

ENNIS TIDY TOWNS



STRATEGIC 3-YEAR PLAN 2018 - 2021



*Shared Heritage,
Shared Goals,
Strength in Community*



About Ennis

Ennis, the capital of Co. Clare, is a picturesque and historic market town taking its name from “Inis” which is the Irish name for island. The town dates back to the 11th Century and was formed between two streams on the river Fergus when the O'Briens, Kings of Thomond, invited the Franciscans to establish a settlement within their domain in 1240.

Ennis and County Clare are world famous as the home of Traditional Irish Music with year round music festivals and trad sessions throughout the town and county. Indeed Ennis was host to the Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann in 2016 & 2017.



The town's history, along with modern influences, represents a pleasant blend of the historic past and active present. Its narrow bustling streets and lanes give character and ambiance to the town confirming that it is indeed somewhere very special. It has a rich heritage tradition with some of the finest monuments, buildings and waterways. The town has held a strong presence every year in the National Tidy Towns Awards and won Ireland's Tidiest Large Urban Centre in 2017.

Ennis Tidy Towns has been active in the town for over 30 years and have a strong commitment to excellence, community engagement and an overriding sense of responsibility to create an environment that is both welcoming and inclusive for all.

Introduction to 3-Year Plan

The following section outlines how this 3 Year Plan was developed and how it links in with other plans and strategies.

Relevant Plans & Strategies

Ennis Tidy Towns are mindful of the connections between this Plan, the works we undertake and the complimentary objectives of the following Plans and Strategies that are relevant to Ennis and County Clare:

- Ennis Tidy Towns 'Wild about Ennis' Biodiversity Plan 2017-2019
- Ennis 2020
- Clare County Development Plan 2017-2023 including the Ennis & Environs Local Area Plan and Record of Protected Structures
- Clare Heritage Plan
- Clare Biodiversity Plan
- Sites & Monuments Record for County Clare

Development Process

Ennis Tidy Towns is cognisant that we do not, nor should not, work in isolation and therefore the aim of our group is a goal that is shared by many in our town i.e. Ennis is a community that benefits from individuals and groups working together to create a shared positive future for the town.

Therefore, in preparing this Plan we were mindful that the community in which we are based was afforded the opportunity to provide input and guidance as to how our multi annual plan was developed. The following development process was adopted:

- 1.** Initial committee meeting to discuss engagement options and define the scope of the Plan based on guidance in the Tidy Towns Handbook.
- 2.** Raise awareness of upcoming Plan development on social media, local newspapers and Clare FM.
- 3.** Widespread promotion of two community workshops held on March 20th and 27th 2018.
- 4.** Contacted local business community directly to advise them of the workshops and also to afford them the opportunity to make submissions.
- 5.** Invite local representatives of Clare County Council Ennis Municipal District and relevant Executive staff (e.g. Municipal District staff, Heritage Officer, Active Ennis, Environmental Awareness Officer, etc.) to the workshops.

The workshops were developed and delivered by Ennis Tidy Towns committee members. In this way we were directly responsible for the Plan and how it was developed. This relied heavily on relevant skillsets of committee members as well as drawing on the extensive community connections of long established volunteers.

Workshop 1:

This workshop was designed in a manner to foster individual and group brainstorming sessions. The room was laid out to encourage group dialogue with refreshments, sweets and fun spot prizes to ensure the process was innovative and importantly, enjoyable.



After a brief overview to attendees of the role and projects undertaken by Ennis Tidy Towns, the following three tasks were performed:

Strengths & Challenges: What are the key strengths that own town has?

In this way we can target our key assets and develop them in a way to aid in progressing our ranking in the National Tidy Towns Awards. Importantly we also identified key challenges faced by Ennis.

Interestingly some elements were seen as both a Strength and a Challenge e.g. the laneways that make our town so interesting also pose some of the biggest issues in terms of access and maintenance.

The diverse communities who live in Ennis greatly add to our social fabric and sense of community. Conversely, it was recognised that Ennis Tidy Towns need to do more to welcome these communities and instill in them a sense of place and shared heritage. Below are two word clouds showing the outcome of this exercise.



My Ideal Ennis: Next was an aspirational, no budget limiting exercise whereby attendees were supplied with a blank piece of paper to draw their Ideal Ennis. This was a group exercise which required tables to work together, listen to each other and importantly work together to draw and plan out an ideal place to live. The exercise proved very enjoyable and lead to people learning what their peers felt about and wanted from their town. Each drawing then had to be presented to the room.

The room facilitator documented each presentation to capture the ideas for future incorporation into a draft Plan for consultation. Below is a synopsis of what people wanted from their town and the work of Ennis Tidy Towns:

Bandstand
Rose Gardens
Seating
Bins / Segregation
River Walkways
Lees Rd – Ballyalla

Laneways
Garda Sign
Friendly Town
Water fountains
Office Space

Orchards
Less Dog Fouling
Kids river bike lane
Reconnect with the Fergus
Vibrant town
Community Composting

Post Office Field
Mini playground
More Carparking
Support businesses
'Welcome' Planting

Projects Brainstorm: The first workshop ended with each attendee being given a handout with each of the Tidy Towns categories listed. People were encouraged to suggest projects for Ennis Tidy Towns to undertake, both alone and in partnership with others.

Workshop 2:

This second workshop was used to recap on the previous session and then a room wide discussion was encouraged to ensure the following:

- Additional projects were identified
- Project partners were proposed
- Supports that Ennis Tidy Towns could offer local community groups were recommended

Following the above a draft Plan was prepared and discussed by the committee. This Plan was then subject to a final round of consultation and subsequently adopted.



Plan Outcomes

The following outcomes resulted from the consultation process. The feedback from the committee, community and Clare County Council has informed our overarching Mission Statement, Strategic Aims and Objectives as well as concrete actions going into the future.

Mission Statement:

To enhance quality of life for all in Ennis through positive social change and community involvement.

Strategic Aim:

The aim of this document is to set out a clear, dynamic strategy to inform the work of Ennis Tidy Towns from 2018-2021 through grassroots community engagement, social inclusion and a respect for our environment.

Objectives:

1. Build on the natural, built and cultural assets of our town to deliver projects of community interest.
2. Foster a sense of community, engagement and empowerment to make Ennis a wonderful place to live, work and visit.
3. Deliver projects, alone and in partnership, with other individuals, groups and Agencies to ensure a best possible entry into the annual National Tidy Towns competition.
4. Ensure our actions and projects are delivered in a sustainable manner, always adhering to the highest standards and based on best practice.
5. Focus on projects that raise awareness and leave a lasting positive legacy for this and future generations.

Project Partners:

Key players in the shared delivery of this Plan include, but are not limited to: Clare County Council, National Parks & Wildlife Service, local businesses and Business Networks, Transition Towns, Garden of Eden Projects, Banner BeeKeepers, Ennis Chamber, Ennis Business Network, Birdwatch Ireland, Scouting Ireland, Religious Faiths, local estates, sports clubs, anglers, Inland Fisheries Ireland, Waters & Communities Office, An Taisce, Mens Shed, Garda Síochána, Clare Local Development Company, Transport Infrastructure Ireland, schools and childcare providers, Clare Roots Society, the Lions Club, local newspapers, online forums and Clare FM.

Ennis Tidy Towns will continue to reach out to all interested parties and identify projects of shared interest and form collaborative partnerships to ensure the continued deliver of projects which benefit our community.

Actions

The following actions are a direct result of our engagement exercise throughout Spring 2018 and represents the shared vision of our community. Upon detailed analysis of the consultation outcomes Ennis Tidy Towns has ensured the following actions are **SMART**:



Importantly we take ownership of these actions and are committed to implementing them over the life of this Plan, be it Ongoing initiatives or in the Short (next 12 months), Medium (12-24 months) or Long term (36 months). The actions also follow the revised category headings for the 2018 Tidy Towns Awards.

Review Process:

Ennis Tidy Towns will review the progress of this plan on an annual basis to ensure the actions are being progressed and priorities are set for each year's work plan.

ACTIONS**Community – Your Planning & Involvement (60 Marks)**
2017
49 MARKS
2016
49 MARKS
2015
49 MARKS
2014
47 MARKS

Community involvement is about thinking of new, innovative ways to garner interest from the town toward common interests. From our dedicated community engagement exercise to inform this Plan the feedback suggests that this category should focus on encouraging the town's youth, new communities and attract new volunteers to participate in Tidy Town's projects and volunteering efforts. Key to this section is raising the profile of Ennis Tidy Towns as community leaders so it can ensure its voice, and those of the people it represents, is heard.

ACTION		TIMEFRAME
1	Strengthen ties with local childcare facilities, schools and regional third level institutions to deliver projects of community interest	Ongoing
2	Develop projects and initiatives that focus on social inclusion and cultural integration such as festivals and others participatory events	Ongoing
3	Foster a sense of ownership through development of 'Adopt an Area' Schemes including roads, lanes and roundabouts	Medium
4	Enhance the role of Ennis Tidy Towns to act as an organisation of excellence and advocacy on issues of importance to our community e.g. environmental, heritage, sustainability and social issues. This can be achieved through participation in National campaigns, local umbrella groups, PPN and committees under Clare County Council	Short - Medium
5	Support other community based organisations in areas of shared interest such as community orchards, local festivals and heritage projects	Ongoing
6	Focus on enhanced recruitment of volunteers from the public, local businesses, schools and active retirements groups through targeted outreach programmes	Short
7	Develop relationships with relevant local, county and State Agencies to ensure a coherent and sustainable approach to community projects	Short - medium

Streetscape & Public Spaces (50 Marks)
2017
44 MARKS
2016
43 MARKS
2015
43 MARKS
2014
42 MARKS

The streetscape and public spaces encompass the physical spaces of the town including the condition of the streets, the appearance of the adjoining areas such as storefronts.

ACTION		TIMEFRAME
8	In consultation with Clare County Council seek to enhance and/or provide local signage and wayfinding	Short - Medium
9	Advocate and fund, where possible, community infrastructure such as communal civic spaces, benches, water fountains, public toilets and play areas.	Ongoing
10	Monitor ongoing concerns regarding derelict buildings, maintenance issues and issues of public safety and seek to have them addressed by relevant stakeholders e.g. Clare County Council, business owners, homeowners, NAMA, etc.	Ongoing
11	Seek to consolidate and expand on existing trails (physical and online forms) around Ennis in association with local community groups, clubs and societies such as Clare Roots Society and the Heritage Office of Clare County Council	Medium - Long
12	Ennis Tidy Towns to continue its ongoing work of painting, litter picking, weed control and other community level maintenance projects to make our town an attractive place to live, work and visit.	Ongoing
13	As Ennis is an historical town, advocate for supports to be put in place to support shop and homeowners to keep their premises attractive and adequately maintained e.g. Streetscape Improvement Scheme	Short - Medium
14	Support and advocate for large scale strategic works to our historic town through schemes such as the Historic Towns Initiative and other projects to enhance the public realm	Ongoing
15	Promote enhanced pedestrian connections within our Public Spaces such as the river at Corovorrin Park and connecting the Friary to Dunnes Stores.	Medium - Long
16	Foster and develop partnerships with the local business community through engagement with organisations such as Ennis Chamber and the Ennis Business Network	Ongoing

Green Spaces & Landscaping (50 Marks)

2017
48 MARKS2016
48 MARKS2015
47 MARKS2014
47 MARKS

Our Green Spaces are important communal spaces for relaxation, recreation and community events. Their management, as well as wider landscaping practices are important as they provide our town's first impression and are important for biodiversity in our urban environment.

ACTION	TIMEFRAME
17 Support Active Ennis in pursuit of attaining Green Flag status for the Fairgreen/Tim Smythe Park	Short - Medium
18 Advocate for active tree management and care, in recognition of the tremendous asset trees are to the fabric of our town	Short - Medium
19 Advocate for more sustainable forms of weed and pest management	Short
20 Seek the designation of a dedicated dog park, or zones/timed dog friendly areas, in association with responsible dog waste practices e.g. reduction of dog fouling	Medium - Long
21 Investigate the provision of a Bandstand as a community asset for the town for local events and musical performances	Medium - Long
22 Enhance provision of seating and amenity areas in open spaces	Medium - Long
23 Undertake pilot and ongoing sustainable landscaping practices in areas of high ecological value such as the Post Office Field and Lees Road.	Short - medium

Nature & Biodiversity in your Locality (50 Marks)

2017
36 MARKS2016
34 MARKS2015
34 MARKS2014
34 MARKS

Ennis Tidy Towns has a strong commitment to natural heritage and biodiversity as showcased in the development of their dedicated 'Wild about Ennis' Biodiversity Plan 2017-2019. Actions for this category, were previously suggested as part of its consultation process, and are therefore not repeated here.

Sustainability - Doing more with Less (50 Marks)

2017
21 MARKS2016
20 MARKS2015
20 MARKS2014
19 MARKS

The primary focus and greatest impact of sustainability is protecting our resources for this and future generations. At a local level this begins with waste prevention. Tidy Towns can best affect change through education and awareness campaigns.

ACTION	TIMEFRAME
24 Fund and advocate for enhanced waste segregation and recycling bins in and around our town	Short - Long
25 Promote, in association with local business, the use of reusable coffee and water bottles using campaigns such as Conscious Cups and refill.ie	Medium - Long
26 Promote sustainability and practicable daily tips at school children and the wider community including composting, waste prevention tips and water conservation measures. Utilise existing campaigns such as #RecyclingListIRL and Reuse Month as well as partnering with local media outlets	Ongoing
27 Promote the use of renewable energies and other innovative practices such as rain water harvesting and sustainable drainage/water treatment systems with local residents and businesses	Ongoing
28 Promote, in association with festival organisers in the town, the greening of festivals	Short - Medium
29 Using the River Fergus as an asset of shared interest advocate for improved water treatment, water conservation and waste minimisation to protect the natural environment	Medium - Long
30 Ennis Tidy Towns to reduce its carbon footprint through enhanced use of email and text, reduced printing and use of sustainable products e.g. recycled paper	Short - medium
31 Develop projects to promote the reduction of packaging and other unnecessary waste streams	Ongoing

Tidiness & Litter Control (90 Marks)

2017
58 MARKS2016
57 MARKS2015
56 MARKS2014
55 MARKS

Ennis has a strong commitment to keeping its streets and environs litter free and recently were awarded the top prize by IBAL (Irish Business Against Litter). This category also requires a focus on clear, uncluttered public spaces.

ACTION	TIMEFRAME
32 Ensure, either through our own activities or that of other stakeholders, control of weeds along walls, footpaths and other areas	Ongoing
33 Work with local businesses including bars, restaurants and betting offices to reduce the impact of discarded cigarette butts in our town	Short
34 Increase the number of dog waste bins, enforcement of dog fouling legislation, awareness campaigns (e.g. Green Dog Walkers) to foster a sense of responsible dog ownership	Short - Medium
35 By raising awareness of excess packaging we can reduce the level of littering along our streets, lanes and approach roads	Ongoing
36 Reduce litter levels through increased level of bins, segregated and general waste	Medium - Long
37 Continue to develop targeted sustainability projects in association with other interested individuals and community groups	Ongoing
38 Promote and raise awareness of National Initiatives such as the Gum Litter Taskforce and nowaste.ie	Ongoing

Residential Streets & Housing Areas (50 Marks)

2017
37 MARKS2016
37 MARKS2015
36 MARKS2014
34 MARKS

Our long-standing commitment to local homeowners and housing estates, through our Local Awards, is something for which we are committed to in the long term. This also requires close consultation with Clare County Council with regard to unfinished estates and derelict buildings.

ACTION	TIMEFRAME
39 Develop a 'Community Hub' section on the Ennis Tidy Towns website to foster shared learning and showcase practicable and achievable projects for local Housing Areas	Short
40 Encourage and promote the Grow it Yourself (GIY) initiative	Ongoing
41 Promote the use of sustainable practices at a household level including renewable energy schemes, waste minimisation and water conservation	Ongoing
42 Raise the profile of Ennis Tidy Towns and the supports it offers to Residential Streets and Housing Areas not currently aware of our work	Short
43 Continue with the annual Estate Mentoring Scheme	Ongoing
44 Identify derelict or unsafe buildings and bring this to the attention of Clare County Council	Ongoing
45 Undertake initiatives to promote social inclusion in our Housing Areas to foster a sense of place	Short - Medium
46 Advocate for ensuring the core of our town is a living, vibrant place for people to live as well as work through lobbying for renovation of derelict properties and innovative reuse of town centre commercial units	Short - Medium

Approach Roads, Streets, & Lanes (50 Marks)

2017 38 MARKS	2016 38 MARKS	2015 36 MARKS	2014 36 MARKS
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The appearance of our town’s streets, connecting roads, laneways, bridges and cycle lanes is of paramount importance to our ongoing success in the National Tidy Towns competition.

ACTION	TIMEFRAME
47 Ensure a coordinated and consistent approach to signage on approach roads, streets and lanes	Short - Medium
48 Vacant sites on approach roads to our town to be monitored and any dumping or anti-social behaviour to be raised with relevant authorities	Ongoing
49 In consultation with Clare County Council, seek to improve the visual attractiveness and accessibility (lighting, removal of bins, etc.) of our towns lanes and bows	Short - Medium
50 Seek to develop iconic Entrance Signs to our town be it through landscaping or innovative sculptures	Medium
51 Promote, in association with An Taisce, the concept of cycling to school and the continued development of dedicated cycle-lanes	Ongoing
52 Undertake initiatives at approach roundabouts (e.g. Clare Abbey) in association with Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) and Clare County Council	Short - Medium
53 Ensure sustainable management of approach roads to allow for a balance between tidiness and wildlife value, being particularly mindful of infestations of invasive species such as Japanese Knotweed.	Ongoing

Conclusion

Throughout our history, and more recently as part of this engagement and consultation process, we draw strength from the strong sense of community in Ennis and an equally strong desire to continue making Ennis an incredible place to live. The motivation to integrate efforts across age ranges and community groups is present. Furthermore, many of the ideas suggested here are strategic programs that aim to enhance the already established sense of community development.

This document is the result of direct input from Ennis residents, our committee’s observations, historical Tidy Towns adjudication reports, research on other Tidy Town submissions, and exemplar programs. Proposed projects aim to align with efforts happening across Ireland, such as the All Ireland Pollinator Plan, and Regional and National waste initiatives such as the new Household Recycling List.

In conclusion, despite our strong recommendations and actions, this is a dynamic document that is meant to be forward looking. It is meant to be inspirational and provide concrete examples of how to execute projects and initiatives. These projects will sow the seeds of ideas that will flourish when nurtured by the community. This Plan is not intended to be seen as the complete answer, rather, this is a culmination of possible solutions.

We hope that you will join us on our journey.





*Front cover illustration by Damien Goodfellow
Back cover photography by Paschal Brooks*