, refreshed, renewed, replenished like a fresh horse given rein***

***will toss its head again with relish, on towards Dysart, almost home.***

One gets a wonderful vision here of the river as it travels, the author here has a lovely way of describing this and in bringing us along even though we are many many miles away. Really lovely piece, well done to Coon TidyTowns and Heritage Group and thank you for sharing this with the TidyTowns family.

Many thanks to all who have sent in poems or stories, they have inspired so many and we continuously receive such lovely comments on the poetry and stories that feature. Please keep sending them in, there is such a well of talent in the TidyTowns family.

## **Reeling in the Years - TidyTowns**

The SuperValu TidyTowns competition has been in place since 1958. In that time well over 2,000 different towns and villages have entered. We currently have in the region of 1,000 active TidyTowns groups in place around the county.

Some of the groups have been with the competition from the very start and have entered every single year while others are brand new in for 2021. Whatever you're TidyTowns history is, you are welcome to the competition and we are delighted to have you along for the journey.

No doubt some of you have some memorabilia from the early years or maybe even more recently, if so we would love to hear from you. We are looking at doing a feature in the newsletter later in the year on the way the competition has evolved over the years. Perhaps you have an old invite to an awards ceremony or a regional awards ceremony, an old adjudication report, an old certificate or an old entry form. All of these items will show us how the competition was delivered in times gone by and might make for interesting reading for some of our readers.

Please do not sent original items to us, if you have material, perhaps you could take a photograph of it and send it in to us. Keep a watch out later in the year to see if your

material is featured. Perhaps you have a story of a trip to an awards ceremony or an award your group were presented with, we would love to hear from you.

## SuperValu TidyTowns Survey

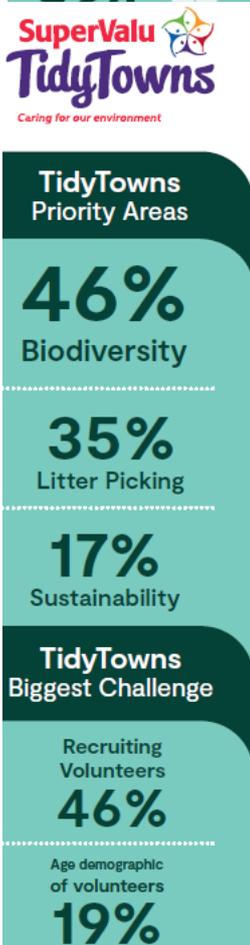


You may recall earlier in the year we informed you of a survey that was being conducted to try to capture some of the great work done by TidyTowns groups around the country each year.

The information given has no effect on your participation in the competition, it was just to put some numbers around the various activities that volunteers engage in each year.

The data coming out of the survey is so impressive. We see that over 3,500 bags of litter are removed from our streets and green spaces every week by TidyTowns volunteers.

Our sponsor SuperValu, who have been sponsoring the competition for 30 years now, have kindly sponsored 10 SuperValu Gift Cards, 10 survey respondents have been chosen and these groups have been contacted and have received their SuperValu Gift Cards.



Thanks to everyone who participated in the survey.

## Clonmellon TidyTowns – Westmeath – Newsletter

Back in the February Issue, we brought you an article from Clonmellon TidyTowns in County Westmeath. John Wilson had got in touch and shared with us a copy of their Autumn Winter 2020 newsletter. John has been in touch again and has kindly sent on their Spring 2021 edition.



We have found our own newsletter is being very well received and expect that the community in Clonmellon equally appreciate their newsletter. In recent times, given all the restrictions and cocooning and the like, a newsletter is a great way to keep in touch with your community. It can be done in a very sustainable way and shared through your social media groups and maybe printed off for those who are not accessing those communications modes yet. It could be something your group might consider.

In the current issue the groups tell us all about their Farmers Market, their Community Garden and also great work that is ongoing on their historic Killua Cemetery. We are also told about their Hanging Baskets for 2021 and the newsletter contains lots of local news of interest to the local community.

## Bat Conservation Ireland & University College Dublin's Batlab

This is a collaborative project, supported and financed by The Community Foundation for Ireland and National Parks and Wildlife Service, to investigate and explore the ecosystem services that bats provide to us. Ecosystem services are the benefits to humans provided by the natural environment and from healthy ecosystems. A core aim of this initiative will be to identify how bats are helping to control insect pests in Ireland.

Bat Conservation Ireland's Dr Niamh Roche pointed out the important role of citizen scientists in Ireland: "Bat Conservation Ireland's work has been

helped immeasurably by thousands of members of the public who have not hesitated to pitch into our schemes for monitoring and detecting bats across the island of



Ireland. With this project, we are asking for help from those who play a key role in Irish bat conservation – custodians of bat roosts. By participating they will find out more about the species of bat they host along with information on what kinds of insects bats feed on in their area.”

Members of the public who host a bat roost, in or around their properties, are invited to contribute to this citizen science exercise by collecting droppings and sending them to the UCD lab. There is a very simple protocol and volunteers can download or watch a video of sampling instructions. Once they are comfortable that they can carry out the steps involved, all they have to do is register on [www.batsandbugs.ie](http://www.batsandbugs.ie) and a sampling pack will be sent out to them.



Experts at UCD will analyse droppings using state-of-the-art DNA metabarcoding techniques, identify the bat species and determine what the bats have been eating.

There are nine species of bats found in Ireland. Sadly, these amazing and valuable creatures can be portrayed negatively by the media and they often get a bad rap – for example, for sucking blood or getting tangled in hair – both fake facts! The priceless ecosystem services they provide to humans include seed dispersal, pollination and pest control.

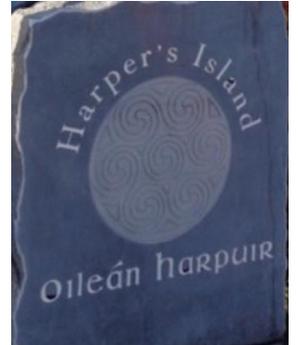
All Irish bats are insectivorous. They eat a range of invertebrates including spiders, moths, dung flies and beetles. Indeed, during the current heatwave that Ireland enjoyed, our nine species of bats could readily be spotted over our houses, fields, hedgerows and waterways feasting on the prolific numbers of midges, mosquitos and other biting insects that interfere with our enjoyment of these warmer evenings and nights.

In Ireland, bats are threatened by habitat loss, climate change and insecticides. The consequences of losing our bats could be enormous. In the U.S., the economic value of bats, in terms of pest control, is estimated to be worth \$22.9 billion per annum. Here in Ireland, it is vital that we gain a better understanding of what bats eat, how much they eat and where.

## Eco Friendly project – Harper’s Island Wetlands

Conor O’Brien from Glounthaune TidyTowns in association with Glounthaune Community Association got in touch to tell us about their Eco Friendly Project on Harper’s Island Wetlands

Harper’s Island Wetlands nature reserve is a key wetland site, which supports one of the most important waterbird roosts in Cork Harbour. It is managed by a partnership between Glounthaune Community Association/TidyTowns, BirdWatch Ireland and Cork County Council. This partnership combines the enthusiasm and practical skills of the local community, the staff resources and access to funding of the local authority, with the scientific expertise in ecological monitoring and conservation management of BirdWatch Ireland. While the priority is to protect and enhance the nature conservation value of the reserve, a key objective has been to develop visitor access to the island in a way that is compatible with this priority.



Overlooking the Wetlands

The sensitivity of the waterbird roosts to disturbance, and their occurrence close to the only access point onto the island, were the challenges that we faced. The solution was the development of a 2 km nature trail, which is screened from the sensitive wetlands by over 800 m of bunds, while two hides provide ample birdwatching opportunities. The bunds were created from material generated by

excavating two 5,000 m<sup>2</sup> (0.5 ha) wader scrapes (shallow ponds) within the wetland zone. These scrapes have been a valuable addition to the reserve, extending the roosting opportunities for waterbirds, as well as developing additional areas of important saltmarsh habitat. Much of the work involved in the development of the nature trail, including construction of one of the hides, was carried out by the local community through the Glounthaune Men’s Shed.

The southern part of the nature trail is a looped walk through a less sensitive area of dry grassland, which allows more expansive access for visitors without creating disturbance risks. In addition to the bunds, this area is separated from the waterbird habitats by a linear wetland that was excavated during construction of the nature trail. This wetland has been planted with Common Reeds (*Phragmites australis*). As well as providing a buffer between the sensitive wetlands and the looped walk, it will also increase the diversity of wetland habitats in the reserve.



Interpretive signage at the entrance

One of the management challenges is the dynamic nature of the wetlands. These have developed over the last 15 years and are still evolving. Ecological and hydrological monitoring programmes have helped us to understand how the system functions through statistical modelling of water levels and investigations of the saltmarsh plant communities. Based on the monitoring results, we have recently introduced a summer horse grazing regime to manage vegetation succession in the wetland habitats.

Future plans include development of a third hide, which will provide views of another important roost site in the adjacent estuary. Further wetland habitat improvement work is also planned. A more ambitious objective for the longer term is the replacement of the sea wall sluice that connects the wetlands to the estuary. This would open up exciting possibilities for enhancing the wetland habitats by providing greater control over the water level regime on the island.

More information is available by viewing a video at; <https://youtu.be/l0wjrv6ruZs>. Well done to all involved in this project and good luck with your future plans.

 <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!!!

## Protect Our Past - OPW

### **Protect our Past – help us to protect Ireland’s unique archaeological and architectural heritage sites**

A new campaign entitled *Protect Our Past* launched recently, highlighting the need for visitors to Ireland’s archaeological sites to be mindful of their actions. The focus of the campaign is to raise awareness of the value, importance and uniqueness of Ireland’s archaeological heritage and to convey some key messages around visitor behaviour at monuments.

The campaign is a joint initiative of the Office of Public Works and National Monuments Service (DHLGH) and they have produced a short guide for visitors on caring for archaeological monuments.

[https://issuu.com/obair/docs/protecting\\_our\\_past](https://issuu.com/obair/docs/protecting_our_past)



Over the coming weeks they will be sharing on their social media channels a series of animated videos which show the impact that inappropriate behaviour can have on archaeological sites. We hope that raising awareness of the value of our heritage sites will lead to an even wider appreciation and understanding of their significance and help in their protection.

### **How you can help**

We encourage you to actively promote this campaign throughout your networks, via social media and all channels available to you, and consider any local heritage sites that you think may benefit from awareness raising. The hashtag is **#ProtectourPast** and the full campaign information is available on [www.gov.ie/opw/](http://www.gov.ie/opw/)

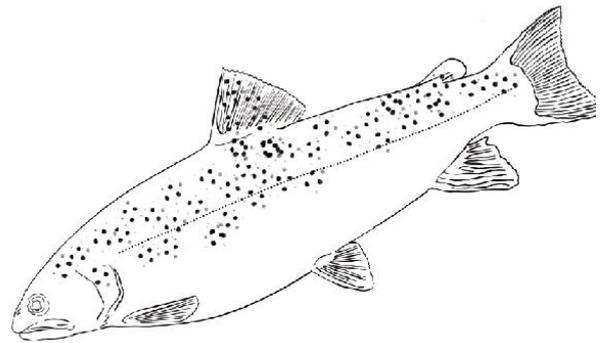
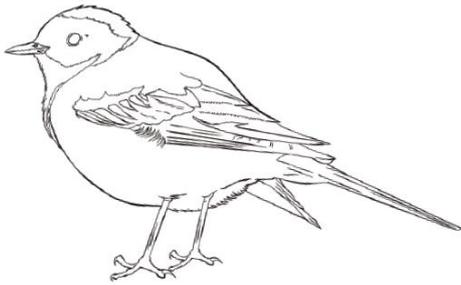
### **Did You Know?**

There are over 145,000 recorded archaeological monuments around the country in private and public ownership, with latest research suggesting evidence of human activity in Ireland well over 10,000 years ago. Examples of archaeological monument types in Ireland include megalithic tombs, stone circles, standing stones, rock art, ecclesiastical enclosures, churches, graveyards, ringforts, souterrains, crannógs and castles.

## Tuam TidyTowns

We have been asked to bring to your attention, an excellent project spearheaded by Tuam TidyTowns with excellent illustrations by Galway Aquarium & with support and advice from the local Community Water Officer.

They have used the materials to engage schools in colouring competitions and are willing to share the resource with other groups. This is a high quality resource with local scientific input. There is fantastic interest locally in this schools resource and it features on the website below managed by the EPA.



Pied Wagtail Glasóg shráide *Motacilla alba yarellii*

The resources are now available for download by visiting the following website;

<https://www.catchments.ie/tuam-tidy-towns-tells-the-story-of-the-river-nanny/>



The story of the river



catchments.ie shares science and stories about Ireland's water catchments, and people's connections to their water. Information about this poster can be found on catchments.ie



**Credit to: Tuam TidyTowns with illustrations by Galway Aquarium.**

The resource development was funded by the Local Authority Waters Programme, Community Water Development Fund with some pro bono contributions also.

If organisations are using the material it would be appreciated if they could post it on social media using #TheStoryoftheRiver hashtag or tag Tuam TidyTowns/LAPWRO.

## Rush TidyTowns unveil the Ros-Eó Mural Wall

Rush TidyTowns committee recently unveiled the Ros-Eó Mural Wall, which involved the hard work of over 100 volunteers from Rush community coming together and bringing this wonderful project to life. The 18 murals were painted by 31 local artists on a dilapidated 450 foot long, 10 foot high wall with 51 separate panels. The murals are themed to represent aspects of Rush during the past, present and future.



Funding was secured from Fingal County Council (FCC) to purchase the base layer paint and other materials, with significant donations of unwanted paint provided by a local paint shop.



Despite Covid, the community found a way to uplift people's spirits, whether it be involved as an artist, or just viewing the Mural Gallery on their daily walks. The Mural represents "Caring", which took about 40 hours to complete and it epitomises what Rush community is all about. It's an image of a young child and an elderly person in front of the gates to Kenure Woods.

Brendan O'Reilly, Rush TidyTowns who commissioned and managed the project said "We were amazed by the level of participation right across the community with 29 local groups, and residents from 10 to 73 years of age helping out. The quality and scale of the 18 murals was way beyond our expectations as we were lucky to have so many brilliant local artists working on the project. We hope we also provided a sense of belonging and community during these disconcerting times."

The following groups were involved in the project: Prosper Fingal, Rush Scouts, Fingal Against Racism, St. Maurs GAA Club, St. Josephs' School, Loretto College Balbriggan, N.C.A.D Cricket Club, GAA Allstars, Rush Boxing Club, Rush Athletics, Rush Pipe Band, Rush Golf Club, Rush Sailing Club, Rush Taekwondo, Junior Park Run, Rush Badminton Club, Rush First Responders, Rush TidyTowns, Rush Men's Shed, Rush Camera Club, Rush National School, Gaelscoil Ros Eo, St. Catherine's National School, Rush Musical Society, The Millbank Theatre, Rinceoil Rush and Rush Nursing Home.

Fingal Mayor Seána Ó Rodaigh said; "I would like to congratulate everyone involved in this fantastic art project. Rush has a strong tradition of community engagement and this beautiful artwork will bring joy to many for years to come."

A link to the video showing the making of the wall can be viewed at;

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O0Bv\\_z4bcf8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O0Bv_z4bcf8)

CE of Fingal County Council Ann-Marie Farrelly said; “Rush has a proud tradition of fostering strong community spirit through the arts and its many community groups and organisations. Fingal County Council is delighted to support this hugely impressive collaborative project and to see the results of months of careful work come to fruition in the form of the Ros-Éo Mural Wall. I am delighted to be here in Rush today for the unveiling of this spectacular piece of art, which not only colourfully depicts Rush through the ages but also serves as a symbol of hope and a beacon of positivity for all who will enjoy it for many years to come. I would like to offer my congratulations to all who contributed to making this mural a focal point for the town and I look forward to future collaborations between Fingal County Council and your community.”



## Keep in Touch

That wraps up the August issue of the SuperValu TidyTowns newsletter. As always we hope you find the items of interest, please continue to share with us what you have been working on and those stories and poems too. Please also send in some photos of TidyTowns memorabilia that your groups might have form down through the years.

We are currently finalising the redrafting of the SuperValu TidyTowns Handbook and will bring you exciting news on this in September’s issue. We will soon be announcing the TidyTowns Photography competition, so get those cameras out and get capturing your place at its best, more information on this in next month’s issue.

Remember, all previous issues of the Newsletter can be found by visiting the TidyTowns website at <https://www.tidytowns.ie/about-us/newsletters/>. Please continue to share the newsletter with your volunteers and wider community and as always, if you have a story to tell, then we want to hear it,

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

Department of Rural and Community Development  
Government Buildings

Ballina

Co Mayo

F26 E8N6

Email: [tidytowns@drcd.gov.ie](mailto:tidytowns@drcd.gov.ie)

Tel: 076 100 6836



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