

Case Study 2



Ballyvaughan Tidy Towns: Improving biodiversity through the Tidy Towns Competition

The national Tidy Towns initiative was launched in 1958 to encourage communities to improve their local environment and make their area a better place to live, work and visit. Since 2006, there has been a special category that focuses on wildlife, which encourages initiatives to conserve and enhance the local environment including the improvement of biodiversity. 50 out of 450 marks are allocated to how a town manages 'Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities'. As part of a Tidy Town committee's five-year plan, this category should include a Habitat Survey/Wildlife Survey.

Ballyvaughan Tidy Towns Committee approached the GeoparkLIFE in 2014 to assist with this survey. GeoparkLIFE considered this an opportunity to look at how a national programme, based on competition, can not only have a positive impact on increasing biodiversity in urbanised areas, but can provide an effective template for communities to engage in conservation.

The Wildlife Survey was produced and included a Management Plan with suggestions and recommendations that comply with the requirements of the Tidy Towns Handbook and that worked towards improving Ballyvaughan's score for Wildlife and Natural Amenities.

This case study showed how effective the partnership between a national organisation and a local community can be in promoting a conservation ethos within a community.

The committee acted upon the plan, with the help of the local school. The project provided an opportunity for the local school children to create wildlife areas, plant seeds and build bug hotels. The Tidy Towns results for Ballyvaughan have seen an increase for the score on 'Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities' and the village gained a national Tidy Town award in 2016. Moreover, the town of Ballyvaughan has become increasingly proactive in extra conservation activities, such as a Greener Homes Survey and more

The skill is to use the Tidy Towns competition to motivate community groups to value biodiversity, and to partner with relevant organisation to produce the survey and action plan that helps communities to enhance biodiversity in practical ways.

businesses getting involved in resource management programmes. There has been an increasing awareness generally of the importance of protecting native habitats that host native pollinators.

This case study showed how effective the partnership between a national organisation (Tidy Towns) and a local community (Ballyvaughan Tidy Towns committee) can be in promoting a conservation ethos within a community.

The trigger for this was the wildlife survey and a practical management plan. This can be produced with the help of local experts in the community, the County Council's Heritage Office and the destination management organisation.

Very little external facilitation was needed once the survey and management plan was produced.

