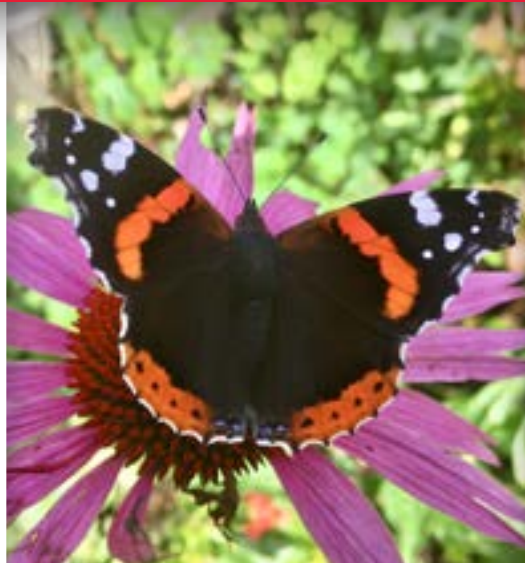


SuperValu 
Tidy Towns
Caring for our environment

**Sustainability –
 Doing more with less**




SUPPORTING THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

The SuperValu TidyTowns 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

This Handbook, which has been prepared with input from the national panel of TidyTowns 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 TidyTowns groups.

In this section, we look at “Sustainability- Doing more with less” which is worth 50 marks in the competition. The entry form contains the following text to assist the entrant in completing this section of their entry form;

Describe how your activities help to make your centre more sustainable and reduce your environmental impact. For example, consider how you use your resources (e.g. methods or materials you use), in your project work under one or more of the following key themes: sustainability, water, transport, waste, energy, and climate action. Describe awareness raising activities carried out across your community and detail any involvement with other Community Groups in this category.

Please state if you have entered a Special Award relevant to this category.

List projects undertaken since June 1st, 2019 including, new projects (N) completed this year, previous projects that you have improved or maintained (M) and future projects (FP) you are proposing to develop. It would be helpful if you could number your project descriptions and include date project was initiated and completed, where applicable.

Note: Please ensure all priority projects are uniquely referenced on your map and legend using the reference numbers assigned below.

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 TidyTowns 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 “Sustainability - Doing more with less” category aligns to goals 6, 7, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15 & 17.





SUSTAINABILITY – DOING MORE WITH LESS

This category has been evolving in keeping with current EU and government policy as well as ‘best practice’ guidelines. It encapsulates how we try to minimise our use of all resources within the community so that we reduce our environmental impact. It is a broad category so you may be surprised at how many of your existing community initiatives are relevant! Read on and find out.

What the Adjudicator considers

- Describe how your activities help to make your community more environmentally sustainable. Not just your own direct activities but those of local business, schools, community buildings and community gatherings and events etc. Remember it’s a very broad area: water, transport, waste, energy, and climate action.
- Show an understanding of what this category means and awareness of the move towards a Circular Economy and implementation of Sustainable Development Goals (which you are probably doing anyway!)
- Provide evidence of how you as a Tidy Towns group reduce your environmental impact: reduce paper usage; zero waste or plastic free committee, car-pooling or walking to meetings
- How you use resources for projects you are involved in (i.e. methods or materials you use), e.g. Reusing salvage materials for landscaping or biodiversity projects. Removing the use of pesticides as well as water conservation in landscaping projects.
- Awareness raising activities carried out across your community – workshops, demonstrations, information days, stalls at farmers markets, joining with the school.
- Awareness raising campaigns using local newsletters, noticeboards, local media, social media.
- Are you linking with other groups in your community? Sharing ideas and information or doing joint initiatives? e.g. Cub Scouts & Brownies look for environmental projects and can earn badges and Men’s /Women’s Sheds or Active Retirement groups enjoy upcycling and repair projects.

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

WHAT IS SUSTAINABLE RESOURCE MANAGEMENT?

A surprising number of things come under the broad title of resources. We tend to think of our various waste bins and what resources could be saved there. It is also important to think about other important resources such as water, energy, transport, food and ‘food miles’, equipment, and reusable items. Tidy Towns Committees can take many steps to reduce the level of resources used and to become more efficient at using resources, while at the same time reducing waste generation. These range from basic, easy-to-do steps to more creative activities. Tidy Towns Committees can encourage the community to think about small behaviour changes such as bulk buying, avoiding disposable products, using local libraries and repairing goods. This is known as resource efficiency.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are the blueprint to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all. They address the global challenges we face, including poverty, inequality, climate change, environmental degradation, peace and justice. The Tidy Towns Adjudicators believe this category aligns with a number of the SDGs as outlined earlier in the document.

WHERE DO WE START?

It is a good idea to get to know your Local Authority’s Environmental Awareness Officer. This person is an expert in this area and will be able to advise you. They often look for groups to host awareness events, e.g. environmental talks/awareness days. These are great learning opportunities for your group and just organising such an event is a very valid activity – perhaps in conjunction with your local school. Sometimes there are small grants available for sustainability projects.

Look within your area for people who might also have expertise knowledge: green school committee members, GYI (Grown Your Own) enthusiasts, gardeners, DIY enthusiasts (Reuse & repair) or purely a passion for creating a more sustainable community. You might consider having a sub-committee to focus only on this category.

Visit www.localprevention.ie/tidy-towns or www.tidytowns.ie to pick up further ideas. There is valuable information in the Tidy Towns newsletter, in which Tidy Towns groups from around the country have been sharing their experiences.

WHAT IS CIRCULAR ECONOMY?

Our world is showing the stresses and strains of this “take, make, waste” model so we’re moving towards a Circular Economy to preserve precious natural resources, protect habitats and reduce pollution.

Circular Economy systems;

- Keep the added value in products for as long as possible and aims to eliminate waste through renewal, reuse, repair, upgrading or refurbishment.
- Keep resources within the economy when a product has reached end of life, so that they can be productively used again and again, creating further value.

COMPLETING THE SUSTAINABILITY CATEGORY - WHERE DO WE START?

Knowledge Sharing:

Work with your Environmental Awareness Officer in relation to sharing knowledge on the correct use of bin systems in place and the emphasis on materials being clean, dry and loose. Some people need reminders on using receptacles correctly such as food caddy / bin-systems / home composting. There are master composter courses available also.

Surveys:

Conduct a survey to give your group a starting point in terms of waste prevention. This could be carried out in direct conjunction with householders or via the local school (they may be conducting surveys as part of their Green Flag programme). Very simple surveys might include the number of households that have compost bins or that have water conservation measures such as rainwater harvesting.

Surveys can be as simple or as complex as you like but the point is to establish your starting point so that you can measure progress. There are several online surveys to make this job easy!

Get involved in online surveys: Tidy Towns groups could avail of online surveys such as An Taisce's www.greenhome.ie, which looks at waste, energy, water and transport – all relevant to this category. There is a special section for Tidy Towns groups. Get your local householders or a pilot area to complete the simple online 'before' and 'after' survey – report findings in your Entry Form.

WHAT INITIATIVES ARE GOING ON ALREADY?

There may be existing initiatives in the Community that may warrant a mention in your Entry Form, e.g. a separate committee might be involved in an energy retrofit of a community centre or GAA clubhouse. You can include a brief update. Perhaps a business has picked up a 'Green Hospitality' or 'Green Business' award?

Piggyback on existing awareness campaigns in your county/region. e.g. European Waste Reduction Week held every November. www.ewwr.eu. There is guidance and promotional materials available to participating groups. Follow your Local Authority and Regional Waste Management Office on social media and re-share the information through your local followers.

VOICE Ireland works with many communities around the country to help them to adopt more sustainable actions within their localities, whether it is through our waste prevention and recycling workshops, Conscious Cup or Conscious Community initiatives.

Show Evidence of Raising Environmental Awareness in your Entry

It is difficult to judge awareness raising on adjudication day, so it is important that you communicate what you have done since your last entry. You can include one or two examples of your newsletter, press releases etc and a couple of photos to show attendance at an awareness event.

Instead of just mentioning your community awareness event, why not tell the Adjudicator how many attended, brief description of what was covered, any follow up actions in the community and/or noticeable changes in behaviour? Some projects may run over two Tidy Towns years if a follow-up review is included.

SPREAD THE WORD!

This is a key component of this category. It is crucial to raise awareness of what you are doing across your wider community. Here are some tips for how you might spread the word about your work:

- Use all available media channels
- Prepare and distribute an annual newsletter (or use parish newsletter) to highlight resource-saving tips and initiatives (online where possible to save paper resources). This could also provide an update on the Tidy Towns annual work programme. It should be targeted at any holiday homes during tourist season.
- Use social media such as Twitter, Facebook as well as texting, WhatsApp and email in order to cut down on resources. Communicate the resource-saving element to the Adjudicator.
- Issue a press release to your local media on your local sustainability initiatives. This could be a regular update in the 'Parish Notes' section of your local paper.
- Include Top Tips on your Tidy Towns Website or weekly tip on Facebook page.
- Share your story with the national Tidy Towns Newsletter

EXAMPLES OF SUSTAINABILITY CAMPAIGNS

- Organise a **Junk Mail Campaign** and get everyone involved. Design your own 'no junk mail' sticker. The Irish Direct Marketing Association (IDMA), the representative body for direct marketers in Ireland, operates a "Mailing Preference Service", whereby you can remove yourself from direct mailing lists. View www.idma.ie/what-is-mps for details.
- **Community Competition:** Run a community competition for the 'best waste-free lunch' idea, 'waste reduction tip, energy/water saving theme, best recipe using leftovers. Presenting environmentally friendly prizes further emphasises the message (rechargeable batteries/chargers, led light bulbs, water butts etc). Clearly exhibit entries in a central area so that you further reinforce your message. Some groups use vacant shop windows for this. Many Tidy Towns groups run competitions in the school on a specific Tidy Towns theme to raise awareness among the children and their families.
- **Greening your Festival:** Do you have one or more local festivals? Encourage the 'greening' of any local festivals or events being organised by the community/school/sports organisations. Visit www.greenyourfestival.ie for ideas.
- **Green Christmas campaign:** Most Local Authorities run a Green Christmas campaign. You could further promote this information through your local channels.

THE FOOD WASTE CHALLENGE: WHAT CAN TIDYTOWNS GROUPS DO?

- Promote any campaigns included in the National Food Waste Prevention Programme.
- Create awareness of the carbon footprint of food waste.
- Show the link between food waste and single-use plastic. Encourage reduction of both.
- Promote proper brown bin usage and segregation.
- Highlight & encourage social enterprise e.g. Food Cloud.

Find out how much food your community wastes in a typical week! Check out the 'Food Waste Challenge' on www.foodwaste.ie for free resources and tips on how to reduce food waste (better planning, buying, storage, cooking). Your Environmental Awareness Officer can also advise you. This could also come under a 'household budgeting' project as there are cost-savings to be made! You might have a local Resource Centre that would be interested in hosting such an event. Organise a cooking demonstration to show how to make the most of leftover food. (e.g. through a local group such as ICA, Active Retirement etc. or in conjunction with a local chef).

*If food waste were a country, it would be the **third largest** emitter of greenhouse gases after China & the U.S. 8% of global greenhouse gases comes from Food Waste. In Ireland, we produce **one million tonnes** of Food Waste per year, 60% of this comes from household and commercial waste. The EU Circular Economy Action Plan requires EU-wide Food Waste reduction of **30% by 2025** and **50% by 2030**.*

Nappy Waste Campaign: Ask your Environmental Awareness Officer for advice on organising a demonstration on reusable nappies, maybe for an appropriate target group in your community (e.g. parent & baby group)

Home and Community Composting: Tidy Towns groups can compost grass cuttings and make leaf mould from fallen leaves (a valuable soil conditioner). Show that your Tidy Towns committee is using your own compost in your planting and landscaping activities. Encouraging locals to compost at home is a great way of minimising waste and reducing our carbon footprint (less energy used than using organic brown bin). If there are brown bins for organic waste available, are they being used properly or is an awareness campaign required? The information is easily available – just use it for your local campaign.

Community Gardening: There are lots of examples of community/communal gardens or allotments. Gardening encourages good environmental behaviour and reduces packaging, chemical use and food waste. It reduces our carbon footprint because the food is grown locally – not travelling thousands of miles from farm to fork. Communities can plant fruit trees and bushes for everyone to use that would be just as attractive as many 'ornamental' varieties. One community organised an 'Incredible Edibles' initiative whereby window boxes outside shops on the main street were planted with edible herbs and locals were encouraged to help themselves. In another small village park, the school children made a sign encouraging people to take herbs and even provided recipe suggestions!

TOP TIPS

Simple but practical ‘Top Tips’ to encourage a more sustainable community:
 (you might think of your own!)

- Bulk buying/using sturdy reusable containers.
- Avoid buying disposable goods.
- Shop local: Mention any ‘Shop Local’ campaign as this saves on energy and transport as well as helping the local economy.
- Promote ‘no waste’ gift ideas like vouchers/tickets/memberships.
- Sharing resources in the community such as grass-cutting/landscaping equipment.
- Install water-saving devices in community facilities (water butts, devices to reduce water flow in showers/sinks/toilets).
- Some Tidy Towns groups have worked with their local authority to install a water refill station in prominent areas of a town.
- Include in your entry initiatives such as community bus schemes, promotion of walking or cycling (e.g. Green Schools Travel actions, Park and Stride, Cycle Bus).
- Lobby for cycle paths and routes (if appropriate) and encourage the local authority to install cycling infrastructure such as secure bike stands and shelters.
- Run an ‘eco-pledge’ campaign (waste/water/energy/all).
- Enter the Tidy Towns Special Awards or get a school/community group to do so. Relevant awards may include Waste Prevention, Water in the Communities, Sustainable Development Goals, Leave No Trace, Water and Communities and Climate Action to name a few. The same information should be included in your main entry under this category.
- Put a waste prevention ‘Tip of the Week’ on your noticeboard/facebook page.
- Organise a community jam-making evening, perhaps after a community berry pick in autumn? Provide recipe leaflets for jams and chutneys. Organise a foraging walk and talk.
- Some communities can avail of free insulation services for qualifying households, e.g. elderly residents. Is there any such scheme in your area and what has it achieved? Energy Action Ireland administers this scheme in the greater Dublin area. www.energyaction.ie. Visit www.seai.ie for tips and grant schemes for householders/communities.
- Donate used books/magazines to a library, nursing home, doctor’s surgery etc.
- Set up a community repair workshop or project. ‘Repair Cafes’ are popular in some areas. Find out what hidden talents or ‘fixing’ expertise you have in the community, e.g. bike repair, computer repair, furniture repair, jewellery repair, clothes alterations etc. This could also be a lot of fun as a community social event. Collaboration with the local authority may be necessary. www.changex.org/ie/repaircafe
- Run a ‘bring and take’ day/ ‘swap shop’ for reusable items such as household goods, clothes and bric-a-brac. This may also serve as a fund-raising opportunity.
- Collect unused mobile phones and post them off to charity or organisations for reuse.
- Get a local group to host a ‘Stitch & Style’ fashion event – mending, altering and embellishing clothes to make the most of wardrobes.
- Run a vintage fashion show of pre-loved clothes to encourage buying second-hand clothes, (tie in with local secondary school/TY students).

- Organise a ‘rubbish night out’ with craft making from reused items. Some Local Authorities hold talks on ‘Upcycling’; maybe your group could host one?
- School Book Reuse / Rental Scheme: Does your local school have schemes to encourage the reuse or rental of books/uniforms etc? Make sure to include this in your entry form. If not, could you encourage it in any way?
- Reduce the amount of plastic bottles in a school by providing a drinking water facility.
- Promote reuse websites, e.g. www.jumbletown.ie, www.freetradeireland.com, www.freecycle.org Many counties have ‘free to a good home’ facebook pages. These initiatives encourage reuse of unwanted items in reasonable condition.
- Reusing jam jars, egg boxes etc. in the community is more sustainable than transporting them long distances for recycling. Mention any organisations in your community that are upcycling goods such as furniture or clothes (sometimes these are social economy schemes).
- Do you have any community groups that reuse items as part of their activities? e.g. Men’s sheds have made bird boxes, planters and attractive gates from old pallets.
- Bring old glasses back to the opticians for reuse in the developing world.
- Encourage people to use the local library and charity shops.
- Use broken crockery as drainage in plant pots.
- Establish a community noticeboard to advertise ‘free to a good home’ items
- Hold a demonstration on how to make environmentally friendly household cleaning products.
- Organise a bicycle maintenance day with a local cycling club and bike shop. Get more people on their bikes.
- Household recycling campaign www.mywaste.ie/what-to-do-with-my-recycling/

Quick Tips for Water Conservation

- Fix leaks or drips
- Monitor meter readings – graph
- Install flush/flow control devices
- Green Schools – water saving actions
- Install auto-shut off or push taps
- Rainwater harvesting
- Gardening/planting to conserve water

Quick Tips for Sustainable Transport

- Green Schools Travel Theme – www.greenschools.ie
- Promote Walking – Walkability Survey, Get Ireland Active, Operation Transformation, Healthy Heart Walks
- Cycling – Safe cycle routes, cycle –skills local cycle clubs, family fun cycles
- Park’n’ride – Park’n’Stride
- Car Pooling
- Using Public Transport

ENCOURAGE LOCAL BUSINESSES

If possible, TidyTowns Committees should encourage local businesses (even one!) to reduce waste / water/ energy/transport. Businesses can in turn encourage staff, suppliers and customers to play their part in reducing waste as well as energy/water usage. Are any local businesses involved in Reuse Schemes where businesses exchange resources for free? In large urban centres, do any of your businesses operate an Environmental Management System, which requires them to make yearly reductions in relation to resources and enhance their green credentials? Does the local shop make efforts to reuse pallets or any other delivery containers? Do they have a 'Conscious Cup' scheme? A business waste prevention measure could be as simple as the local shop changing its sandwich wrap to a more sustainable design or the local café moving to durable rather than disposable cutlery. It is relevant to encourage and/or include such initiatives in your entry. Do any businesses in your local community divert surplus food to charity? Make them aware of Food Cloud.

There are lots of free resources available to businesses that want to reduce waste/energy/water usage. For example, Repak provides a free site visit and follow up 'packaging optimisation' report to help members reduce packaging. As a TidyTowns group, you are not expected to be directly involved in any of this work but should show awareness of any involvement in environmental programmes by local businesses. Provide a brief update and give them credit in your entry. e.g. Green Hospitality Award. You could also encourage them to get involved. There is a programme to suit all business sectors. See www.greenbusiness.ie for more information or contact your Environmental Awareness Officer.

TIDYTOWNS AND SCHOOLS

TidyTowns Committees should demonstrate their engagement with the local School(s) in the context of Sustainability as there is overlap between this category and several of the Green Schools themes (i.e. waste, energy, water, travel). Ideally, a member of the TidyTowns committee should be on the Green Schools committee and if possible attend some of their meetings. Both the school and TidyTowns group are carrying out similar projects and should work together for best results. Schools are required to 'inform and involve' the wider community as one of their seven steps. In larger towns, one member of the TidyTowns committee could be designated Green School/ Youth Liaison Officer. Consider getting pupils or your local youth/scout group involved in a junior TidyTowns committee, so they are encouraged to have ownership of projects and take more pride in the community. If the school is not an active Green School, encourage them to join and tell your Adjudicator!

Provide an update on your school's Green Flag Programme and what Flag they are working on as the themes tie into specific TidyTowns categories. www.greenschoolsireland.org Organising any environmental initiative for young residents outside school times (e.g. during summer holidays) is very worthwhile and should be mentioned in your entry.

GREENING THE TIDYTOWNS COMMITTEE

Highlight TidyTowns Housekeeping. Promote the Waste Prevention/resource efficiency message in all TidyTowns activities and make sure to mention all in your entry, e.g., minimal use of paper and printing, double-sided printing, using email/social media where possible, avoiding use of disposable items when hosting events, minimise use of water and energy in day-to-day work activities, using your own compost etc. One community stored a set of partyware at the community centre and rented it out for birthday parties and events at a nominal fee to avoid waste.

SUMMARY

There are many activities that can be undertaken within the category. We hope we have set out some ideas for you. Choose activities that suit your Centre and that you believe the locals will get behind.

Useful Websites for Householders/Community

- www.mywaste.ie (A to Z of all things Waste, recycling lists, Circular Economy, Upcycling)
- www.localprevention.ie/tidytowns
- www.rediscoverycentre.ie (national centre for Circular Economy (Ballymun))
- www.zerowastecashel.ie
- www.irelandsdg.geohive.ie (Ireland's Hub for SDGs)
- www.voiceireland.org
- www.changex.org/ie/repaircafe (Ideas for setting up a local 'Repair' event)
- www.jumbletown.ie , www.freetradeireland.ie , www.freecycle.org (free 'give and take' websites)
- www.greenhome.ie (An Taisce scheme with online community/ household surveys and Action Plans)
- www.greenschoolsireland.org (An Taisce Green Schools Programme)
- www.stopfoodwaste.ie (lots of facts/tips/recipes, leaflets to download)
- www.crni.ie (Community Recyclers Network Ireland)
- www.camara.org/give-computers (Computer Reuse for Charity initiative)
- www.ewwr.eu (European Week of Waste Reduction, promote community event)
- www.ipcc.ie (Irish Peatland Conservation Council – tips on composting/wormeries etc.)
- www.consciouscup.ie (Campaign to promote use of Reusable coffee cups)
- www.water.ie/conserv/#content (Tips for conserving water at home)
- www.seai.ie (Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland) Energy/money saving tips for households/schools/business. Includes Home Energy Survey.)
- www.taptips.ie (Tips for conserving water at home/school/work Includes survey, posters, kids colouring sheets)
- www.energyaction.ie/ea/our-background (Free insulation services greater Dublin area)
- www.facebook.com/GreenCommunitiesIreland
- www.incredible-edible-todmorden.co.uk (a community growing local food throughout the town for their community)
- www.incredibleedibles.ie (schools healthy eating initiative to encourage growing of fruit/veg)
- www.giy.ie/get-growing (grow it yourself website)
- www.mywaste.ie/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/SRWMO-Greener-Gardening-Booklet-Onscreen-Use-AW.pdf
- Your Local Authority (Environment Section) & Regional Waste Management Office websites and Gardening Websites that help promote Waste Prevention & environmentally friendly gardening might be very helpful.

Useful websites specifically for Businesses

- www.epa.ie/begreen (links to EPA 'green' programmes, e.g. green business, hospitality, healthcare)
- www.greenbusiness.ie/sme-efficiency-and-cost-reduction-questionnaire
- www.localprevention.ie/projects (waste prevention case studies from various sector)
- www.repak.ie/members/packaging-optimisation-design (Repak packaging waste prevention programme)
- www.planet-lean.com (Leaner organisations are more resource efficient & environmentally friendly)
- www.leanbusinessireland.ie
- www.everycancounts.ie (Can recycling scheme for business/communities)
- www.stopfoodwaste.ie/resources/business

NOTES