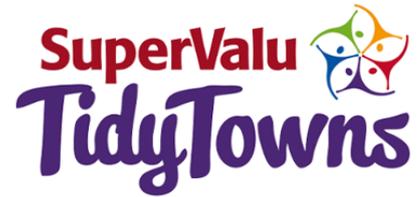




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SuperValu Tidy Towns Newsletter Issue 2023-2

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A Chairde,

Welcome to our second newsletter of 2023, we were delighted to see so much colour on show in the St. Patrick's Day parades across the county where so many Tidy Towns groups were out in strength, well done to you all, more about that later.

Last week, Mr Ian Allen Managing Director of SuperValu joined Minister Heather Humphreys T.D., as they launched the 2023 SuperValu Tidy Towns competition in Trim in County Meath.

Full details on the entry process together with information on this year's special awards can be found by visiting www.tidytowns.ie.

In this issue, we bring you some stories from around the country, a poetry section and some information to support you with the entry process for this year's

competition. Thanks to Ennis Tidy Towns for sharing some useful hints on the process also, they have also shared their 2021 winning entry with us all, so no doubt that will give many of you some fresh ideas.

We are also trying out a new feature whereby you can submit questions or issues you have so that the wider Tidy Towns family might have the answers you need. We will see how this develops in the coming months.



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



<https://twitter.com/TidyTownslre>



<https://www.tidytowns.ie>





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



SuperValu

Minister Heather Humphreys & Mr. Ian Allen launch 2023 SuperValu Tidy Towns Competition celebrating 65 years of transforming communities

The Minister for Rural and Community Development, Heather Humphreys TD, in association with the Managing Director of SuperValu, Ian Allen, have today (23rd March 2023) launched the 2023 SuperValu Tidy Towns competition.

Since 1958, the competition, which is administered by the Department of Rural and Community Development and sponsored by SuperValu, has been a pivotal initiative in bringing communities together and addressing some of the environmental challenges we face in modern society.

This year marks the **65th anniversary of the competition** and is expected to attract one of its highest level of entries to date.

The official launch took place in Trim, County Meath – the winners of the 2022 SuperValu Tidy Towns Competition.

Speaking in Trim, Minister Humphreys said:

“It gives me great pleasure to be here along the banks of the River Boyne in Trim, Ireland’s Tidiest Town for 2022, as we launch the 2023 SuperValu Tidy Towns competition. This year we celebrate 65 years of this fantastic competition, which has become part of the fabric of Irish society.

“The saying ‘ní neart go cur le chéile’, which means unity is our strength, really sums up what SuperValu Tidy Towns is all about.

“Once again the focus this year will be on bringing communities and TidyTowns volunteers of all ages together as we effect real change and make our towns and villages better places to live, work, visit and raise a family.”

Minister Humphreys continued:

“Being part of your local TidyTowns group is a great way to get involved in community life.

“My Department, through the national rural development policy ‘Our Rural Future’, supports vibrant, inclusive and sustainable communities throughout Ireland.

“I would encourage everyone to reach out to their local group and volunteer, you will be amazed at the benefits to you and your wider community.

“I would also like to thank our partner and sponsor, SuperValu for their continuing support and enthusiasm through their nationwide network of retailers support groups.

“This is SuperValu’s 32nd year of sponsorship of the TidyTowns Competition and they are championing awareness of the competition especially in areas of biodiversity and sustainable living.”

Also speaking at the launch, Ian Allen, Managing Director of SuperValu, said:

“It gives me great pride to launch SuperValu TidyTowns together with the Department of Rural and Community Development. What makes SuperValu TidyTowns special is that it truly shows the power of community and how collective small actions can make a big difference toward ensuring our communities are more sustainable places to live, work and play for generations to come.”

“Every year, 29,648 volunteers across 924 committees give over three million hours of their time to SuperValu TidyTowns – this is a phenomenal effort. We have been heartened by the increased focus on biodiversity and sustainability

projects in recent years, as well as the blended energy of youth and gold dust skills of experienced members, which makes up the hundreds of TidyTowns committees across the country.

“We are thrilled that SuperValu has been chosen to continue our sponsorship of the TidyTowns competition for the next five years and are very grateful to the Department of Rural and Community Development for this exciting opportunity. We are excited to work with colleagues, friends and neighbours around the country to make our communities a better place. We strongly encourage people to contact their local SuperValu TidyTowns committee to join the collective efforts being made to build more sustainable communities for all.”

The number of entries is steadily increasing and many new groups are entering the competition for the first time or returning with new enthusiasm and drive to improve their local areas. The Special Awards also continue to bring an added dimension to the competition and again this year we have an impressive array of special awards with some fantastic prizes.

The closing date for receipt of entries for this year’s competition is Wednesday, 10th May 2023. Entry forms for the SuperValu TidyTowns competition are available at www.tidytowns.ie and this information has been emailed to all registered groups. Entry to the competition will only be accepted by email to the tidytowns@drcd.gov.ie address.

Full details of the competition are available on www.tidytowns.ie or www.supervalu.ie

2022 Regional Awards Ceremonies

The first of our regional award ceremonies covering the West and North West region will take place on Wednesday April 5th in Keadue in County Roscommon. Invitations have now issued for this event, if you were a winner in the 2022 SuperValu TidyTowns competition in the West and North West region and have not yet received an invitation, please let us know.

We are working on finalising dates for the remaining regional awards ceremonies at which we will present all of our winners with their certificates and medals following the 2022 SuperValu TidyTowns competition.

Once we have more details on the remaining events, we will let you know.

Anything Wild? By Billy Flynn

Hello and welcome to “Anything Wild?” a new series for the Supervalu TidyTowns Newsletter that hopes to bring you a little closer to wild species and places that you might be encountering as the year turns. What better time for such a series to start than Spring? Not really being a winter person, the author admits that he wasted some of the greatest moments of the year yearning for June or July. The fool, the fool, he allowed



Spring to be merely a prelude to that off-fleeting summer and missed what is arguably nature’s finest performance - the wildflowers of Spring.

If you’re a botanist, it’s probably like being a parent when it comes to wildflowers, you shouldn’t really ever admit to having a favourite. Thankfully I’m not one of the former so there’s nothing to stop me from stating that my favoured flower is Lesser Celandine. There, I’ve said it.

Wordsworth (also not a botanist of more than the amateur variety) while often best-remembered for Daffodils, made a bold claim on the Lesser Celandine in the eponymous poem that it was ‘bright at the sun himself...’ Indeed, even on a murky February day, such as that at time of writing, the golden hue of the Lesser Celandine positively gleams among the damp green of a Monaghan roadside. I might perhaps hold this flower closest to my heart as it’s a true sign of spring. With its yellow petals offering undeniable hope of longer, more colourful days, but really it’s because it’s easily identified. That’s probably why it made me fall in love with botany in a wet woodland in Wicklow nearly a quarter of a century ago.

You see, you can't mistake it, really. Think Buttercup but with more sass. It is actually a type of buttercup as it belongs to the same family as the flowers plucked to make those childhood-beloved chains. It also used to share the same first name that botanists call the familiar buttercups *Ranunculus*. Giving it its full Latin title, it (now) is *Ficaria verna*. That literally means ‘the Fig Buttercup.’ While the flower bears no resemblance to any fig that you might imagine, unearth a Lesser Celandine and you’ll encounter a knobby and irregularly shaped tuber. Having done that and knowing that ‘figs’ was once a familiar term for haemorrhoids, you’ll never think of either plant the same way. You’ll then also understand why the more famous William’s favoured flower was once called Pilewort. I’ll leave that there.

You can expect to see Lesser Celandine gracing your woodlands, hedgerows and roadsides from February onwards although I’ve found them a little late this year. Although they’ve become established in parts of the ‘New World’ where they’re widely regarded as an invasive species, here at home, there’s literally nothing to compare to them in early spring.

Just as Herrick mourned the passing of that Tidy Towns staple, the fair Daffodil, I used to feel pangs of sadness watching the bright yellow of the Lesser Celandine fade as it must to grey as its season gives way to summer. Along with the sadness was a regret that I'd not made enough of this latest, now-receding spring. Not anymore, though. Although Wordsworth (back to him one last time) observed that 'Sunshine may not cheer it, nor the dew; It cannot help itself in its decay;' he then smiles at the fading of this flower's petals. I take from this that he accepts that even something once as bright as the sun must cede its day to what is to come after.

This was brought to my mind last March when our youngest pointed out an early Lesser Celandine and yelled 'Dad, look! That's one of your spring buttercups!' Thrilled with the thought of having this beautiful wildflower associated with me (in her head, at least), I had to remind myself that favourites aren't allowed. Or maybe they are, for a season at least.

Billy Flynn is an Ecologist and Tidy Towns Adjudicator from Clones, Co. Monaghan. He has never claimed to be a botanist and will accept any corrections or suggestions on this column with as much grace as he can muster.

Email is best, billy@flynnfurney.com thank you.

You can discover more about the Lesser Celandine and gorgeous photographs of same on wildflowersofireland.net a website given to us all by the wonderful Zoë Devlin whose field guide to Irish wildflowers the author cannot recommend enough.

¹ Line from *The Lesser Celandine* by William Wordsworth (1770-1850). The author could apologise for the gender-specificity therein but some things age better than others. I don't know what else to tell you.

¹ It used to be scientifically-named *Ranunculus ficaria* but it isn't anymore, for reasons that are too boring to get into here. I doubt the flower cares a whit.

¹ My earliest record is December 10th, in a Hazel woodland in Co. Clare. I wouldn't trust myself on this but for the fact that I was accompanied at the time by an actual botanist, the gifted Deborah D'Arcy.

Your Questions Answered...we hope!

We have recently received a suggestion from a group with regard to listing issues or queries that groups around the county may be experiencing and seeking support from the wider Tidy Towns family as to how these issues might be overcome. It is most likely the case that other groups have encountered these issues previously and may have a resolution to share.

We would ask you therefore to share any such issues you have with us. We in turn will create a dedicated section in the newsletter and share these out to the wider network. Groups will not be identified, the process will be discrete and anonymous so please have no concerns there.

We will try it for a few months and see if it is of benefit to you, our readers. It will be something similar to a problem page so watch out for the section in upcoming issues.

Dear Tidy Towns.....

St. Patrick's Day – Arklow TidyTowns

Sandra Duffy has been in touch to tell us that this year Arklow TidyTowns themed their parade as “Save our Sea, Pick up Three”.



This initiative was to encourage the community to pick up three pieces of litter off the beach and save our ocean wildlife.

The boat was upcycled with a sail made from plastic bottles and bags.

This was a great way too get involved in the local Paddy's day parade to support

the community activity, to walk with many other volunteer groups and also to use the opportunity to promote the TidyTowns ethos. This year we did Sustainability. Last year we displayed a Biodiversity promotion.

Well done to Sandra and all the crew of the recycled Boat in Arklow.

If your group participated in this year's parade, perhaps you would like to share some images with us also.



Community Climate Challenge

We would like to invite all **TidyTowns** groups to our upcoming community climate challenge and info sessions.

The **free** two week Community Climate Challenge funded by Irish Aid, engages groups to reduce their Co2 emissions in a positive and fun way, using the app Ducky.

More information about the Climate Heroes competition is available via www.climateheroes.ie



Community Climate Challenge
22 April - 6 May 2023

Challenge yourself and compete against other community groups

Track eco-friendly acts and reduce CO2 emissions

Be the first ever Climate Heroes Challenge winner



Click here to register your group

www.climateheroes.ie



Getting your Submission Ready By Cormac McCarthy – Ennis Tidy Towns.

Well, it's that time of the year again – submission time! Every committee knows the dread and sleepless nights that getting your submission in on time can cause. Whether you pull together your submission alone or as part of a team there is no underestimating the work in ensuring, you document all your projects, be they NEW-MAINTAINED-FUTURE PROJECT.

But what constitutes a good submission? I don't think there is any one answer to this, as individual Adjudicators no doubt have particular likes and dislikes. We have been lucky to get positive feedback in recent years on our submission such as:

2022: Thank you for this year's excellent submission which fulfilled all the requirements including keeping it succinct and lucid.

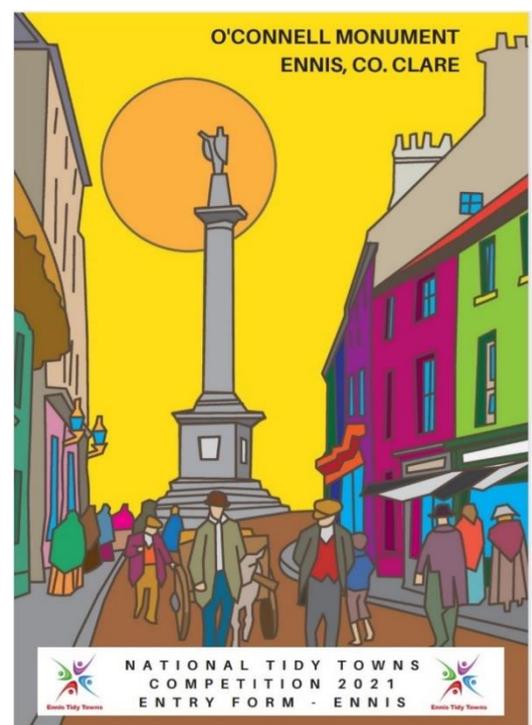
2021: Your entry form is a super piece of work: it is well laid-out, generously illustrated and very easy to navigate. Thanks to all that played a part in putting this together. Your plan is easy to navigate, well laid-out and succinct.

2019: While not wishing to start this assessment with hyperbole, if this adjudicator has seen a nicer-looking presentation than this, it doesn't come to mind. Cleverly laid out with double-sided print, amply illustrated and beautifully bound, this was a pleasure to behold.

However, this was not always the case. We have worked hard, taking on board Adjudicator comments to reduce our submission from a hefty 170 pages to last years 31 pages. Also, it did not happen overnight. Here is what our Adjudicator said in 2016: Last year's adjudicator made some remarks about slimming down the entry form and this still applies.

In the spirit of TidyTowns we decided to share our 2021 winning entry form last year. We did this so others could benefit and importantly realise that less is often more. In a nutshell we have adopted the following approach:

1. Start each category with a list of 'items raised' from the previous Adjudication Report and succinctly outline how these have been addressed. If substantial, you can elaborate in the main body of text.
2. Next start with your main project in that category – we decided to call these our flagship projects. Then list them in order of importance/impact/effort.
3. On average, provide approx.. 5-6 lines of text per Project and ideally include a BEFORE and AFTER photo.



4. Label the project as New, Maintained or Future Project.
5. Add the SDGs which you feel it best aligns with. The entry form directs you to which ones might best reflect your project. We found this a steep learning curve, don't worry; best to give it a go than leave it blank was our approach.
6. Whilst we use weblinks we keep them to the absolute minimum e.g. only if we developed a video and it's on YouTube.
7. A few years back we decided to get a map of Ennis graphic designed which we annotate each year. Maybe consider using a local artist or use your Pobal grant aid – it's a great investment and is reused year on year!
8. As we are a Large Urban Centre we have recently started to include a suggested itinerary which will showcase all our listed projects in the easiest and fastest way. We have a population of over 25,000, numerous approach roads and a warren of medieval streets (many one-way). Just let's say navigating Ennis is ...erm... a challenge at times.

So sin é – we hope you have found this useful. Our 2021 submission can be downloaded via this link:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/16Mm0FhjrZuABBKMh1_w_LS554T0oJMNd/view?usp=drivesdk

We also discovered a way to download your social media posts (Facebook) with associated photos which is great for helping you start the submission – the photos are small in size, the posts are dated and as its social media the text amount is usually kept to a minimum – WIN WIN!

Hack 1: <https://fb.watch/jgCTCA7HXC/>

Hack 2: <https://fb.watch/jgCRE244dW/>



Tidy Towns Submission Hack #2

How to use smallpdf.com
to ensure you meet the
20MB submission limit!



**Best of luck to all
the committees
this year!**

Thanks to Cormac and all the crew in Ennis TidyTowns for their “sharing is caring” approach and for the valuable advice given here to all groups to assist in getting your entry ready for the 2023 SuperValu TidyTowns competition.

Kilsheelan TidyTowns

Tom from Kilsheelan TidyTowns has been in touch to tell us about a recycling initiative they have been working on.

This is an innovative and eye catching sustainability project that was initiated from a similar structure sighted by one of our members, Bernie whilst in Spain

In Spring 2020 this structure this installed in our village creating 10,000 hits in Week 1 on Facebook when we were doing a daily picture of our village during first pandemic shutdown



It's been a great educational and fun structure as Children love filling the structure and are attracted by the colour. The tops are recycled to make pallets and garden furniture

On March 17th 2021 we installed a Shamrock to capture metal bottle tops

These structures were made in our Parish by Eamon Condon a metal fabricator.

From collected bottle tops, Niamh and Kiara, two very talented artists made a mural of Kilsheelan Village from some of the recycled tops.



We have antique petrol pumps at Robinsons Bar.

The boats of which there are many, represent our river and our unique presentation on approach roads with colour and innovative art.

Finally, our unique architectural heritage is our bridge linking us to Co. Waterford

This project was filmed and featured on Nationwide in October 2022

Tullow TidyTowns & Climate Action Committee Launch of the report of Tullow Swift Survey 2022

During the summer of 2022, Tullow TidyTowns and Climate Action Committee commissioned ornithologist, Padraig Webb, to count the number of nesting swifts in Tullow Town. Swifts are small (40 gram) migratory birds which come from middle Africa to nest in Ireland in the summer months. With the scientific name *Apus Apus* (Greek for “no foot”) swifts are on the red list of Birds of Conservation Concern in Ireland (2020-2026) and have suffered a 57% decline in their breeding population in the past 18 years. There is an estimated breeding population of 51,728 swifts remaining in Ireland. These tiny birds have a 21 year lifespan and have curved wings shaped like a scythe which allow the birds to remain in the air. In fact, from the moment they fledge from the nest they spend the rest of their lives in the air only landing to nest in the summer months.

At the launch in Tullow Library, Padraig Webb outlined the results of the Tullow baseline Swift Survey. There are a total of 26 nesting pairs in the Tullow Town core area which is a surprisingly good number. Padraig found 8 nesting sites in Tullow, principally in old buildings which had open spaces to allow air into the attics. The most important nesting site, with a total of 9 nests, is Scoil Padraig Naofa (the Boys’ National School) followed by the former Monastery Merchants building which has 4 nesting sites. During the course of some of the survey evenings, Padraig was accompanied by volunteers from Tullow Tidy Towns and the highest number of swifts observed was 60 birds over the Pairc Mhuire residential area. Swifts tend to be easier to notice at evening time from 7.30 p.m. to 9.00 p.m. when they return to the nests to feed the chicks.



In his report, Padraig, made a number of key recommendations, including the publication of the results of the report; organising swift themed walks; engagement with local schools; the incorporation of swift nest bricks into new buildings; the erection of swift nesting boxes at key locations and a complete re-survey of the core town area in 2025 to check the effect of the nesting boxes on the swift population.

L-R: Cllr. Will Paton (Chair of Tullow Tidy Towns), Mary Doyle, Cllr. John Pender, Loretta Bentick, Cllr. Brian O’Donoghue (Chair of Carlow County Council), Padraig Webb (Ornithologist and author of the swift survey report), Elena Puyo-Valverde (Tullow Library), Cllr. John Murphy and Nicola Brennan.

Tullow TidyTowns will now commence the implementation of the report’s recommendations especially the erection of new swift nesting boxes and look forward to carrying out a second survey in two years’ time to find out if the erection of the nest boxes has increased the swift population in Tullow.

For further information please contact: Will Paton (087) 678 7115

Copies of the Tullow Swift Report 2022 can be obtained by emailing tullowtidytowns@gmail.com

Rush TidyTowns deploy seven Hedgehog nest boxes

Brendan O'Reilly, Chairperson Rush TidyTowns has been in touch to share with us a story about a project they recently completed.

Sarah Lowndes, writes that, Rush is one of only two places in Ireland to have a hedgehog sanctuary. As such, Rush TidyTowns have always had a natural inquisitiveness around hedgehogs. Their ability to adapt and survive is second to none. Unbelievably these little mammals first evolved roughly 15 million years ago! Showing such strength in character our biodiversity team wanted to help restore the dwindling population in our local area.

We felt it fitting to do a project linked to Hedgehogs, so we set about locating areas where hedgehog already exist around the town, and then building nest boxes to help them just before the breeding season commences.



The project was initiated by Rush TidyTowns Biodiversity Officer Sarah Lowndes. Volunteer Ken Goslin, a previous Volunteer of the Year winner set his sights on the task of creating seven nest boxes with the finest timber and a design and finish Dermot Bannon would be proud of. Beautifully handcrafted the nest boxes were weather proofed, treated and lined with mud and leaves to encourage usage. On the advice of Rush based Dublin Hedgehog Rescue they set about placing them in a mix of private and public undisclosed locations known to have visitors of the prickly variety. Sarah and Ken said the experience was intriguing knowing they were

giving the local hedgehogs a helping hand before they wake from hibernation.

Rush TidyTowns ask the public, if they do happen to come across a box, to leave it be and allow the boxes to remain as a safe habitat. Sarah commented that it may take the Hedgehogs a couple of years to move in, but fingers crossed we are on the right road, helping to restore the numbers of our spikey little friends. Sarah added that if the project proves a success, we plan to expand on it.



Thanks to Brendan for sharing this us and to Sarah for the vision and of course to Ken on your great work in crafting the boxes, great team effort indeed.

Be a March Hare

by Denis Heffernan March 2023

I say get up and give it a go,
you never know who you will get to know,
On the street where you live or the village green,
There are always people you might like to meet.

I met him first when he came to our town,
He looked the type that would quickly settle down,
He joined our team in the tidy town,
Today he is our chairman and we are very proud.

It doesn't take a special person,
To dig a flower bed or paint a wall,
To wash a road sign or plant a tree,
I know what I am saying that person is me.

For 35 years I have done it all,
I am now seventy-five and still love it all,
Some people say I have got contrary,
But with two big ears I take it all easy.

Some great moments I have had in that time,
Especially when we won in 2009,
To be crowned all Ireland champions on that September day,
For the next 12 months were all blown away

So now to all for 2023,
Get moving now like a march hare,
Encourage others to join in,
You never know what you might win.

Take a good look at all the awards,
Photography sometimes tells it all,
A few short lines of before and afters,
Don't rattle on it can be a disaster.



Here we have another Poem which was sent in to us by Gráinne Mc Manus who is from Ring TidyTowns, a small village near Clonakilty.

**Fair daffodils you've come so soon
To grace our village Ring
With nodding heads of yellow blooms
Welcoming the start of Spring.**

Thank you Gráinne for sharing this with us and indeed we are all welcoming Spring and all the joy and colour that it brings.



2023 SuperValu TidyTowns Competition

As earlier referenced, we have now launched the 2023 SuperValu TidyTowns competition. We would advise that all areas entering the competition be it for the first time or as a seasoned entrant, that you first of all, read the information booklet which is contained on the TidyTowns website at www.tidytowns.ie.

As always, careful consideration should be given to completing your entry form and your Map ensuring that all projects are listed and recorded in your legend.

Web links are fine to support your entry but please keep these to a minimum; your Adjudicator has a limited period in which to review your entry material and to conduct a site visit, remember, sometimes – less is more!

We would also like to point out that all of the entry information is available in both Irish and English and we encourage groups to submit their entry in Irish if they wish. There is a special award for all entries submitted in Irish with €2,500 up for grabs.

A photo can sometimes speak a thousand words, remember to include before and after images where appropriate to enable your Adjudicator to appreciate the change your actions have made.

Once again, this year, we ask that you link your projects to the UN Sustainable Development Goals, you are doing the work already, this is just a way to identify it from a different perspective. By thinking globally and acting locally, we are all making a change to support a more sustainable world.

The closing date for the 2023 competition is Wednesday May 10th so that gives you seven weeks to compile your entry and email it in to us at tidytowns@drcd.gov.ie remembering that 20MB limit.

2023 SuperValu TidyTowns Competition...contd.

The closing date for this year's special awards will be over three weeks later, June 2nd and as always, we would encourage you all to look at the information booklet, visit the sponsors websites and entry as many of these special awards as possible, there is over €62,000 in prizes attached to this year's special awards. Thanks to all of this year's sponsors, we very much appreciate your ongoing support.

Thank you also to our main sponsor SuperValu who this year celebrate 32 years of sponsoring the SuperValu TidyTowns competition, this is a fantastic partnership and we look forward to their sponsorship and support in improving the competition in the coming years. Thanks also to their nationwide network of local retailers who give on the ground support to hundreds of TidyTowns committees across the county.

We will continue updating on the special awards and on all things TidyTowns, we would like to wish you all the best of luck in preparing your entry material, we are here to support you in any way we can, phone us, email us, follow us on social media. Best of luck to all our entrants to the 2023 SuperValu TidyTowns competition, celebrating 65 years of community and environmental initiatives.

2022 Cash Prizes

We have made great progress in issuing cash prizes following the 2022 SuperValu TidyTowns competition. Over 90% of prizes have now being paid. New Revenue guidelines require all groups receiving payment to be registered. Some of our winners in the 2022 competition were not set up on our financial system, as this was their first prize. We would love to get all prizes paid out to groups as soon as possible, so if you have yet to receive your cash prize, please engage with us with regard to getting your groups set up. We have been in touch with all groups but some have yet to respond, so we will continue to work with you in the coming weeks to get the required material in order for us to process your well-deserved cash prize.

Keep in Touch

Well that brings us to the end of another issue, of the SuperValu TidyTowns newsletter. We hope you find the articles of interest and that you continue to share your stories with us, it is your newsletter after all.

Anne, Helen & John

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