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Supporting the Sustainable Development Goals
Act Local – Think Global

Administered by the Department
of Rural & Community Development

**SuperValu
Tidy Towns
Newsletter
Issue 2021-10**

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Tidy Towns Family & Friends,

Welcome to the tenth edition of the SuperValu Tidy Towns Newsletter for 2021. Since we were in touch with you, last we have seen Ennis named as Ireland's Tidiest Town for 2021. Congratulations to all the committee and the volunteers who have worked so hard to reach this stage in the competition. Well done to all involved who have helped the town reach this achievement. Congratulations also to our other winners who were all announced at a ceremony in the RDS on November 12th, by Ms Heather Humphreys T.D. Minister for Rural and Community Development and Mr Ray Kelly, Marketing Director of SuperValu who this year, celebrate 30 years of sponsoring the national competition.

Further information on some of the other winners on the day can be found in the newsletter. Sadly, we were not able to have the celebration we would have liked but we hope you all got to tune in and watch the ceremony online.

Speaking at the awards ceremony, Minister Humphreys announced a package of funding totalling €1.5 Million to be distributed to over 1,000 Tidy Towns groups to assist them in preparing for the 2022 competition. The Tidy Towns unit will be in touch with all eligible groups in the coming weeks with more information.

As we prepare to issue the newsletter, sadly our Covid-19 daily case numbers are increasing. We need to double our efforts as we head into winter to look after ourselves

and those vulnerable in our communities. We all hope that we get to celebrate the joys of Christmas with our families and friends, in order to give us the best chance to do that, we need to continue to adhere to the public health advice around limiting our contacts, maintaining social distance, wearing of appropriate face coverings and cough and sneeze etiquette. Thank you all for your efforts to date in supporting your communities, it is when we are at our weakest that the strength of community shines through, let that light shine in your community this winter. Take care.

Our Friends

by Kieran Togher

In our isolated worlds
We forget about them
As they race
To fill their larders
Those little industrious
Marvels shine
Saving our home
Our planet
One flower
At a time

They carry the seeds
Of life
As payment for nectar
The plant welcomes
These assiduous little gems
As friends
Building a symbiotic relationship
One bee
At a time

Our food depends on them
If they go, then we follow
We need them
They get nothing from us
In return
We are a burden
To this incredible life form
All we do is
Destroy their world
One habitat
At a time

They love the red clover
Yet these seeds cost nothing
Nature gives them to us for free
So do not spray them
Or cut them away
Nature will do the rest
Save our world
One meadow at a time
One hedgerow at a time
One flower at a time



Thank you to Katherine Mangan from Belmullet TidyTowns who got in touch with us to share the picture and Poem above. The biodiversity mural was created using recycled bottle-tops, by VTOS students in Belmullet, for Baile Slachtmhar Bhéal an Mhuirthead and the beautiful poem was written by one of the students - Kieran Togher. Well done to all involved and well done to Belmullet TidyTowns for winning the national Gaeltacht Award in this year's competition.

MINISTER HUMPHREYS ANNOUNCES ENNIS CO. CLARE AS WINNER OF IRELAND'S TIDIEST TOWN FOR 2021.

- €1.5 Million announced in grant aid for over 1,000 TidyTowns groups nationwide.
- Glaslough TidyTowns, Co. Monaghan named as the inaugural winner of the Young Persons in TidyTowns Award.
- Minister Humphreys praises role played by TidyTowns volunteers during unprecedented period
- Minister for Rural and Community Development, Heather Humphreys TD, today (12th November) announced Ennis, Co. Clare as Ireland's Tidiest Town for 2021.

The announcement was made at a scaled-back event held in the RDS today with a small number of representatives present from this year's entries to the Competition.

The event was streamed live to thousands of TidyTowns volunteers around the country who were eagerly awaiting the announcement of the winners. The SuperValu TidyTowns competition has been in existence since 1958 and Ennis was judged to be the best from a number of 847 entries to the competition this year.

The announcement was greeted with much celebration and excitement at today's awards ceremony at The RDS in Dublin.

On hand to announce the results of the 2021 competition with Minister Humphreys, T.D., was Mr. Ray Kelly, Marketing Director of SuperValu, the competition's sponsor for the 30th year.

Some of the other big winners on the day included:

- Geashill, Co. Offaly awarded Ireland's Tidiest Village.
- Abbeyleix, Co. Laois awarded Ireland's Tidiest Small Town.
- Cobh, Cork South awarded Ireland's Tidiest Large Town.
- Ennis, Co. Clare awarded Ireland's Tidiest Large Urban Centre.

Speaking after the awards ceremony, Minister Humphreys said:

"This is a fantastic achievement for Ennis who are very deserving winners. Ennis first entered the SuperValu TidyTowns competition in 1959 and continue to showcase all that is good about community and volunteerism. They have been consistently achieving high standards in the competition at local, regional, national and European level and won the competition previously in 2005. Given the tremendous interest in the competition and the increasing efforts made by all entrants, it is a wonderful achievement to take the national title for a second time; this really demonstrates that resilience and determination do reap rewards.

"I want to congratulate Ennis and all of the other deserving prize-winners announced today. It has not been easy for TidyTowns groups during what has been an unprecedented period.

"Like all sections of society, the pandemic has prohibited us from participating in the things we enjoy within our own communities.

"I want to commend the hundreds of groups and thousands of volunteers who, in the face of adversity, put their community first and continued to make their areas better places to live and work and to visit, all the while, adhering to social distancing and public health guidelines. "For that, on my own behalf and that of the Government, I want to say Thank You."

Minister Humphreys also announced a special allocation of €1.5 million in funding to support the work of individual TidyTowns Committees around the country to assist them in their continued efforts to enhance their towns and villages. This is the fifth consecutive year that funding has been provided to support these Committees and brings the total allocated since 2017 to €6.7 Million.

The Minister said:

"The sense of belonging and pride of place that is achieved by being part of a TidyTowns group creates a wonderful welcoming atmosphere for both residents and visitors alike.

“Given the challenges faced by TidyTowns groups during the pandemic and the way in which they moved to an online entry process, I am delighted to be able to announce that I have secured funding of €1.5 million to directly support the TidyTowns committees who, through their efforts, bring out the best in their towns and villages.

“In total, 1,022 TidyTowns groups across the country will be eligible to benefit from this investment.”

The Minister also thanked SuperValu, the competition’s sponsor, adding:

“Today, I want to congratulate SuperValu who celebrate their 30th anniversary of partnership with TidyTowns and sponsorship of the competition. The competition continues to attract new entrants and new awards and it is getting stronger every year.

SuperValu continue to show fantastic support for the competition through their financial sponsorship, their commitment to improving and growing the competition and through the dedicated support at a local level provided to TidyTowns groups by their network of local retailers.”

Mr. Ian Allen, Managing Director, SuperValu commented after the awards:

“On behalf of SuperValu I would like to congratulate Ennis for being named Ireland’s Tidiest Town for 2021. It is a fantastic achievement and is the result of incredible work and dedication by the committee.

The outstanding efforts and achievements of the category winners, and indeed all of our committees across the country deserves significant praise and recognition. 2021 was another landmark year for SuperValu TidyTowns. We now have a record 1,022 groups engaging in the competition, with a record 847 entries this year. I’d particularly like to mention the new committees and encourage their participation into the future. The level and quality of the projects that you all delivered across all categories is astounding.

At its heart, the SuperValu TidyTowns competition is the public expression of the work countless individuals undertake to build community spirit and make their local area a better place in which to live and work. The incredible committee members, in collaboration with our network of independent retailers, share our desire to build thriving, sustainable communities.”

Mr. Allen went on to say,

“As long-term supporters of TidyTowns, we at SuperValu have seen first-hand the competition grow and evolve over time. This year, perhaps more than ever, we have seen an increasing number of wonderful initiatives that focus on biodiversity, conservation and other important issues that are critical to creating sustainable communities. This is something I welcome and encourage.”

The SuperValu TidyTowns competition is organised by the Department of Rural and Community Development and sponsored by SuperValu who have sponsored the competition since 1991.

TidyTowns Grant

Speaking at the recent awards ceremony Minister Humphreys announced a funding package of €1.5 Million to support over 1,000 TidyTowns groups in their preparation for the 2022 competition.

1,022 eligible groups will be contacted by the Department in the coming weeks. In order to be eligible, a centre must have entered the competition in either of the years 2018, 2019 or 2021.

Villages will be entitled to a grant of €1,000, small towns €2,000 and large towns €3,000. Large Urban Centres will be entitled to a grant of €4,000. All eligible groups are encouraged to enter using the form that will be issued electronically in the coming weeks.

If your group has recently changed your email address, please inform us by sending an email to TidyTowns@drcd.gov.ie so that we ensure you receive the application form and relevant details.

Ireland's Tidiest Village 2021 - Geashill

Geashill in Offaly have been named as Ireland's Tidiest Village for 2021. Their Adjudicator was very impressed with their entry and here is a flavour of what they had to say in the Adjudication Report.

The Adjudication team were impressed with the way Geashill make best use of social media noting you used Zoom during the pandemic to keep your community engaged and update. You have done wonderful work in the area of planting, the Adjudicator makes note of the 1,000 bulbs planted with assistance from the local school children. Your understanding of the Sustainable Development Goals and how you applied them throughout your entry was welcomed. Your twice daily litter picks and "Walk and Pick" initiatives have served you well. The Adjudicator makes reference to your recycling point citing it as one of the best, they have seen in the competition. Keep up the good work Geashill



<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!!!

Mayo County Council & Baile Slachtmhar Bhéal an Mhuirthead

Launch European Innovation Partnership Project for conservation of the Great Yellow Bumblebee



The Mullet Peninsula is home to Ireland's rarest bee – the Great Yellow Bumblebee (*Bombus distinguendus*) and is one of very few places in Europe with a sustainable population. Baile Slachtmhar Bhéal an Mhuirthead (Belmullet Tidy Towns) have been endeavouring for some years to create an awareness of the wealth of wildlife to be found in the area, the importance of bees to pollination, and are concerned about the decline in bee populations. Working in conjunction with UCD, the National Biodiversity Data Centre, Mayo County Council and Birdwatch Ireland, the community group have been doing everything they can to show what can be done to help the Great Yellow Bumblebee and other pollinators. Therefore, it is a fantastic achievement for the area that Mayo Co. Co. and Baile Slachtmhar Bhéal an Mhuirthead have together launched a European Innovation Partnership Project (EIPP) for conservation of the Great Yellow Bumblebee. EIP projects bring together expertise (advisers and researchers) to work in partnership with farmers to consider how to practically solve problems in the agri-food industry.

**Baile Slachtmhar
Bhéal an Mhuirthead**
Belmullet Tidy Towns



Dr. Margaret Tallott, a volunteer with Baile Slachtmhar Bhéal an Mhuirthead, expressed delight that healthy populations of the Great Yellow Bumblebee have been observed on the mainland during recent preliminary surveys by Dr. Dara Stanley and PhD Researchers from UCD, "This is great news and it supports the main aim of the project, which is to create 'Beelines to Belmullet and Beyond'. The project will build on the work of Niamh Phelan, Dave Suddaby and Dara Stanley."



Niamh Phelan spent a lot of time carrying out research on the Great Yellow Bumblebee on the Mullet Peninsula in 2019 (kindly hosted by a volunteer of Belmullet Tidy Towns, Eva Reilly) while she studied an MSc in Wildlife Conservation and Management (UCD). Niamh was supervised by Assistant Professor in Applied Entomology, Dr. Dara Stanley from UCD (School of Agriculture and Food Science). Dave Suddaby is a BirdWatch Ireland Conservation Officer and Reserves Manager, based on the Mullet Peninsula and Termoncarragh Lake SPA, who has had great success with the restoration of the Annagh Marsh Reserve and the ultimate return of breeding Red-necked Phalaropes.

Through the work of Phelan, Stanley and Suddaby, they have investigated how connectivity can be created between farms and public land, including Belmullet town, to create species-rich grassland and coastal grassland habitats with Red Clover, Kidney Vetch and Common Knapweed. This will allow for the dispersal of the Great Yellow Bumblebee species, supporting its range expansion. If connections can be made between farms and other patches of land, the project can build on creating a network of landowners and guardians of public lands who can share learning and knowledge between them and improve the outcome for the Great Yellow Bumblebee and many other species.

Margaret Tallott of Baile Slachtmhar Bhéal an Mhuirthead summarised how this project can help to improve the population of the Great Yellow Bumblebee outside of Belmullet and potentially throughout Ireland: “Bees don’t travel by road. They need to move to and from pollinator-friendly areas. If we can all work together to create more pollinator-friendly areas (e.g. don’t cut areas with red clover, kidney vetch and common knapweed), then the bees will thrive and they will travel further & further. Put quite simply, we need to create ‘Beelines to Belmullet and Beyond’.”

At the launch of this new project, Eva Reilly of Baile Slachtmhar Bhéal an Mhuirthead acknowledged the support of Mayo Co. Co. and, in particular Cllr. Sean Carey (Chair of the Agriculture Strategic Policy Committee), who highlighted the vital role of farmers in the conservation of the Great Yellow Bumblebee. The work of Dave Suddaby (Birdwatch Ireland) was also acknowledged and appreciated – he was the first person to formally identify the Great Yellow Bumblebee on the Mullet Peninsula. Peter Gill (Parks Superintendent, Mayo Co. Co.), who has been a driving force for this initiative, expressed his gratitude to everyone involved and acknowledged the vital importance of the local community and the farming sector in its success, as well as the role of the researchers and experts including local agricultural advisor, Noel Walsh, all of whom are of crucial importance to this unique project.

There is a wealth of information available online about how we can all do our bit to help the Great Yellow Bumblebee. Examples include www.pollinators.ie and www.tidytownsbelmullet.ie (currently undergoing reconstruction). All over Belmullet town, you will see signs in patches of grass and on the roadside saying ‘Managed for Wildlife’ – these are just a few of the areas that Baile Slachtmhar Bhéal an Mhuirthead are keeping uncut (or cutting less frequently) in order to help our pollinators, including the Great Yellow Bumblebee.

Well done to all involved in this initiative. If you would like further information. Dr Tallott can be contacted on 086 222 6269.

Photography Competition

The closing date for entries to our photography competition has now passed. Thank you to all the groups and individuals who sent in their photos to us. We are currently reviewing all the entries and the winners will be announced in the Christmas issue of the Newsletter.

Ireland's Tidiest Small Town 2021 - Abbeyleix

Congratulations to Abbeyleix in Laois who have been crowned with the title of Ireland's Tidiest Small Town for 2021. Comments in their 2021 Adjudication report tell us how their entry impressed their Adjudicator.



Well done Abbeyleix on your entry, the Adjudicator comments on *the volume of work you have completed is outstanding.* Your shopfronts as always impress us so too do your actions with regard to the Sustainable Development

Goals. Congratulations on your designation as a “cycling and walking friendly town”. The Abbeyleix bog, such a gem, this features prominently in your work programmes and rightly so, this is an EU habitat after all. Your recently launched Biodiversity Action Plan is excellent and well done on being asked to present your story to the Innovation Academy at UCD. Your recycling statistics increase year on year, keep this up! You are to be commended for your early morning clean ups at 5am.

Reeling in the Years - TidyTowns

In recent issues we asked groups to share with us some old memorabilia they may have from the completion of years gone by. Sadly, we have not received much material so we will put this project on hold for now and perhaps try again in 2022. If you have anything you would like to share with us, please rest assured we only ask for photos of the items, you do not need to send any originals into us.

Dromiskin TidyTowns

It's not easy celebrating a major milestone during a pandemic but Dromiskin TidyTowns in Co. Louth were determined to acknowledge the 30th Anniversary of the formation of the committee as well as three decades of participation in the National TidyTowns Competition. During consultation for their 3 Year Plan a number of projects were identified that it was felt would be a fitting legacy to mark thirty years of TidyTowns activity.

Huge progress had been made over the years in greening the community through tree planting, biodiversity planting schemes and development of a number of pocket parks / gardens so it was considered a good idea to undertake a Green Infrastructure Mapping project the results of which are displayed on an information panel in the Church / School Car Park where the information could be shared with the wider community.



A graphic designer was engaged to design the inserts in a visually attractive but easily understood format and as the high quality panel comprised of three separate sections, each requiring an insert, it was decided that the green infrastructure of the village would be displayed on the large central panel with one of the smaller sections used to highlight the many sustainable planting arrangements in the school grounds.

As the TidyTowns committee regularly collaborate with the school, and many of the younger Junior TidyTowns members are pupils, it was jointly decided that the third section should be used to display an Eco Alphabet which would create awareness about what each person could do to further “green” the community. The Information Panel is framed on each side by a trio of Metal Flower Sculptures with the project financed by a grant from Louth County Council, a corporate donation from Ardee Credit Union and local fundraising.

The committee were also conscious that many of the projects undertaken over the thirty years of TidyTowns participation were now so much part of the fabric of the community that many residents wouldn't realise how relatively recently they were added to the streetscape. With this in mind, a large interpretative sign was commissioned highlighting the key projects undertaken in each of the three decades and, in its village centre location at the Centra Supermarket has attracted much interest and discussion and, together with regular Facebook posts, creates awareness of how TidyTowns projects have transformed the visual presentation of the village.



The committee were honoured recently when the Chairman of Louth County Council visited the village to officially unveil a number of the more recent projects and see at first hand the difference an active TidyTowns committee and its volunteers can make in a local community.

The committee were honoured recently when the Chairman of Louth County Council visited the village to officially unveil a number of the more recent projects and see at first hand the difference an active TidyTowns committee and its volunteers can make in a local community.

Well done to all involved and congratulations to Dromiskin on their Bronze medal achievement in the 2021 competition.

Ireland's Tidiest Large Town 2021 - Cobh



Congratulations to Cobh in Cork who were this year named as Ireland's Tidiest 2021. Here is some of what their Adjudicator had to say about their efforts in the 2021 competition.

Cobh, your Adjudicator comments on your well presented and easy to navigate entry. Your involvement in the Gaisce award programme is

welcomed. Congratulations on achieving recognition as one of the best cruise destinations in the world. Your works along the Five Foot Way are very impressive and will no doubt be admired by your many visitors. The "Save our Swift" initiative is a welcome development and welcome too are the occupants of your Swift nesting boxes. The extensive pollinator corridor throughout the town and the careful selection of appropriate planting is to be commended. We very much like your Sustainable Communities concept and your actions with regard to positive ageing. Well done on your mural, your Adjudicator commends you on all of your actions and suggests you have much more in the "tank".

River Clean Up - Boost for Community on Tullamore

The Tullamore community came out in force over the weekend in the effort to get to grips with the challenge that affects many towns - river dumping. Volunteers from a number of local community groups including Tullamore TidyTowns and Shannonside Sub Aqua Club supported by a team from Offaly County Council retrieved over 1.5 tonnes of dumped waste in an area of Tullamore River from Kilcruttin to Millennium Square at Main Street.

Over 20 shopping trolleys along with bikes, beds, mattresses and a 60 inch flat screen TV were mindlessly dumped by individuals with zero respect for the environment and the people of Tullamore.

'Thank you to everyone who supported the Tullamore River Clean up on Saturday, particularly to Shannonside Sub Aqua for volunteering to help us with this project, without their support this event could not have happened. The removal of waste from the Tullamore River will help improve water quality and the adjacent natural environment' – commented Ide O'Connell, Assistant Scientist, Offaly County Council – Project Manager The Tullamore Living River.

As Tullamore TidyTowns tries to focus its efforts on further improving on its repeated Gold Medal status over the last 7 years, the dedicated community group is firmly focused on achieving top spot in the National TidyTowns competition.

'We have been working with various local groups for the last number of years to highlight the importance of wildlife habitats and biodiversity for the environment and this is reflected as a main judging criteria in the National TidyTowns competition' commented Ray Carroll, chairperson of Tullamore TidyTowns.



The Tullamore Living River project spearheaded by Offaly County Council and supported by the Offaly Local Development Company has seen the creation of a wetland area at Kilcruttin, which will

significantly add to the natural habitat area for wildlife and alleviate the flow of floodwater sediments. As part of this project, support has been given for a major clear out of dumped debris, which has accumulated over many years. The project will also include selective management of vegetation along the river to open up views, which have been blocked for at least a generation.

Water quality has improved throughout the Tullamore River watercourse in recent years but there is little room for complacency as we were starting from a very low base. Research has shown the importance of Tullamore River as an important nursery ground for trout which feed into and populate the Clodiagh, Brosna and Shannon rivers.

A recent Otter survey conducted by Tullamore TidyTowns supported by Local Authority Waters Programme indicates Tullamore has the highest density of otter signs found in a national survey anywhere in Ireland. It is no coincidence that Tullamore River is home to the Otter. With improved water quality has come increased numbers of small fish and native white tailed crayfish, which provides the Otter with a steady food supply.

A selection of photographs from the project can be viewed at the following link;

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1IZxPYN1eI4TT5GSwdDeraYPol9hIU44G?usp=sharing>

A Video showing some of the works completed can be view here:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1KtHg6fpuka0kH5KAA-dWb2sxTTD8Gors/view?usp=sharing>

Well done to all involved on this project, no doubt the improved water quality will support biodiversity in the area. Keep up the good work.

Ireland's Tidiest Large Urban Centre & Overall Tidiest Town for 2021 – Ennis County Clare

Congratulations to Ennis TidyTowns who have been named as Ireland's Tidiest Large Urban Centre for 2021 and the National Tidiest Town overall for 2021.

The Adjudication team were well impressed with you offering this year Ennis, here is some of what they had to say.



Well done Ennis on your initiatives to keep your community together and positive during the pandemic. You have continued to excel on Social Media, not just for your own benefit but in sharing content far and wide, noted by your Adjudicator as “a great service in keeping the flag flying”. Your art work on drain covers combines the aesthetic with the functional, excellent work. The Adjudicator commented on your Parklet initiative, these will no doubt feature more going forward. Your extensive



actions in the area of Pollinators are too many to describe, suffice to say, you are leading the way in this area. The Adjudicator was impressed with your “Gumdrop Bins”, your Green Flags, water bottle filling stations and your “Bike Week and Walking Bus” initiatives, all very in keeping with your sustainable thinking.

Baltinglass TidyTowns Swift Boxes Project 2021

Baltinglass is a small, heritage town that spans the River Slaney in west Wicklow. It is nestled in the river valley, and surrounded by the famous Wicklow hills. It holds an exciting past as recently the town's hinterland has become known as ‘The hillfort capital of Ireland’, due to the highlighting of nine ancient hillforts that exist on the surrounding hills. This proliferation of ancient settlements means that Baltinglass has a greater density and wealth of hillforts even than Newgrange and the Hill of Tara!



The Baltinglass TidyTowns project to install swift nest boxes began in early 2021. The swift is on the amber list of birds of conservation concern in Ireland because its population has declined by over 40% in the last 15 years. Conservation actions across the country are helping to recover populations. Swifts come to our towns every year for just four months; arriving in early May and leaving in late August. These are four important months because they are coming here to breed and so 'here' should be considered their home. Swifts are faithful to their nest sites. Once they have found a place to nest, they will return to that site every year for the rest of their lives. Nest box projects can provide homes for new breeding pairs.

Baltinglass TidyTowns had recently come together as a new committee, with a view to entering our community into the TidyTowns national competition. Our vision to bring our town into the era of sustainability as a small community currently at the centre of huge national and global climate change policy. At the heart of our aims was the vision to promote climate action and achieve sustainable goals in all the work and projects we would plan and undertake. We decided that with guidance and help from a local swift expert and member of Bird Watch Ireland to erect 4 swift boxes, triple boxes, at some locations in town. These locations were picked out carefully by our local Birdwatch Ireland expert.



The Baltinglass TidyTowns Swift nest project team have installed swift nest boxes and a swift calling system in four locations in all. The most visible of these is the nest box at the side of our busy town library on the town's main square. Other locations include the bell tower of what was the Convent on Chapel Hill (a custom-made box was made for this site by our local expert and Bird Watch Ireland member), now the location of our new Primary Care Centre, and now the restored

convent building provides direct provision and affordable housing to Syrian refugees and local families, on the water tower of Scoil Naomh Íósaf, the local primary school and on the rear of old teachers' residents in Stratford Lodge N.S, Church Lane.

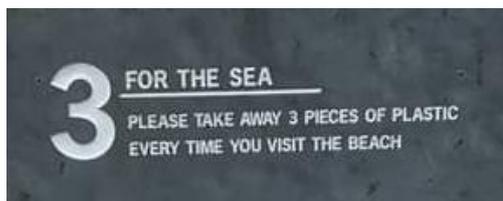
The sound caller emits the swift call for a couple of hours each day for a couple of months each year to attract the swifts to the box. Once the swifts start using the box we will be removing these sound systems as swifts will stay loyal to a site for many years to come. An appeal was sought on our Facebook page for donations towards the purchase of these boxes and their sound systems, and so many local businesses and residents took a great interest from the get go.

The project was fully sponsored by local donators and businessman, and would not have been possible without their generosity and keen interest in our project. Permission was gratefully granted by all the owners of the buildings needed. Next year we hope the swifts will use the boxes to raise a brood of swifts.

We were delighted to see our project reach completion in May 2021.



'3 For the Sea'



Eileen O Malley got in touch with us to share an initiative she is involved in called '3 For the Sea'. The purpose of the initiative is to motivate people to participate in the battle against plastic pollution, specifically ocean plastic.

Back in late 2018 or early 2019, with the help of a donation from the Miltown Malbay TidyTowns group, we here in Clare had two permanent stone signs erected at Spanish Point and Whitestrand Miltown Malbay beaches. The signs asked that people take away 3 pieces of plastic every time they visit the beach. As a regular beach walker and anti-plastic beach cleaner, I can see the enormous difference that these signs have made to the amount of plastic found on both beaches.



Since 2019, we have watched with delight as similar signs/plaques have been erected on several other beaches around the country. There are now signs on beaches in Dublin, Wicklow, Cork and Waterford and most recently, there have been 3 signs commissioned by Bundoran TidyTowns and Donegal Co Council. I have attached photos of these and some of the other signs for your information.

3 for the Sea is a simple initiative, which can be easily replicated allowing everyone, regardless of their age, to act against plastic pollution. I would love to see similar signs on every beach in Ireland.

I have been in contact with both Bray and Bundoran TidyTowns group who have kindly furnished me with details of the costs involved. It would appear that the average cost of each sign/plaque is 200 euro plus vat. In our case we initially made contact with Clare Co Council. Bray and Bundoran TidyTowns groups contacted their own local councils and sought permission to have the signs erected.





Once given the go ahead by the council, it was simply a matter of sourcing local stone suppliers and engravers. If any group would like further details on this, Eileen can be contacted at 086 - 0611147

Cork Volunteer Awards

A big shout out and congratulations to 2 people from Clonakilty TidyTowns that recently received Cork Volunteer awards.

Noreen Minihan, a teacher all her working life, has also been involved as a founder of countless organizations and initiatives in Clonakilty over the last 60 years. For example, The Cork Polio Aftercare that evolved into the Cope Foundation, the Clonakilty Local Organisations Active Group (CLOAG) that has now evolved into the West Cork Traveller Centre, the building of Clonakilty Community hall, the establishment of the local Duchas Historical Society, the annual band championships (that attracts bands from all over the country to Clonakilty), the West cork Drama festival, the Street Feast festival, the town twinning of Clonakilty with Waldaschaff (Ger) the and the award-winning Clonakilty TidyTowns.



Clonakilty. As Billy says, she could be described as “Clonakilty’s ambassador”, leading by example to inspire and encourage those around her.

Noreen has devoted her life and talent to the people of Clonakilty and has been at the forefront of much positive change in the town, including improved rights for Travellers, the integration of those in Direct Provision into the life of the town, and the transformation of the streets and public living spaces to name a few. At a personal level, she continues in her inimitable way to spread joy, good cheer and inspiration to everybody she meets.

Mike Deasy has been involved with Clonakilty TidyTowns for the last twenty two years and is Joint Chairperson of the organisation for the past ten years. In that time he has helped to build the organisation into what it has become today, growing from a small membership to now having in excess of fifty volunteers. His involvement has seen Clonakilty TidyTowns receive numerous awards including the Overall Winner of

It is no exaggeration to say that Clonakilty would not exist as it presently does without the work of Noreen Minihan. Former County Architect Billy Houlihan remembers how Noreen was always called upon to greet delegates from across the country and beyond to give them a tour of the town and present the best of

National TidyTowns in 1999, gold medals in 2000, 2002, 2004 to 2019 plus Tidiest Small Town in 1999, 2000, 2012 and 2017. Also IPB Pride of Place in 2009 and 2017 as well as International Awards from 2000 to 2009 including Entente Florale, Nations in Bloom China, Communities in Bloom Canada, and Gold Medal for Waste Management.

Through his volunteering and working life he has established connections with other community individuals, groups, and organisations, inviting them to be part of Clonakilty TidyTowns. The success of this has created strong links and emanated a strong sense of pride in individuals and businesses to begin and remain heavily involved in our community. These relationships have also built a sustainable, enjoyable, inclusive, and healthy organisation for the whole community to be part of.



Mike is also the Co-Ordinator who liaises with the Courts Probation Officer to facilitate people's community service hours. He works tirelessly on this every week, organising rotas and workplaces as well as delivering and collecting the necessary tools and equipment each day.

Mike's impact on the community stretches to the four corners of Clonakilty and beyond as he has the ability to include everyone. He brings people onto the committee, along to the weekly street cleaning, from every walk of life, and all ages. New residents to the town, nationally or internationally, are fully welcomed and it gives them a safe space to meet new friends and feel a valuable part of their new community.

A weekly, ongoing wheel of meetings, organising, doing, making, and liaising is all done with a big smile, humour, and quiet words. Mike's impact as a volunteer in the community is as much immeasurable as it's invaluable.

Congratulations to both Noreen and Mike and continued good health and involvement to you both.

2021 Competition Awards

Congratulations to all of the winners in the 2021 SuperValu TidyTowns competition which were announced on November 12th. In previous year's, these awards would be presented to you at regional awards ceremonies in the regional winning locations.

Unfortunately, this year, we will not be holding these ceremonies and all awards will be posted out to winning centres. We are currently arranging to have medals engraved and hopefully these will issue in the next month or so. Certificates will also issue by post this year, however, they will not be framed but a contribution towards the framing costs will be added to all cash prizes. We will be commencing issuing cash prizes as soon as possible, some groups will receive their prizes before

Christmas, for others, it will be January, depending on how soon we have medals and certificates ready will determine when we post them out, we will avoid the Christmas rush as items may become mislaid or damaged in the extra Christmas volumes. Rest assured, your prize money, certificates and medals were achieved, will be sent out as soon as possible. Once again congratulations to all our winners and thank you for your patience in these busy weeks.

Keep in Touch

Thank you for taking the time to read our tenth issue of the newsletter for 2021. In the next issue with the support of our proud sponsors **SuperValu**, we will be giving away more **SuperValu** gift cards to acknowledge the stories, poems and features you have been sharing with us. Thank you as always for the information; this is your newsletter, so make it work for you. Thank you also to our sponsors **SuperValu** who have this year celebrated their 30th anniversary of sponsoring this unique environmental and sustainable initiative that we all love so much.

We will also be announcing the winners in our 2021 Photography competition. If you have any nice stories or poems for the festive season, send them in, no doubt the readers will enjoy them.

All issues of the Newsletter are on the TidyTowns website at <https://www.tidytowns.ie/about-us/newsletters/>. The results book for 2021 is also available on the website <https://www.tidytowns.ie/SV-TidyTowns-Results-Booklet-2021.pdf> together with all of the 2021 Adjudication reports <https://www.tidytowns.ie/reports/>.

Information on the grant announced by Minister Humphreys will issue shortly, please do not worry, we will be in contact with you with all the details on how to apply for this very welcome funding.

Best Wishes as always from Anne, Helen & John in The TidyTowns Unit

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