

SuperValu Tidy Towns Newsletter Issue 2-2024

The SuperValu Tidy Towns competition, administered by the Department of Rural and Community Development and sponsored by SuperValu, supports the Sustainable Development Goals

A Chairde,

Welcome to a bumper second issue of the SuperValu Tidy Towns newsletter of 2024.

We know you have all been busy with the planting season and with preparations ahead of this year's Adjudication – we hope the weather has been kind wherever you are!

In this issue, we bring you a recap of various projects undertaken by Tidy Towns groups nationwide since the end of December 2023/ beginning of January 2024. We highlight the wonderful Celebration Day recently held in Glaslough, 2019 winners of the SuperValu Tidy Towns competition. This edition will also highlight the nominees and winners in this year's Ireland's Best Kept Ceremony recently held in Belfast as well as some reminders and advice for groups.

Please continue to send us in suggestions for the next edition of the newsletter which will be issued in September 2024.



Quin TidyTowns

Quin TidyTowns had another fantastic Christmas Tree Lighting get together in their redeveloped fountain area, with Santa switching on the lights, and their two beautiful choirs junior and senior entertaining the crowds. The redevelopment work took place throughout 2023 and was funded by the local community and the Department of Rural and Community Development Town & Village Renewal Scheme. An official opening will take place later in the year.

Quin also held a Remembrance Gathering on December 31st 2023, to remember all members of the community that died during 2023 and to acknowledge the significance of community as we enter 2024. The event included a candle lit walk from Quin Abbey to the redeveloped fountain area and thereafter the beautiful senior choir sang three pieces after two reflections were read by members of our community. Despite the atrocious weather, over 150 people gathered in a poignant yet beautiful community gathering.



Quin Village TidyTowns have a very busy year ahead, with the usual weeding, painting, cleaning, mowing, strimming and planting. Planning is also well underway on a number of new sustainability and biodiversity initiatives, including a Preloved Fashion Event themed around vintage and sustainability in March followed by a 'Cash for Clobber' where the community is being asked to recycle clothing. Quin have

also secured funding for a village energy survey which will take place later in the year. A village wide bird, insect/bee and butterfly boxes and hotel plan is well underway with community members recycling wood for bird boxes and bee hotels – it's all go in Quin Village TidyTowns for 2024.



Arklow TidyTowns

Arklow TidyTowns had their first outing in 2024 on a bitterly cold day in January. Their crew of 10 began weeding and sweeping one of the pocket gardens in Arklow town, the Seafarer Memorial garden. As you can see, the winter plants were out in colour. After a sweep and a tidy up, the group enjoyed warm soup and sandwiches. Volunteering with TidyTowns is more than just hard work – it is a day out with friends old and new!

Howth TidyTowns

SEASONAL COLOUR FOR ALL

Seasonal Food for Pollinators
Dedicated to conserving & enhancing Fingal's "Jewel in the Crown"

Howth TidyTowns are keen followers of all other TidyTowns Groups- through this Newsletter, RTE's Nationwide & Social Media platforms. Good ideas give birth to more excellent projects nationwide.

Howth Peninsula is a much-loved area-locally, nationally & internationally, but many people may not be aware that although we are a peninsula with a small village within easy reach of our capital city, we receive annual visitors comparable to those of Killarney.

Howth TidyTowns Volunteers grew substantially in Lockdown, so we were delighted to receive praise for our planting in last year's Adjudication Report, plus encouragement to share details of our planting with readers. We selected areas we have planted since 2018. We work in partnership with Fingal County Council who ceased spraying at our request, prepared the ground, provided topsoil and in some cases plants. Plants that you will notice in many of our photos are Nepeta, Euryops, Hardy Geraniums, Primulas & of course All the Spring bulbs- so listed below are other plants.



Claremont Cottages:

As you approach Howth Castle Entrance & Dart Station coming from Sutton Cross. This lovely area which gives such a cheerful welcome to visitors is situated in front of a brightly painted derelict cottage. Here we planted: Red Crocosmia, Roses, Penstemon, Doronicum, Grasses.



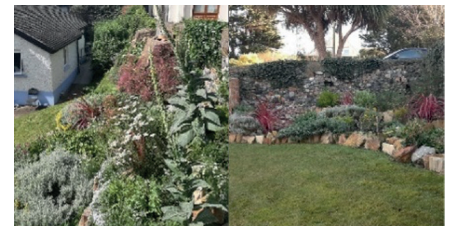
Promenade Boat:

Donated by a local owner, this old boat totally sets the mood for a stroll around the historic calm of our beautiful working harbour. Planted with: Verbena, Osteopermum, Lavender, Carpet Rose, White Candytuft.
Top: Summer 2023
Bottom: Winter 2023



Promenade Strip:

Previously sprayed but now a delightful long line of seasonal colour which provides food for pollinators. Plants are: Aubretia, Heather, Lavender, Periwinkle, Woodruff, Sea thrift, Candytuft, Delosperma, Stonecrop, Creeping Phlox, Thyme, Saxifrage, Rock Roses. Left: Summer blooming Right: Winter blooming!



The Library Garden:

We designed & planted a rockery on this green slope at the heart of the village with: the donation of Howth Peninsula Stone, the guidance of Local RHSI Partner Gardeners & a North County Dublin Garden Centre. Planted here for year-round colour: Black Pearl Coral Bells, Cordyline Salsa, Strawflower, Stonecrop-Sedum brilliant, Voodoo, Giant Herb Robert, Erodium, Wallflower, Multiflora Rose, Red Crocosmia, Nasturtium, Japonica, Veronica, Tall Lilies, White Creeping Pratia, Chamomile, Fleabane Daisy, Ceanothus Blueblossom, Blue Salvia, Adjugas, Sedum-Mediovariegatum, Creeping Willow, Periwinkle, Creeping Thyme.
Left: Summer Rockery
Right: Winter Rockery



St. Laurence's Slope & Harbour View:

Directly adjacent to the historic village & boasting old vernacular walls. These areas are a testimony to the industry of Our Maintenance Team who provide seasonal colour + pollinators by planting: Penstemon, Hydrangea, Agapanthus, Heuchera, Lambs Ear, Indian Blanket flower, Campanula, Rosemary, Lavender, Saxifrage, Grasses, Cotoneaster, Hellebore, Bergenia, Vipers Bugloss.



Scoil Mhuire:

Situated adjacent to Howth TidyTowns Community Garden, the sloping banks opposite the school have been given a total All Year-round facelift & food for pollinators by Our Maintenance Team, delighting parents who linger for a chat or to watch their children

play together. Plants are: – Viburnum, Hebe, Escalonia, Penstemon, Nepeta, Achillia, Bergenia, Heuchera, Hydrangea, Salvia, Wallflower, Hellebore, Antirrhinum, Michaelmas Daisy, Periwinkle, Rosemary, Lavender, Brunnera, Geum, Nicotiana.
Top: Summer Blooms
Bottom: Winter Colour



Balglass Road Slope:

A favourite resting point for walkers coming off the Loop Paths to enjoy the timeless view of Ireland's Eye whilst taking in all year round variety of plants originally planted by a resident turned stalwart Howth TidyTowns Volunteer!

Here you will enjoy:

Agapanthus, Antirrhinum, Convolvulus cneorum, Persicaria, Heuchera, Hydrangea, Golden Rod, Echiums, Osteopermum, Erodium, Giant Herb Robert, Lambs Ear, Viburnum, Hebe, Carpet Rose, Small Red Roses, Salvia, Native Primroses, Wallflower, Indian Blanket Flower, Cyclamen.

FAILTE CHUIG HOWTH!

Poets Corner

**March is Buzzing
Denis Heffernan, March 2024**

March is here I am full of delight,
Dark days of winter now left behind,
Bright Spring days early morning light,
Longer days to get it all right.

2024 a new year of TidyTowns,
All the old stuff left behind,
A fresh start now for us all again,
Get cracking now to see what you can win.

Look back on your report of 2023,
See what was said and were you pleased,
Take note of all your reports,
Fix what you can and carry on.

Don't get stressed with the entry form,
Keep it simple and tell what's happening,
A few short lines with the projects you do,
And photos to show the jobs that are new.

Be proud of the work you do in your town,
If you are planting flowers or washing down,
You make a difference that is for sure,
Good luck to all you can be proud.

**Kilmeedy Community
Development Group**

Kilmeedy were in touch to say they received a wonderful poem from a visitor to Kilmeedy Village titled 'The Garden' by Mary McCormack (Chicago). It invokes a wonderful feeling of calm and an appreciation of nature, which is very much needed in today's busy world.

The Garden

The bench and the birdhouse nestle
among flowers.
What a beautiful sanctuary, this garden,
this spot of land
Alive with colours – purple columbine,
yellow buttercups,
And pink water ravens like little fairies
dancing upon green leaves.
What peace there is in this garden,
the robins and wrens making their visits.
The travellers stopping by for a moment to
admire this tucked away place,
this treasure.

Castleknock TidyTowns

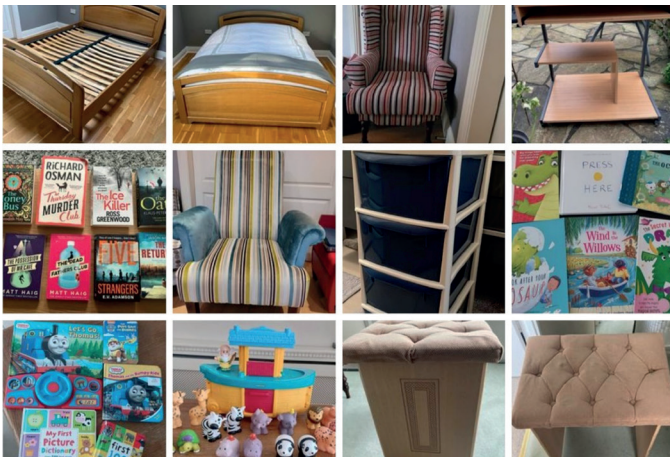
Castleknock TidyTowns - CommunityCycle celebrates 18 months:

Doing More with Less...

With Sustainability and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in mind, Patricia Sheehan from [Castleknock TidyTowns](#) set up [Castleknock CommunityCycle](#), a Facebook page designed to

- Pass on your unwanted preloved stuff, by giving it away for free.
- Extend the lifespan of your stuff through reuse and repurpose.
- Reduce our carbon footprint. Rethink... Don't buy new.
- Avoid Landfill
- Positive Climate action

It's been an incredible journey, and we're thrilled with our 3,000 members supporting local sustainability, using an online framework. The beauty is, members are passing on stuff daily, from the luxury of their homes. CommunityCycle is all about creating a more sustainable, eco-friendly community by reducing waste and sharing the love for reusing. Thanks to our amazing community, we've accomplished so much in just 18 months, since launching in October 2023.



Here's a glimpse of our achievements:

- Over 3,000 members
- 6,700+ items saved from landfill.
- Countless stories of generosity and kindness
- Our mission has always been simple:

Share what you don't need, find what you do, and let's work together to keep usable items out of the landfill. We couldn't have done it without the dedication and support of the local community!

To spread the love and inspire others to join our cause check out Castleknock CommunityCycle if you live in Castleknock or the surrounding area.

If you live elsewhere check www.circularliving.ie where you can join your local CommunityCycle Castleknock CommunityCycle a thriving community, and here's to many more years of shared sustainability, kindness, and friendship!

'This amazing community has renewed my faith in Human kindness'



Castleknock TidyTowns talks to 'Green Sense' 'Earthology' about Climate Action, Sustainability Projects and Climate Heroes

Patricia Sheehan from Castleknock TidyTowns talks to [Earthology](#) about Castleknock TidyTowns climate action, sustainability projects and the Global Action Plan challenge, 'Climate Heroes' and how your community group can get involved.

Castleknock TidyTowns came second in Climate Heroes last year and are ready to go for the challenge again. Climate Heroes is a team-based climate challenge. Together with other members of your community, you will learn about and take simple actions on the drivers of climate change.

Enjoy the challenge and fun way to change behaviours and actions around sustainability and climate action. The Global Action Plan Climate Heroes challenge starting 15th April 2024, is free to join, check out details and register [here](#).

Patricia shared lots of ideas and advice on how to engage the community and there are some real nuggets in the podcast below about connecting with people, that could be useful for anyone looking to make local or neighborhood changes.

Patricia has a professional background in change management and training from working in pharmaceuticals. She has really used this experience from her previous career to help change hearts and minds. One project, the CommunityCycle (reuse/repurpose) Group has saved over 6000 items from landfill in the last 18 months.

One of her top tips is to Rethink and Rechoose... you(we) are the Citizen with a choice not a Consumer. Check out the podcast for some tips on climate action and sustainability projects for communities.

TidyTowns Groups and Election Poster Free Zones

As TidyTowns groups throughout the country are very concerned with environmental issues and the general appearance of their areas they are generally the drivers of local initiatives to reduce the visual, physical and environmental impact of election posters in their neighbourhoods. Here is the story of Castleknock TidyTowns (CTT) journey to declare Castleknock a Poster-Free Zone (PFZ) with some tips and suggestions other groups might find useful.

Castleknock is a historic, heritage village in an urban setting in the west of Dublin under the Fingal County Council (FCC) local authority.

After an absence of 18 years CTT was reformed in 2019 and we set about deciding on our five-year plan. One of the priorities was to declare Castleknock a PFZ so we spent considerable time and energy researching how best we might achieve our goal before we went public with it. We knew we would get only one chance to get it right so it was important we had all our ducks in a row before we embarked on what was a significant initiative. If it failed we felt it would be impossible to reintroduce it as we would have lost the confidence of candidates, political parties and the public. Remember not everyone is in favour of PFZs and some would be happy to see the project fail, consequently much preparatory work needs to be done to get everyone on board and to do so long in advance of the next election/referendum.

The first thing to get clear is why you consider it important to restrict or ban posters in your area. In the case of CTT the three main reasons were :

- To address climate change and sustainability.
- To prevent littering and obstruction of public infrastructure.
- The safety of pedestrians and cyclists.

The next thing to decide is whether your organisation is going for a complete ban on posters or a restriction on the number of posters. CTT decided to go for a complete ban within a limited PFZ as we felt that would be easier to manage, fairer to all candidates and would address our three main concerns outlined above.

Top Tip: Include politicians public meeting posters in your ban/ restrictions as they are often used extensively during the run up to elections.

The final major decision is to determine the geographical area to be covered under the initiative. CTT's main objective was to protect Castleknock Village so the PFZ was confined to a short stretch through the village plus limited sections of the approach roads . In our view it is important not to be greedy by having too large a PFZ . Instead, confine it to the essential area and allow candidates ample opportunities to display their posters outside of the PFZ. In our case it would be impossible to travel into or out of the village of Castleknock without being exposed to a significant number of posters on each of the approach roads outside of the PFZ, a matter appreciated by the candidates.

Having decided on these issues the next step is to advise all candidates and parties of the details of the initiative. This needs to be done well in advance of the next election/referendum so that candidates can make plans to adjust their poster purchases/ campaigns/ budgets accordingly. In our case we gave almost 12 months notice in advance of the next election. To avoid any confusion you should make it absolutely clear where the PFZ begins and ends. We drew a detailed map showing the boundaries and accompanied it with photographs and written details.

We put a very significant effort into getting buy-in well in advance of the next election. For example, for the local elections, we wrote by email to all existing councillors (and parties) in the Castleknock local electoral area seeking their buy-in and commitment, in

writing, ahead of time. Then we approached all other candidates just as soon as they announced they were planning to stand for election in our area and ensured we also got their commitment in writing. We knew cross-party buy-in and commitment from the top was essential so we held a number of meetings/discussions with various senior party representatives to secure all of that.

Top Tip: Keep those commitment emails on file as you may need to rely on them later!

Our next step was to let the denizens of Castleknock know about the project so we published details of the PFZ initiative on social media as well as sending a press release to all local media channels. Our local radio station Phoenix FM carried a live interview with two representatives of CTT and in our newsletter to all residents of Castleknock we promoted the project.

Remember adherence to any poster ban/ restriction is on a voluntary basis as legally candidates are permitted to display their posters in accordance with various laws, rules and regulations overseen by the local authority. So you need to win over the support of all candidates by showing your initiative is fair to all, including first time candidates.

Incidentally an argument often put forward is that poster bans/ restrictions are particularly harmful to first time candidates trying to get their names into the public domain. However here in Castleknock during the recent local elections 50% (3 out of 6) of the successfully elected candidates were first time candidates for county council seats in this local electoral area so that surely disproves the argument.

Very importantly we put forward a novel suggestion to our local authority (FCC) that Castleknock trials a pilot project whereby in return for candidates adhering to the PFZ the County Council would erect a large poster board in a central prominent location in the village where every candidate could display one poster with their details/ policies etc and even list a QR code with a link for more details. This practice is very common in many European countries and if the pilot project was successful in Castleknock it could be rolled out throughout the country. Unfortunately we did not get buy-in from Fingal Co Co on this occasion. Nonetheless we will continue promoting and advocating this scheme for the next election. Indeed we suggest other TidyTowns groups likewise propose this scheme to their local authorities and politicians. Together we might bring about change for the benefit

of our communities.

So, was Castleknock TidyTowns Poster-Free Zone initiative a success? Yes, a resounding success. We first put it into action for the referendums held on 8 March 2024. We got excellent support from the candidates/ parties and this gave us great encouragement as it was evident we could mount a successful PFZ initiative with the cooperation of all concerned. The Local and European elections held on 7 June presented much more of a challenge as here in Castleknock we had 32 candidates vying for attention and many of them were unknown to us or indeed the electorate. Despite our best efforts many of them and their poster teams were unfamiliar with our area and the boundaries of our PFZ. Initially it was like herding cats and playing Whack a Mole at the same time as no sooner did we get a candidate to remove their posters from the PFZ another candidate's posters would pop up. However things settled down after a while and we received great cooperation from the candidates and Castleknock PFZ was often described as an oasis of calm in an otherwise cluttered city streetscape.

Top Tip: During the period of the election campaign it is essential to constantly monitor for any breaches of the PFZ and to immediately inform the relevant candidates campaign teams requesting prompt removal of any posters. It only takes one candidate/ party to ignore the PFZ then others feel they need to do likewise and the scheme collapses.

We received very positive feedback on the success of the project from Castleknock residents, and indeed others passing through the village, so for the upcoming general election, expected to be held by March 2025, we will of course continue with the initiative and request all candidates to once again respect the Castleknock Poster-Free Zone.

We wonder what your experience has been in organising PFZs or poster reductions/restrictions in your area and if you have any advice or tips to offer other TidyTowns group? Perhaps the SuperValu TidyTowns Newsletter will publish them in the next edition.

www.castleknocktidytowns.com



Rush TidyTowns

On Sunday the 3rd of March 30 volunteers from Rush Clean Coasts group, and from further afield planted Marram grass on part of the Sand Dunes on South Beach in Rush. Coastal Erosion is a constant issue here with the sand dunes disappearing bit by bit. but the Marram grass helps tie the sand together and provides at least some form of barrier to erosion. Aine Lawless from Clean Coast Ireland oversaw the planting process with the volunteers transplanting the grass from densely populated areas to the bare section of dunes. Brendan O'Reilly, from Rush Clean Coasts said that this is the second planting event we have held with Aine, and to see the results from the last time in May 2023 it certainly motivated us to get out again and in bigger numbers. He thanked all the volunteers and added that we plan to have a further event later in Spring.



Sunday the 24th of March saw the first big event in the "Let's Play Rush" calendar taking place for 2024. Up to 1,000 people came along to the now annual Easter Fun day, with an egg trail around the woods, games, music, a sensory tent, Penalty kick, face-painting, refreshments, prizes and the infamous sock fight all taking place in Kenure Woods Park. The event was organised by volunteers from Rush Tidy Towns, Rush Community Council and Rush 38th Scout Group, with funding from Fingal County Council.



Rush Bygone Days book launch

We had a great evening of celebration yesterday in Rush Sailing Club with the launch of the Rush Bygone Days book. This has been a labour of love for 2 years and contains personal stories from 29 contributors capturing what life was like to both live in and visit Rush in years gone by. Rush Tidy Towns Chairperson Brendan O'Reilly said "Thank you to Minister Joe O'Brien TD for Dublin Fingal for officially launching the book and presenting a copy to the contributors and their families who were there". Curator of the book Diana O'Donohue added that "the event in Rush Sailing Club was very poignant, and we were delighted so many of the families of contributors had the chance to celebrate the launch with us". The book is a free resource for the community, and a unique glimpse into the past. It will be available on loan from Rush library and will also be distributed to the schools and other locations in Rush. It will also be available to read on line quite soon. We will also have a few left over to distribute to interested people in the community. This project was kindly funded by Fingal County Council and Creative Ireland.

Glaslough TidyTowns

Glaslough Celebration Day

A great day was had in Glaslough, winners of the 2019 SuperValu TidyTowns competition, on Saturday 18th May when President Higgins, accompanied by his wife Sabina Higgins, officially unveiled the winning plaque. The ceremony was postponed in 2020 due to the pandemic, and we were delighted to attend the day's long awaited celebrations.



Glaslough TidyTowns volunteers and local members of the community also came out in force to welcome the President.



Ireland's Best Kept Town Awards

Congratulations to all the nominees and winners of the Ireland's Best Kept Town awards. The ceremony was held in the beautiful venue of Riddel Hall, Belfast, where Randalstown, Co. Antrim were crowned overall winners of Ireland's Best Kept Town 2024.



Malin were named Ireland's Best Kept Village 2024 with Roscommon also winning the title of Ireland's Best Kept Large Town 2024.



Congratulation to the other nominees – keep up the good work!

County	Town	Category
Antrim	Ballynure	Village
Donegal	Malin	Village
Mayo	Mulranny	Village
Down	Royal Hillsborough	Small Town
Antrim	Randalstown	Small Town
Louth	Dromiskin	Small Town
Kildare	Kill	Small Town
Cavan	Cavan	Large Town
Down	Hollywood	Large Town
Roscommon	Roscommon	Large Town
Antrim	Antrim	Large Urban Centre
Derry	Londonderry	Large Urban Centre
Sligo	Sligo	Large Urban Centre
Wicklow	Greystones	Large Urban Centre

2024 TidyTowns Special Awards Deadline Extension (Friday 12th July)

SuperValu and AsIAM are pleased to announce the extension of the Inclusive Communities Special Awards – we encourage groups to submit your entry by Friday 12th July

SUPERVALU AND ASIAM INCLUSIVE COMMUNITIES AWARD **PRIZE FUND €2,000**

Sponsored by SuperValu and AsIAM

This award aims to recognise the outstanding work done by committees in embracing and including the autism community. SuperValu and AsIAM are working in partnership to promote the creation of more inclusive communities and this award is to acknowledge the hard work done by the committees who are making changes to promote and facilitate inclusivity of the autism community.

A prize of €2000 will be awarded to the TidyTowns committee who best demonstrates how they promoted the inclusion of the autism community through autism friendly projects and initiatives.

Resources and information regarding autism friendly practices are available on supervalu.ie and AsIAM.ie

SuperValu TidyTowns Survey

Watch out for our survey that will be emailed in the coming weeks.


Your input matters, and your committee could win one of 5 x €100 SuperValu Gift Cards just by participating.

Keep in Touch

We wish to officially welcome Siobhán and Michelle to the TidyTowns Unit – they are very welcome additions to our small team overseeing the competition. We look forward to working with you all in the coming months.

Niamh, Helen, Siobhán & Michelle

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