

Letterkenny Tidy Towns

THREE YEAR PLAN



LETTERKENNY TIDY TOWNS
Caring for our environment



Comhairle Contae
Dhún na nGall
Donegal County Council

Welcome to Our New 3-Year Plan!

This plan is to be used to guide the work of our committee and volunteers over the next 3 years of our Tidy Towns efforts. This plan sets out a number of Key Projects that we believe will have the greatest impact on our town over this period. We have included an approximate timeframe for these projects. The plan then sets out year by year the projects and initiatives that we will strive to undertake over the lifetime of this plan. Finally, a number of annual and ongoing tasks are given that are central to our ongoing work here in Letterkenny.

Letterkenny Tidy Towns

Our community has been active for over 35 years. We have been helping our town thrive and become more sustainable through dedicated and focused community action.



OUR MISSION

We are a voluntary community group whose mission is to help make Letterkenny a better town to live in and enjoy.



OUR VISION

To greatly improve our sense of community, the quality of people's lives, and our local environment.

Tidy Towns and The Community Of Letterkenny



We recognise that our volunteers and residents are our most valuable assets. We depend on our fellow community groups, sports clubs, and residents' associations for their support and encouragement. We rely on our residents' interest, ideas, and feedback, and we use these to create this plan. We acknowledge the contribution that those who have moved to Letterkenny to make it their home have made to our work and our community.

Tidy Towns is not just a competition; it's a movement that demonstrates everything good about our people – volunteerism, positivity, cooperation, community spirit, protecting our common environment, and that sense of pride in looking after the place we call home.

How Was This Plan Developed ?



This plan was developed by Letterkenny Tidy Towns with the assistance of Flynn Furney Environmental Consultants. A period of consultation included one-to-one meetings and exchange of information. Walkover surveys of the town were also carried out by the consultants.

The consultants then met with our committee to hear from them what they felt was needed for the plan. The consultants then contacted representatives of all the Letterkenny schools, as well as key members of Donegal County Council, who were asked to complete a simple survey on their work and Letterkenny Tidy Towns.

Finally, the Tidy Towns Committee arranged a roundtable consultation event attended by Tidy Towns volunteers, residents, local authority staff, and our committee. All these consultation steps provided the information to put together this plan.

Acknowledgements

Letterkenny Tidy Towns gratefully acknowledge the assistance of Donegal County Council in supporting the development of this plan. The support of the Local Authority Waters Programme is also greatly appreciated.

We would also like to thank all the wonderful volunteers, residents, and businesses of Letterkenny that make our work possible.

We couldn't do this without you.



Letterkenny and The Sustainable Development Goals

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



This is Letterkenny – Seo é Leitir Ceanainn



Letterkenny is the principal town of County Donegal, with a population of just over 22.5 thousand, making it the main population center of this Ulster county. It is located at the mouth of the River Swilly, where it discharges into Lough Swilly. The uneven topography of the town with some steep hills is reflected in its Irish name Leitir Ceanainn – the hillside of the O’Canannains, a clan which was once royalty in this part of Donegal.



The town owes much of its appearance today to the Plantation of Ulster, which established Letterkenny as a market town. The streetscape still reflects this, with the Market Square being a key focal point of the town. It remains an important commercial center, with Main Street always bustling with many long-established retail premises. Numerous large retailers now operate away from Main Street in shopping centers and the Letterkenny Retail Park.



The town boasts seven primary schools and four secondary schools, as well as hosting a center of the Atlantic Technological University (ATU).



Letterkenny has a long and proud history of involvement in Tidy Towns, being a Gold Medal holder every year since the inception of Gold Medals in 2003 and leading the county’s high achievers for decades. It won the overall award in 2015 and has also represented Ireland in the Entente Florale competition, where it received a Gold Medal.

Key Projects

These are the Key Projects for Letterkenny Tidy Towns for 2024-2027. These are the projects that will have the greatest impact on the town, its landscape and natural environment over this time. They are also the projects that will demand the greatest time and resources of Tidy Towns and its supporters.

1 Key Project. *Community - Your Planning & Involvement*



Project Period
2024

VOLUNTEER DATABASE & ROSTER

This project will see the setting up of a smart database for communicating with and keeping track of volunteers. This will also inform volunteers where work is going on and what needs doing and when. A GIS application such as MyMaps may be used to allow volunteers to upload spatial information such as what areas have been recently done and where work is needed.

11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES
AND COMMUNITIES



2 Key Project. *Community - Your Planning & Involvement*


Project Period
2024-2025

SOCIAL MEDIA TRAINING

It is recommended that training in relevant social media is provided for key volunteers. This is to include photograph and video-based media as well as instruction on website maintenance.



3 Key Project. *Streetscape & Public Places*


Project Period
2024-2025

SHOPFRONT FOCUS

The traditional shopfronts of Letterkenny are a great asset to the town's streetscape. These are to be promoted by the Tidy Towns through a range of initiatives. These may include an exhibition of shopfronts – displayed in shopfronts, a workshop on traditional sign-writing and a publication on best practice for shopfronts.



4 Key Project.

Green Spaces & Landscaping

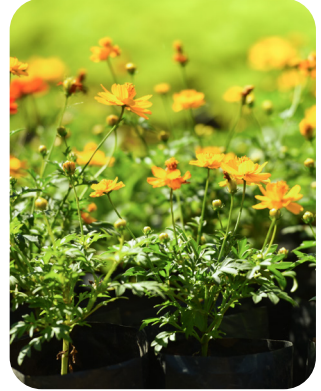

Project Period
2024-2027



PLANTS FOR POLLINATORS

Letterkenny Tidy Towns will make a significant move toward pollinator-friendly planting within all of its planting schemes. Over this period, Tidy Towns will track the extent of this progress and identify new opportunities for both places and plants as they arise.

Our target will be to have >90% of our planting schemes using plants for pollinators by the end of 2027.



5 Key Project.

Green Spaces & Landscaping


Project Period
2025-2026

HERBICIDE-FREE WEED CONTROL

This project will involve Letterkenny Tidy Towns undertake a novel trial of weed control measures that will not include any chemical herbicides. We will work with 3rd-level students of ATU to devise a trial structure in an area of the town where ongoing weed control is needed. We will make the findings of our project freely available to other Tidy Towns groups.



6 Key Project. *Green Spaces & Landscaping*


Project Period
2026

17 PARTNERSHIPS
FOR THE GOALS



GROWING SKILLS FOR VOLUNTEERS

In order to address the need for wider horticultural knowledge among our volunteer cohort, we will arrange for a series of practical workshops that will impart the key skills for planning, planting and maintaining our green spaces. These will be made open to all of our volunteers and supporters. Following these, the trained volunteers will be able to lead gardening teams on our work days.



7 Key Project. *Nature and Biodiversity in Your Locality*


Project Period
2024

15 LIFE
ON LAND



LOCAL BIODIVERSITY ACTION PLAN

A Letterkenny Biodiversity Action Plan is planned which will set out appropriate, locally based actions for the conservation, management and/or enhancement of habitats for the benefit of native species. This biodiversity action plan will set out a programme of ambitious yet practical actions with a focus on biodiversity enhancement for a 3-year period which the Tidy Towns group and wider community can aim to achieve.

8 Key Project. *Nature and Biodiversity in Your Locality*


Project Period
2027



THE LETTERKENNY BIODIVERSITY GUIDE

One of the outcomes of the Biodiversity Action Plan will be a useful guide to biodiversity projects and initiatives. This will be a practical 'toolkit' for worthwhile and doable actions for biodiversity that may be undertaken at home, at school or in a club. This will be made available online and may also be produced in print.



9 Key Project. *Sustainability – Doing More With Less*


Project Period
2024-2027



FOCUS ON LOUGH SWILLY

This is a large protected site that is on our doorstep here in Letterkenny. There are at least five of the most important habitats in Europe to be found here. The lough is also a significant site for Otters and Harbour Porpoise. Throughout the duration of this plan, we will help to raise awareness of the importance of Lough Swilly and work with partners such as LAWPRO and Swilly Greenway to highlight ways that we can all protect and develop water and wetland habitats such as this.

10 Key Project.

Sustainability – Doing More With Less


Project Period
2024-2027

13 CLIMATE ACTION



LETTERKENNY LOCAL CLIMATE ACTION

Throughout the lifespan of this plan and beyond, Letterkenny Tidy Towns will commit to undertaking and supporting actions that will reduce our dependency on fossil fuels, lower emissions of greenhouse gases and promote awareness of the urgency of climate change. We will strive to build capacity to improve carbon literacy and the education of all stakeholders.



11 Key Project.

Residential Streets and Housing Areas


Project Period
2025-2027

ESTATES BIODIVERSITY NETWORK

Estates often offer ample space for useful biodiversity projects. However, if numerous estates undertake a project the results may be multiple. Letterkenny Tidy Towns proposes that every participating estate takes on a biodiversity project (e.g. a mini-pond or bug hotel) that would be constructed and managed by children and young adults.



12 Key Project.

Residential Streets and Housing Areas


Project Period
2026-2027



THE RESIDENTS' HANDBOOK

This novel project will see the creation of a really useful guide for Letterkenny residents. It will contain key contacts, dates and addresses. However, it will also include recycling information, tips on composting, lists of wildlife-friendly plants, suitable trees for estates, water conservation and energy-saving measures in the home.



13 Key Project.

Approach Roads, Streets and Lanes


Project Period
2026



SIGNPOSTING THE WAY

Many car journeys undertaken in Letterkenny are unnecessary. If people knew how close some of the key attractions were, they would walk. This project will plan and erect friendly signage that lets people know how far their journey would be on foot and how much time it is likely to take.



14 Key Project.

Community - Your Planning & Involvement



LETTERKENNY COMMUNITY APP

It is proposed that the Letterkenny Tidy Towns joins with other community groups to create a community app. This will allow groups, clubs, schools and the local authority disseminate information of community interest as well as a forum for volunteers.



Our Plan

Projects Planned for Year 1 (2024-2025)

Project	Category
Shout out for Volunteers: This year we will carry out an active campaign looking for more volunteers to join our team.	Community - Your Planning & Involvement
Targeting Dereliction: Our Tidy Towns group will make the tackling of dereliction on our main streets a key focus of our work this year.	Streetscape & Public Places
More Low-Mow: We will identify and map grassed areas (e.g. verges/lawns) for the implementation of a 'low-mow' regime.	Green Spaces & Landscaping
Active Residents: This year we will make contact with all of the residents committees and encourage them to participate in our projects.	Residential Streets and Housing Areas
Road Surfaces: We will ask the Municipal District to survey areas where road surfaces are in need of repair or upgrade.	Approach Roads, Streets and Lanes
Club Together: Each month for 6 months we will invite a different sports club to do 1 Saturday morning litter-pick.	Tidiness and Litter Control
Donegal Tidy Towns Network: We will investigate supports into setting up a network of Tidy Towns groups for Co. Donegal.	Community - Your Planning & Involvement
Biodiversity Signage: We will create signs that inform passers-by on why we are maintaining some areas uncut.	Green Spaces & Landscaping
Safe Footpaths: we will carry out an awareness campaign for users of electric scooters and e-bikes on keeping our footpaths safe for all users but particularly vulnerable pedestrians.	Streetscape & Public Places
Local Link: we will promote the use of the Local Link service and campaign for its expansion in routes and frequency.	Sustainability – doing more with less
Local Champions: We will seek volunteers to become 'local coordinators' for their area and provide information for volunteers.	Community - Your Planning & Involvement
The Right Trees: We will produce a short list of suitable trees for planting at estates and in gardens in Letterkenny.	Green Spaces & Landscaping
Good Signs: We will carry out or commission an audit of the signage of Letterkenny	Tidiness and Litter Control
Online: We will undertake a reworking of our website to make it more up to date, attractive and interesting.	Community - Your Planning & Involvement
Walkable Letterkenny: We will seek the completion of a walkability audit during this year.	Sustainability – doing more with less
Borrow a Brolly: We will seek commercial partners to set up a scheme wherein shoppers may borrow umbrellas between Letterkenny retail outlets to encourage walking in poor weather.	Approach Roads, Streets and Lanes

Our Plan

Projects Planned for Year 2 (2025-2026)

Project	Category
New Crew: We will hold training workshops for new volunteers. These will include an introduction to our work, health and safety and opportunities to help us in what we do.	Community - Your Planning & Involvement
New Tricks: We will seek volunteers among retirees who wish to get involved and assist with horticultural projects.	Green Spaces & Landscaping
Know What To Grow: We will promote the use of plants for pollinators in gardens and public spaces.	Nature and Biodiversity in Your Locality
Love Letterkenny: This year we host a social media campaign on why we should all value our town.	Community - Your Planning & Involvement
Old Signs: We will maintain a list of out of date signage that should be replaced or removed.	Tidiness and Litter Control
R for Recycling: we will encourage groups and clubs to gather recyclable items for fundraising purposes.	Sustainability – doing more with less
Swilly Walk: We will commence consultation with Donegal County Council on how this amenity may best be enhanced.	Nature and Biodiversity in Your Locality
Ár Gaeilge: We will promote the use of Irish in our businesses and on signage in commercial premises.	Streetscape & Public Places
Nature Aware: We will highlight the importance of Lough Swilly Special Area of Conservation.	Nature and Biodiversity in Your Locality
Spring Clean Team: This year we will endeavour to recruit 5 new volunteers from different areas of the town and ask them to spread the word locally on helping out with this annual event.	Community - Your Planning & Involvement
Citizen Science: We will encourage our volunteers and residents to get involved with biological reporting such as the Hedgehog and Red Squirrel projects.	Nature and Biodiversity in Your Locality
Focus Blackspot: We will identify and highlight litter blackspots on social media and use to promote good practice and our anti-litter work.	Tidiness and Litter Control
Crossing Points: We will support the Municipal District in planning new pedestrian crossings and footpaths in appropriate locations.	Approach Roads, Streets and Lanes
Educate Together: We will involve the Educate Together school in at least one project outside the school gates.	Community - Your Planning & Involvement
Tidy Towns on Wheels: We will actively seek funding and sponsorship for acquiring a vehicle for transporting materials	Tidiness and Litter Control
Pocket Parks: We will identify 3 areas for the planning and location of mini or micro-parks in Letterkenny.	Green Spaces & Landscaping
Saving Water: We will use our social media to promote good water conservation practice. We will explore a Letterkenny Tidy Towns reusable water bottle scheme.	Sustainability – doing more with less
Prized Estates: We will sponsor an award for biodiversity in housing estates.	Nature and Biodiversity in Your Locality

Our Plan

Projects Planned for Year 2 (2026-2027)

Project	Category
Paint your Place: We will produce a useful guide to painting commercial premises from trade contacts to colour schemes and hints on signage	Streetscape & Public Places
Good Matches: We strive to partner our volunteers with appropriately skilled members for a better volunteering experience and best outcomes.	Green Spaces & Landscaping
Spread the Word: We have our key information translated into relevant languages in order to allow our newest residents to be aware of what we are doing and to participate.	Community - Your Planning & Involvement
Do Your Wee(d) Bit: We will encourage householders to take on chemical-free weed control in their own areas.	Tidiness and Litter Control
Shop Local: We will encourage the Letterkenny Chamber to devise an incentive scheme for using local businesses and services.	Sustainability – doing more with less
Good Approach: We will carry out surveys of our 4 main approach roads and identify needs including signs for cleaning, potential 'low-mow' verges and areas for traffic-calming.	Approach Roads, Streets and Lanes
Local Involvement: By this date we will have asked all residents' associations to participate in some of our projects or offered them our help.	Community - Your Planning & Involvement
Doggie Bins: We will seek suitable locations for dedicated dog litter bins for Letterkenny.	Tidiness and Litter Control
Our Goals: We will 'adopt' 3 of the Sustainable Development Goals and promote practical applications of these in our work.	Sustainability – doing more with less
Destination Compost: We will locate a suitable site for a community composter and have volunteers trained to manage this facility.	Green Spaces & Landscaping / Sustainability – doing more with less
Pollinator Pledge: We will seek residents to 'pledge' their garden for pollinators as part of the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan scheme.	Residential Streets and Housing Areas
Community Orchard: We will seek candidate sites to plant and maintain a community-owned orchard.	Green Spaces & Landscaping
Getting Around: We will promote the development of a Park & Ride service and identify 'park & stride' walkable parking areas.	Approach Roads, Streets and Lanes

Annual and Ongoing Projects



These are the projects that are either multi-annual or are ongoing.

Project	Category
Roundabout Ways: We will continue to ask our local businesses sponsor the upkeep of our roundabouts and seek new sponsors as required.	Green Spaces & Landscaping
Bee Friendly: We will maintain the well-being of bees and other pollinator species as a central aspect of our planning of projects.	Nature and Biodiversity in Your Locality
Paint the Town: We will continue this very successful initiative	Streetscape & Public Places
Young Nature: Insofar as possible, we will involve young people in all of our biodiversity-themed initiatives.	Nature and Biodiversity in Your Locality
Talking Transport: We will strive to maintain good communication with the local authority Roads Section .	Approach Roads, Streets and Lanes
Active Travel: Letterkenny Tidy Towns supports the concept of active travel and will support all such suitable schemes.	Sustainability – doing more with less
Anti-litter: We will undertake anti-litter projects each year with our local schools	Tidiness and Litter Control
Cleaner Communities: We will seek to maintain this popular project across the lifetime of this plan.	Tidiness and Litter Control
Communication: We will attempt to communicate any concerns we have with owners of Letterkenny properties in the interest of mutually satisfactory outcomes	Streetscape & Public Places
Tree Care: We will promote the careful cutting of grass at the base of trees.	Green Spaces & Landscaping
Bad Signs: We will not tolerate unauthorised commercial signage and will seek its removal as necessary	Tidiness and Litter Control
Shop Local: We will continue to promote local businesses and services in order to keep Letterkenny sustainable.	Sustainability – doing more with less
Hedgerow Aware: We will promote good practice on hedgerow cutting on our approach roads and thoroughfares.	Nature and Biodiversity in Your Locality
Helping Hands: We will continue to support local groups such a residents' associations with projects insofar as we can.	Residential Streets and Housing Areas
On the Edge: We will practice and encourage edging of vegetation rather than herbicide use across Letterkenny.	Approach Roads, Streets and Lanes





This plan was developed with the assistance of
Flynn Furney Environmental Consultants.



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