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**2040**

**SuperValu**  
**TidyTowns**

*Caring for our environment*

Administered by the Department  
of Rural & Community Development



Supporting the Sustainable Development Goals  
Act Local – Think Global



## Happy Easter Everyone

A Chairde,

Welcome to our April issue of the SuperValu TidyTowns Newsletter. We have now adjusted our clocks to Summer time and can really see nature welcoming a new season. Easter is a time of hope and new beginnings, so hopefully that will be true for all our TidyTowns groups and volunteers. Work is continuing throughout the country, many of you have been sharing stories with us and telling us of projects you have been working on. We encourage you to continue to maintain social distance and adhere to the public health advice.

The most recent announcements, whilst not what we might have hoped for, do give us some hope as we work our way towards brighter days, the vaccination programme continues to be rolled out and we all long for life to get back to the way it was. That day is coming.

This Easter issue of the newsletter is bursting with material, we bring you many stories and information pieces, which we hope you, will find inspiring and informative.

We also announce some recipients of SuperValu gift cards for stories submitted to us in 2021. Keep sending these on to us so we can share your great work with everyone else. Who knows, there may be a gift card on the way to your group in the coming months.

We want to take this opportunity to thank you all for your resilience, patience and determination. We want to wish all our TidyTowns volunteers, our adjudicators and sponsors a very happy Easter and we look forward to launching the competition shortly.

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## Spring 2021

It's difficult to believe how much the world can change in a calendar year. Twelve months ago, almost all talk in the media was on Brexit and its potential ramifications. Little did we know that 2020 would go down in history for very different reasons. For some people, their interests, hobbies and passions had to be entirely put aside. For others, their work was curtailed or restrained. If you are a committed TidyTowns volunteer, what you do in and for your community is all of the above combined. There are almost 1000 TidyTowns groups around Ireland and their beneficial impact on our common environment is huge. This is not just on tackling litter or prettifying streetscapes. TidyTowns has become the leading voluntary environmental movement on this island and there are huge biodiversity benefits too as one of the 8 categories is Nature and Biodiversity in Your Locality. The author was interested to know how TidyTowns groups managed to continue their work on local biodiversity projects in the face of the restrictions that have been imposed since last March. A chat with volunteers from some of the leading TidyTowns groups found that they had managed very well indeed.



In Ennis, Co. Clare, the lockdown meant fewer work nights but it also allowed them time to put together a very involved funding application to LEADER. This has resulted in them being the first community group to purchase their own 'zero-grazer.' This is a piece of agricultural machinery that removes cuttings rather than mulching them and has allowed Ennis TidyTowns to maintain 80% of their roundabouts and

much of their verges in a wildflower-friendly way. They have also calculated that they have made huge emission reductions thanks to their less intensive management regimes. You can follow some of the story on [www.pollinators.ie](http://www.pollinators.ie). Away from their pollinator-friendly roundabouts, they have also been at the desk, developing 'Everyday SDGs' - embedding the 17 Sustainable Development Goals into what this group does as part of its work. Like so much of what Ennis TidyTowns does, it is sharing this far-looking project with other groups around the country.

Way down south, Cobh TidyTowns has kept the flag flying for biodiversity. Their work has been restricted, admits Margaret 'Moggy' Somers, but they never stopped. They replaced many 'useless for wildlife' ornamental plants with pollinator-friendly perennials along their 'Five-Foot Way.' They also created a community orchard along this walk (it's a lot longer than 5 feet!) as well as a new mural of native butterflies that



may be seen here. This project, Cobh volunteer Ruth reckons, got a lot of people through Lockdown. You can see some of the amazing work that they have done here on [www.cobhtidytowns.com](http://www.cobhtidytowns.com) or on their Facebook page. You will also see their Cuinne an Ghiorria (The Hare's Corner) Nature Notes from The Great Island and their links to Cuskinny Marsh Nature Reserve. They have used some of the 'down time' to work on their

social media, says Ruth, and their signage too. One of the upsides is that people seem to be more aware of how much the TidyTowns group does than before. Perhaps people are taking more time to look around and properly take in their environment. If they did, they would have been surprised to see strawberries growing in repurposed oil barrels - one of the new features of the Five-Foot Way in 2021.



Up north and nearly on the border that Monaghan shares with Armagh, Glaslough TidyTowns have also been keeping busy. However, you would expect that from the reigning champions who, despite being the only group since 1967 to hold the title for 2 years running, have not rested on their laurels. They managed to squeeze a 'real-life' Bio-Blitz into a period of lockdown relaxation, as their

Chairperson Louise Duffy put it. Somewhere in there, they also managed to convert the open lawns of their biggest housing estate to wildflower meadows. They have also leaned heavily on social media, using this to remind residents to keep feeding the birds and held an online poster competition for school-goers. A pollinator-themed float never got its outing last St Patrick's Day but their wildflower garden and allotments could all be looked after at a safe, if not terribly social distance.

Although all of the groups have different challenges and aspirations, they were all united in their commitment to biodiversity in their hometowns. If six pages were allowed for this article, we would still be leaving out some of the projects that these groups undertook over the last year. Wildlife in many communities has champions that will be coming out fighting when the bell finally rings.

Billy Flynn

First published in Irish Wildlife, Spring 2021

## **National Tree Week 2021**



We recently celebrated National Tree week 2021. It has been difficult to complete projects and initiatives that would normally be carried out as part of National Tree week but many groups continued to work in line with public health advice. Trees are so important to us. Susan Browne from Ballyduff TidyTowns in County Kerry has been in touch to share a video with us that they made for Tree Week. You can access

the video on their Facebook page or by accessing the following link using Chrome.

<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=205967931325193>

If your group carried out any events for National Tree Week 2021, we would love to hear about them, remember the Tree Award also which is sponsored by the Tree Council of Ireland, this award will once again feature in this year's competition with a prize fund of €1,000.

## SuperValu Gift Card Winner

We are delighted to be awarding **SuperValu** Gift Cards in time for Easter on foot of articles we have featured in recent months. Our colleague Deirdre, who is a manager in the Department has kindly read through recent issues and has selected a winner and two runner ups since January 2021.



In our February Issue, we brought you a wonderful poem, which was penned by Denis Heffernan from Emly TidyTowns. Deirdre was very impressed by the poem and commented that; “*The Poets Corner Poem is being awarded a €50 gift card for being creative and inspiring for volunteers*”. We are reproducing the poem here again in the event you missed it in February.

### **2021 A New Year**

2020 is now truly gone,  
But in 2021 Covid goes on,  
Oh now I wish we could put it to sleep,  
And get on with our lives like it used to be.

Still we know we must soldier on,  
And in Tidy Towns we are all so strong,  
So upward and onward with no excuse,  
We had a rest, now the test is yours.

To be a member you don't have to be smart,  
Check in with Tidy Towns and they will give you the start,  
You might be surprised with the joy,  
You will get while helping others and doing your bit.

If you can dig a flower bed or paint a wall,  
Wash down a sign or cut a lawn,  
Pick up litter that's on the street,  
Or spread some chippings it would be a treat.

A must for every town starting anew,  
A simple plan of what you intend to do,  
A few photographs of before and after,  
And a few short lines with the entry form.

Good luck to you all and do keep safe,  
In taking part you are all so great,  
The future of Tidy Towns depends on you,  
Your community will benefit too.

Denis Heffernan  
February 2021

We featured a piece in January from Kilbride TidyTowns in Co. Meath who told us about how they created some very sustainable Christmas decorations. In her assessment of this story, Deirdre commented that; “Kilbride are to be given a €50 gift card for the novel idea of upcycling for their Xmas decorations and bringing cheer to their community”. Here are a sample of the ingenious creations from Kilbride TidyTowns.



Well done to all in Kilbride TidyTowns.  
<https://m.facebook.com/kilbridetidytowns/>

Also in the January issue, we brought you a piece from Summerhill TidyTowns, also from County Meath. They told us how they collaborated with Vincent de Paul, Third Age, Summerhill Community Centre and Sona Sasta (Meals on Wheels) and distributed 255 book bundles locally. They also worked with Dangan National School



in making up 210 packs of reindeer food and shared them with the pupils. The packaging was recyclable and the food biodegradable replacing previously used plastic bags and plastic glitter. Deirdre commented here that; “Summerhill are to be given a €100 gift card for really inspiring projects in difficult times”. Well done to all in Summerhill TidyTowns for their creative and sustainable initiatives. Many



thanks to Deirdre for her assessments and commentary on each of our worthy winners. Congratulations to all our winners. We will be sending your prizes out in the coming days. Thanks as always to our sponsor **SuperValu** for giving us these gift cards to acknowledge the great work being done by TidyTowns volunteers across the country.

We will have more **SuperValu** gift cards up for grabs in the coming months, so please continue to keep sharing those stories with us. We love to hear what is happening in your communities. Well done again to our winners.



## Donnybrook TidyTowns Don't Leaf it to Others!



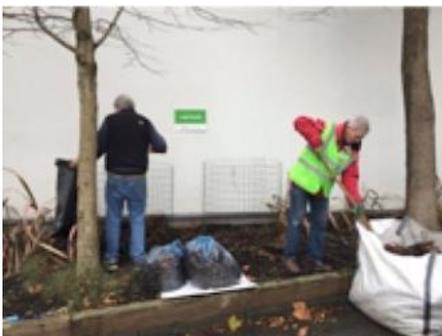
Autumn leaves are for most people a welcome sight, signalling the end of a hot summer and the start of cooler weather. However, autumn leaves on footpaths are a danger to pedestrians

and leaves in the gutters can block drains and cause flooding.

Donnybrook is a leafy suburb close to the centre of Dublin. The main road and many of the side roads are tree lined on both sides with a lot of leaf fall in the autumn

Donnybrook is on the Dublin City Council cleaning schedule but with the amount of leaf fall, it would require a dedicated team just to keep Donnybrook leaf free.

Donnybrook TidyTowns launched their "Don't Leaf it to Others" initiative in 2017 where we encouraged the community to come out and gather the leaves on the paths and gutters outside their properties. Dublin City Council supply the gloves, brushes and bags and Donnybrook TidyTowns collect the leaves. The leaves are then placed in one of our community/household leaf mould sites or bagged and left out for collection by Dublin City Council. In return Dublin City Council supply Donnybrook TidyTowns with compost for use in our planters and for those involved in the initiative.



One of the community leaf mould sites being constructed (left) and now showing last year's leaf mould ready for use and this year's crop of fresh leaves (right).

The initiative has grown with more and more households getting involved and this is a win-win situation. A win for greater community involvement and a win for cleaner and safer footpaths.

We promote the many benefits to making your own leaf mould whether you are a casual or avid gardener.

- It has fewer nutrients than other composts so it is perfect as potting compost for seedlings.
- It also improves the moisture retention of soil in the garden or in containers.
- It improves the soil condition as the coarser organic particles help create air spaces which helps roots penetrate the soil.
- It can also be used as mulch to help prevent the growth of weeds.

## CLÁR Funding of €5.5 Million available for 2021

Minister for Rural and Community Development Heather Humphreys T.D. has launched the €5.5 million CLÁR 2021 programme. The launch sees a 10% increase on 2020 funding and will include a new Innovation measure to support communities to develop and test new project ideas & encourage outside the box thinking. Funding is also available for Community Gardens and Allotments which might be of interest to TidyTowns groups. CLÁR provides funding for small-scale infrastructural projects in rural areas that have suffered significant levels of population decline.

The measures being funded under the 2021 CLÁR programme include;

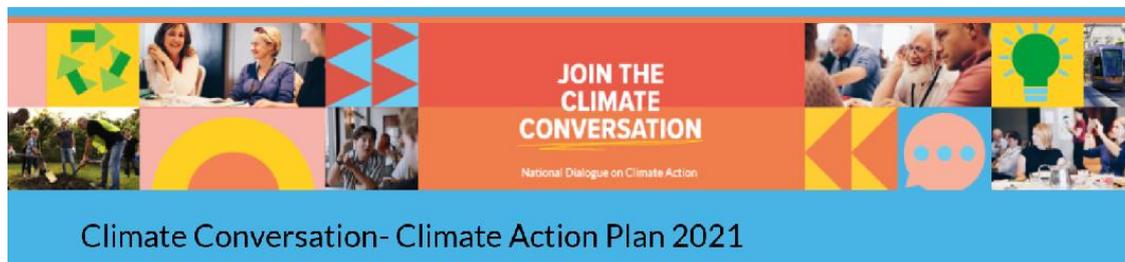
- Measure 1: Support for Schools/Community Safety Measures
- Measure 2: Outdoor Community Recreation Facilities
- Measure 3: Community Wellbeing Measure:
  - a) Community Gardens and Allotments
  - b) Mobility and Cancer Care Transport
- CLÁR Innovation Measure



Further details on the funding can be obtained by contacting your Local Authority or by contacting [clar@drcd.gov.ie](mailto:clar@drcd.gov.ie) or visiting <https://www.gov.ie/en/organisation/department-of-rural-and-community-development/>

## Climate Action Plan – Consultation Process

The Government recently launched a public consultation process for the next Climate Action Plan. As part of this process, everyone has the opportunity to engage with an online Climate Conversations platform, this platform will seek people's opinions on various elements of Climate Action and particularly perspectives on actions at a local level. Government want to hear from as many people as possible in order to ensure that a diverse range of perspectives and experiences inform the development of the next Climate Action Plan.

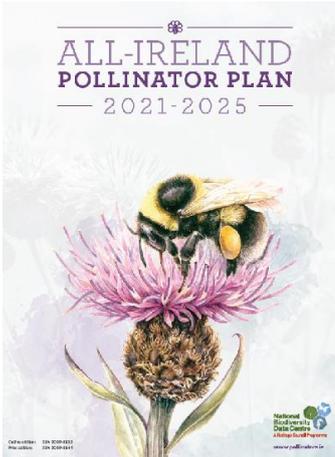


The Department of Rural and Community Development and TidyTowns groups continue to be very involved with the processes to support Climate Action at a national level. We are now encouraging you all to engage with this platform and ensure that your opinions and the opinions of your family and friends and wider communities are considered as part of this important process.

Have your say by visiting;

<https://www.gov.ie/en/organisation/department-of-rural-and-community-development/>

## All Ireland Pollinator Plan 2021- 2025



We are delighted to bring you the news that a new All-Ireland Pollinator Plan for 2021-2025 was launched recently. This is the second phase of this very successful project, a new five-year roadmap that aims to help bees, other pollinating insects and our wider biodiversity. The new plan is even more ambitious than the last – with more partners coming together to deliver even more actions this time around.

TidyTowns groups across the country have adopted the All Ireland Pollinator Plan and have been busy embracing the actions it contained. The level of interest in our Pollinator friends and the plants that support them have grown so much in the last five years and you should all take great comfort in knowing you and your communities have been instrumental in that change.

For more information on pollinators and how you can play your part, simply visit [www.pollinators.ie](http://www.pollinators.ie) and read the All Ireland Pollinator Plan 2021-2025 please visit;

<https://pollinators.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/All-Ireland-Pollinator-Plan-2021-2025-WEB.pdf>

### Look after Yourself!

We urge you all on an ongoing basis to take care of your physical health and exercise caution, being mindful of the public health advice and adhering to it.

We also need to be mindful of our mental health and general wellbeing. These past months have been very difficult. Many factors can influence and affect our health and wellbeing. Examples of these factors include not being able to see family or friends, anxiety around contracting the virus, feeling lonely or isolated or perhaps you lost someone close to you and have not been able to grieve in the normal way.

Being mindful, paying attention to nutrition and physical fitness, and ensuring we get enough sleep, can influence how we interact with our family, work colleagues, and others in our wider circle and the world around us generally.

We should look after our mental and physical health. This means investing sufficient time and effort on an on-going basis. Be good to yourself, take time to do the things you like, although that may be difficult during the pandemic, do your best, a short walk every day can really help to clear the mind, sit and relax, read a book, call a friend and have a chat. Whatever you find helps you to get through the day, most importantly, be kind to yourself, we are in this together and together, we will get through it. Look out for each other, the TidyTowns family are there to help.

Further support is available by visiting [www.hse.ie/healthandwellbeing](http://www.hse.ie/healthandwellbeing) or [www.healthyireland.ie](http://www.healthyireland.ie) and remember Alone are there to help you on 0818 222 024.

## Leixlip TidyTowns – Co. Kildare

Berni from Leixlip TidyTowns got in touch to tell us how very thankful and proud they are of the work that has been done over the Winter Months by their Volunteers.

They were asked to adopt an area in September for the Winter Months, meaning working on their own because of Covid 19. They had a wonderful response within hours of sending the request out resulting in all areas being covered for litter picking not only once a week but 2/3 times a week, unfortunately as the year went on there was a lot more litter everywhere as is happening all over the Country.



They noted extra Graffiti but one of the Volunteers checked regularly and removed it as soon as it appeared.

Some wonderful examples seen here in these before and after photographs, showing the importance of capturing the work you do in photographs.



Berni took on board repainting some Street Signs with permission from the Local Authority. Many happy hours spent painting some intricate signs. Overall the group had a very successful winter and are looking forward to the longer brighter evenings when they can get out and about again even with social distancing and prepare for the Judging of the TidyTowns Competition



Here are some more before and after images of the great work done by Leixlip TidyTowns.

Well done to all involved.



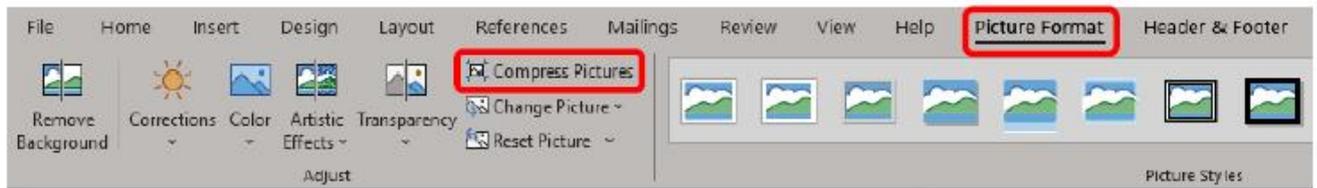
## Entering the 2021 SuperValu TidyTowns Competition

As we look forward to the pandemic situation improving, we are putting the final changes to the entry form for the 2021 SuperValu TidyTowns competition. As we have advised, this year as a result of the public health advice and ongoing travel restrictions and working from home protocols, we will be requesting that you submit your entry form to us electronically via the [tidytowns@drcd.gov.ie](mailto:tidytowns@drcd.gov.ie) email address.

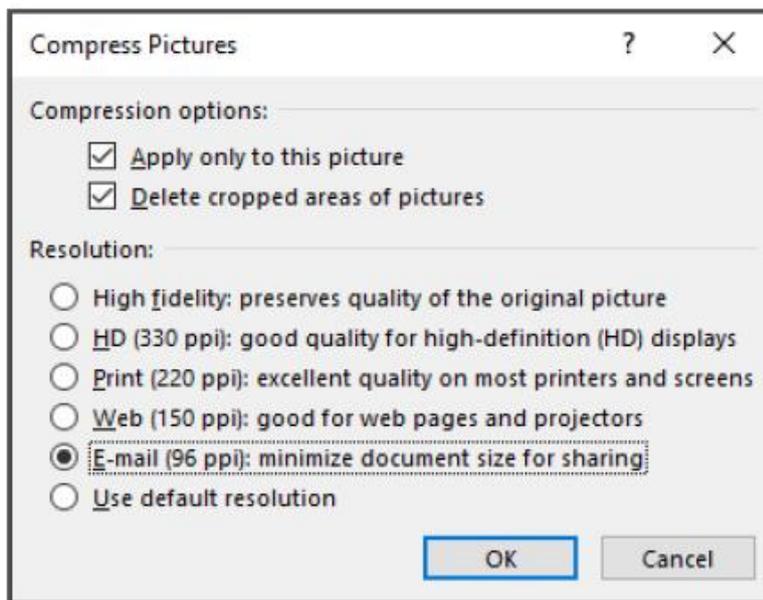
As the adjudication will take place remotely in 2021, the inclusion of photographs will play a vital role in how you demonstrate to the adjudicator the work you have done. Photographs can take up a good deal of space but the following advice on how to compress photographs for sending via email might help you. Thanks to Dara from the national panel of adjudicators who shared this information with us.

### Windows

1. Select the picture or pictures that you want to compress.
2. Under **Picture Format**, in the **Adjust** group, click **Compress Pictures**.



3. Select the compression you would like for the picture (the smaller the DPI, the smaller the size of the image).

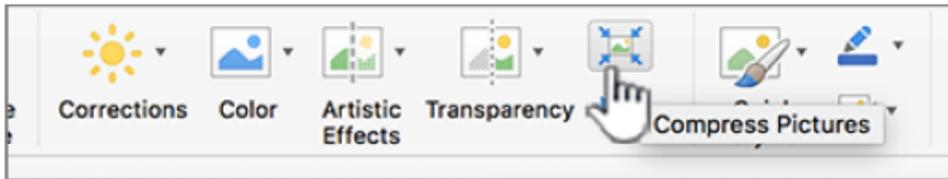


4. Click **OK** to reduce the resolution. If the reduction renders the image unreadable, click **undo** to revert and select a larger DPI.

The illustrations above refer to those who use Windows, the details below will cover the steps for those who use Macintosh operation systems or Apple.

## MacOS

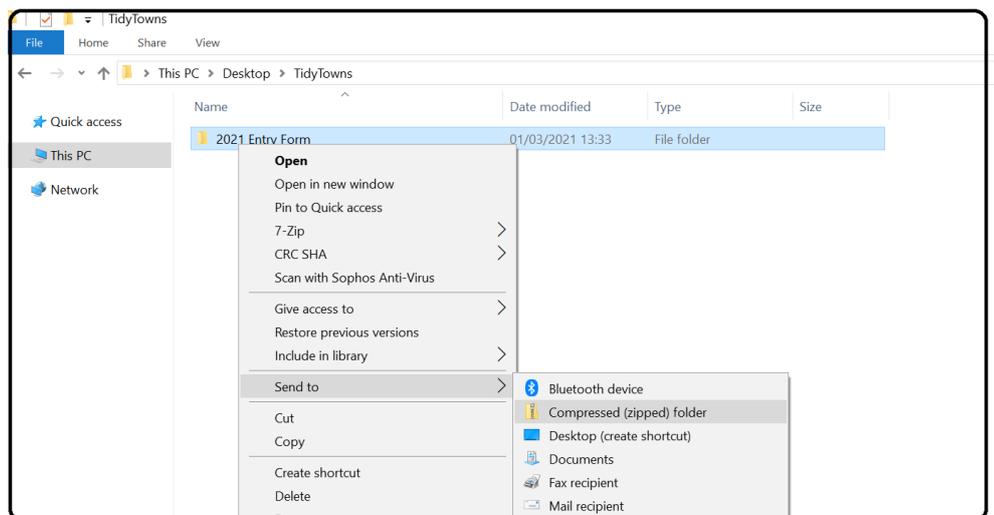
1. To compress all pictures in your document, on the ribbon, select **File > Compress Pictures** (or **File > Reduce File Size**).
2. To compress only selected pictures, hold down **SHIFT**, click the pictures you want to compress, and then click **Compress Pictures** on the **Picture Format** tab.



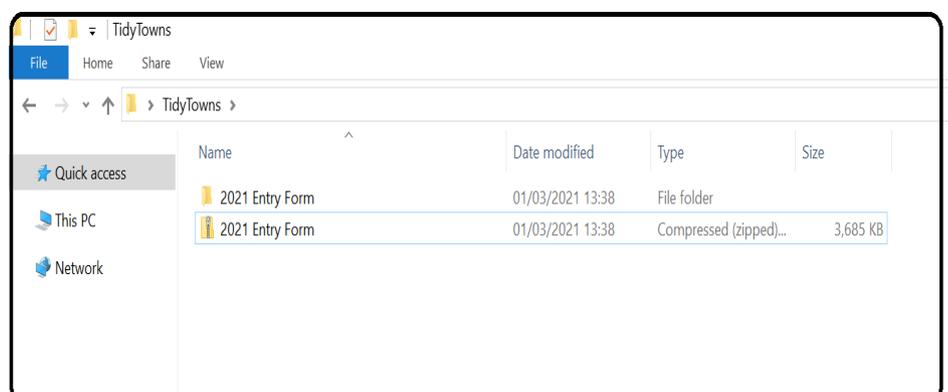
3. Select the compression you would like for the picture (the smaller the DPI, the smaller the size of the image).
4. Click **Selected pictures only** or **All pictures in this file**. If the reduction renders the image unreadable, click **undo** to revert and select a larger DPI.

By compressing photographs in your entry, it will greatly reduce the overall size of your file for submission via email. If you have concerns that your file might be close to the 20MB limit, you can further reduce its size by submitting it as a Compressed Zip Folder.

In order to create a compressed zip folder, right click on the folder that you have saved on your computer and select "send to" then select "Compressed Zipped Folder" as shown here.



This will then create a new folder with the same name as the original folder but it will be compressed, the icon will be a small folder with a zip type image as shown here.



You should then attach this is the file to your email to the TidyTowns unit through the [tidytowns@drcd.gov.ie](mailto:tidytowns@drcd.gov.ie) mailbox.

## The Story of Lough Derg

No, I am not talking of the boat trip on the Shannon, I am sharing some of my memories of the Holy Island of Lough Derg in Pettigo Co Donegal. A place of pilgrimage for many years otherwise known as St Patrick's Purgatory I wonder if the last word would ring a bell in today's modern world. Yes 3 days of fasting praying and soul searching.

It's nearly 30 years since I was last on the Holy Island but the memories are as fresh in my mind as the first time I went. No one prepares you for that first visit, fasting from 12 o'clock Sunday night got the bus from Knocklong at 6 on Monday morning, full of excitement and wonder. Moving quickly through Towns and Villages and getting a little bit hungry when the sight of a cake shop would catch my eye another rosary and I dose off. Knock Shrine was our first stop, stretch the legs, go to the men's room and back on the bus. The odd song or hymn, don't get me wrong it was quite pleasant. Through Sligo town and on to Pettigo and then the bog roads, as the bus cruises along.

We are peeping around every bend to see if we can see the Island. Then suddenly we are there we got our own tickets for the boat £15 each. The lake is grey and so is the sky it was an open boat in them times. Off at the other side of the Island and the smell of aftershave and perfume soon disappear so do your shoes and stockings and then everyone shares the same common ground your rain coat and your rosary beads and how could I forget the spray for the midgets. Head for the Basilica to start your first station before mass at 6.30. By the time you have finished your first station you could say Our Father, Hail Mary and Glory backwards.

Not the mention the beds round and round you go on what I would describe as walking on rough gravel the small bit of grass that you find to walk on is like the best carpet your ever stood on. Of course, you can have your meal of the day before or after mass. The smell of sliced toast and oat meal cakes I can still remember. I eat as much as I could put in to my belly, with a long night ahead without sleep in front of me, then mass and get ready for the night vigil. By now I was forgetting what was happening in the outside world, my mind and body was here in this sacred place. It was my choice to come here and I am so glad I am here.

The night vigil begins with community prayers and then the second stations and so on in and out of the Basilica, around the back, put on your raincoat take it off, sit in the pew, and then someone tips you on the shoulder you are falling asleep up again and off you go. Then the midgets start and I think that I am the only one on the Island that they decide to attack.

You go to the rest room for a cup of Lough Derg soup, water and salt and pepper. You make chat with other people and hear their stories as why they came to Lough Derg. I struggle through the night waiting for the break of dawn at 4.30. I get a bit of new life with daylight the night up is nearly over or so it seems.

Oh what I would give for a sausage, egg and rasher or a cut of fresh cake bread with a lump of butter and strawberry jam. Still I am here of my own choice and I am very glad I came. Six o'clock mass it is hard to stay awake. A new day I am not getting any brighter I try not to think of food, more Our Fathers, Hail Mary's and Glory and of course kneel at the waters edge. I still can see the yellow iris and the rushes as they swayed in the movement of the water. The day drags on, will it ever come to 9.30 so I can go to bed sure enough time waits for no one and I find myself in my bunk bed. It is not Harbour Hotel but I won't complain. Not a word from anyone only the odd snore or wind break excuse me. Up at six for mass and more Our Father, Hail Mary and Glories.

10.30 on the boat back to the Mainland to take our bus home. Stop in Pettigo for water etc., some buy stuff to take home. Still another long day to go before I can have that sausage, egg and rasher or a bit of fresh bread. I suppose some people would say its daft. I went back several times after that and so did my family. I would still go today but my health says different. In my opinion it was the best break away for body and soul that one could get. I am sure not everyone will agree with me.

Denis Heffernan 2021



Thank you Denis for this lovely account of your memories of visits to Lough Derg in Pettigo, Co Donegal. This very insightful account may encourage some of our readers to take the trip to this sacred place.

Denis is a regular contributor to the Newsletter; he has been sharing his poetry and stories with us from the start. We love to see material like this coming through to us and would encourage all

our readers who may have stories, poetry or art to share with us, to please do so.

Looking forward to the next instalment Denis, well done as always.

## [Ringsend Irishtown TidyTowns & Environment Group](#)



Ringsend Irishtown TidyTowns & Environment Group R.I.T.E are a group based in Dublin who carry out regular clean ups in their area.

They have a Facebook page whereby they keep their community informed of the work they do. They have added extra flowers and shrubs around the community to try lift people's spirits.

Please see a link to a short video of the group giving back something to their frontline shop workers and the older people in their community during the first lock down restrictions last May 2020

<https://www.facebook.com/margaret.dunne.39/videos/3004845832929636>

## Ensure your entry is received and registered

We are encouraging all our registered groups to enter the 2021 SuperValu TidyTowns competition. The competition started back in 1958 with 52 entries in its first year. The entry level has increased year on year, in 2018, we had a fantastic number of 883 entries, which had been our highest on record and this was very encouraging in the 60<sup>th</sup> year of the competition. Much to our surprise and delight, these records were shattered in 2019 with an increase of 41 centres entering the competition giving us a staggering 924 entrants. Of these entrants, Glaslough in County Monaghan was selected by the adjudicators as the winner and was crowned with the title of Ireland's tidiest town for 2019. Glaslough, no strangers to the title, had also been crowned with the national title in 1978.

We very much appreciate the work that goes into preparing your entry and we want to have it registered as soon as possible once we receive it, we therefore ask you to complete all sections of the form but in particular the "About You" section so that we can register your entry correctly.

As entries for the 2021 SuperValu TidyTowns competition are received and registered, we will be putting up a list on the TidyTowns website, which will display at county level, all of the entries registered. This will be updated daily during the days after the closing date. We request that all groups check this list to ensure your entry has been received and registered. One week after the closing date, if you do not see your entry appearing on the list; please get in touch with the TidyTowns unit so we can investigate the matter for you. <https://www.tidytowns.ie/competition/registered-entries/>



The TidyTowns unit were recently invited by Limerick City and County Council to participate in a series of webinars they were hosting to assist TidyTowns groups in preparing for this year's competition. Earlier this month the TidyTowns unit

were involved in one of these webinars, titled, "SuperValu TidyTowns Competition 2021 Entry Process". We want to acknowledge Limerick City and County Council and in particular, their Environmental Awareness Officer Sinead Mc Donnell for the opportunity to share information with so many TidyTowns groups on the 2021 competition. Sinead has kindly shared a recording of the entire webinar with us together with the entire questions and answers section. Please feel free to view this at the following link; [Limerick European Green Leaf](#)

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

 <https://twitter.com/TidyTownsIre>

 <https://www.tidytowns.ie>



Please share the Newsletter with your wider TidyTowns group and volunteers through your own social media or through email.

Let's try and keep everyone in the Picture.

## Lockdown Litter Picks - Cavan TidyTowns

Cavan TidyTowns have been doing two litter picks per week since the start of the year. They have had between 20 and 30 volunteers out on each pick.

We have been working hard with local government and local social groups such as Cavan GAA and Fairgreen Community Gardens.

We have been engaging in numerous social and environmental projects and helping to keep our town clean and safe.



## The use of Pesticides/Herbicides

Some say that weeds are just plants in the wrong place, we will let each of you come to your own conclusions on that; however, if you are on a mission to remove or eliminate weeds, you should do so responsibly.

Bernie O'Flaherty who is a Coordinator with the Local Authority Waters Programme has been in touch to remind us about reducing the use of herbicides as we head into the Spring/early summer outdoor maintenance works that many groups will be commencing.

'Reducing use of herbicides to benefit pollinators AND water quality:



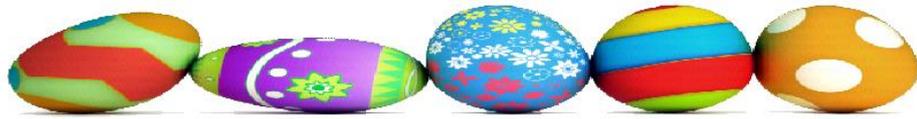
Adopt a pollinator-friendly pesticide code. Reducing use of herbicide will mean more wildflowers for pollinators to feed on. Furthermore, responsible use of herbicide will help protect water drains and prevent contamination of our water supply sources including our rivers and lakes.

**Did You Know? A single drop of pesticide is enough to breach the drinking water limit in a small stream for up to 30 kilometres.**

The Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine have produced a very informative guide to assist with responsible pesticide use in public and amenity and garden areas. To download the guide which contains 10 easy steps ([Straight A's for Amenity](#)), copy and paste the following link into your browser.

<https://www.pcs.agriculture.gov.ie/media/pesticides/content/sud/ResponsiblePesticideUsePublicAmenityGardenAreas200217.pdf>

## Lockdown Litter Picks



### Durrow TidyTowns

Durrow TidyTowns in County Laois recently contacted us about a litter pick they had. They organised a 16km litter pick on Saturday 6th March in conjunction with Abbeyleix TidyTowns, Cullohill TidyTowns and The Harps GAA and Abbeyleix GAA clubs.



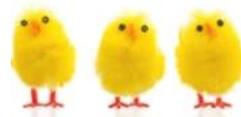
They had a huge turnout in all areas and it should be noted that all volunteers followed Covid-19 guidelines. They have had great support from Laois Federation of TidyTowns and Laois County Council who also supplied litter bags, gloves, litter pickers and collection of rubbish from the Litter pick. It was fantastic also to see that Mountmellick TidyTowns also got involved and that other TidyTowns groups and GAA clubs in Laois are doing so over the coming weeks, fantastic community spirit.



Litter picking happens constantly in the background by all TidyTowns Groups on a daily basis, it's not seen but it happens and is carried out by a huge community of volunteers. This initiative is about joined up thinking for communities and it turned out to be hugely beneficial to everyone, there was a great sense of community and joy in people being out helping especially in these Covid-19 times



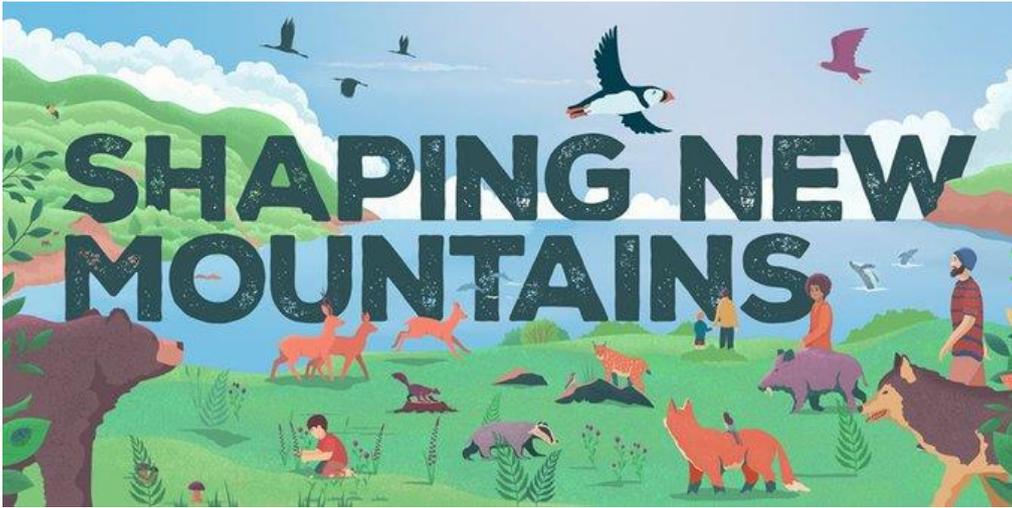
We would like to acknowledge the great work that has been done by TidyTowns groups around the country during recent months, which have been difficult for groups to get out.



It should be noted that the litter picks referenced here were conducted in line with public health advice and all guidelines were adhered to.



## Shaping New Mountains- Irish Wildlife Trust



TidyTowns groups are often the most powerful actors for biodiversity at local level. Informing themselves and taking positive steps to counter our biodiversity crisis, TidyTowns wildlife enthusiasts are more vital to Ireland than ever.

Of relevance to every group will be the new podcast series released by the Irish Wildlife Trust. This is Shaping New Mountains and while it's hard to believe, this is (to the best of this author's knowledge) Ireland's first wildlife podcast series. Actually, it's more of an Audiobook than just a string of Podcasts.



It has been excellently crafted by ecologist and Irish Wildlife Trust Campaigns Officer Pádraic Fogarty; himself a former Tidy Towns Adjudicator. It's something of a sequel to his first book, Whittled Away – Ireland's Vanishing Nature (Dubray Books, 2017).

If you have not read Whittled Away, you are advised to do so if you want to get some context on why your work in the Nature and Biodiversity in Your Locality category is so important. Like his first work, the revelations of Shaping New Mountains are not always comfortable to learn. Pádraic does not pull punches on how we got into this mess and what scale of a crisis we are facing into. However, as the title suggests, there is a fresh horizon put before us. He travels the country talking to a range of people who play different roles when it comes to conservation or the lack of it. There is hope out there, but we have a long road ahead. Listening to this book, released in chapter format by the Irish Wildlife Trust on [www.iwt.ie](http://www.iwt.ie) will help you in the right direction.

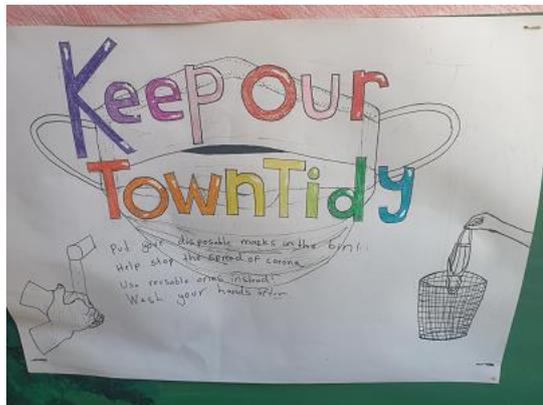
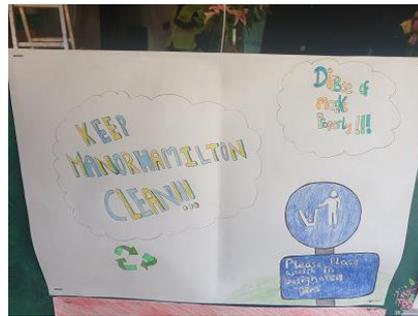
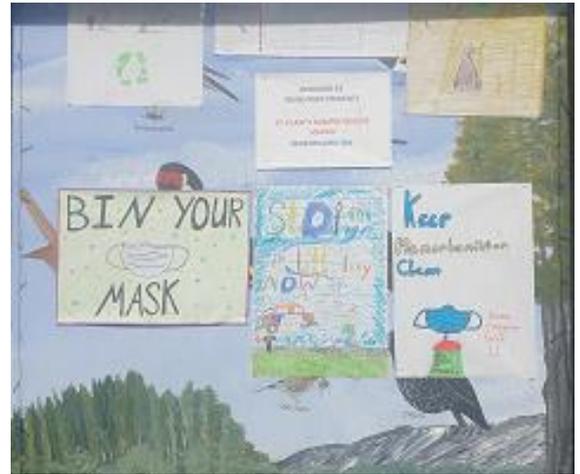
<https://iwt.ie/shaping-new-mountains/>

Review by Billy Flynn

Shaping New Mountains is a production of the Irish Wildlife Trust and can be accessed at their website, on Apple Podcasts or wherever you get your podcasts.

# Manorhamilton TidyTowns

As part of this year's Young Social Innovators programme, the Transition Year students from St. Clare's Comprehensive in Manorhamilton have linked up with Manorhamilton TidyTowns Organisation. As part of their project, they decided to design a poster for their local community, advising and highlighting the importance of disposing of facemasks. They realised that this was a major problem in the area and wanted to ensure that everyone played a part in keeping the community safe and tidy.



We have reproduced a sample of the fine art work from the students here. We are sure you will agree that in addition to their creative skills, there are a few very important messages here that we should all take note of. The wearing of facemasks is very important but equally important is the way we dispose of them. Remember to dispose of litter responsibly.

# Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's)



Last month, we brought you some background information on the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which reflect economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development.

This Agenda is a plan of action for people, planet and prosperity. It also seeks to strengthen universal peace in larger freedom, it recognises that eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions, including extreme poverty, is the greatest global challenge and an indispensable requirement for sustainable development.

The full version of the “Transforming our World” agenda can be found by visiting;

<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/post2015/transformingourworld/publication>



The 2021 SuperValu TidyTowns entry form will feature these goals and the goals that apply to each of the different competition categories will be listed on the entry form as follows;



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**STREETSCAPE & PUBLIC PLACES** 60 Marks

**Buildings:** Conservation and presentation of heritage buildings and quality of shop-fronts will be considered, taking account of the design, sustainability, accessibility, usability and suitability of new structures or civic amenity buildings for all people, regardless of age, size, ability or disability. Please highlight the efforts made to address derelict sites and unoccupied buildings even if unsuccessful.

Groups are encouraged to reference any of the goals that their various projects or initiatives aim to deliver. We are not asking you to do anything differently, just to have an awareness that the work you are already undertaking is achieving so many of these goals already.

Recent issues of the newsletter, featured fact-sheets on the SDG's which were compiled by Ennis TidyTowns and kindly shared with us for distribution. Over the next few issues of the newsletter, we will give you a sample of some of the projects you might like to consider under each of the goals, chances are, you already have completed many of these types of projects in recent years. Recent issues of the newsletter can be found by visiting this link on the TidyTowns website;

<https://www.tidytowns.ie/about-us/newsletters/>

In the March newsletter we gave some examples of the various projects that might be relevant to goals numbered 1 to 10, in this issue, we bring you some helpful hints with regard to the remaining Sustainable Development Goals, 11 to 17.

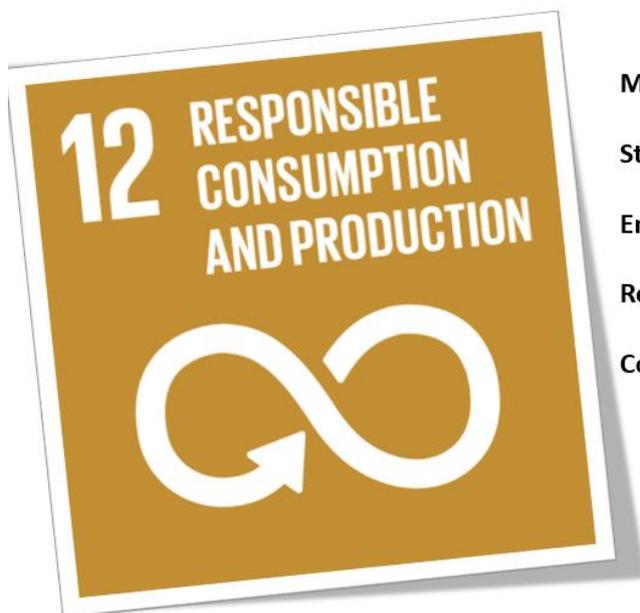


**Future-proofing your community**

**Do you have a local Village plan?**

**Develop and protect our Heritage locally**

**Tidy Towns is key for developing a strong sustainable community**



**My Waste**

**Stop Food Waste Programme**

**Environmental Policy -Ditch the disposables**

**Reuse, Recycle, Upcycle**

**Conscientious Consumerism think Local**





Climate Action Plans local impacts

Conscious Cup

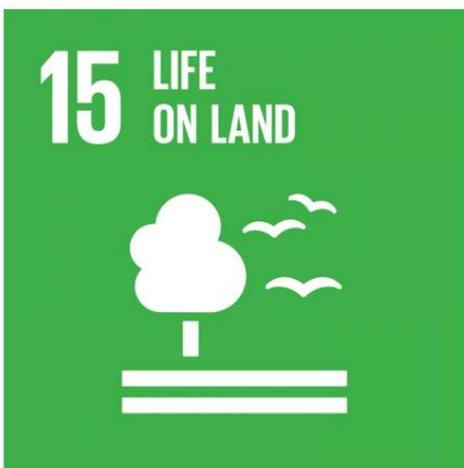
Single Use Plastic free

The Future is Local



Save the fishes!!

Pollution free rivers, protect the waterways.



Annuals vs. Perennials

Plant a Tree

Traditional Skills workshops

Think Native- what do you know about your local habitat?



Local Communities are the experts

Comhairle Na nÓg

Local Groups



# 17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS



This is all of you talking to everyone else:

- Social
- Environmental
- Economic
- Tidy Towns Communities can be a centre piece of Partnership for the Goals



We hope you all find this information on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's) of use in completing your 2021 SuperValu TidyTowns entry form. It might be a good idea to incorporate them into your TidyTowns 3 or 5 year plan also, that way you have identified which of the goals your projects align with in

advance of putting them in your entry form. The following areas might be of further support to you.

<https://sdgs.un.org/goals>

<https://irelandsdg.geohive.ie/>

[www.tidytowns.ie/about-us/newsletters](http://www.tidytowns.ie/about-us/newsletters)



We want to assure those entering the competition, there will no negative marking if you do not reference the goals in 2021, this is our first year incorporating them into the entry form, so we will build on them year on year into the future, do the best you can.

## “Project Us”

We were contacted by Aimée Vaughan, Project Us Co-ordinator in Active Citizenship with Concern Worldwide. They have been working on an Irish Aid funded programme called “Project Us”.



The aim of “Project Us” is to build awareness for the UN Sustainable Development Goals, they do this by holding community conversations at what they call Digital World Cafés. The cafés offers a space for people to learn about the goals and to discuss how they affect us in Ireland, connect them globally and hopefully think of ways we can create sustainability in our communities.

There is no cost to the café, no prior knowledge of the goals are needed, the cafes are currently held online and the aim is to have a conversation.

They have previously held a café with Delgany TidyTowns and have kindly shared a link to a report they did collating conversations at previous cafés.

To find out more, visit; [https://admin.concern.net/sites/default/files/documents/2020-10/1%20ProjectUs\\_Web.pdf](https://admin.concern.net/sites/default/files/documents/2020-10/1%20ProjectUs_Web.pdf)

## Keep in Touch

Well that brings us to the end of the April and Easter 2021 Newsletter, from Litter picks to Poetry and SDG's to new plans being launched, there is a wealth of information here for you all. We hope, as always, that you find the newsletter interesting and informative.

Congratulations to our winners of **SuperValu** gift cards, and thank you to our sponsors **SuperValu** for their generosity and ongoing support. Now in their 30<sup>th</sup> year of sponsorship of the competition, what a wonderful commitment of support and this sustainable and environmental competition.

**SuperValu**  
Real Food, Real People

We look forward to restrictions easing in the coming weeks, we are not there yet, but we are getting there and once it is safe for us to do so, we will be launching the 2021 SuperValu TidyTowns competition, in the meantime, however, we encourage you all to be preparing material and photographs for your entry. We want to once again remind you that even though, you may not have completed as much as you would have liked, please enter for 2021, there will be no negative marking and we really want to see all our registered groups and new groups entering. Strength in numbers.

Easter is a time of hope and celebration but sadly, so many events in the past year have gone by without us being able to meet and celebrate as we would like, we would encourage you all to stay safe over the Easter holidays, to be vigilant and to adhere to the public health advice. We thank you so sincerely for the trojan efforts you have made and continue to make but we must stick firm and look after ourselves and each other. There is light at the end of the tunnel and the brighter, longer days will help us on our journey.

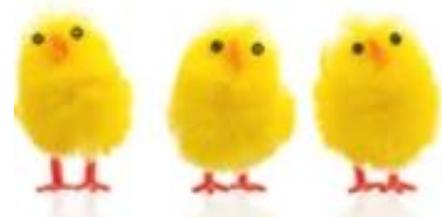
As always we ask you to continue to share stories with us, the newsletter is there for you all, so please feel free to share your projects and initiatives with us, tell us how your community are dealing with the challenges presented during the pandemic. These will give hope and inspiration to other groups who are experiencing the very same concerns. The Newsletter issues to close on 1,000 groups every month, we encourage you to share it further in your communities through notice boards, WhatsApp groups etc.

Thank you for your continued support and dedication to the SuperValu TidyTowns competition and may we wish you and your families all the very best for Easter 2021.

Anne, Helen, John and all the team in The TidyTowns Unit

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Rialtas na hÉireann  
Government of Ireland

**SuperValu**   
**TidyTowns**  
*Caring for our environment*