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SuperValu Tidy Towns Newsletter

Issue 2022-1

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A Chairde,

Welcome to our January 2022 issue of the SuperValu Tidy Towns Newsletter. Let us start by wishing you all a very happy healthy and prosperous new year.

We hope you enjoyed your Christmas break, sadly case numbers were high over the festive period but thankfully things appear to be settling now, hopefully they continue to do so as we look forward to spring, longer evenings and a return to life as we knew it.

We very much welcomed the news last week with regard to restrictions but we must proceed with some caution. Many in our communities are vulnerable and the past two years have taken a toll, so we should be patient with each other, while some are very eager to

get back out there, others will do so with trepidation and by taking small steps that is fine and we will get there.

We are making progress on the 2022 competition, entry this year will be again by electronic means so perhaps now is a good time to look at setting up that email account or creating that Facebook page, perhaps chat to some of the younger members in your community who might be willing to help, it could be a great introduction to get them involved in your group. This year again, we hope to bring you some new special awards in addition to many of the more established favourites. We will notify all groups when the competition launches in addition to all the information you will need including the closing date. Keep a watch on www.tidytowns.ie for more updates.

Thank you to our sponsors and to you the groups who make it all possible, we look forward to working with you all during the year and getting back to what we all love to do for our towns and villages. Wishing you all every success in your 2022 projects and wishing you all the best of health and prosperity in order for you to bring those projects to fruition. Good Luck.

Remember to share your stories, poems, old photographs or Tidy Towns memorabilia with us, this is your Newsletter, make it work for you.

Geashill TidyTowns – “Pig on the Green”

With so much to do and what feels like so little time it's great to be part of a project which really captures the imagination of an entire community. Our “Pig on the Green” Creative Ireland project has certainly been one of these.

In 2015, while excavating a new pathway to an entrance stile in our village green in Geashill we hit a large stone which turned to be a number of large blocks of cut limestone forming a 'H' arrangement. After much research our former postman let us know that this was the Site of a large Pig Weighing Scales used to weigh animals at the Geashill Pig fair. Not only that, but we found out that Geashill held one of the biggest in the country in the 1800s! We really wanted to put something in place as a permanent commemoration of these times.



The opportunity came in 2021 when we submitted a grant proposal to Creative Ireland to create a sculpture of a Pig. We have a fantastic young Weld Art sculptor called Luke Carson who lives locally and was willing to make this piece for us. Fortunately, our application was successful, and Luke started work on the Pig in early summer.



This project demonstrated for us the value of true collaboration. We put out two calls for people to donate their old and unwanted tools and implements to be used as part of the project which received lots of local support. We also had two fantastic 'muses' for this project in a pair of Tamworth Pigs called Bigly Pigly and Reversey Percy who live close to the village.

Even the installation of this piece involved help from right across the community. In what was undoubtedly another difficult year this project really brought people together. We also used our social media channels and our offline local information board to keep people updated on the pigs progress, sharing photos of the work in progress and getting people's feedback on what might be best location for the finished piece.





The result of this and of Luke's skill and patience is a truly unique sculptural piece which has been incredibly warmly received by both the local community and visitors alike and from right across the generations. It's lovely to see people interacting with and enjoying this sculpture. Luke maintained he spent more time looking at the piece as it developed and searching out just the right piece for the right place than he did carefully welding those pieces together.

We have been fortunate enough to work on a number of Creative Ireland funded projects over the last few years and they have allowed us to weave art, culture and heritage into the community in a way that is inclusive and accessible to everyone.

In 2018 stone carver Ciarán Byrne hand carved a stone slab with a verse of a poem about Geashill written by Edward Egan, in late 2019 and early 2020 master hedge layer and Woodwright Eoin Donnelly re-laid a large section of hedging in Geashill National School using traditional methods. Our community have both enjoyed and learned so much from all these projects and we look forward to enjoying the rewards of these efforts for many years to come.



Well done to everyone involved on this fabulous project, it really demonstrates great upcycling of those old tools and further proves the old saying "One man's trash is another man's treasure" Congratulations Caren and thanks for sharing this with us all.



<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!!!

Poets Corner

This month we bring you a poem on an issue that we are all aware of, not the nicest of topics but one that needs to be addressed all the same. Many thanks to Ken Duffy from Swords TidyTowns for his penmanship and for sharing it with us.

Dog Poo Shame

By Ken Duffy

Irresponsible dog owners, why disgust
Disposing of dog poo, it is a must
For Health and Safety, follow the rules
This kind of behaviour, is only for fools

Think of others, who step in your poo
Most think its wrong, how about you
Think of children, who are out at play
Or adults walking, enjoying their day

Those who bag, then place on a tree
Or throw in a bush - that disgusts me
Why go to the bother, of bagging poo
Then use nature, as a convenient loo

There was no bin, is never an excuse
For your behaviour, and walkway abuse
Take your poo home, it belongs to you
Don't spoil it for others, the right thing do

Thanks Ken for those cleverly put together words, I think you have put your finger on it and sadly all too often many of us have put our foot in it!!

Castlebar TidyTowns – Floating Tree

Castlebar TidyTowns in Mayo are delighted with their involvement with the floating tree on Lough Lannagh. The tree was the brainchild of Karen Rowland and she approached to committee and asked us to be involved. We were so pleased to be of assistance and sat down for the last number of months putting the plan together.

Ann Cresham, treasurer, said “Karen contacted us with this brilliant idea and we worked with her to see it come to fruition. There were a lot of technical issues, especially because we were working on water and using electricity to power the lights, so this took a lot of co-ordination. Electrician, Robbie Carson, was on hand to provide excellent professional advice and was responsible for lighting the lights. We are lucky that our former chairman, Ger Deere, is also a councillor and he was on hand to examine and deal with the regulations.



Many permissions had to be obtained from different regulatory bodies and fair play to Ger, he got all relevant approval.” Ann added, “Stanley Jackson came on board and offered to build the platform for the tree and the tree itself, and his engineering expertise was a joy to see.” Once the tree and the platform were put together, the TidyTowns, under Karen’s direction, decorated it and ran a check to ensure lights lit and it floated successfully.

The organisers believe that this project was a reflection of the good that is in a community. Ann continued, “Over the last two years we all had a horrible time and we were looking for brightness in our lives. It is a light in the darkness of this virus and we think of all those frontline workers who cared for us when we knew nothing of COVID, and we were scared. We think of those no longer with us that died during this terrible time and we never got to say a proper goodbye to”.

The lake is a precious place to the people of Castlebar and they used it to exercise during lockdown while working within a 2km limit. The lake is also sacrosanct to the committee. Our former chairman, Liam Durcan, had a vision for Lough Lannagh before his untimely death in 2004. We are honoured to carry Liam’s dream on and to look after this area, to the best of our ability, in his name. This tree will overlook his memorial garden and we are so happy for that. To coincide, the boat that the Tidy Towns won in a competition during Liam’s chairmanship, came back to us recently, and it is so fitting that this boat will be used to maintain the tree this Christmas, as well as the lake itself. We will think of Liam as we look at the lights while walking the loop of Lough Lannagh.”

The organisers asked another inspirational Castlebar man to switch on the lights on the tree. Charlie Gannon is an incredible young man. At just 24, Charlie lost his left arm to bacterial meningitis at aged 11, his left leg three years ago and he will soon have his right leg amputated below the knee too, leaving him with just his right arm. He raised €11,033 to for the National Breast Cancer Research Institute by cycling 50km on a stationary bike at his home. This tree is a reflection of the community of Castlebar. It shows what working together can do, it shows how inspirational our community is, it shows leadership in dark days and shows that no matter what and no matter how dark, there is always alight.

The organisers want to thank Karen Rowland, who drove this and never let anything get in her way, Robbie Carson who professionalism and expertise gave us the confidence in the project, Pat Rowland from Elverys for sponsoring the lights, Stanley Jackson and his son Karl who designed the whole structure and made sure it would work and would float, Jarlath McHale from Mayo Adventure Experience who was our man on the water, Sean Henehan who came to rescue at last minute, Mick Baynes in the tourist office, and all the members of the TidyTowns who got stuck in, what a great town we have, what a great community. You can see more about this wonderful project by visiting the following link; <https://fb.watch/aeVwwCNyOg/>

Well done to all involved on raising the spirits and shining a light in what has indeed been a very difficult and challenging period in all our lives.

2021 Competition Awards

We have been working away on issuing payment of prizes that were announced on November 12th following on from the 2021 competition. Many of you will have already received your payment and many more will be paid by the end of the month.

In some cases, where groups are not registered on our financial system, we have to set them up as a new supplier in order for us to process a payment. We have been in contact with many of you in this regard and thank you for your cooperation.



Revenue Guidelines

We have now been advised that new Revenue guidelines which came into effect in 2021 require all voluntary groups in receipt of public funding to be registered for tax purposes. Many groups are already registered but some are not. It would be good practice going forward to consult with your local Revenue Office to get registered as this new requirement will apply to all public funds being provided going forward. We will be in direct contact with any affected groups in the coming weeks to ensure we get your prizemoney over to you as soon as possible.



We have just received the Medals from our designer and we hope to get these out to the 136 lucky TidyTowns groups who won a medal in the 2021 SuperValu TidyTowns competition. Keeping with our sustainable ethos, we have replaced the Medal holders, we hope you all like the new sustainable approach.

Certificates will also issue by post in the coming weeks, as previously advised, they will not be framed this year but a contribution towards the framing costs has been added to all cash prizes.

Congratulations once again to all our winners and indeed to all our entrants for 2021, thank you for your continued interest and participation in the competition, as a result, we are all winners.

We look forward to welcoming you all to the 2022 competition in the coming months.

Shane Holland Design TidyTowns Medals and holders for 2021 – Rethinking Packaging and Moving with the times

In keeping with our drive to become more sustainable, the TidyTowns unit consulted with Shane Holland Design in 2021 to look at designing and producing a more sustainable and fitting holder for those much sought after TidyTowns medals.

For groups out there who have been fortunate enough to give a home to our TidyTowns Trophies or to receive a TidyTowns medal, you will appreciate the design attention to detail that go into each.

This attention to detail and design is all thanks to Shane Holland Design in Duleek in County Meath. While working on the TidyTowns awards 2021 we were asked to rethink how the awards are presented. With restrictions, there were no regional awards ceremonies, so medals would have to be sent by courier or post to the recipients. Our challenge was to create a simple package that was light but rugged enough, yet attractive, had simple external disc markings for Gold, Silver, and Bronze, and be made from environmentally responsible materials with less plastics.



The packaging comprises of paper envelopes, pulp packaging, cardboard, paper, printed TidyTowns branding, and string box closers.

The medal holders are styled on 6th-century monastic beehive huts from Co. Kerry. The holders and each medal bear etched TidyTowns motifs of Water, Plant life, Heritage, and Architecture, all etched into the cherry or walnut veneered plywood beehive.

Congratulations to all who should soon receive their hard-fought medals for 2021 from the TidyTowns organisers. We are delighted to bring our new design and make ideas to our clients at the TidyTowns competition since 2006.

Sincere thanks to Shane and his team, for more information, please visit <https://shanehollanddesign.com/>



The Post-Christmas Tidy Out & New Year's Resolutions

With the festive season behind us, many will have turned their focus to the well intentioned plans for the New Year. Perhaps that is doing that long awaited tidy up or clean out or maybe it is taking up a new hobby or fitness regime for January and beyond.

Whatever it is, make it enjoyable, the last two years have been tough so don't be tough on yourself, take it easy, get back into the swing of things gradually, we have all missed out on so much since the pandemic started so reconnect with friends and family that you have not seen in a while. If you are looking for tips, the following might help you in keeping healthy and in making that tidy up, make a difference to those in need.

Healthy Ireland

Keeping fit and healthy is key to staying active and well. 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/>



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.

Our Feathered Friends

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

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



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.

Remember by supporting Charity Shops you are assisting in combatting poverty, which is one of the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

Wishing all Tidy Towns groups every success for 2022

SuperValu

Tidy Towns Grant

Just a gentle reminder on the funding package of €1.5 Million announced in November by Minister Heather Humphreys T.D. to support over 1,000 Tidy Towns groups in their preparation for the 2022 competition.

1,022 eligible groups have now been contacted by Pobal on behalf of the Department with the details on how to avail of this funding. The closing date for receipt of application forms for this funding is only a few short weeks away, February 28th, 2022. Funding obtained must be expended by July 21st, 2022 so the earlier you get your form in, the sooner you can spend the funding.

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 return the form that has issued.** If you have not received communication on this, please get in touch with us so we can look into it for you.

This is a fantastic opportunity to assist you in progressing some of your initiatives and in preparing for the competition next year. The €1.5 Million in funding announced by Minister Humphreys in November brings the total funding provided to Tidy Towns groups to €6.7 Million since the Department of Rural and Community Development was established in 2017.

Email Contacts

We currently have 1,022 active Tidy Towns groups around the country. This is the first time this number has exceeded 1,000 so it really demonstrates that Tidy Towns is very much alive in our communities. As we move to new ways of doing things and in our aims to be more sustainable, contact with groups will continue to be via electronic means in so far as possible. We have email addresses on file for close to 1,000 groups, if your group has not yet shared your email address with us or if you have changed your address, please get in touch so that we can update our records.

Going forward this will be the main method of contact, in the coming years we will move away from printed material, this year we moved from the printed entry form and while that was a challenge for many groups, we commend you on the manner in which this was embraced. We will, in the coming years move from printing adjudication reports and results booklets, these are always available on the website and by not printing this amount of material, we are reducing our paper requirements and being more sustainable.

Keep in Touch

Thank you for taking the time to read our first issue of the SuperValu TidyTowns newsletter for 2022. We hope that the year ahead will be much brighter for us all and we look forward to returning to what we call normal in so far as we can. It will take a while for us all to get there, but we will. The resilience, perseverance and patience we have seen from TidyTowns groups and volunteers in recent years is a testament to the great work and the great can do approach you all have – long may that continue.

Thank you to all our readers, our contributors and also to our sponsors **SuperValu** for their ongoing support and sponsorship. We will be once again announcing winners of **SuperValu** gift cards in the coming months, so get those articles into us, who knows, it could be your group we are listing as one of the next luck recipients.

Remember, that all issues of the Newsletter are on the TidyTowns website at <https://www.tidytowns.ie/about-us/newsletters/> together with our recent compilation of poems and stories from the last number of years.

If you have any issues or queries, please drop us an email or give us a call, we are here to help in any way we can.

Anne, Helen & John

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