

Sustainable Waste & Resource Management



Sustainable Waste & Resource Management

In 2013, the Waste Minimisation category was renamed Sustainable Waste and Resource Management (SWRM) in order to encourage more efficient use of all resources in the community, not just waste itself.

In 2014, total available marks for the SWRM category were increased from 20 to 50 marks. The reasons for this were:

- To reflect the importance of this area in relation to the SuperValu TidyTowns competition
- To bring the available marks in line with other competition categories
- To reflect the time and effort being spent by many TidyTowns groups in relation to this category.

This TidyTowns Handbook update has been written to give TidyTowns groups expert guidance for tackling this category. It has dozens of suggestions, ideas and tips to help your group to succeed in managing resources as part of your overall TidyTowns efforts. You are wished every success in this and all of your TidyTowns work.



Please retain this update for future reference and as keep as an insert to your TidyTowns Handbook, it replaces the previous information on the Waste Minimisation category.

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1. Introducing: Sustainable Waste & Resource Management

The Background

Recycling initiatives should be well established in the community at this stage. This category aims to encourage TidyTown groups to move beyond recycling, to reduce the amount of waste produced by the community in the first place and to best manage the resources used by the community.

Entrants should consider any resource efficiencies across the community including water, energy and transport for example. This category has evolved in keeping with current government policy and 'best practice' guidelines. This is now a very broad category so you may be surprised how many of your community initiatives would be relevant!

What resources are we trying to manage?

A surprising amount of things come under the broad title of resources. Certainly lots of the solid waste items that normally spring to mind do. But so also do water, energy of all kinds, transport, food and 'food miles', equipment, reusable items and time - including volunteer time.

What is resource management?

TidyTown Committees can take many steps to reduce the level of resources used and to become more efficient at using materials, while at the same time reducing waste generation. These range from basic, easy-to-do steps to more creative activities. Bulk buying, avoiding disposable products, using local libraries and repairing goods are all ways of being more resource efficient.

First steps

We advise you to talk to your Local Authority's Environmental Awareness Officer. This person is an expert in this area and will have good advice. The Environmental Awareness Officers are often



Your local authority's Environmental Awareness Officer (EAO) is your local expert in resource management. Get to know them.



Recycling should be well-established in your community by now. The new category looks at all resources used by your community-including water and energy...



looking 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. Look within your area for people who might also have expertise: Green School Committee members, GIY enthusiasts, gardeners or anyone involved in environmental work.

Some Local Authority areas also have Local Authority Prevention Network (LAPN) Co-ordinators and specific waste prevention projects. Visit www.localprevention.ie/tidy-towns to pick up ideas and to see if there are any interesting projects happening in your area that you could get involved in. You should also visit the www.tidytowns.ie to see what other similar-sized TidyTown groups around the country are doing.

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2. Starting Off

Where do you Start? – Simple Surveys

Carry out some sort of survey or distribute a questionnaire in order 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). Surveys can be as simple or as comprehensive as you like but it is important to show that you are trying to establish your starting point so that you can monitor your progress going forward. Finding out the number of households that do home composting is an example of a simple survey.

Or get some of the community to survey how much food they waste in a week! Check out the 'Food Waste Challenge' on www.foodwaste.ie for guidance. One community did a survey of how much energy and water was used in their public toilets and looked at ways of reducing this. This also led to big cost savings.

...or sign up to online surveys

TidyTown groups could avail of online surveys such as An Taisce's www.greenhome.ie, which aims to help householders to save money while helping the environment. It looks at waste, energy, water and transport – all of which are relevant to the SWRM category. TidyTown groups can sign up as the community 'hub' whereby all information from all your individual households is gathered under the your 'TidyTown' name. Get your local householders to complete the simple online survey and submit a sample with your entry form as evidence of your efforts. The website provides attractive 'before' and 'after' graphs that can be submitted as backup material with your entry. Visit www.greenhome.ie for further details.

Is there stuff going on already?

Probably, and there is no point in reinventing wheels, so find out. Feel free to piggyback on existing awareness campaigns in your county/region. e.g. European Waste Reduction Week is held every November. Community groups such

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

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as TidyTown groups can register to participate with their specific waste reduction initiative via the website www.ewwr.eu. There is guidance, information leaflets and promotional materials available to participating groups. Most Local Authorities run a Green Christmas campaign, you could further promote this information through your local channels.

Show Evidence of Raising Environmental Awareness in your Entry

It is difficult for adjudicators to judge awareness-raising when they visit so it is important that you tell them what you have done throughout the past year, (since 31 May last year). There are marks going for this. TidyTown entrants should keep copies of all leaflets, newsletters, and press mentions of local resource-saving initiatives so that representative samples can be submitted annually with your TidyTown entry form. Remember to take photos of your awareness events and submit one or two samples with your entry. Instead of just mentioning your community awareness event, why not tell the adjudicator how many attended, brief description of what was covered, was there any follow up actions in the community and/or noticeable changes in behaviour?



3. Telling Your Community What it's About

Promoting waste prevention ideas and initiatives is a big part of the Tidy Towns Groups' role in this category. Here, we give some tips for how you might spread the word about your work on waste.

Use media - old & new

Prepare and distribute an **annual newsletter** (or use parish newsletter) to highlight waste prevention and other resource-saving tips/initiatives in your community. This could also provide an update on the Tidy Towns annual work programme. This should also be targeted at any holiday homes during tourist season.

Try to use **social media** such as Twitter, Facebook as well as texting and email in order not to use too many paper copies. State clearly that you are avoiding waste by doing this, as well as reaching out to a wider audience.

Issue a **press release** to the media on your local waste prevention initiatives. This could be a regular update in the 'Parish Notes' section.

Put Top Tips on your **Tidy Towns Website**: Consider the development of a Tidy Towns website (or a link from an existing community website) that will feature waste prevention or energy/water saving tips for householders/tourists and maybe even your online community survey.

Promote 'Stop Food Waste' campaign

The average household throws away on average €700 worth of food each year so there are big monetary as well as environmental savings to be made from reducing food waste. 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). Visit www.stopfoodwaste.ie for some tips on how to reduce food waste (better planning, buying, storage, cooking). Take on their 'Food Waste Challenge'. Promote it on the 'money saving' angle for

householders on tight budgets who are wasting food and money every week.

Organise a 'Junk Mail' Campaign

Junk Mail is an issue for many households. A lot of direct mail is poorly targeted and irrelevant and is often thrown straight into the recycling bin. 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 to get details on how to register. For instance if post is arriving for a previous occupant or deceased person, you can register their names and they will be removed from the database. Carry out your own 'No Junk Mail' campaign by putting stickers on letterboxes. Some Local Authorities have 'No Junk Mail' stickers available or you can design your own.

A Community Competition

Run a community competition for the 'best waste-free lunch' idea, 'waste reduction tip, energy/water saving theme, best recipe using leftovers. Or you could run a competition/campaign to encourage householders to save water and energy. Try to use environmentally friendly prizes to further emphasise the message (rechargeable batteries/chargers, led light bulbs, water butts etc). Clearly display entries throughout the community or in a central area so that you are further reinforcing your message.

Green 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 suggestions.

Nappy Waste

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)

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Telling Your Community What it's About



Composting

TidyTowns groups can compost grass cuttings and make leaf mould from fallen leaves (a valuable soil conditioner). Show that your TT committee is using your own compost in your planting and landscaping activities. Encouraging local residents to compost at home is another 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 in the community, are they being used properly or is an awareness campaign required?

Community Gardening

There are lots of examples of community/communal gardens or allotments. Gardening encourages good environmental behaviour and reduces packaging and food waste. It also reduces our carbon footprint because the food is grown locally, not travelling thousands of miles from farm to fork. Communities could plant fruit trees and bushes in public places for everyone to use that would be just as attractive as many more

'ornamental' varieties. See some useful websites below for more information. One community organised an 'Incredible Edibles' initiative whereby window boxes outside shops on the main street were planted with edible herbs. Local residents were encouraged to help themselves to the fresh herb supplies.



4. Every little helps – Small Changes but Big Savings

Be sure to encourage some well-known, common-sense ideas such as bulk buying, using sturdy reusable containers and not buying disposable goods.

- **Shop local:** TT committees could mention any 'Shop Local' campaign as this saves on energy and transport as well as improving 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).
- Initiatives such as 'community bus' schemes provide an **alternative to car travel** and could be mentioned as should any local promotion of walking or cycling (perhaps school working on Green Schools 'Travel' theme?).
- Run an '**eco-pledge**' campaign (waste/water/energy/all)
- Enter the Tidy Towns **Special Award** on Waste Prevention (or get a school/group in the community to do so). The same information should be included in your SWRM category.
- Put a waste prevention '**Tip of the Day**' on your noticeboard/facebook page
- Organise a **jam-making** evening in the community, perhaps after a community berry pick in autumn? Provide recipe leaflets for jams and chutneys.
- 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 is the organisation administering this in the greater Dublin area. www.energyaction.ie

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5. Reuse: Ideas too Good to Waste

Promote 'Reuse' Initiatives

We often throw out an item we no longer want; yet in many cases the item can be repaired, made into something else, donated, sold, or even given away. These are all examples of Reuse. There are lots of actions you can take to promote reuse, either by teaming up with a local reuse organisation,

or by organising something yourself. Often groups have relevant initiatives in the community that they just don't think of including here. e.g. a local charity shop. Below is a very useful list of how we can all reuse more.

- **Donate used books/magazines** to a library, nursing home, or other organisations that might want them.
- 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.repaircafe.ie.
- Run a **'bring and take'** day for reusable items such as household goods, clothes and bric-a-brac. This may also be used as a fund-raising opportunity.
- Have a collection of **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** or pre-loved clothes sale to encourage buying second hand clothes.
- Organise a **'rubbish night out'** with craft making from reused items. Some Local Authorities hold talks on 'Upcycling' from time to time; 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?
- Promote reuse websites, e.g. www.jumbletown.ie, www.freetradeireland, www.freecycle.org. Many counties have 'free to a good home'. All of these initiatives encourage reuse of unwanted items in reasonable condition. There are also Apps: CRNI (Community Reuse Network Ireland) has a free 'Reuse' Smartphone App to help you find organisations and services who can reuse items you no longer need.
- **Reusing jam jars, egg boxes** etc. in the community is more sustainable than transporting them long distances for recycling
- Do you have any organisations in your community that are **upcycling** goods such as furniture or clothes? (sometimes these are social economy schemes) These should be mentioned.
- Do you have any **community groups** that reuse items as part of their activities? E.g. Some 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**.
- Support your local **charity/2nd hand shops**, always mention in your entry what charity shops you have in your community or where the nearest ones are.
- Use Styrofoam or broken crockery as drainage in plant pots



Reuse: Ideas too Good to Waste

- Some communities run local 'barter schemes' to swap goods and services within the community. Such initiatives also save on resources such as waste, energy, transport etc. so deserve a mention.
- One community uses an unoccupied premises to run a weekly 'indoor market' of second hand goods, with all proceeds going towards Tidy Towns projects.
- Establish a noticeboard for household swap items.
- Really Cycle: Organise a bicycle maintenance day with a local cycling club and bike shop. Get more people on their bikes.



Quick List- Water Conservation:

- ✓ Fix leaks or drips
- ✓ Monitor meter readings - graph
- ✓ Install flush/flow control devices
- ✓ Green Schools
- ✓ Install auto-shut off or push taps
- ✓ Rainwater harvesting

Quick List -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



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6. Encourage Local Businesses to Reduce Waste

Many businesses are already looking at their waste collection, gas, water and energy bills and thinking of ways to reduce them, thereby helping their bottom line as well as the environment. 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 environmental programmes your local businesses are involved in and mention them in your entry. Try to find out if a local business has received any green business/hospitality award and mention in your entry form.

If possible, TidyTowns Committees should encourage local businesses to reduce waste and implement reuse/recycling initiatives. Businesses can in turn encourage staff, suppliers or customers to play their part in reducing waste as well as energy/water usage.

Can you encourage any local businesses to become involved the Green Hospitality Awards (GHA) programme? There is a programme to suit all business sectors. See www.greenbusiness.ie for more information. There are also a number of local green business initiatives so look out for any in your area. Your Environmental Awareness Officer may also be able to advise.

- Are any local businesses involved in Reuse Schemes such as 'Smile Resource Exchange' where businesses **exchange resources for free**? Please mention it in your entry.
- Does the local shop make efforts to **reuse pallets** or any other delivery containers?
- Many businesses may have **environmental management programmes** or accredited environmental management systems in place. Some of the actions they implement under these programmes are relevant to the SWRM category and could be briefly mentioned in your entry.
- A business **waste prevention measure** could be as simple as the local shop changing the design of its sandwich wrap to a more environmentally friendly design or the local cafe 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?



7. The Tidy Towns - Green Schools Link

Tidy Towns Committees should demonstrate their engagement with the local School(s) in the context of Sustainable Waste & Resource Management 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 Tidy Towns committee should be on the Green Schools committee and if possible attend some of their meetings. Both the school and TT group are carrying out similar projects and should work together for best results. Schools are required to 'inform and involve' as one of their seven steps. This usually entails working in conjunction with the wider community. In larger towns, one member of the TT committee could be designated the Green School liaison officer and focus solely on this. Consider getting pupils or your local youth/scout group involved in a junior 'Tidy Towns' committee so they are encouraged to have ownership of projects and take more pride in the community for the future.

If the school is not active in the Green Schools Programme, encourage them to join. You will get marks for your efforts. Always state in your Entry Form what Green Schools theme each of your schools is currently working on. Visit for www.greenschoolsireland.org for more information and tips to reduce waste/energy/water usage. 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.

Highlight Tidy Towns Housekeeping

Promote the Waste Prevention/resource efficiency message in all Tidy Towns activities and make sure to mention all in your entry, e.g., minimal use of paper and printing, using 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. You could encourage your group to take part in An Taisce's Green Communities.

Bringing it All Back Home

Being green comes naturally now for hundreds of Green Schools. The Green Home Project has been set up to use the same highly successful model that has made Ireland a leader in the Green School movement to make Irish homes more sustainable. Lots can be done online (see the web link below) and there is no shortage of help and support.





8. More information

Useful Websites:

Householders/Community

www.localprevention.ie/tidytowns

www.repaircafe.ie 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/ householder surveys and Action Plans

www.greenschoolsireland.org An Taisce Green Schools Programme

www.stopfoodwaste.ie (lots of facts/tips/recipes, leaflet 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.)

Your Local Authority website – Environment Section

www.seai.ie (Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland) Energy/money saving tips for households/schools/business. Includes Home Energy Survey.

<http://www.water.ie/water-supply/be-water-smart> Tips for conserving water at home

www.taptips.ie Tips for conserving water at home/school/work Includes survey, posters, kids colouring sheets

www.energyaction.ie Free insulation services greater Dublin area, similar services nationwide

Gardening Websites that help promote Waste Prevention

www.communitygardennetwork.ning.com (Community gardening)

www.incredible-edible-todmorden.co.uk/ a community working to grow local food throughout the town for their community

www.incredibleedibles.ie/yourgarden/schools healthy eating initiative that encourages growing of fruit & vegetables

www.giyireland.com (grow it yourself website)

Useful websites for Business

www.begreen.ie (links to all EPA 'green' programmes, e.g. green business, hospitality, healthcare etc.)

www.localprevention.ie Local Authority Prevention Network (LAPN), case studies where businesses have reduced waste

www.smileexchange.ie (Free business resource exchange)

www.preventandsave.ie (Repak packaging waste prevention programme)

www.envirocentre.ie (Enterprise Ireland environmental supports)

www.everycancounts.ie Can recycling scheme for business/communities

www.foodwaste.ie/information/food-waste-prevention