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Project Ireland  
**2040**



Supporting the Sustainable Development Goals  
Act Local – Think Global

Administered by the Department  
of Rural & Community Development

## SuperValu Tidy Towns Newsletter

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A Chairde,

We are delighted to welcome you to our second edition of the SuperValu Tidy Towns Newsletter for 2022. Spring is in the air, although recent visits from Dudley, Eunice & Franklin did not have that spring feel. We hope that none of your areas sustained any damage and that we have seen our last of strong winds etc. for the foreseeable future. It is upsetting to see mature trees coming down, trees that have stood tall for many years but nature is a wonderful thing and we must work alongside it.

Preparations are well underway for the launch of the 2022 SuperValu Tidy Towns competition. We will be emailing all of the forms and terms and conditions out to all registered groups on the day of the launch so make sure to keep an eye on the email inbox. It

may be in late March or early April so a few weeks to go yet but groups should be starting to pull the relevant information together, photographs, maps plans etc. Time rolls by very fast and the closing date will appear out of nowhere.

Speaking of closing dates, the deadline for submitting your application for your share of the €1.5 million Tidy Towns grant scheme announced by Minister Heather Humphreys T.D. last November is **February 28<sup>th</sup>**, please ensure you get your form in if you have not already done so.

We are in discussion with new sponsors and hope to bring you some new special awards again this year. These awards are always aligned with the work you are currently doing, so may result in additional marks and additional cash prizes. We would encourage you all to look at [www.tidytowns.ie](http://www.tidytowns.ie) when the competition launches and consider entering some of these additional competitions.

Thank you as always to our main sponsor SuperValu and to our additional sponsors, thank you also to you the volunteers for your hard work, your commitment and for your support of the newsletter through your stories, poems and articles.

Looking forward to engaging with you all in the months ahead and best of luck to you all in your preparations for the 2022 competition.

# Government launches first ever Town Centre First policy



Rialtas na hÉireann  
Government of Ireland

- Major new strategy to tackle vacancy, combat dereliction and breathe new life into town centres
- Network of Town Regeneration Officers to drive future development
- Unprecedented investment to make our towns better places to live, work and raise a family
- Suite of supports and tools to help businesses and local communities deliver on their unique vision for their area
- New Policy to deliver on the objectives of ‘Housing for All’ and ‘Our Rural Future’

Earlier this month the Government published Town Centre First – a major new policy that aims to tackle vacancy, combat dereliction and breathe new life into our town centres. Town Centre First contains 33 unique actions which will give our towns the tools and resources they need to become more viable and attractive places in which to live, work, visit and run a business.

The policy is underpinned by multi-billion euro investment spread across major Government schemes such as the Rural Regeneration and Development Fund (RRDF), the Urban Regeneration and Development Fund (URDF), Croí Conaithe (Towns) Fund and the Town and Village Renewal Scheme.

For the first time, designated towns will gain their own dedicated Town Regeneration Officers, who will be crucial to driving future development.

The policy also contains a range of actions designed to achieve key objectives such as social and economic revival in towns, the provision of housing, as well as addressing challenges like vacancy and derelict buildings.

The actions also support the protection of our environment, as well as the heritage and culture of our towns. Town Centre First was launched in Moate on February 4<sup>th</sup> by the Minister for Rural and Community Development, Heather Humphreys TD, the Minister for Planning and Local Government, Peter Burke TD, and the Minister for Heritage and Electoral Reform, Malcolm Noonan TD.

Town Centre First, which supports the objectives of Housing for All and Our Rural Future, is a commitment under the Programme for Government.

Announcing Town Centre First, the Minister for Rural and Community Development Heather Humphreys TD said:

“Town Centre First’ represents a new approach to revitalising communities the length and breadth of this country. This is about bringing together our businesses, our local authorities and our town teams - so that they are at the fore when it comes to planning for the future development of their communities. It’s about ensuring our towns have the tools, resources and investment they need to tackle major issues such as dereliction and vacant properties”.

The Minister went on to say; “We know that so many of our towns, particularly in rural Ireland, face considerable challenges, but they also have extraordinary potential. With investment under the likes of the Rural Regeneration and Development Fund and the Urban Regeneration and Development Fund, we will ensure our towns become even better places to live, work and raise a family. Town Centre First’ will arm our towns with the ability to map out and deliver on their own unique vision, helping to revitalise Rural Ireland and deliver on the objectives of ‘Our Rural Future’.”

Among the specific actions contained in Town Centre First include:

- Town Centre First Plans: Support for towns in producing their own Town Centre First Plans, produced by a local Town Team drawn from local community and business representatives. These will identify challenges, actions and integrated responses across a number of themes (business/commercial; community/cultural; housing; built environment; heritage)
- Investment: Implementation of plans will be supported by a targeted investment programme across Government, including through the Rural Regeneration and Development Fund (RRDF), Urban Regeneration and Development Fund (URDF) and dedicated funding streams to tackle vacancy and dereliction in particular.
- A network of Town Regeneration Officers: who will bring a coordinated approach to Town Centre First delivery across the country and support local Town Teams
- A National Town Centre First Office: that will drive implementation of Town Centre First actions and coordinate stakeholder engagement at a national level and across the local government sector. This office will also be a forum for best practice
- Capacity building programmes for Town Teams
- Health Check Programme: a national, integrated and scaled-up programme for towns
- A Town Centre First toolkit (including web portal): this will provide access to all resources, funding information and best practice models for developing Town Centre First Plans

- Identification of ‘pathfinder towns’: to act as demonstrators of the Town Centre First approach and lead best practice. Towns requiring more support with local stakeholder collaboration and access to investment programmes will be identified at an early stage
- A Town Centre First National Oversight and Advisory Group: the group will ensure cross-government focus and policy alignment. It will monitor and guide policy delivery and annual implementation plans.
- Impact assessment methodology: this will help assess the impact of development and investment on town centres. It will be applied to the statutory planning system.
- A research and evidence platform and agreed data measurement requirements: these will relate to key social and economic outcomes and ensure there is an evidence base for the ongoing evaluation of the Town Centre First policy.

The Town Centre First Policy is available at

<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/473d3-town-centre-first-policy/>

## TidyTowns Associated Competitions 2022

As a result of the Covid-19 pandemic and the travel restrictions and public health advice that followed, sadly none of the associated competitions proceeded in 2020 or in 2021. A virtual Communities in Bloom took place last year but we are delighted to be in a position to announce that thankfully, Ireland’s Best Kept Town, Entente Florale and Communities in Bloom are all set to return for summer 2022.

## Entente Florale 2022

We are delighted to welcome the return of the Entente Florale competition for 2022. This is our European competition and each year we nominate two centres based on their performance in our national competition.



Our entrants for the 2022 competition are Keadue in County Roscommon and Dalkey in County Dublin. The Department and the Entente Florale mentors have met with the committee and local authority in Keadue and will be meeting with the group and local authority in Dalkey later this week.

We wish both centres all the best with their preparations for the Jury visits which take place in early July.

## Ireland's Best Kept Competition 2022



Ireland's Best Kept competition is a North-South initiative and is in place since 1995. We were to celebrate the 25th anniversary of this all-island competition in 2020 but that will now be recognised this year at the awards ceremony which will take place in Belfast in June.

Each year we nominate one centre from each of our eight population categories to go forward for this competition. We are delighted to advise that the eight nominations which were to represent their categories in 2020, are all taking part for 2022. They are;

Abbey, Co. Galway

Inistioge, Co. Kilkenny

Abbeyleix, Co. Laois

Birr, Co. Offaly

Raheny, Co. Dublin

Tramore, Co. Waterford

Athlone, Co. Westmeath &

Dundalk, Co. Louth.

Adjudication for this competition is very similar to that for the SuperValu Tidy Towns, a team of judges will visit each centre anonymously in May and will then present the results to ourselves and our colleagues in the Northern Ireland Amenity Council.

We would like to wish all of our nominations and the six centres from the North's Best Kept Towns competition all the very best for this year's competition.

## Communities in Bloom 2022

There was a virtual competition for Community in Bloom in 2021 titled "Hope is growing". Glaslough in County Monaghan who were the 2020 entrant in the Communities in Bloom competition participated in this virtual event and will be the Irish nomination for the 2022 competition. As a result of the pandemic, the competition did not proceed in 2020.

We are delighted to announce that the Jury will be visiting Glaslough in person in the summer and we very much look forward to welcoming them.

We have every confidence that Glaslough will showcase the village, county Monaghan and indeed the country in a professional manner on the international stage and we wish them all the very best of luck with the process.



## [EZ Living Furniture Is Making Ireland Greener- One “Tree” At A Time](#)

EZ Living Furniture have recently got in touch with us here in the TidyTowns unit to share some information with you on a campaign they are running to make Ireland Greener.

The company has been operating in Ireland for the last 23 years. During this time, we have seen substantial growth in our furniture businesses nationwide. We currently have 15 stores across the country with plans to expand even further in the future. We know, as a company, that we owe all of our success to the people and communities of Ireland. This is one of many reasons why we like to give back to charities and businesses as much as we possibly can.

We already take part in recycling initiatives to help the environment, but we know that we can do more. This year, we have decided to do our bit to help combat climate change. Studies have shown that tree planting has a hugely positive effect on Mother Nature. Planting trees in our communities will help us in so many different ways. Every tree planted creates more oxygen for us to breathe and prevents flooding by absorbing rainwater and releasing it slowly.

To help improve our communities for future generations, it's important that we act now. This is why we have decided to purchase a large number of trees and deliver them to communities across the country to be planted. We already have a number of schools and GAA clubs that are willing to partake in this initiative and accept our trees, but, EZ Living Furniture would also like to supply some trees to TidyTowns groups.

EZ Living Furniture knows that trees are not only great for the environment but also benefit our mental health and well-being. Who doesn't love a walk through a leafy park with fresh clean air to enjoy? As such, EZ Living Furniture wants to provide trees to any town council that would love to plant and nurture a better environment for their community. All we ask in return is some photos of you planting the trees so we can spread the word across our social media channels, website and the local newspapers, hopefully leading to more councils taking us up on our offer, and getting more trees planted.

The planting season for these trees runs from November until March, so this, unfortunately, excludes March 2022 because of a short notice period. We are, however, looking for advance notice of interest from groups to know if they would like to partake in this initiative for later this year (November 2022 - March 2023). If your group would be interested in taking part, we would like to hear from you. All that we need from you is:

- The number of trees that you would like from us.
- The address of where you would like these delivered to.



You can Email this information to: [sarah@ezlivingfurniture.ie](mailto:sarah@ezlivingfurniture.ie)

**My Faithful Black shoes**

Unlucky for some Friday the 12th  
November day pouring with rain  
All Ireland day for the Tidy Towns  
With my black shoes on what a letdown.

With my blue suit on and gel in my hair  
We left for Dublin with a chill in the air  
It poured with rain all the way up  
The excitement was building  
I thought my heart would stop.

We got to the venue with the greatest of ease  
With Jonas Callanan behind the wheel  
The rain just stopped as we got in to town  
I felt my feet couldn't touch the ground.

We were checked and tested as we made our way in  
With fairy lights it was like a magical den  
I looked around I wanted to meet all  
My friends and give them a greet.

My hearing is not as it used to be  
So sometimes I shout when there is no need  
Then the lovely Ann Cassin took to the stage  
The winners revealed another great day.

As I left the venue my feet felt wet  
For me to bend down is a big test  
Just then I realised the soles had departed  
My lovely black shoes and me had parted.

I had them a lifetime or so it seemed  
I only wore them a few times a year  
At TidyTowns events I always felt great  
With my shiny black shoes and the gel in my hair.

So now in the park my black shoes hang high  
I hope a robin or wren fly by  
And take a liking and build a nest  
Inside my black shoes and raise her chicks

Denis Heffernan  
February 2022

Thank you Denis for your ongoing support and for sharing your work with us and the wider TidyTowns family, you are truly talented. Keep up the great work.

## TidyTowns Grant

Just a final reminder on the funding package of €1.5 Million announced in November by Minister Heather Humphreys T.D. to support over 1,000 TidyTowns groups in their preparation for the 2022 competition.

The closing date for receipt of application forms for this funding is February 28<sup>th</sup>, 2022. Funding obtained must be expended by July 21<sup>st</sup>, 2022 so the earlier you get your form in, the sooner you can spend the funding.

If you have not already submitted your application for this funding, please do so immediately.



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



<https://twitter.com/TidyTownsIre>



<https://www.tidytowns.ie>



Remember to share the Newsletter with your wider TidyTowns group and volunteers through your own social media or through email. It's good to keep everyone in the Picture!!!

## Keep in Touch

Thank you for taking the time to read our newsletter. We hope to feature more of your stories and projects in the coming months so please do keep sharing them with us. We would encourage you all to access the new TidyTowns Handbook on the website and to remind you that all issues of the Newsletter are on the TidyTowns website at <https://www.tidytowns.ie/about-us/newsletters/> together with our recent compilation of poems and stories from the last number of years.

If you have any issues or queries, please drop us an email or give us a call, we are here to help in any way we can.

Anne, Helen & John

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Our Rural  
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