



SuperValu Tidy Towns

Caring for our environment

Tidiness and Litter Control



Supporting the Sustainable Development Goals

Handbook

Brought to you by the Department of Rural & Community Development



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

SuperValu

The SuperValu TidyTown competition commenced in 1958 and has since become Ireland's best-known sustainable and environmental initiative. The competition is administered by the Department of Rural and Community Development and has been proudly sponsored by SuperValu since 1991.

The competition is independently adjudicated under eight categories, these are;

Community- Your Planning & Involvement	Streetscape & Public Places
Green Spaces & Landscaping	Nature & Biodiversity in your Locality
Sustainability- Doing more with less	Tidiness & Litter Control
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes

In September 2015, 193 UN Member States adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development “Transforming our World”. The centrepiece of this Agenda are the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which reflect economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development. Throughout the entry form, you will see where many of these goals are aligned to the different TidyTown categories. Please identify, if applicable, under each category where your projects or initiatives aim to address one or more of the sustainable goals.

You will see that the “Tidiness & Litter Control” category aligns to goals 12 & 17



This Handbook, which has been prepared with input from the national panel of TidyTown Adjudicators, is divided into sections, each category is covered individually, however, the entrant is advised not to read each section in isolation from the others. Landscaping has an important role to play in the adjudication of Streetscapes and Public Places, Residential Streets and Housing Areas and Approach Roads, Streets and Lanes, Tidiness and Litter control, likewise will be looked at in a number of categories. We would encourage you therefore to refer to all categories regardless of the project or initiative being undertaken.

Please refer to the General Information section also which contains valuable information for all TidyTown groups.

In this section, we look at “Tidiness & Litter Control” please refer to the scoring sheet to see the marks for this category. The entry form contains the following text to assist the entrant in completing this section of their entry form;

Tidiness: General lack of clutter, blocked footpaths, redundant poles, unsightly overhead electric cables, absence of graffiti and fly-posting, and evidence of control of weed growth at kerbs. Absence of unsightly and or inappropriate advertising, such as that on gables of buildings and mass produced advertising banners in shop fronts. Please note that although general tidiness is evaluated and marked in this category, tidiness is also considered under all categories.

Litter: The Adjudicator will assess the absence of litter and dumping, evidence of litter control strategy, including regular litter patrols, segregation of collected litter during clean-ups and promotion of anti-litter awareness throughout the community.

Note: TidyTown groups and volunteers are reminded that their safety and welfare must always take priority. In order to ensure the safety of volunteers, TidyTown groups are encouraged to seek the advice of An Garda Síochána prior to undertaking projects on roads, roadsides and road verges.



TIDINESS AND LITTER CONTROL

Whilst Tidiness and Litter Control is a category within the competition in its own right, areas of tidiness and litter control will form part of the Adjudicator's assessment in many of other categories.

EXCESSIVE OR INAPPROPRIATE SIGNAGE

Signs are a common nuisance to committees. Notwithstanding the importance of safe, visible and secure road and speed control signs, bare poles are often left behind after signs are removed. Also, there are occasions when there are simply too many signs provided in town / village centres. Where this is a problem, you should consider compiling a photographic inventory of signs with these marked on a map. Discuss these with representatives of the Local Authority and see if any unnecessary signs can be removed. In relation to shop signage – contact your Local Authority regarding the availability of Shopfront Design Guidelines. Large scale advertisement hoardings in small villages can be visually intrusive and should be avoided.

What the Adjudicator considers under Tidiness

- Lack of physical and visual clutter
- Presentation of signage
- Absence of inappropriate advertisement hoardings
- Redundant and useless poles
- Presence of unsightly overhead wires
- Prevalence of graffiti and flyposting
- Traffic management and parking arrangements
- General weed and plant management
- Any outstanding tidiness issues that may not have been picked up in other categories
- Treatment of vacant buildings; derelict / undeveloped sites; management of graveyards.
- Presentation of curtilage areas viewed from the public realm
- Presentation of street furniture

PRIVATE OPERATORS

Some private businesses such as newsagents and estate agents can contribute to visual clutter due to the number of signs and their cumulative impact. While a single sign may not cause a problem five single signs does. Often the TidyTowns Adjudicator will mention this problem. You should make a local business aware of the negative impact they are having and indeed point out that this is costing your committee marks in the competition. Perhaps suggest the removal of individual signs and their replacement with sponsored grouped signs – such as an information board. This board could provide a map of the area with the location of sponsoring premises indicated along with small ads for those premises. Businesses can also reduce clutter on footpaths which cause obstructions for buggies and wheelchairs.

OVERHEAD WIRES

Excessive overhead wires and cables can be an unsightly issue for many committees. Undergrounding of cables and removal of all poles provides the most visually desirable solution. However, it should be borne in mind that undergrounding is a costly procedure. The two stages involved in this are the provision of service ducts in the pavement – typically a Local Authority responsibility; and the placing of the cables in those ducts – typically an ESB responsibility. While the opportunity sometimes arises for cables to be placed underground when a street is opened up for major works, such as laying a main sewer, these works are expensive and should be considered long-term, albeit important goals, of the committee. An alternative measure for consideration might be the attachment of street lighting to buildings and running cables parallel to premises rather than crisscrossing the road in conjunction with the relevant authorities, together with careful installation and maintenance, in order to minimize detrimental impacts on the visual amenity of streetscapes within our towns and villages.

GRAFFITI

Graffiti is a complex problem. The disfiguring of walls, doors and parapets by felt-tip pens and spray paint is a serious problem. The traditional method of stone cleaning is by sandblasting which, although very effective, removes the top layer of stone and is not suitable for many surfaces. The incidence of graffiti may be reduced if walls are covered with a strongly textured render, murals, climbing plants, such as ivy or Virginia creeper, or decorative timber slats. Consideration might also be given to designating walls in specific areas for Public Art displays with perhaps a competitive element; this may work to reduce the incidence of indiscriminate graffiti.

TRAFFIC ISSUES

With regard to traffic, the Adjudicator appreciates that this is a complex area requiring action by the Local Authority. Notwithstanding this, traffic can impact on the quality of your local environment – not just due to congestion but also due to improper parking arrangements, illegal parking, etc. You should again discuss these issues with your local stakeholders and businesses. In many towns and villages, the TidyTowns Committee has played an important role in lobbying for the introduction of bye-laws regulating parking so consider the important role you may play. Traffic bollards and road signs, especially those on traffic islands and roundabouts which have high visibility need to be kept clean, legible and in good repair.

WEED AND PLANT CONTROL

Weed and plant growth is connected to the committee's on-going tasks in relation to landscape maintenance. Add an extra dimension to litter patrols and ask volunteers to report or remove overhanging plants and growth at the base of walls and the edge of footpaths, traffic islands and roundabouts (being mindful of safety issues with the latter). Remember, as always, to consult with your Local Authority and to obtain the permission of landowners before removing. Regular maintenance can reduce the need for weed killer. Remember the TidyTowns competition supports the All Ireland Pollination Plan and the use of herbicide will impact your adjudication negatively.

PRESENTATION OF CURTILAGE AREAS

It is important that the curtilage areas of all properties, domestic, commercial and community which can be viewed from the public realm should be maintained in a tidy manner as such areas are considered by the Adjudicator also. This can be achieved by eliminating unsightly open storage and / or effective screening by appropriate landscaping. Again, the co-operation of property owners must be sought and encouraged.

PRESENTATION OF STREET FURNITURE

The presentation and general maintenance of all street furniture including litter bins, public seating, sign posts, lamp standards, bicycle racks and more are considered in this category. These should be clean, well painted and legible as appropriate and free of fly posting, cable ties and posters.

VACANT / DERELICT / UNDEVELOPED SITES AND GRAVEYARDS

Dereliction, underdevelopment and neglect of buildings and sites can look unsightly and negatively impact a centre's adjudication! Vacant premises, especially those with shopfront windows can be utilized in a variety of creative ways pending their re-opening. For example, they can be used to exhibit the work of TidyTowns and other community groups which will enhance their respective streetscapes also. Derelict or underdeveloped sites can be used to feature temporary wild flower gardens or seated amenity areas pending their redevelopment; alternatively, appropriate container plants along their road edge can provide effective screening. Old graveyards often have heritage and / or wildlife interest so any plan to 'clean them up' must involve the local authority's heritage officer or other appropriate professional expertise. Permission of property owners is essential.



WHAT THE ADJUDICATOR CONSIDERS UNDER LITTER CONTROL

- Absence of litter and dumping during adjudication
- Litter management plans or litter control strategies
- Evidence of regular litter patrols and segregation of litter
- Participation in initiatives such as National Spring Clean, County Litter Leagues and more.
- Partnership and community involvement with litter control
- Engagement and awareness raising in relation to litter control
- Prevalence of dog fouling
- Fly-tipping and illegal dumping
- Presentation of bottle banks and litter bins

LITTER CONTROL

Litter control is a key principle of the competition. This is an increasingly problematic area with many committees reporting higher numbers of offences of dumping in local areas. Notwithstanding this, Local Authorities play an increasingly active role in litter control and management through the appointment of Litter Wardens and the issuing of litter fines. Committees should work in tandem with the Local Authority to ensure litter control is to a high standard in their centre.

MANAGING LITTER

Litter can be managed with regular clean-ups and patrols. Divide the area up between various Committee members or other volunteers. Patrols can take place regularly with individuals committing shorter amounts of time and therefore more likely to remain committed. The committee should provide gloves, litter pickers and bags to volunteers who conduct regular clean-ups. Committees could check with their Local Authority offices or their local SuperValu stores to see if they are in a position to provide this equipment.

You should also contact the Local Authority to see if arrangements can be made to provide the committee with a dedicated refuse container. This may, by arrangement, be emptied with the cost paid by the authority.

An annual spring clean is a good opportunity to spread the message about litter and participation in initiatives such as County Litter Leagues can be a great motivator.

A special push to 'clean up' can again be launched coming up to the adjudication period, for example, early June. Pick-ups should take place throughout the year though as experience shows that litter is less likely to be dropped in a clean area rather than an unclean one.





IDENTIFYING PROBLEM AREAS

The committee may consider undertaking a litter survey to identify problem areas or litter black spots and marking these on a map of your Centre. Don't forget to include river and canal banks as well as lake shores and beaches in addition to woodland and similar amenity areas that are part of your town / village. Consider also zoning areas on a map of your centre according to their litter cleanliness.

You might establish the days/times that littering is most problematic. Many committees know this without the need to conduct a formal survey. However, conducting an annual survey allows you to keep track of the littering occurring over time and provides you with data to:

- Inform the community (a Facebook page can be very useful for this)
- Discuss with your local authority and elected representatives; and
- Provide evidence to back up calls for additional resources – such as the need for additional litter bins, litter patrols and possibly the installation of CCTV equipment discussed.

CHEWING GUM

Chewing gum can be a problem – particularly outside shops, at bus stops, etc. Many recently repaved footpaths (very often with expensive and attractive materials) have become marked by this careless habit. It is possible to clean these stains with a special machine though it is very expensive. The best cure is in prevention!

DOG FOULING

Dog fouling is a scourge for some centres. In addition to dog poo being unsightly, it also poses a risk to human health as it can contain bacteria such as E-coli and parasites such as round worm, the larvae of which can cause loss of vision. There are a number of national campaigns in place that committees can join / promote. If dog fouling is an issue for your centre, you should speak to the environment section of your Local Authority.

CIGARETTE LITTER

Cigarette litter is still a serious issue in many towns and cities. Cigarette waste is a major environmental problem; cigarette butts are made from a form of plastic and can take up to 12 years to decompose as they are not bio-degradable and do not break down organically. Cigarette butts can also release toxic chemicals once in the water and are harmful to birds and wildlife. Therefore, cigarette litter has negative implications both visually and environmentally.

Where feasible segregate litter for recycling; this will contribute to the achievement of a number of the 17 Goals for Sustainable Development. On-going cleaning regimes and awareness campaigns – in tandem with Local Authority actions – will ensure that litter is minimised throughout the year.

WORKING WITH PARTNERS IN THE AREA

Contact the environment section of your Local Authority and see what help and support is available. Perhaps meet with the Litter Warden and discuss problem areas where action should be taken.

Schools, businesses, residents' associations and other groups should be involved in litter minimisation and cleaning. Contact your local school and sports club to ask for help with a spring clean. Discuss with school officials litter control projects for inside – and outside – school grounds.

HELPFUL LINKS

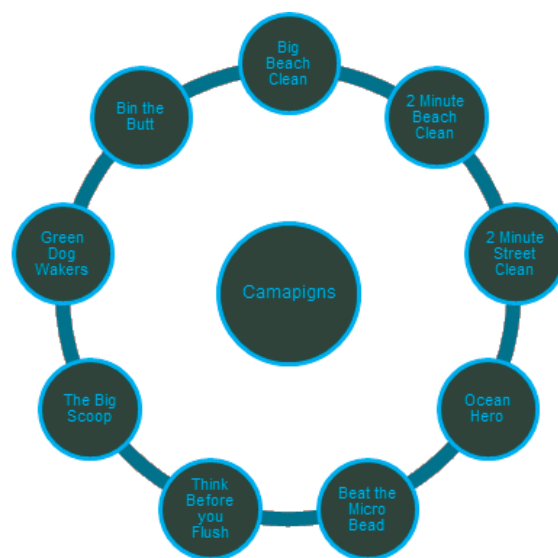
National Spring Clean	https://nationalspringclean.org/
Neat Streets	http://www.neatstreets.org
Clean Coasts	https://cleancoasts.org/
Green Coast	https://beachawards.ie/green-coast/
Gum Litter Task Force	https://www.gumlittertaskforce.ie/
Dogs Trust	https://www.dogstrust.ie/whats-happening/issues-campaigns/the-big-scoop/

LITTER BINS

Ensure that litter bins are provided in areas where they are most needed and that they are emptied frequently enough to meet demand. Consider also the design of the bin; is the size of the opening appropriate to address the specific problem? (i.e. animal scavengers and household waste disposal) and can bins be fitted with cigarette end extinguishers and containers?

TYING IN WITH CAMPAIGNS

You could tie in with several national campaigns. This will of course depend on your location/ situation. Consider some of the following:



NOTES

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