



CARLINGFORD TIDY TOWNS

3-Year Plan | 2023-2026



Comhairle Contae Lú
Louth County Council



**FLYNN
FURNEY**

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSULTANTS

Welcome to the Carlingford Tidy Towns 3-Year Plan!

This plan is to be used the guide the work of the Tidy Towns for the next 3 years. The plan was drawn up following consultation with members of the Tidy Towns group and two surveys undertaken in Carlingford in March and April 2023. An online survey was also circulated to local groups and individuals to gather views and ideas.

Carlingford Tidy Towns has already been doing excellent work over the years. This Plan sets out to provide direction for the group over the next 3 years. First of all, we will put forward the Key Projects – major projects that will have greatest impact for Carlingford. Each project is linked with its relevant Tidy Towns category. Then we have a Schedule of tasks and advice that will address all of the projects outlined within the 3-year period. Finally, there is a list of Funding Schemes presented so that various Actions in this Plan can potentially be realised in the near future.

Acknowledgements

Carlingford Tidy Towns would like to thank all of their wonderful volunteers for their work over all our years of Tidy Towns involvement. Thanks to our many supporters, including the businesses and Louth County Council.

This plan was funded by Louth County Council under the Tidy Towns Project Scheme. Carlingford Tidy Towns and Flynn Furney Environmental Consultants wish to thank Louth County Council for its support, which made this project possible.

This Tidy Towns Plan was created for Carlingford Tidy Towns by Flynn Furney Environmental Consultants Ltd. The authors would like to thank the volunteers of Carlingford Tidy Towns for their support.

Carlingford: An Overall Impression

Carlingford is a picturesque town located in County Louth, on the shores of Carlingford Lough. It is steeped in history and has a rich heritage dating back to Viking times. The town was an important trading post during the medieval period and was a significant centre of commerce and industry in the region.

One of the defining features of Carlingford's history is its longstanding tradition as a fishing town. For generations, the local community has relied on the sea as a source of sustenance and income. The town's bustling harbour has always been at the heart of its economy, with fishing boats regularly bringing in fresh catches of salmon, haddock, and other seafood.

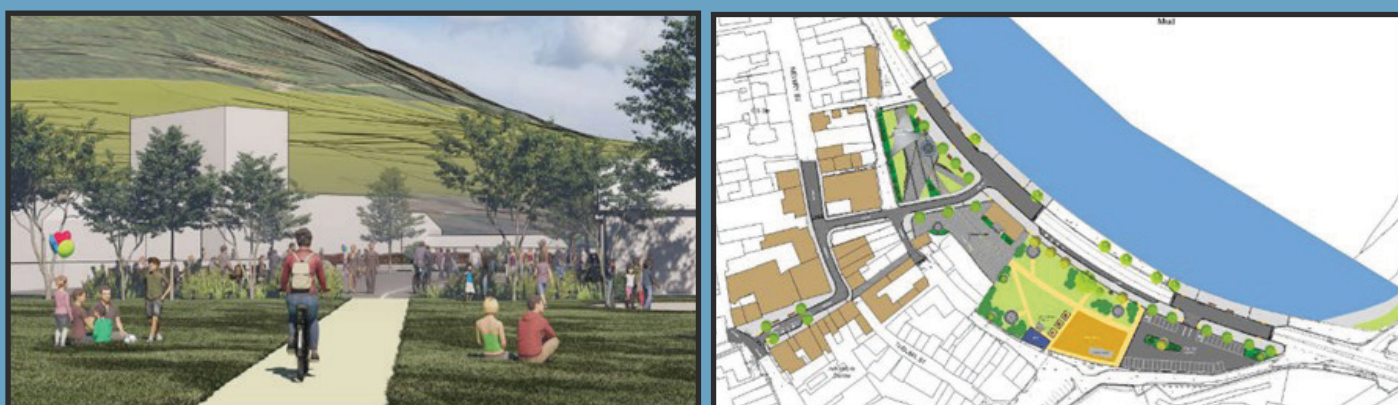
Today, Carlingford is a thriving tourist destination, attracting visitors from all over the world with its stunning natural scenery, historic landmarks, and vibrant culture. The town's Tidy Towns Committee

plays a crucial role in maintaining and enhancing its beauty and charm. The committee is made up of volunteers who work tirelessly to keep the town clean, green, and welcoming for residents and visitors alike. Their efforts have earned Carlingford numerous accolades in the Tidy Towns competition, including multiple gold medals, and the town continues to be a shining example of community pride and environmental stewardship.

The town is surrounded by breathtaking scenery, and there are many areas within and around Carlingford that are protected for their unique ecological and environmental value. One such area is the Cooley Peninsula, which is designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The peninsula is a rugged and unspoilt landscape of rolling hills, heathland, and ancient woodlands, and is home to a rich variety of plant and animal life. Visitors to the Cooley Peninsula can enjoy a range of outdoor activities, including hiking, cycling, and wildlife watching.

In addition to the Cooley Peninsula, Carlingford is also home to the Carlingford Lough Special Area of Conservation (SAC). This protected area encompasses the entire Lough and its surrounding coastline, which is home to a wide variety of rare and endangered species, including the Otter, Atlantic salmon, and Curlew. The Carlingford Lough SAC is an important site for conservation and biodiversity, and is a popular destination for birdwatchers and nature enthusiasts.

The town's Tidy Towns Committee has been instrumental in protecting and enhancing these and other natural areas in Carlingford. Through their hard work and dedication, they have helped to ensure that the town remains a beautiful and welcoming place for people and wildlife alike.



Snapshots of new plans for Carlingford from Louth County Council.

New Plans for Carlingford

Flynn Furney Consultants are aware there are major plans being proposed by Louth County Council in consultation with the community regarding new parking and green space facilities in the town centre. This is very positive. We do recommend that pollinator-friendly, perennial shrubs & flowers and native tree & hedgerow species be used in the new planting schemes. The advice of the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan should be followed here, including the planting code lists at [pollinators.ie/resources/](https://www.allirelandpollinatorplan.ie/resources/). Any car parking areas should be enhanced and broken up with tree planting and flowerbeds. This approach makes urban areas more pleasant and colourful, while creating opportunities for pollinators.

Carlingford Tidy Towns Plan - online survey results

An online survey using 'Survey Hero' was circulated to groups and individuals in Carlingford from 14th to 20th April 2023. This aimed to gauge people's views on the town and how it is performing in relation to the various Tidy Towns categories in their eyes. There was much positive feedback – it is obvious that locals do love their town, however there were plenty of suggestions on aspects that can be improved. Overall, there were 50 responses, which is relatively substantial. About 13 responses were not filled in or only partially filled in. The questions and an overview of the responses are laid out below.

Q1. Below are the 8 categories for the Tidy Towns competition. Please indicate which categories you think Carlingford does best under.

Many seem to consider Streetscapes, Residential Streets & Housing Areas and Green Spaces & Landscaping at or near the top (jointly), followed by Tidiness and Litter Control, Community – Your Planning & Involvement and Nature & Biodiversity. Following that is Green Spaces & Landscaping and Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes.

At or near the bottom was clearly Sustainability. However, many of the categories at the top also appeared at or near the bottom. The main categories voted at the bottom were Streetscape, Community, Nature & Biodiversity, Residential Streets & Housing and Tidiness & Litter Control. Also near the bottom were Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes and Green Spaces & Landscaping.

Overall, this shows a bit of mixed feeling across the board. Some feel the town is doing very well in specific categories, but then others feel there are improvements needed in exactly the same categories that performed well in this survey.

Q2 - Please briefly explain why you ranked the categories in Question 1 as you did.

Reasons for giving positive rankings included that the Tidy Towns works hard to keep the village looking well for locals and visitors, lovely planting and signage on approaches to the village. A 'great community with excellent volunteers' was one comment made. The beautiful built heritage of the town and the scenery were highlighted on several occasions. It is obvious that residents are proud of this, and rightly so.

The extent of litter, especially after weekends, was raised as a key issue. Dog litter was also identified as an issue. Also highlighted were the stag and hen parties – several people expressed their frustration at this as they feel it brings down the character of the town and caused issues like litter and overcrowding. While the efforts of the Tidy Towns were often praised, it was suggested that tradespeople make more effort to maintain their areas. More buy-in from the community was suggested too.

Streetscapes and green areas were generally deemed fine but needing improvement. One person stated: 'Carlingford requires a facelift.' While some approach roads, streets and residential areas were praised for their upkeep, others were highlighted as requiring some improvement which could help improve the town as a whole. The Heritage Centre and Taaffe's Castle were highlighted as particular areas that need improvement.

More engagement with the council was a suggestion, and that they take on board the concerns of

the community. One respondent feels the Council's consultation process for projects is a 'ticking the box exercise' where locals are asked for their feedback on local issues but then these concerns are not taken on board and acted on. The laneways were highlighted as requiring some work. E.g. 'Little lanes in Carlingford need to be re-paved somehow & made attractive. Side premises to these lanes should be encouraged by the council to open up – craft/ice cream/etc access from these laneways.'

Q3 – Standout features of Carlingford

The natural beauty and scenery came out on top here, along with the many heritage sites, the lough/harbour and the colourful houses, e.g. north end of Newry Street and 'cute streets'. The flowers along the tennis court were a highlight for several people too, along with other green areas and landscaping. The range of activities, bars and restaurants were also a standout feature for respondents. The efforts of local volunteers were also praised for looking after the town.

Q4 – What needs improvement?

Lack of parking was raised as a key issue, as well as a lack of bins. Green spaces should be increased with parking outside the village. Reducing short term lets and increasing long-term housing was raised. Several respondents expressed unhappiness at seeing Taaffe's Castle in disrepair, as well as the scaffolding still in place. Some described it as an 'eyesore'. The library and old courthouse were highlighted as buildings that need work also. Lack of pavement and the need for pedestrianisation in the town centre were noted.

One person said: 'Encourage more family friendly spaces. The stag and hen mentality and behaviour is destroying the village.' A couple of people mentioned the 'derelict houses on the corner as you turn onto the Main Street.' The green and playground were other key areas respondents feel need improvement, as well as the wall near Trinity Church, the 'numerous derelict buildings', namely 'the derelict houses on the corner as you turn onto the Main Street, the library, the area behind 'Junior's', the Tholsel and Eblana House.

Q5 – Ideas for Carlingford

Suggestions here included painting of buildings, e.g. as in Dundalk, more flower displays along the promenade and hanging baskets, a pedestrianised public square and main streets, more bins and public toilets, and more outdoor seating areas. A few people suggested: 'Less accessibility for Hens and stags', with more focus on 'tourism for families and hill walkers etc.' Speed bumps on the Greenore Road were recommended. Some respondents would like the look of businesses and derelict buildings to improve in the town centre and that business owners and property owners should be made to take more responsibility for this. A community orchard and community growing were other suggestions. Pedestrian crossings were also suggested, eg. at Ghan Road, the promenade junction and at the junction where Station House and tennis courts are. More green areas was another idea, along with more bin collections, installing underground bins and parking outside the village.

Q6 – Are you willing to help out and how?

Three people gave contact details and said they'd help out, while 12 said they'd help in future but gave no contact details. 5 say they already do volunteer. Planting, clean up days, litter picks, weeding, machinery, willow structures, admin, lobbying, planting ideas and planters, etc, were the main offers of help people gave.

Key Projects for Carlingford Tidy Towns

Laid out below are 14 Key Projects for Carlingford Tidy Towns for the next 3 years. These are the projects that will have the greatest impact on the village, its landscape and natural environment over this time. Some of these projects will demand significant time and resources from Carlingford Tidy Towns and its supporters.

KEY PROJECT 1: INVASIVE SPECIES MANAGEMENT

CATEGORY: Nature & Biodiversity In Your Locality

Invasive species are non-native plants, animals, or microbes that can establish and spread rapidly in an ecosystem. They negatively affect the environment and community spaces in various ways. Firstly, invasive species can alter ecosystem processes, such as nutrient cycling and water flow, leading to a decline in native biodiversity. Secondly, invasive species have a competitive advantage over native species, outcompeting them for resources like food, water, and habitat. This disrupts the food web and reduces the provision of ecosystem services such as pollination, soil fertility, and carbon storage, which negatively impact human well-being. Lastly, invasive species have economic impacts such as reducing crop yields, damaging infrastructure, and increasing costs associated with pest control.



Winter Heliotrope
Petasites fragrans



Alexanders plant (*Smyrniolum olusatrum*) is an invasive species that is native to the Mediterranean region but has become naturalized in parts of Ireland and the UK. The plant spreads through seed dispersal and can form dense stands in a range of habitats, including roadsides, waste ground, and coastal areas. A number of dense stands of Alexanders were noted, with the main problem areas being around the Castle. Working with the OPW to secure funding to treat these areas would be of huge benefit to biodiversity.

Alexanders *Smyrniolum olusatrum*

Winter heliotrope (*Petasites fragrans*) is an invasive species in Ireland that originates from southern Europe. It spreads through underground rhizomes and can form dense colonies in woodlands, hedgerows, and other natural habitats. The Biodiversity garden was the main area where this species was noted.

Japanese Knotweed *Fallopia japonica* grow rapidly and outcompete native plant species. The plant can cause damage to buildings, roads, and other infrastructure, and can also impact the natural environment by altering soil chemistry and reducing biodiversity. Stands of JKW were noted in the fields around the castle.



Japanese Knotweed
Fallopia japonica

KEY PROJECT 2: REDUCED MOWING REGIME

CATEGORY: Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality, Green Spaces & Landscaping

Grasslands and wildflower meadows play a critical role in supporting pollinator populations, including bees, butterflies, and other insects. These pollinators are essential for the reproduction of many of our crops and wildflowers, making them vital to our food systems and ecosystems. Unfortunately, many grasslands and meadows have been lost due to urbanization, intensive farming practices, and the use of pesticides, which has led to a decline in pollinator populations.

To address this issue, communities should consider managing grasslands and meadows as pollinator-friendly areas. This can involve planting native wildflowers, eliminating pesticide use, and reducing the growth of grasses through the planting of Yellow Rattle. By doing so, communities can help to support the recovery of pollinator populations and improve the health and resilience of their local ecosystems.



Areas around Carlingford Castle are perfect areas to be managed as wildflower meadows.



Increasing the number of wildflower meadows can also provide a range of benefits beyond supporting pollinators. These areas can help to reduce soil erosion, promote water conservation, and provide habitat for a variety of other wildlife. In addition, they can enhance the beauty and recreational value of community spaces, creating opportunities for residents to connect with nature and enjoy the outdoors.

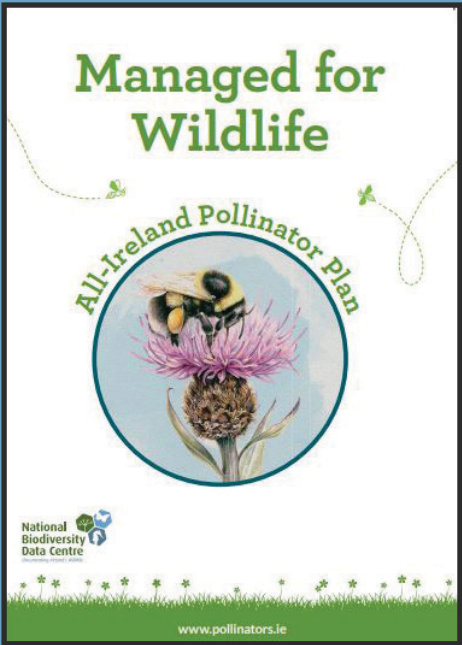
Grasslands at the Priory that could be enhanced.

The OPW has committed to prioritising biodiversity measures in its 2022-2026 Biodiversity Action Strategy. By working alongside OPW general managers, grasslands around the Castle and Priory could be managed as meadows benefiting both pollinators and the community.

Other target areas include the lawn at the front of the garda station, the front lawns of 'The Church' on Newry Street, larger grassy areas around the town, grass verges and corners.

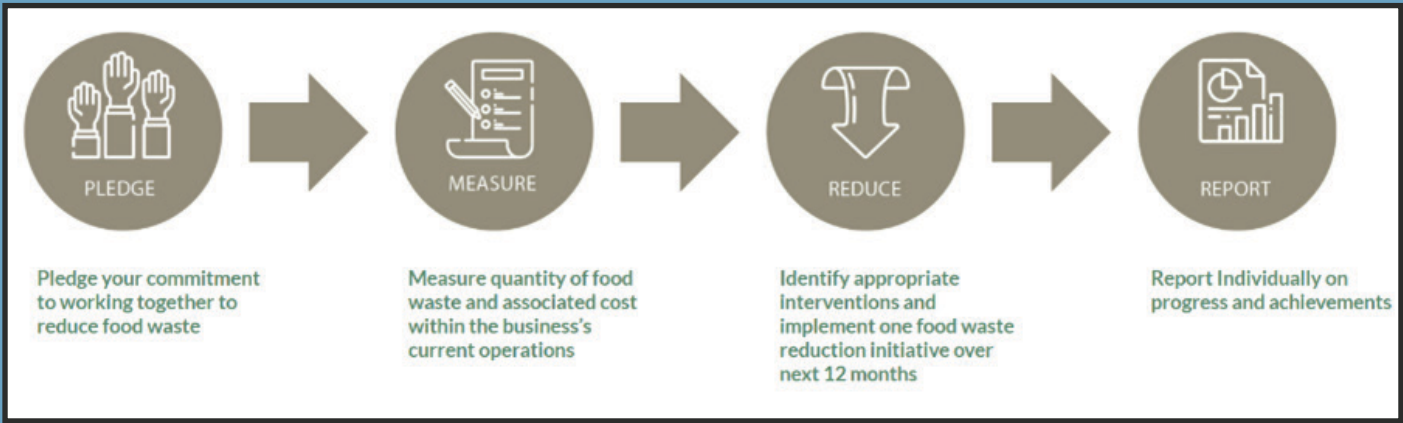


Mown lawns at Garda Station



KEY PROJECT 3: FOOD WASTE CHARTER
CATEGORY: Sustainability – Doing More with Less

Getting local businesses to sign up to Ireland's food waste charter can have a significant impact on sustainability in a town. The charter promotes a range of measures aimed at reducing food waste, including better inventory management, more efficient ordering and handling practices, and donation of surplus food to charities and community organizations. By signing up to the charter, local businesses can demonstrate their commitment to reducing food waste and protecting the environment. This can help to create a culture of sustainability in the town and encourage other businesses and individuals to follow suit. By working together to reduce food waste, local businesses can not only help to protect the environment but also save money and increase their social impact by supporting community organizations that help to feed those in need. Carlingford is bustling with restaurants that would greatly benefit from being involved.



KEY PROJECT 4: IMPROVING THE APPEARANCE OF PUBLIC BUILDINGS

CATEGORY: Streetscape and Public Spaces

The appearance of public buildings, such as libraries and garda stations, can have a significant impact on the overall look and feel of a town. These buildings are often situated in prominent locations and are highly visible to residents and visitors alike. As such, they can serve as important landmarks and symbols of the community.

Improving the appearance of these buildings can have numerous positive effects on the town. First and foremost, it can enhance the visual appeal of the area and make it more attractive to residents, visitors, and potential investors. Furthermore, well-maintained public buildings can also contribute to a sense of civic pride and community identity. This can help to foster a stronger sense of community spirit and social cohesion.



The town library is in need of some TLC and appears somewhat vacant from the outside.



Painting the town library should be a priority, as should the completion of any works at Taaffe's Castle. This Castle has been covered with scaffolding for some time. It would be great to see such a historic and central building being repaired and revealed as soon as possible.

The garda station looks beautiful with its recent new coat of paint in a striking shade of blue. A 'low-mow' regime in its lawns would also create a meadow and benefit biodiversity.

The scaffolding at Taaffe's Castle has been in place for some time.

Painting the railings and creating a pleasant, planted area inside the railings of the 'Coast Guard Cottage' would really enhance this lovely building. Additionally, the gates of the church next door would benefit from a fresh coat of paint and its lawns managed for pollinators every 5-6 weeks.



A derelict building in the town centre.

KEY PROJECT 5: ORCHARDS & 'POCKET FORESTS'

CATEGORY: Nature and Biodiversity in your locality, Approach Roads.

Creating an orchard in a town can have numerous benefits for the local community and biodiversity. Orchards provide a source of fresh fruit for the community, as well as an opportunity for local residents to learn about food production and healthy eating.

Orchards provide valuable habitat and food sources for a range of wildlife, including birds, insects, and mammals. Activities around orchards might include fruit picking, pressing and baking with the produce.

The orchard behind the Welcome to Carlingford sign on the Newry Road could be extended.



The area just north of Carlingford Castle has recently been cleared of vegetation. This would be an ideal spot for planting a 'pocket forest' or small orchard. Suggested species are Hawthorn, Wild Cherry, Hazel and Crab Apple (plus other native fruit trees, if desired).

Area near Carlingford Castle.

There have already been fruit trees planted on the slope by the welcome sign on the Newry Road, which could be extended. Other suggested areas include unused green spaces in local housing estates and 'linear groves' along roadside green stretches which are often bare and regularly mown.



A Tidy Towns Group planting an orchard in Greystones, Co. Wicklow.

KEY PROJECT 6: NEWRY STREET & CASTLE HILL

CATEGORY: Streetscape and Public Spaces, Community.

There are several lovely colourfully painted buildings extending up Newry Street. It would be wonderful to see this extended right into the town. Cobh, Co. Cork is an example of a seaside town with its famous, striking multicoloured terraces. There is no reason why Carlingford can't do something similar!

Some of the walls along Upper Newry Street/Castle Hill may need a fresh coat of paint also.

Extend colourful housing from Newry Street down into the town centre.



The little green corner at the junction between Castle Hill and Newry Street could be enhanced. It is recommended to remove the Cordyline plant here, relocate the litter bin nearby and to erect the Wildwood Café/Viewpoint sign under one the traffic signs, on the same pole. The large rocks here can perhaps be added to to make a feature, with pollinator friendly planting added in the centre. The remainder of the lawn can be maintained under a 'low-mow' regime.

Newry Street/Castle Hill



Green corner at Castle Hill

KEY PROJECT 7: IMPROVING ACCESS TO KEY FEATURES

CATEGORY: Streetscape and Public Spaces

Improving infrastructure and paths in communities is important for several reasons. Firstly, it promotes physical activity and a healthy lifestyle by making it easier and safer for people to walk, cycle, or use other active modes of transportation.

There are some key features in Carlingford that would benefit from having better access. A priority would be to reconstruct the stone steps down to Nun's Cover Beach. The old steps have been broken making this area accessible for some time. The steps are at the end of the track from the castle down to the beach. This track could be made somewhat safer also.



Steps and access to Nun's Cover Beach should be re-established.



Looped walk by the old Abbey.

The old abbey is another striking feature of Carlingford. There is a walk through the area from the town centre which could be enhanced by improving the surface and widening it slightly for better access. The Alexanders are also an issue along this path and will need a targeted removal programme.

The land to the opposite side of the abbey is quite wet and would be suitable for the creation of a bog garden area. A bog garden can provide a pleasant outdoor space to be enjoyed by locals and visitors as they walk by. Local students could also use the space to learn about wetland ecosystems, biodiversity and conservation. The site is also linked with an old mill with its own mill race and wheel.

This whole area is very important as regards the history of the town and it would be great to bring it back to life and encourage more people to walk the track and enjoy it once more.



Image of a bog garden from the booklet 'Gardening for Biodiversity' by Juanita Browne.

KEY PROJECT 8: DEVELOPING & PROMOTING 'BADGER'S WALK'

CATEGORY: Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality

Carlingford Tidy Towns should consider securing funding to enhance the existing locally named 'Badger's Walk'. This would provide a lovely walking trail for locals and visitors. Some of the trail is ideal as is, however some aspects, such as the surface and entrance may need enhancement and to be made safer for walkers and cyclists.

Some signage at the entrance and along the trail itself about the surrounding habitats and species would be ideal. A stop-off point along the way to admire the view across the bay would be an extra bonus!



Badger's Walk.



By creating a biodiversity trail, Carlingford can encourage residents and visitors to appreciate the natural beauty of the area and learn about the importance of conservation.

The trail could feature a range of interpretive materials, including panels, brochures, and audio guides, as well as interactive exhibits and activities for children.

Biodiversity trail potential.

The 'Ballycroy National Park Biodiversity Trail' in Ballycroy in County Mayo, is an example of a successful project that was locally-led.



Green Designs Ltd.



By KnockOnWoodEssex.

KEY PROJECT 9: 'REVIVING OUR LANEWAYS'

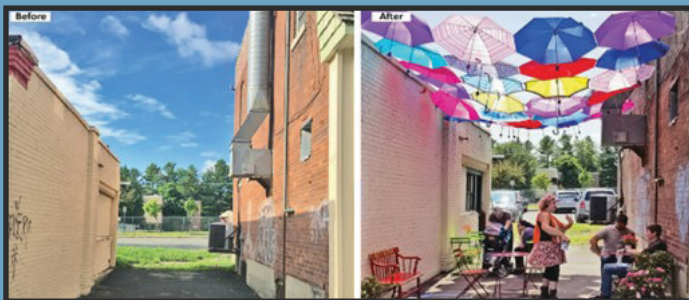
CATEGORY: Streetscape and Public Spaces, Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes

A 'Reviving our Laneways' project would be a great boost for Carlingford. Community groups can brighten up alleyways by adding color and art to otherwise drab and neglected spaces. One approach is to paint murals or add street art to the walls of the alleyway. This can help to make the area more attractive and engaging, while also deterring vandalism and other negative behaviors. Alternatively, a simple coat of paint can do wonders, as can some regular weed removal.



Additionally, adding planters or hanging baskets can help to bring nature and greenery into the space, and can also help to reduce the impact of pollution and noise. By engaging the community in the process and involving local artists and volunteers, a community group can transform an alleyway into a vibrant and welcoming public space that benefits the entire neighborhood.

Another idea might involve looking at old maps (OSI or otherwise) which might have named these laneways in the past. An example of this is in Cobh, Co. Cork, which has been very successful. This would not only be an exciting historical project for the town, but adding name signs would add character and life to these laneways. If old names can't be found, there could be a local competition to find the best names for the laneways, e.g. 'Lover's Lane', 'Butcher's Alley', etc!



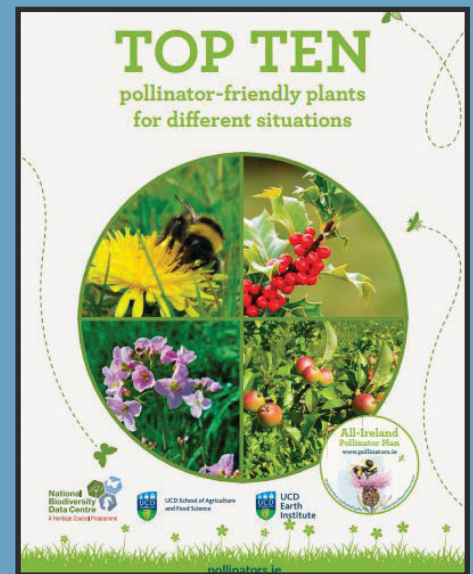
Examples of enhanced, vibrant laneways and alleys

KEY PROJECT 10: POLLINATOR PIT STOPS

CATEGORY: Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality

There are already some impressive pollinator-friendly flowerbeds throughout Carlingford Town. Many plots have been planted into directly without using pots which is encouraged by the Tidy Towns competition, to reduce watering and resources. Planting perennial species is much more cost-effective, requires less maintenance and the plants last for several years, as opposed to summer bedding plants which must be removed each year and new ones replanted the next season.

A few more pots and hanging baskets throughout the town centre could be encouraged to add colour and encourage pollinators. Herbs are also great for pollinators – and useful for restaurants and businesses! These are easily grown in window boxes. This would create 'pollinator pit stops', meaning bees don't have to travel very far to fill up as they search for food.



Available at pollinators.ie/resources



The new plans for Carlingford's green spaces should prioritise the planting of pollinator-friendly, perennial shrubs, flowers and native tree and hedgerow species.

The Thomas D'Arcy Magee monument area would also be a key space to enhance the planting scheme.

Thomas D'Arcy Magee monument.

A range of pollinator-friendly plants are favoured by bees and butterflies, such as spring bulbs (especially Crocuses, Snowdrops, Grape Hyacinth, Fritillaries and Anemones), plus perennial flowers and shrubs, e.g. Heather varieties, Lavender, Potentilla fruticosa, Allium, Salvias, Catmint and Geranium sylvaticum. See the 'Pollinator Friendly Planting Code' guidelines for extensive pollinator-friendly plant lists at pollinators.ie/resources/. 'The Top Ten pollinator-friendly plants for different situations' guide is very useful!



Spring flowers.

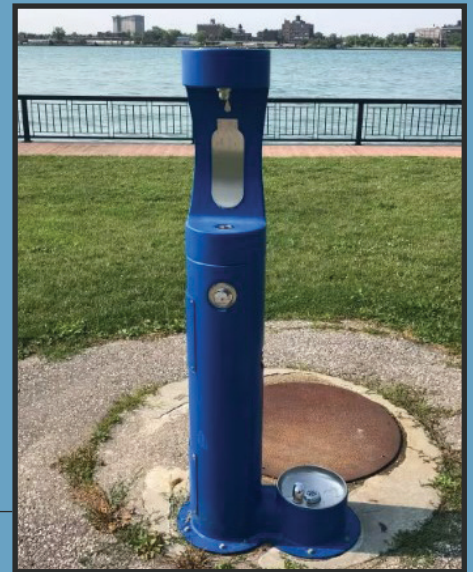
KEY PROJECT 11: INCREASE SUSTAINABLE INFRASTRUCTURE

CATEGORY: Sustainability – Doing More with Less

Sustainable infrastructure is crucial to creating a more sustainable and livable town. The Tidy Towns committee can play an important role in promoting sustainable infrastructure by organising an evening to discuss how it could be improved.

This could include ideas such as installing public water fountains (e.g. Clonakilty and Carrickmacross Tidy Towns), solar-powered seating with charging points (Kilkenny Tidy Towns group), and community composting programs (Glaslough Tidy Towns group). These examples have been successfully implemented in other towns and have helped to reduce waste, increase access to clean water, and promote the use of renewable energy.

Water Station | Photo by Jennifer Le Grassa.



Solar powered pay and display parking (Kilkennypeople.ie).

Other recommended infrastructure improvements include increasing the availability of public transport, improving bike paths and pedestrian walkways, electric car charging points, solar panels on public buildings like the garda station and reducing single-use plastics. By promoting sustainable infrastructure, the Tidy Towns committee can help to create a more sustainable and resilient town that is better equipped to face the challenges of the future.

It is important that the proposed greenway also comes right into the town centre of Carlingford, in a way that is safe and pleasant for walkers and cyclists. Pedestrianised streets are fantastic and are definitely worth considering for the town centre. They can also be piloted first to experience how it could work. Some respondents to the online survey have seen how well pedestrianisation works in other cities and towns and would like to see it happen in Carlingford.

KEY PROJECT 12: PLASTIC FREE CAMPAIGN

CATEGORY: Sustainability – Doing More with Less, Tidiness and Litter Control

A plastic-free campaign is a great way for a Tidy Towns committee to make a significant impact on reducing waste in their community. It can reduce the amount of plastic waste generated in the town, which can help preserve natural resources and protect wildlife. Additionally, a plastic-free campaign can help raise awareness among residents and businesses about the importance of waste reduction and promote a culture of sustainability.

Many towns and communities have launched successful plastic-free campaigns in recent years, e.g. Dingle, County Kerry has become a leader in reducing single-use plastic waste. The town has implemented measures such as banning single-use plastics in local businesses, encouraging reusable alternatives, and promoting water fountains and refillable water bottles.



By Seal Rescue Ireland.



To set up a plastic-free campaign, the Tidy Towns committee can start by conducting an audit of local businesses to identify areas where single-use plastics are used. Then, they can work with businesses to find alternatives, such as reusable containers or packaging made from biodegradable materials. The committee can also promote the use of refillable water bottles and work with local authorities to provide public water fountains. This campaign should involve the local school and teachers and encourage their participation.

Greennews.ie

Additionally, the committee can raise awareness among residents by organising events, such as talks, workshops, or film screenings, that educate people about the impact of plastic waste and the importance of reducing it. A social media campaign could encourage people to use reusable products and promote the campaign's message.



Recycled plastic products that can be created with 'precious plastics' machinery.

KEY PROJECT 13: ENHANCING HOUSING ESTATES

CATEGORY: Residential Streets & Housing Areas, Nature & Biodiversity in Your Locality

The housing estates in Carlingford are well maintained and pleasant. Some improvements could be made, however.

The pollarding and severe pruning of trees needs to cease in one or two of the housing estates in Carlingford, e.g. Cuchulainn Heights. Several of the Birches here are in bad repair and may need replanting.

Birches trees in one of the estates.



There are also green areas in each of the estates that are regularly mown. There is scope here for adopting a 'low-mow' regime where lawns are mown only every 4-5 weeks instead of every 1-2 weeks. This is recommended by the AIPP. It can be piloted first by trialling strips and patches and installing one or two 'Managed for Pollinator' signs. A small orchard would also be a good idea to the rear of one or two estates where children don't use the space to play.

Adopt a 'low-mow' regime.

Encouraging residents to pledge their garden for pollinators might be another good idea, via pollinators.ie. A competition to encourage the most 'biodiversity-friendly garden' might also be a great initiative and encourage more participation in residential areas.

Painting up fencing or planting native hedges or climbers like Ivy and Honeysuckle along them would help to add colour to boundaries.



Add some climbers to fencing.

KEY PROJECT 14: IMPROVING SIGNAGE

CATEGORY: Streetscape and Public Spaces, Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes.

Some of the signage in Carlingford looks brilliant, e.g. the black welcome sign from the Newry Road approach. However, an audit should be carried out to determine what has faded or become defunct.



The Litter League signs show great achievements but may need upgrading, for instance. The current car park contains damaged signs and some which are out of date. There are also too many cluttered together. It would be good to keep this in mind for the new car park. Keep signage clear, straightforward and to a minimum. It should also be maintained into the future.

Also, two signs in the same vicinity shouldn't repeat themselves, so perhaps the Heritage Town sign can be removed as the welcome sign already states this fact. These are things to consider when auditing the signage in the town going forward.



Our Plan: Projects Planned for Years 1-3 2023-2026

Key Project no.	Key Project Title	Category	Timeframe and Advice
1	Invasive Species Management	Nature & Biodiversity in your Locality	2023-2024 Tackle invasive species issue as a priority, especially Japanese knotweed.
2	Reduced Mowing Regime	Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality, Green Spaces & Landscaping	2023-2026 Begin 'low-mow' regime across town. Maintain annually.
3	Food Waste Charter	Sustainability – Doing More with Less	2023-2024 Begin to establish charter with businesses in 2023.
4	Improving the appearance of Public Buildings	Streetscape and Public Spaces	2023-2026 Begin process of improving buildings in 2023. Appeal to property owners and Louth Co Co for support.
5	Orchards & 'Pocket Forests'	Nature and Biodiversity in your locality, Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	2023-2024 In stages, each planting season (Nov-Mar).
6	Newry Street & Castle Hill	Streetscape and Public Spaces, Community.	2023-2026 Begin process of improving buildings, walls and green areas in 2023. Appeal to property owners and Louth Co Co for support.
7	Improving Access to Key Features	Streetscape and Public Spaces	2023-2026 Begin process of improving key features in 2023. Appeal to landowners and Louth Co Co for support.
8	Developing & Promoting 'Badger's Walk'	Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	2023-2026 Begin process of upgrade in 2023. Appeal to landowners and Louth Co Co for support.
9	'Reviving our Laneways'	Streetscape and Public Spaces, Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	2023-2024 Aim to complete by 2024. Appeal to property owners and Louth Co Co for support.
10	Pollinator Pit Stops	Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	2023-2026 Begin in 2023. Extend pollinator-friendly planting and maintenance. (May-Aug). Maintain annually.

11	Increase Sustainable Infrastructure	Sustainability – Doing More with Less	2023–2026 Begin in 2023 and aim to incorporate measures year on year. Appeal to business owners and Louth Co Co for support.
12	Plastic free campaign	Sustainability – Doing More with Less, Tidiness and Litter Control	2023–2026 Begin in 2023 and aim to incorporate measures year on year. Appeal to business owners and Louth Co Co for support.
13	Enhancing Housing Estates	Residential Streets & Housing Areas, Nature & Biodiversity in Your Locality	2023–2026 Begin consulting with residents' associations in 2023. Begin 'low-mow' regimes and planting, etc. Maintain annually.
14	Improving Signage	Streetscape and Public Spaces, Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes.	2023–2024 Carry out audit in 2023. Aim to remove, improve signs, etc by 2024.

Some grants available to improve and enhance community spaces

The Tidy Towns Grant Scheme

This grant scheme is administered by the Department of Rural and Community Development and provides funding to Tidy Towns Committees for projects aimed at improving the local environment. The grant is open to Tidy Towns Committees and can be used to fund a wide range of initiatives, including litter prevention/control, landscaping/planting and community involvement projects.

Local Agenda 21 Environmental Partnership Fund

This fund is administered by the Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment and provides funding to community groups for environmental projects. Tidy Towns Committees can apply for this fund for projects such as energy conservation, waste reduction and water conservation.

LEADER Program

The LEADER Programme is a rural development programme funded by the EU and administered by the Department of Rural and Community Development. Tidy Towns Committees can apply for funding under this programme for projects that contribute to the economic, environmental, and social development of their local area.

Community Enhancement Program

This grant scheme is administered by the Department of Rural and Community Development and provides funding for community projects that enhance facilities and amenities in urban and rural communities. Tidy Towns Committees can apply for this grant to fund projects like the development of public amenities, the enhancement of community spaces, and the promotion of biodiversity.

The Community Water Development Fund

This is a grant scheme administered via the Local Authority Waters Programme (LAWPRO), which provides funding for community-based projects that help to protect and improve water quality in local areas. Projects could include measures such as wetland restoration or rainwater harvesting.

The Community Tourism Initiative Scheme

This scheme, administered by Fáilte Ireland, provides funding for community groups who are developing tourism initiatives in their local area. If Carlingford Tidy Towns Committee is developing tourism-related initiatives, they could potentially apply for funding under this scheme.

The Sports Capital Program

Although primarily focused on funding for sports facilities, this grant scheme administered by the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media can also provide funding for the development of recreational facilities that are open to the wider community. This could potentially include projects such as the development of walking or cycling trails.

The Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme

This grant scheme, administered by the Department of Rural and Community Development, provides funding for the development of outdoor recreational infrastructure in rural areas. If Carlingford Tidy Towns Committee is developing outdoor recreational projects, they could potentially apply for funding under this scheme.

CLÁR Fund

The CLÁR programme provides funding for small-scale infrastructural projects in rural areas. It aims to support sustainable development in identified areas by attracting people to live and work there. The funding works in conjunction with local funding and on the basis of locally identified priorities.

The scheme is funded by the Department of Rural and Community Development. It is delivered by local authorities in consultation with groups in local communities.

Community Foundation for Ireland Grants

This nationwide charity foundation offers a range of funding schemes, including the Environment & Nature Fund, which includes grants for biodiversity plans and implementing the actions of completed biodiversity plans.

