

Comhairle Contae Mhuineacháin Monaghan County Council



Preventing Waste with Tidy Towns



A Case Study Report for 2013

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Introduction and background:

When making its application to the EPA's Local Authority Prevention Network (LAPN) Monaghan County Council requested funding to work with Tidy Towns organisations in the County on the "Sustainable Waste and Resource Use" category of the National Tidy Towns competition. In the funding application promotion and awareness of waste prevention was given a priority in terms of the best outcomes. Other projects which Monaghan County Council deemed appropriate for Tidy Towns included reuse and composting. This short report outlines the activities undertaken with the cooperation of local Tidy Towns committees during 2013.

1. Taste of Monaghan Festival:

The Taste of Monaghan festival is held annually in Monaghan town on the first weekend in October. The festival attracts approximately 5,000 people to the festival marquee over a three day period.

Monaghan County Council's Environment Section worked with Monaghan Tidy and Junior Tidy Towns to promote the "Stop Food Waste" Campaign during the festival. This was achieved through the following:

- Junior Tidy Towns manned a stand during the festival and distributed a "Taste of Monaghan Leftovers Cookbook" which was prepared by Monaghan County Council. Other items such as spaghetti measures, rice cups and information on the "brown bin" for food waste were also distributed.



Pic 1: Jnr. Tidy Towns at the Stop Food Waste Stand

A Transition Year (TY) "Stop Food Waste, Cooking with Leftovers" competition was held on the first day of the festival. 3 out of the 5 schools in the town participated, with over 150 students along with 7 teachers attending the competition. 5 finalists (who were picked from a leftovers recipe that they had submitted beforehand), cooked a dish on the day. The dish was then judged by a representative from Stop

Food Waste and a winner was declared. All agreed that this was a great idea and was very informative and entertaining. This competition was only possible as Taste of Monaghan had provided a cookery demonstration area with 5 workstations. Whilst there was no direct involvement by Tidy Towns the competition complemented the work being undertaken that weekend by the Tidy Towns. If the completion is repeated we would propose to have a representative from the Tidy Towns present to help with the judging.



Pic 2: T.Y Stop Food Waste Cookery Competition

- A “Stop Food Waste” cookery demonstration with local chefs was held on the Saturday of the festival. Three local chefs agreed to participate with each cooking a dish based on leftovers. The chefs were from local restaurant The Squealing Pig, renowned local duck farm Silver Hill Duck and the Krazy Baker.



Pic 3: Local chefs at Stop Food Waste Demo

Monaghan Tidy Towns and Junior Tidy Towns also played a vital role in managing waste on site during the festival.

- In 2013 a priority was given to ensuring all cardboard and glass was segregated by the exhibitors. This was successful and worked well, more work needs to be done with exhibitors and a note at the start of the weekend explaining to them what the procedures are would be helpful.

- Segregated bins for the general public were provided. However, this was met with limited success as there was not enough people to man the bins and people just seem to ignore the signage. This will have to be re-evaluated for 2014
- Total waste arising for the festival over the last number of years is as follows:
 - 2013 3300 KG
 - 2012 3160 KG



Pic 4: Tidy Towns committee member managing waste

In conclusion getting Monaghan Tidy and Junior Tidy Towns involved in the festival has been positive. It has allowed the committee become involved in the project yet most of the groundwork and organisation has already taken place by Monaghan County Council and the festival committee. A short 2 minute video on the festival is accessible on Monaghan County Council's YouTube channel MonaganCoCo or search "Taste of Monaghan, Monaghan Co Co & Stop Food Waste" on YouTube.

2. Reusable Coffee Cups

To promote awareness of waste prevention Monaghan County Council purchased 350 ceramic reusable coffee cups for distribution throughout the County. Monaghan County Council worked with a number of Tidy Towns groups, using their local knowledge to ensure that the cups were distributed to appropriate outlets such as coffee shops and service stations.



Pic 5: Ceramic cup with waste prevention message

Each business that participated received between 10 and 15 cups, along with a poster. The shops were encouraged by the Tidy Towns to give the cups to their “regulars” who in turn would use it on a regular basis. In terms of awareness and promotion of waste prevention the project has been successful, with a lot of coverage on local media, social media and there was even a small article in a national newspaper (Irish Independent 6/11/2013). Anecdotally, each shop has experienced different levels of success with the cups, with one saying that nobody returned with their cup, with another reporting that at least 50% of the cups were being used on a regular basis.

A further project was developed when *meals on wheels* service asked could they receive some of the cups to use as soup containers. 40 cups were purchased for them as they estimated that they would save €600 and 2500 disposable cups per annum.



Pic 6: Meals on wheels and Castleblayney Tidy Towns with their cups for soup.

3. ECO Summer Camps

Over the last three years Monaghan County Council in partnership with a number of local Tidy Towns committees has organised an ECO Summer Camp during the month of July. Monaghan County Council organises workshops and field trips whilst the Tidy Towns organises the venue, the participants who are aged between 7-13 and the supervisory staff. The summer camp lasts 2 hours a day for a week. The expected outcomes are that the

participants will have a greater respect for their local environment and appreciate the work undertaken by the Tidy Towns.

Examples of the workshops undertaken are;

- Making musical instruments from waste.
- Arts and craft from waste.
- Nature walks to local scenic areas.
- Field trip to local stream with fisheries board.
- Design a poster for Tidy Towns.
- Science and energy workshop.
- Leave no Trace workshops.



Pic 7: Selection of activities from ECO Summer Camps

This project is very popular with the Tidy Towns as it allows them to engage and build relationships with a young audience in a fun yet educational way. Whilst the focus on the summer camp is waste prevention other issues of relevance to Tidy Towns such as litter, climate change, heritage and biodiversity are also brought up during the week.

4. Up-Cycled Gardens

During 2013 Monaghan County provided a small amount of funding to two Tidy Towns groups to develop a garden that would utilise waste as a central planting feature of the garden. Both groups have made some progress and work is continuing to ensure both gardens are completed during 2014.

Both tidy towns group worked in partnership with an allotment group and a gardening group to help with the project. One group has further developed their project and are now working on a water harvesting project with an adjoining community hall.

From a waste prevention point of view both projects have the potential to raise awareness of waste prevention in the community as well as providing a good project for Tidy Towns to get involved in.



Pic 8: Planter made from tyres and raised bed made from glass collected from local pub



Pic 9: Upcycled Garden Entrance

5. Composting Workshops

Monaghan County Council continues to promote home composting. This year with the help of Tidy Towns committees, two projects with local garden/allotments groups took place. Both groups built composting units for garden waste and Nuala Madigan from IPPC conducted a composting workshop for gardeners, which was well attended.



Pic 10: Composting area and composting workshops

6. Household Hazardous Waste

In cooperation with Castleblayney Tidy Towns and Blayney Blades a talk on Household Hazardous Waste by Pauline McDonagh of the Southern Waste Management Region and Mary Stack of Cork County Council was facilitated. At the talk the 22 people from the Castleblayney area found out all about using fewer chemicals in their home and garden.



Pic 10: Household Hazardous Waste Talk

7. Tidy Towns and GAA Clubs

Monaghan County Council worked with Castleblayney Tidy Towns to fund bins to collect plastic bottles from GAA clubs in the Castleblayney area. 10 clubs in the area are currently participating. The bottles which are collected directly by Tidy Towns are then brought to Shabra Plastics in Castleblayney who pay for them. The bottles are sorted, cleaned and made ready for recovery by Shabra. Whilst not prevention, it is progress for the GAA clubs in terms of moving away from disposal as the preferred option for all waste. Furthermore, it saves money for the local GAA clubs on waste disposal costs, whilst generating revenue for the Tidy Towns which is distributed back into the community.



Pic 11: Castleblayney Tidy Towns and Blackhill Emeralds GAA Club

Future Projects

County Monaghan Tidy Towns network, which is a collaboration of all the Tidy Towns organisations in the County, has agreed to make the waste prevention category a priority for 2014. Monaghan County Council will look for funding through the LAPN in 2014 to implement a number of new projects and continue, improve and replicate existing projects.