



Rialtas
na hÉireann
Government
of Ireland

Tionscadal Éireann
Project Ireland
2040

SuperValu 
Tidy Towns

Caring for our environment

Supporting the Sustainable Development Goals
Act Local – Think Global

Administered by the Department
of Rural & Community Development



SuperValu Tidy Towns

Newsletter

Issue 2022-11 Christmas 22

- Welcome
- Minister's Message
- Tidy Towns Grant Funding
- Ballivor Tidy Towns
- Going home for Christmas
- All Ireland Pollinator Plan
- Kilbride Tidy Towns
- Stay Healthy this Christmas
- SuperValu Gift Card winners
- SDG Champions
- Rush Tidy Towns
- Photography Competition
- Medal Holders
- The Solitary Bench
- Keep in Touch

Season's Greetings everyone,

We extend a very warm welcome to all readers to our Christmas 2022 issue of the SuperValu Tidy Towns Newsletter. We hope this issue finds you and your families, volunteers and wider community safe, well, and full of the joys of the festive season.

It has been a challenging few years for everyone what with Covid and now the increase in living costs. That said we hope that this time will be a special time where you and your family and friends get to meet and spend some quality time with each other.

This time of year can be a joyous time for so many but can also be a difficult time for others, thinking of loved ones who are living away from home, who are

unwell or remembering those who are no longer with us. As we light a special candle this year, we remember all of you and send you our very best wishes for Christmas.

In this issue of the newsletter, we bring you a message from our Minister and we also announce winners of SuperValu Gift Cards and the winners of our third SuperValu Tidy Towns Photography Competition. Congratulations to all our winners.

We also bring you an update on the €1.4 Million funding package recently announced by the Minister for Rural and Community Development, Ms. Heather Humphreys TD.

We have now processed over 85% of this year's awards payments, we are still engaging with the remaining groups and we will do everything we can to assist you so that we can get your well-deserved cash prize to you in early 2023. We will present the medals and certificates at our four regional awards ceremonies; these will hopefully take place in February 2023, more information on these in January.



Dear TidyTowns Volunteers,

It was so encouraging to have the SuperValu TidyTowns competition back to its normal delivery this year after the last few challenging years. There are still challenges ahead as we continue to live with Covid and with the increases in living costs but the resilience shown by communities and TidyTowns groups in particular during these times is heartening.



I was very pleased to meet with so many TidyTowns volunteers at the national awards ceremony in October in the RDS where Trim in County Meath were named as Ireland's Tidiest Town for 2022. Thank You to the 882 towns and villages who entered this year and congratulations to all our winners.

At the ceremony, I was delighted to announce a funding package of €1.4 Million to support you, the TidyTowns volunteers, in the year ahead as you all prepare for the 2023 competition. This will bring the total funding provided by my department since 2017 to €8.1 Million. This demonstrates the value Government and indeed, my Department has on the work TidyTowns groups carry out in areas such as biodiversity, sustainability and in addressing the challenges, we face through climate change.

I look forward to launching the 2023 SuperValu TidyTowns competition in the New Year and to working with our sponsor SuperValu who will continue their sponsorship for the competition out to 2027.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you the volunteers once again for your support and to wish you and your families a very happy and peaceful Christmas and hoping 2023 is a healthy, happy and prosperous year for you all.

Heather Humphreys



Our Rural Future: Minister Humphreys announces details of €1.4 million in funding for TidyTowns Groups

Minister encourages Tidy Towns committees to avail of funding for 2023 projects of Grants between €1,000- €4000 for 935 groups with Emphasis on projects that promote green spaces, parks and biodiversity.



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

Minister for Rural and Community Development, Heather Humphreys TD, has recently announced the details of €1.4 million in funding to support TidyTowns groups prepare for the 2023 SuperValu TidyTowns competition.

As part of the initiative, grants of between €1,000 and €4,000 will be provided to 935 TidyTowns groups right across the country. Groups who entered the SuperValu TidyTowns competition in 2021 or 2022 will be eligible.

Minister Humphreys today published the details of how Tidy Towns committees can avail of the funding and encouraged all eligible groups to apply.

The SuperValu TidyTowns competition has been in existence since 1958. It continues to grow and attract new entrants each year. 882 towns and villages entered the competition this year. At the national awards ceremony in October, Minister Humphreys declared Trim in County Meath as Ireland's Tidiest Town for 2022.

Speaking about the funding to support groups entering the 2023 SuperValu TidyTowns competition, Minister Humphreys said:

“This week I wrote to all Tidy Towns Groups across the country and thanked them for their work and dedication to their community. The efforts of the thousands of volunteers make our towns more vibrant and better places to live, work and raise a family. “

“I want to support our Tidy Towns Groups in preparing for next year's competition and today I am delighted to announce the detail of the €1.4 million in funding which I confirmed at the event in the RDS in October. The funding of between €1,000 and €4,000 is being provided to groups to assist them in preparing for the 2023 Competition, the 65th anniversary of the SuperValu TidyTowns competition, but no sign of retirement on it – it's stronger it's getting”

“Today I am encouraging groups availing of the funding to look at projects for their green spaces and parks, and projects that are sensitive to our biodiversity and promote sustainable living. I am confident that this funding can help further support such initiatives.”

All eligible groups will be contacted before Christmas to confirm their funding. Applications for funding must be returned to Pobal no later than February 28th 2023. Late applications will not be accepted. All projects and initiatives funded through this support must be completed by July 31st, 2023.

Looking ahead to next year, the Minister said; “I want to take this opportunity to thank the thousands and thousands of TidyTowns volunteers that have given of their time and skills so generously over the years. I am confident that the funding provided by my Department in recent years, in addition to the funding I am referring to today, has made and will continue to make, a real difference in the towns and villages of Ireland.”

Ballivor TidyTowns Co. Meath

Noel French from Ballivor TidyTowns got in touch to advise us about our thermostats and we can make some very valuable changes.

In November as the winter season approached Ballivor TidyTowns provided temperature gauges free at local shop outlets in Ballivor. “By lowering your thermostats you can reduce your bill but you can also reduce your carbon footprint.

Set the room thermostat to 18°C and then turn it up by one degree each day until you find a temperature you are comfortable with. But be sure that the temperature does not drop below 16°C for elderly people and those with impaired mobility.

Your heating bill can be reduced by 10% by simply lowering the thermostat by just one degree. Turn the thermostat for your living areas down to 20°C. The temperature in hallways and bedrooms should be cooler, ideally between 15-18°C.

A Ballivor TidyTowns spokesperson thanked Meath County Council for providing the temperature gauges. The council also provides a Home Energy Saving Kit which is available to borrow from the local libraries.

Cllr Nick Killian, Cathaoirleach of Meath County Council, who launched the initiative congratulated Ballivor TidyTowns on their contribution to their community and wished them well with their project.

Photographed opposite are, Aine Hamilton, Carmel Hannigan, Cllr. Nick Killian and Noel French.



Going home for Christmas

Mikey had left Ireland in the late 50s he often talked of that February morning when he left home. It was a very frosty morning his dad and mam were so lonely dad kept wiping his nose he said he had a cold. Mam kept staring out the window but Mikey was full of excitement. The thought of all the great things fellas had said about London. Bright lights, nightclubs and loose women. Life would never again be the same. 25 years on he still wondered would things be the same when he got back.

He got work on the building sites and that was what he did for the rest of his time. He soon got to know all the Irish clubs and bars. He went to the Galtymore most weekends. It was here he met Rose O'Brien from Mayo a student nurse they fell in love and married on March 17th 2 years later. They were madly in love and then tragedy struck. Rose got killed by a bus while crossing the road Mikey was never the same. He worked all week and most weekends drank himself stupid. He lost most of his friends he seldom wrote a letter home except birthdays for mam and dad when he would send them a few pounds.

They were always asking when would he come home for a holiday. They longed to see him and indeed Mikey felt the same way. Many a time he saved money for a holiday and then spent it on drink. But this time it was going to be different. He was going home this Christmas he would surprise mam and dad. He had set the date December 17th the excitement was building up.

He took down the tin box to check the money he had been saving. He held it tightly in his hand when suddenly he got a pain in his chest. He held on to the tin box as sweat fell from his brow. He fell to the ground and he pressed his emergency button on his chest as he gasped for breath. Noel his friend came around and dialled 999 while Mikey struggled to breath. Mikey was rushed to Frimley Park hospital and there he spent Christmas thinking of Rose his wife and his mam and dad in Ireland. He remembered how dad would hang his grey woollen socks on the crane as mam gave out about the smell. He remembered them saying the rosary and shaking holy water. He left hospital the end of January and seemed to be doing ok. But alas he suffered a stroke and struggled for the next few weeks. He said he would go home for Easter but it wasn't to be. He died and was buried in Greenford Cemetery on the 12th of March beside his wife Rose. An east wind was blowing at home in Ireland as his mam and dad said the rosary for the repose of his sole.

Denis Heffernan
December 2022

Thank you as always Denis for your stories and poems and for sharing them with the wider TidyTowns Family.



All Ireland Pollinator Plan

One third of our wild bee species are threatened with extinction from the island of Ireland. We know it is because we have drastically reduced the areas where they can nest and the amount of food our landscape provides for them. In publishing the first All-Ireland Pollinator Plan (AIPP) in 2015, Ireland became one of the first countries in Europe to address pollinator declines, and the Plan has since gained international acclaim. The first AIPP was developed from the grass roots up, to ensure we have an island that's better for biodiversity; better for pollinators; better for us; and better for future generations. It is a shared action plan. Together, we can collectively take steps to restore our pollinator populations to healthy levels.

A 15-member all-island steering group provide oversight of the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan. The Plan is managed by the National Biodiversity Data Centre. The National Biodiversity Data Centre is funded by The Heritage Council and the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage. It is a programme of The Heritage Council.

The 81 actions in the first AIPP for 2015-2020 were delivered. In the first phase we wanted to ensure that everyone understood what pollinators need, and what simple, evidence-based actions they can take to help. Extensive guidelines were developed for everyone from farmers to councils, communities, businesses, schools, sports clubs and gardens. These are all freely available at <https://pollinators.ie/>

A new version of the AIPP for 2021-2025 was published in March 2021. It is more ambitious than the first version – with more partners coming together to deliver more actions. Pollinators are better off than they were in 2015, but we still need to do more. The new plan has more than doubled our goals – with 186 actions to help biodiversity. Within the second phase, we need to engage more, monitor more, and manage more land for biodiversity.



The Local Authority Pollinator Award was successfully run in the TidyTowns competition in 2022. Every year, the standard of entries is growing and the committee behind the award continue to be inspired by what is being achieved. The award was introduced in 2016 and over 200 TidyTowns groups have entered the special pollinator award since then.

In addition to the overall winner, this award identifies large and small-town winners within each of the four Tidy Towns regions. Since 2021, we have also introduced an award for the best newcomer. Congratulations to Cobh in Co Cork who won the overall award in 2022. Other winners were; Best newcomer: Cratloe TidyTowns

Large town winners were; Midlands & East – Skerries TidyTowns , South & Mid West – Cobh TidyTowns , South East – Clonmel TidyTowns & North West & West – Buncrana TidyTowns. Small town winners were; Midlands & East – Geashill TidyTowns, South & Mid West – Castlegregory TidyTowns, South East – Tullahought TidyTowns & North West West – Belcarra TidyTowns .

TidyTowns groups have been instrumental in bringing life to the plan and we extend our sincere gratitude to all TidyTowns volunteers who have embraced what the plan is about and have applied it to so many of their TidyTowns projects. Keep up the great work everyone. The Bees will thank you.



Kilbride TidyTowns - A Bike for Christmas

Small gesture but big impact.

Some months ago, one of the Kilbride TidyTowns eagle-eyed volunteers spotted this children's bike being discarded and heading for the skip. Noticing that it only required some small repairs it was retrieved and Pat, our local bicycle repair man in Ashbourne, was only too delighted to help us out with the repairs, free of cost. Through a local family hosting Ukrainians, we were put in touch with a Ukrainian family living in a refugee centre who were delighted to get the bike for one of their children for Christmas.

The group were delighted that their little gesture meant so much and also contributed something small towards addressing the global sustainable development goals addressing climate action, good health and well-being, no poverty, partnership, etc.



The group are now seeking an urgent meeting with representatives of Santa's elves to discuss more sustainable and climate friendly presents this Christmas.

Happy Christmas from all the girls and boys, women and men at Kilbride TidyTowns



Stay Healthy this Christmas

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

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

Healthy Ireland


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/>



Shop Local

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



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

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

<https://stopfoodwaste.ie/>



STOPFoodWaste.ie

Planning & Shopping

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

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

TidyTowns & Community Groups

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

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

Christmas

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

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

Safefood

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

Biscuits, they do look very tasty.

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



Unwanted Gifts & Packaging

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

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



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

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

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



I'm sure many people and Tidy Towns Groups are participating in the Irish Garden Bird Survey which runs from 28th November to February 2023, please see details

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

Unwanted Gifts

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

SuperValu Gift Card Winners

With thanks to our sponsor **SuperValu** we are delighted to announce some recent articles that were selected as winners of **SuperValu** Gift Cards. Remember to keep those stories, poems and updates on your projects coming in to us. €50 **SuperValu** Gift Cards will be working their way to the following groups whose stories captured the attention of our readers.

In Issue 5 we heard from **Dunshaughlin TidyTowns**.

Oliver Fitzpatrick, Manager of Tara Mines offered Dunshaughlin TidyTowns Group a number of trees which they were removing from their site in Navan. The donated trees were London Plane and many of those trees, once felled, would unfortunately be used for firewood. With some research and imagination the group decided to process the raw timber into public seating in the village.



Two members of the Tidy Town's Committee, Patrick Connaughton and Fiona McAuley visited a local mill where the London Plane trees for were swopped for Lebanese Cedar. Lebanese Cedar is more suited for outdoor use and, hopefully, will require little maintenance. Patrick & Fiona drew up the design & specifications for the park benches that Neill could work from.



A bench has been located at the area known as Gallow's Hill, so named following the 1798 Rebellion when the "Croppies" raided the local barracks for weapons. The seat will provide a tranquil spot for residents to relax and enjoy the natural beauty of the environs.

In Issue 7 of 2022, we brought you a work of art from **Glaslough in Co Monaghan**. Ann Mc Kenna a CE worker for Glaslough TidyTowns had just completed her Train the Trainer course. Being a budding artist, Ann was approached by some members of the local TidyTowns committee to start art classes with them in the Oakland community centre. Ann and the group put their thinking caps on, and it was decided that they would start a six-week art class.



As no one had painted a picture before, the first class was to build their confidence, have fun and go home with a completed painting, and this was exactly what they did, every one was amazed by what they had achieved. The classes went from strength to strength each week and everyone gaining more confidence in themselves and having lots of fun on the way.



In Issue 9 Norma from **Carrick on Shannon TidyTowns** in Leitrim got in touch to share with us some images of a mix of modern and vintage bicycles, painted and planted up with mostly pollinator friendly plants and ivy, adding colour and selfie opportunities to a green area along

the River Shannon.

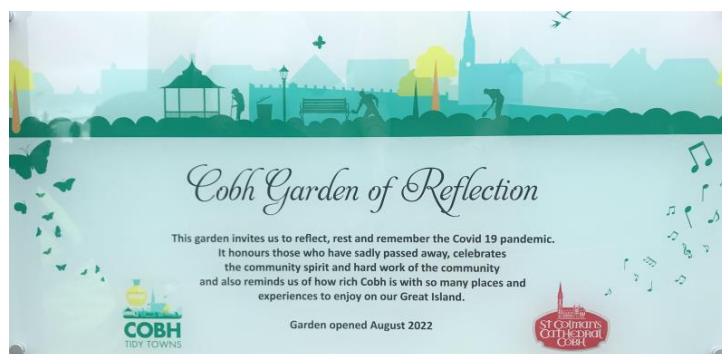
This is upcycling; pardon the pun, at its finest. Well done to all involved, no doubt these have made into many staycation photos and indeed vacation photos from our further afield visitors. Nice to see the pollinator planting too.



Ruth from **Cobh TidyTowns** got in for Issue 9 also, having won the 2021 TidyTowns Covid Community Spirit Award, individuals and businesses in Cobh started planning a project to remember all the positivity in the town during this time and reflect on those who are no longer with us. The Cobh Garden of Reflection is a Cobh TidyTowns initiative in association with Cobh Parish. The enhancements to

the area invite us to reflect, rest and remember the Covid 19 pandemic.

The garden honours those who have sadly passed away, celebrates the community spirit and hard work of the community and reminds us of how rich Cobh is with so many places and experiences to enjoy on our Great Island.



Dromiskin Tidy Towns has had much to celebrate recently having been awarded its second Bronze Medal in the National SuperValu TidyTowns Competition and being one of only nineteen groups nationally to be awarded a Community Green Flag for its development and presentation of the Heritage Park. In Issue 10, they told us more about their park.





Developed on a village centre site, owned by the Parish and licenced to the TidyTowns committee, the Park was designed by a local Tidy Towns volunteer who is a qualified Landscape Architect, with other members using their particular skills for other aspects including landscaping, historical research, completing successful

funding applications, crafting sculptural pieces and implementing a herbicide free maintenance programme.

The Park, on its site of one third of an acre, may be a relatively small public space but it certainly packs a big punch with its permanent landscaping features, curving pathways and high quality interpretative panels highlighting the rich and varied heritage of the community.

Congratulations to each of our winners. Remember you can read the full stories together with so many more, by visiting the TidyTowns website where you can access all of the previous issues of the Newsletters. Thanks again to **SuperValu** for sponsoring these prizes.

2023 SDG Champions Programme

The Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications is now seeking Expressions of Interest for participants in the 2023 SDG Champions Programme.

As part of the 2023 programme, 20 organisations and groups from across the country will be appointed as 'SDG Champions' to raise public awareness of the SDGs and to demonstrate, through example, that everyone in society can make a contribution to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Applications are sought from all organisations and groups, big and small, who would like to act as an advocate for the SDGs and a good practice example of how to promote and utilise them.

Applications will be accepted in written or video format and will be accepted up until 5pm, Friday, 20th January 2023.

For further information on the SDG Champions Programme and how to apply, please see: www.gov.ie/sdgs



Rush TidyTowns – 2023 Calendar Launch

Brendan O Reilly, Chairperson of Rush TidyTowns in Dublin has been in touch to tell us about their recent Calendar launch.

Rush TidyTowns recently launched their 2023 calendar in the Strand Bar in Rush. The calendar is comprised of 12 images depicting all aspects of Rush.

Rush TidyTowns ran a photography competition over the whole year for residents with the committee choosing 12 photos from the entries for inclusion in the calendar. The winning photographers were presented with a prize by Minister Joe O'Brien on the night. Also in attendance were Councillors Brian Dennehy, Rob O'Donahue and Cathal Bolland.

The calendar is an important fundraiser for Rush TidyTowns and calendars can be bought for €10 from a number of shops in the town. Don't wait too long though because we had a lot of very disappointed people last year when they sold out well before Christmas.

Here we have a selection of images from the launch, it looks like an enjoyable evening was had by all and we wish you all every success with the Calendar, what a lovely idea.



Photography Competition

For the third year now, we are delighted to have brought you our SuperValu TidyTowns photography competition. Yet again this year, you surpassed yourself with the fantastic images sent in, sadly there can only be a few winners, so without further ado, let us bring you the results of the 2022 Photography competition.



In our junior section, we are delighted to award a €100 gift card to Aimee Quinn, who is 15 years of age from Colaiste Mhuire, Ballymote TidyTowns for this image of one of our feathered friend's happy out in the green space.

We are happy to award a gift card of €150 to Ballinlough TidyTowns for this image showing true TidyTowns dedication.

Sadly we have litter to pick but thank you to these volunteers here and to all who do their bit throughout the year. We will get your gift cards out to you in January, congratulations to our winners in this category.

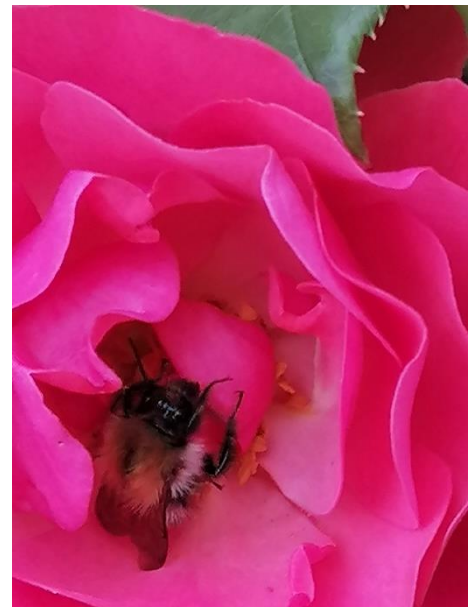


In our main competition in third place and receiving a cash prize of €100 is Ballinlough TidyTowns in Co Cork, this image shows Liam one of the group's great volunteers as he plants one of their very first planters in Ballinlough! They just set up the TidyTowns group this year and entered the competition for the first time, welcome on board. Keep up the good work Liam and all the team.



In second place and receiving a cash prize of €200 is Arklow TidyTowns for this lovely image showing one of our pollinators doing what they do best. I like to think as a title for this as "lunch is served"

Well done to the photographer here, it is all about timing and in this case, you got in spot on.



Our overall winner in the 2022 SuperValu TidyTowns Photography competition is Dromiskin TidyTowns for this image, which they call “Pesticide Free” It is indeed a beautiful photograph and shows the wonderful green spaces and floral areas that can be created in a pesticide free world. No doubt, it is extra work but it is so worth it when you end up with something like this.



Yet again this year we were so impressed with the response we received. We extend our congratulations to all our winners.

Gift Cards will issue in the post to our junior winners in January and we will be in touch with the other groups to organise your cash prize in the New Year.

Thank you to all our entrants and remember to keep taking photographs, they make a fantastic contribution to your TidyTowns entry and are essential to show the before and after impact of your work.

Medal Holders

This year we changed our medal holder to a more sustainable version. We still have a small number of the original holders, if any of you had one of these that perhaps got damaged or broken and you would like a replacement, please let us know and we can send one on to you.



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

 <https://twitter.com/TidyTownsIre>

 <https://www.tidytowns.ie>



THE STORY OF THE SOLITARY BENCH IN WESTPORT

This is an Upcycled Council Garden Bench, which was destined for the Rubbish, and with the help of a local crafts man, it has gained a new lease of life and a relaxing space for people to watch the wildlife and enjoy the Garden. Thanks to Mandy from Westport Chamber for sharing this with us and to Gemma Hensey for composing the piece.

The story of the solitary bench at the library! (F28 HE26) by Gemma Hennessy

I need to tell my story, as I'm lucky to be alive and useful. I'm only here since January 2021!

I once had a lovely patch in Westport, but I fell into disrepair and was dumped behind the council yard. I'm lucky to be still in Westport as many of my compatriots have gone to other areas along Mayo's Western seafront. I was considered useless, as much of my wood was rotten, so I had been cast aside!

A group of do gooders' -well gardeners by another name at the library got the notion that they'd like a bench so that people, could perhaps admire their work or simply sit, chat, look at the view. Even then it wasn't that easy to get me. Pat Fahy managed to retrieve me from the Council yard and then I was dumped down Quarry Lane for a while or out of the way. Then they had to get permission to be allowed to put me where I'm now -that was no easy chore. There were objections here and there but when one of the do gooders got a petition going and signatures, they go the go ahead.

The town architect had to decide exactly where it should be situated. From then on it was plain sailing. Creative Wood supplied the perfect wood, tidy town's the nuts and bolts and Simon Brown the perfect craft person. To avoid me having an occasional involuntary dip into the Mall river from night revellers I'm chained into position too.

So overall I'm happy to be useful again, I have different views from time to time with the dippers whooping down on the river and the ferret scurrying along the path at the river's edge, the crane managing to get his feed after a stately wait. I even saw a crow swoop down from her nest to attack one of the gardeners - rather frightening to say the least.

The many varieties of flowers during the different seasons are beautiful. I don't know all their names yet but gradually I will and appreciate the different seasons and what they may bring. I have heard that the garden has a biodiverse theme -whatever that means- and that some flowers have absolutely no pollen and others are useful for the bees and pollinating insects.



I do have a problem with litter, I do wish that people would take it with them, my patch is getting rather worn too but hopefully the gardeners will sort that out - perhaps camomile might work there.

From this to this



Environmentally yours,
The Solidarity Bench by the river.

Keep in Touch

Here we are at the end of this issue and indeed at the end of the year. It has been our pleasure to engage with so many of you throughout 2022. Perhaps it was via email, letter, phone call, or perhaps in person at the Ploughing, at the awards ceremony or at one of the events during the year, however you got in touch with us, we are glad you did and delighted that so many of you entered the SuperValu TidyTowns competition this year.

Thank you for being so loyal, so patient and so resilient during the difficulties that life can send our way when we least want or expect it. We would encourage all of you to take some time to fill in the grant form if you are one of the 935 eligible groups that entered the competition in either 2021 or 2022 and get it back in by the February 28th closing date.

Thank you to all of the TidyTowns volunteers around the country who give so generously of your skills and your time. Thank you to our sponsor SuperValu and to their network of retailers who assist so many groups around the country. Thank you to all our special award sponsors for their loyal support and to our national panel of TidyTowns Adjudicators who report on all your work. We look forward to doing it all again in 2023, which is in fact our 65th anniversary.

Let us finish by wishing you and yours all the best for Christmas and for the New Year. Safe travelling during the holidays, stay safe, happy, healthy and warm and remember to check in on those in your community who may find this a lonely time of year, a friendly chat and a cuppa can be so powerful and would mean so much.

Remember to keep those stories, images, poems and articles coming in, let us keep the newsletter busy for 2023.

Anne, Helen & John

Department of Rural and Community Development
Government Buildings

Ballina

Co Mayo F26 E8N6

Email: tidytowns@dracd.gov.ie

Tel: 01 – 773 6938 or 01 – 773 6912

Ár dTodhchaí
Tuaithe
Our Rural
Future



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

