

# Tullamore Tidy Towns

## TULLAMORE TIDYTOWNS SUMMARY ACTIONS LONG TERM PLAN 2023 - 2026



**Prepared for Tullamore TidyTowns Committee**

By

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## **SUMMARY ACTION PLAN**

### **Table of Long-Term Actions.**

The following table is a summary of the proposed actions detailed in the main long-term plan. The committee should use this to regularly review and see who would lead on each action and the year the action would be carried out during the three years of this plan.

Adjudication category	Specific Action	Year action is to be completed	Review/ Assessment	Partner Body EG. Local Authority/ LEADER
<b>Community Involvement &amp; Planning</b>	Build on the social capital of Tullamore's volunteers through sustained praise, promotion, and providing details of the many different ways in which volunteers can support your work.			
	Review annually and enter (where appropriate) Special Awards to receive recognition for your efforts.			
	Continue to try and attract new volunteers to assist in your work, especially in newer competition areas such as sustainability or wildlife.			
	Communicate your efforts widely.			
	Aim to double Facebook increase followers to 2100 within 2 years.			
	Continue to promote key events and invite attendees and support from other groups.			
	Encourage Tullamore TidyTowns School Liaison Officer to work closely with 2 schools per academic year.			
	Draft and Circulate a questionnaire for schools so they can provide simple details of their actions. These details can be added to news pages and included in the TidyTowns entry form and possibly form part of a School's Special Award entry.			
	Review your long-term plan regularly.			
	Add TTT's name on all your actions/planting/painting.			
	Annually agree a joint calendar of activity with the County Council towards year-end.			
	Continue to explore and develop links with pertinent bodies to help advance the aims of Tullamore TidyTowns to the benefit of partners.			
	Meet regularly with Tullamore Credit Union to advance actions of mutual benefit.			
	Share and encourage and work towards the Vision for Tullamore Tidy Towns.			

Adjudication category	Specific Action	Year action is to be completed	Review/ Assessment	Partner Body EG. Local Authority/ LEADER
<b>Streetscape &amp; Public Places</b>	Work closely with the Municipal Council to input into the design of public realm schemes.			
	Regularly (e.g. Annually) review presentation of commercial buildings and encourage action as necessary.			
	Praise nicely presented buildings and support efforts to do so (e.g. Business Awards at the Credit Union's TidyTullamore competition).			
	Consider co-ordination of a works programme at height so local businesses can be offered access to such services at reduced cost.			
	Highlight the availability of shop signage guidelines at events.			
	Monitor and ensure any empty commercial windows are nicely presented.			
	Ask or arrange for separate groups to co-ordinate a window display for the community where needed.			
	Carry out an accessibility audit of Tullamore and promote actions as appropriate.			
	Determine who the owners are of all empty properties in the town.			
	Maintain or foster good links with owners of all buildings in the town.			
	Encourage all building owners to present empty buildings nicely.			
	Seek permission to present windows and doors as best as possible, using temporary painted marine-ply where necessary.			

Adjudication category	Specific Action	Year action is to be completed	Review/ Assessment	Partner Body EG. Local Authority/ LEADER
<b>Streetscape &amp; Public Places (cont.)</b>	Check where built heritage trails of Tullamore are advertised and promote links to same.			
	Highlight and afford protection to important but often overlooked elements of built heritage.			
	Raise awareness of the built heritage in Tullamore.			
	Check where built heritage trails of Tullamore are advertised and promote links to same.			
	Highlight and afford protection to important but often overlooked elements of built heritage.			
	Encourage the appropriate care and maintenance of ironwork.			
	Be aware of planning applications and works that could impact on built heritage and encourage appropriate development.			
	With regard to the potential to restore a Mill wheel – a conversation with Tuam TidyTowns is recommended to consider this.			

Adjudication category	Specific Action	Year action is to be completed	Review/ Assessment	Partner Body EG. Local Authority/ LEADER
<b>Landscaping and Open Spaces</b>	Continue to host activities and events in Lloyd Park aiming for 1 per annum (either by TTT or a partner body).			
	Support the development of the Park's amenities.			
	Support and encourage others to host more events in Lloyd Park.			
	Continue to use bee-friendly flowers in any landscaping schemes and encourage others to do so.			
	Contact Tullamore Credit Union to discuss inclusion of bee-friendly plants in their street planters and hanging baskets.			
	Keep any hanging baskets/ planters to a minimum and place where they can make the greatest impact.			
	Plant containers with bee-friendly perennials and shrubs and communicate your choice.			
	Assess each year containers and refresh, repair or relocate as necessary.			
	Locate a position for a community polytunnel with room for secure storage adjacent.			
	Support a programme of works for a polytunnel when erected.			
	Continue to support extension of Greenway and encourage addition of supporting infrastructure.			
	Reduce the amount of open grass areas that are tightly cut whilst explaining why you are doing this.			

Adjudication category	Specific Action	Year action is to be completed	Review/ Assessment	Partner Body EG. Local Authority/ LEADER
<b>Nature &amp; Biodiversity in your locality.</b>	Continue to promote awareness of the special fauna and flora of Tullamore by asking special interest groups to lead on one such event per annum.			
	Where possible, arrange for all wildlife activities to have a personal element to give ownership.			
	Share wildlife news on social media to raise awareness of same.			
	Consider the development of a natural heritage trail/app, possibly with the local Rotary Club.			
	Consider implementation of welcome signage at key arrival points in the community.			
	Work with Education Staff to develop an interactive heritage trail along the Greenway for participants to enjoy.			
	Lobby for the inclusion of suitable trees in the town as part of enhancement projects.			
	Bodies placing containers of trees and planters on main street should work together to ensure the containers are spaced out and complement each other.			
	Appoint tree volunteers/ warden to manage trees in certain roads/access points.			
	Identify areas where gaps in hedges or tree lines could be filled by planting of native or bee-friendly trees and shrubs.			
Provide more opportunities to interact and highlight natural heritage of Tullamore with activities and events.				

Adjudication category	Specific Action	Year action is to be completed	Review/ Assessment	Partner Body EG. Local Authority/ LEADER
<b>Nature &amp; Biodiversity in your locality (cont.)</b>	Link with Waterway's Ireland's Education Unit to advance biodiversity projects along canals.			
	Support and partner projects to advance awareness and development of aquatic habitats in Tullamore.			
	Raise awareness of EU designated site in area and run one outreach programme e.g. An acorn growing project.			
	Identify places for trees to be planted in Tullamore and prevent unnecessary removal of trees.			
	Manage weeds without the use of chemicals on public areas and encourage residents to follow your example.			
	Encourage participation in citizen science projects and the recording and submission of biodiversity data.			



Adjudication category	Specific Action	Year action is to be completed	Review/ Assessment	Partner Body EG. Local Authority/ LEADER
<b>Sustainability - doing more with less.</b>	Implement water-saving actions in Tullamore.			
	Research the feasibility of a mobile water bowser and rain harvesting project – with possible funding through ‘Water conservation’ theme under LEADER.			
	Start an awareness campaign on what not to put down your drain.			
	Consider how TTT can work with the Sustainable Energy Committee to take steps towards achieving Sustainable Development Goals.			
	Promote energy saving with prizes such as wind-up torches and wind-up radios or metre monitoring boxes.			
	Embrace the many schools that are discouraging single-use containers.			
	Investigate provision of drinking water fountains in Tullamore.			
	Investigate and progress the potential for all Tullamore community groups to ban single-use plastics.			
	Promote use of Public and School Transport.			
	Engage with Irish Rail on suitable projects for Tullamore.			
	Consider ways to support safe lift-sharing / Ride-matching where possible.			
	Promote sustainable school transport.			

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<b>Tidiness and Litter Control</b>	Support the Annual Spring Clean			
	At the start of every season, audit for tidiness issues that can be fixed			
	Ensure all signs are legible, clean and remove if necessary			
	Support and brief litter pickers annually			
	Ensure regular volunteers receive a H&S briefing annually			
	Highlight the council's guidance for shop fronts and signs			
	Have a series of actions to target the problems of cigarette litter where identified			
	Advocate a series of actions at the Boardwalk Area to target littering in the canal.			
	Carry out measures to target dog waste			
	Remove and recycle out of date NDP funding signs			
	Continue to lobby for Undergrounding of Overhead wires.			
	Reduce signage at junctions as per signage policy			

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<b>Residential Streets &amp; Housing Areas</b>	Build on links with Tullamore Credit Union to engage with estates in Tullamore			
	Where possible, and where links are in place, advance links with residential estates or streets to advance activities pertinent to this competition			
	Ensure bilingual signs are erected and are nicely maintained.			
	Ensure presentation of boundary walls is good			
	Encourage home owners to implement wildlife-friendly actions in their gardens			
	When/ If talking to estates consider implementing some changes in mowing regimes in line with the All Ireland Pollinator Plan.			

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<b>Approach Roads, Streets &amp; Lanes</b>	Discourage signage clutter on approach roads and create a shared notice where community events can be advertised in an orderly manner.			
	To reduce the number of 'Welcome to Tullamore' signs discuss with pertinent bodies about joint signage on approach roads.			
	Make roundabouts on approach roads and the by-pass more attractive by planting of colourful bee-friendly flowers and possible addition of attractive enhancements appropriate to the area.			
	Research 'cut and lift' grass management options, or a six-week cutting rotation for verge-side grass management.			
	Support and Continue discussions to improve road-side entrances to large local businesses in Tullamore.			
	Discuss support and buy-in from businesses with regard to actions in the All Ireland Pollinator Plan.			
	Continue to support and enhance lanes and side streets in Tullamore.			
	Continue to use planters and bollards to prevent poor parking blocking pavement and check that they are nicely presented.			
	Support the development of safe cycling and pedestrian links to the GAA pitch.			
	Advocate and fund supporting infrastructure such as cycle racks.			
	Advance discussions re undergrounding of bottle banks in Kilbride Carpark. If not possible, the banks here need an urgent complete refurbishment.			
	Initial discussions with newly appointed Arts Officer to discuss commissioning high quality mural/s in strategic positions of Tullamore or a street art programme for utility boxes etc.			

## APPENDIX 1: USEFUL LINKS ON BIODIVERSITY

*\* This is a selection of links that may be useful. Some websites (such as Invasive Species Ireland) are no longer updated but still contain good information.*

**Bat Conservation Ireland** –dedicated to conserving Ireland’s bats. [www.batconservationireland.org](http://www.batconservationireland.org)

**BirdWatch Ireland** – NGO committed to conservation of Ireland’s birds. [www.birdwatchireland.ie](http://www.birdwatchireland.ie)

Information on building bird feeders and nest boxes. <http://www.birdwatchireland.ie/Default.aspx?tabid=264>

**Butterfly Ireland** - Butterfly information and distribution maps in Ireland. [www.butterflyireland.com](http://www.butterflyireland.com)

**Buglife** – UK Charity to encourage invertebrates [www.buglife.org.uk/](http://www.buglife.org.uk/)

**Green Schools Ireland** - [www.greenschoolsireland.org](http://www.greenschoolsireland.org)

**Heritage Council** – Independent, body advancing both built and natural heritage in Ireland. Co-ordinates the vitally important network of Heritage Officers across Ireland. [www.heritagecouncil.ie](http://www.heritagecouncil.ie)

**Inland Fisheries Ireland** - <https://www.fisheriesireland.ie/>

**Invasive Species Ireland** – Info. on invasive species [www.invasivespeciesireland.com/](http://www.invasivespeciesireland.com/)

**Irish Peatland Conservation Council** NGO promoting peatland conservation. <http://www.ipcc.ie/>

**Irish Wildflowers** –Over 800 wildflowers with names in Irish, English & Latin. <http://www.irishwildflowers.ie>

**Irish Wildlife Trust** – a charity committed to conserving of Ireland’s rich natural heritage. [www.iwt.ie](http://www.iwt.ie)

**Local Authority Prevention Network.** <http://localprevention.ie/tidy-categories/schools/>

**Moths Ireland** – Moth information and studies in Ireland. [www.mothsireland.com](http://www.mothsireland.com)

**National Biodiversity Data Centre** - National Biodiversity Data Centre - documenting Ireland’s wildlife. Citizen Science Projects [www.biodiversityireland.ie/](http://www.biodiversityireland.ie/)

**National Parks and Wildlife Service** - Information on important sites and species, wildlife legislation and biodiversity plans. It includes an interactive mapper with information. <http://www.npws.ie/>

**RSPB** – Information on building and siting nest boxes. [RSPB Nest Box Guide](#) [RSPB Feeding Birds Guide](#)

**Tree Council of Ireland** –A voluntary group concerned with trees in Ireland <http://www.treecouncil.ie/>

## **APPENDIX 2: BUILT HERITAGE OF TULLAMORE**

The website [www.archaeology.ie](http://www.archaeology.ie) allows you to find out details about local built heritage through its Historic Environment Viewer. In this viewer you can change the base layer maps to view different aged maps of the area overlaid with data about National Monuments and Protected Structures.

*Screen grab of the interactive map from [www.archaeology.ie](http://www.archaeology.ie) where blue dots represent buildings detailed on the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage and red dots are sites/items scheduled for inclusion in the Record of Monuments & Places (pre-1700 AD). Please note that we have permission for this to be shown for educational purposes but not for commercial gain. You are recommended to view this online for more details of sites etc.*

### **Built Heritage detailed at [www.archaeology.ie](http://www.archaeology.ie)**

The table below lists designated listings in the National Inventory of Architectural heritage in Tullamore

### **Built Heritage details in the Record of Monuments and Places for Tullamore:**

## APPENDIX 3: PLANTING FOR POLLINATORS

The following is an extract from guidelines available from [www.pollinators.ie](http://www.pollinators.ie):

Pollinator friendly planting code - professional planting recommendations Experts agree that inadequate nutrition is a major cause of pollinator declines. We want pollinators to be there when we need them, but our landscape doesn't provide the abundance and diversity of flowering plants that they need to survive throughout their life cycle. To have a healthy balanced diet, bees need to be able to feed on pollen and nectar from a range of different flowers from early spring to autumn.

It is important to prioritise increasing native plants (trees, shrubs, wildflowers) across the landscape to provide food for pollinators.

Good native hedgerow species for pollinators:

Hazel (Feb-Apr) Willow (Mar-May) Blackthorn (Mar-May) Hawthorn (Apr-Jun) Broom (Apr-Jun) Wild Cherry (Apr-May) Bramble (May-Sept) Wild Privet (May-Jul) Crab apple (May-Jun) Elder (May-Jun) Whitebeam (May-Jun) Rowan (May-Jun) Wild Rose (Jun-Jul) Honeysuckle (Jun-Oct) Guelder Rose (Jun-Jul) Raspberry (Jun-Aug) Ivy (Sept-Nov) Gorse (Jan-Dec)

These species are **not** recommended for hedgerows: Horse Chestnut, Beech, Laburnum, Lilac, Lime.

These species can be **considered invasive** and should not be planted: Fuchsia, Cherry Laurel, Rhododendron, Sycamore, Snowberry.

Deliberately planting horticultural or ornamental plants Important:

In towns and towns non-native horticultural or ornamental plants can be an important additional food source for pollinators. It is important to choose species that are good sources of nectar and pollen. However, you should **not** plant these in natural or semi-natural habitats. They should also not be planted in farmland (outside of farm gardens).

- Perennial plants are generally better sources of pollen and nectar than annuals. They are also cost effective as they grow and flourish over the following years. In contrast to seasonally replaced annual bedding, perennial plants can look less attractive to the public when they have finished flowering. This can be minimised by carefully selecting perennials and mixing them with ornamental grasses.
- Traditional annual bedding plants like Geraniums, Begonias, Busy Lizzy, Petunias, Polyanthus or Salvia splendens have virtually **no pollen and nectar** and are of little value to pollinators. If you are using annuals you should try to select scented, single-flowered varieties. The block planting of these can be an excellent source of food for pollinators.
- The All Ireland Pollinator Guide have lists of pollinator friendly trees, shrubs, climbers, perennials, annuals and bulbs. Please note that these are not exhaustive lists. The best guide is to observe what the bees themselves are feeding on in parks/gardens and to increase the amount of these plants.

**STREET TREES** Roadside margins can be difficult locations in which to establish trees. Those suggested are pollinator friendly, resistant to pruning and should not cause any structural damage or create health and safety issues.

Species	Flowering
Juneberry Tree <i>Amelanchier x grandiflora</i> 'Robin Hill'	Small white flower April. Good autumn colour
Upright Hawthorn <i>Crataegus monogyna</i> 'Stricta'	White flowers May
Pillar crab <i>Malus tschonoskii</i>	Scented white flowers May. Can set fruit
Callery pear <i>Pyrus calleryana</i> 'Chanticleer'	White flowers April-May. Can set fruit.
Rowan <i>Sorbus acuparia</i> varieties	White flowers May-June
Lime <i>Tilia cordata</i> 'Greenspire'; <i>Tilia x europaea</i> 'Euchlora'	Pale yellow flowers June-July

Lime (*Tilia*) species have fragrant flowers and produce a lot of nectar, however care is needed in the selection of cultivars as many can grow to large tree size proportions that will exceed allotted roadside space. Some are also very attractive to aphids and can lead to honeydew drip onto cars below (e.g., *Tilia x europaea*, *T. platyphyllos*). Those suggested above are smaller and don't attract aphids, therefore producing no dripping.

[A detailed list of bulbs, flowers and climbers suitable for any season are available to view here.](#)



# Pollinator-friendly plants for YOUR GARDEN

Our pollinating insects are in decline. One third of our 99 bee species are at risk of extinction. By choosing pollen-rich flowers for your garden, you will help provide much-needed food our Bumblebees and other pollinating insects as well as creating a beautiful colourful garden. There are lots of pollinator-friendly plants to choose from.

To learn more about the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan, see [www.pollinators.ie](http://www.pollinators.ie)



Grape hyacinth



Wallflower



Lungwort



Berberis



Broom



Rosemary



Borage



Comfrey



Allium



Foxglove



Catmint



Calamint



Bellflower



Scabious



Lamb's-ear



Globe thistle



Stonecrop



Verbena



Lavender



Sneezeweed



## APPENDIX 4: NATIVE TREES & SHRUBS FOR LANDSCAPING<sup>1</sup>

Common name	Latin name	Height (max)	Suitable for public open spaces	Suitable for streets / confined spaces	Suitable for tubs, containers, raised beds.	Guide to planting: see key below
Alder	<i>Alnus glutinosa</i>	22m	Yes	No	Yes	ADPS
Alder buckthorn	<i>Frangula alnus</i>	6m	Yes	No	Yes	D Restricted distribution. Not commonly available.
Arbutus (strawberry tree)	<i>Arbutus unedo</i>	8m	Yes	No	Yes	Not frost hardy
Ash	<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>	28m	Yes	No	No	ADIPS
Aspen	<i>Populus tremula</i>	24m	Yes	No	No	DPSV Not close to buildings or any services
Bramble	<i>Rubus fruticosus</i>	2m	No	No	No	C/H note: tends to be invasive
Broom	<i>Cytisus scoparius</i>	2m	Yes	No	Yes	*
Burnet rose	<i>Rosa pimpinellifolia</i>	2m	Yes	No	Yes, but vigorous In a rural setting	C/H Restricted distribution. Not commonly available.
Common (or European) gorse	<i>Ulex europeus</i>	2.5m	Yes	No	No	HV
Crab apple	<i>Malus sylvestris</i>	6m	Yes	No	No	AHIP
Dog rose	<i>Rosa canina</i>	2m	Yes	No	Yes. Vigorous	C/H
Downy birch	<i>Betula pubescens</i>	18m	Yes	Yes	Yes	ADIP
Elder	<i>Sambucus nigra</i>	6m	In hedge	No	No	V
Guelder rose	<i>Viburnum opulus</i>	4.5m	Yes	No	No	DH
Hawthorn	<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>	9m	Yes	Yes	Yes	AHIPS
Hazel	<i>Corylus avellana</i>	6m	Yes	No	No	AHS
Holly	<i>Ilex aquifolium</i>	15m	Yes	Yes	Yes	AHPS
Honeysuckle	<i>Lonicera periclymenum</i>	climber	Yes	On walls	No	C
Ivy	<i>Hedera helix</i>	climber	Yes	Yes	Yes	C
Juniper	<i>Juniperus communis</i>	6m	Yes	No	No	S
Pedunculate oak	<i>Quercus robur</i>	30m	Yes	No	No	AI only suitable for large spaces
Privet	<i>Ligustrum vulgare</i>	3m	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Rowan or mountain ash	<i>Sorbus aucuparia</i>	9m	Yes	Yes	Yes	ADHIP
Scots pine	<i>Pinus sylvestris</i>	24m	Yes	No	No	AI
Sessile oak	<i>Quercus petraea</i>	30m	Yes	No	No	AI only suitable for large spaces
Silver birch	<i>Betula pendula</i>	18m	Yes	Yes	Yes	ADIP
Sloe, blackthorn	<i>Prunus spinosa</i>	3m	Yes	No	No	AHPV
Spindle	<i>Euonymus europaeus</i>	7.5m	Yes	No	No	H
Western (or mountain) gorse	<i>Ulex gallii</i>	1.5m	Yes	No	Yes	* Restricted distribution. Not commonly available.
Whitebeam spp.	<i>Sorbus aria</i>	12m	Yes	Yes	Yes	IPS
Wild cherry	<i>Prunus avium</i>	15m	Yes	Yes	Yes	AHI
Willow spp.	<i>Salix spp.</i>	6m	Some	No	No	V Not suitable near buildings or services
Wych elm	<i>Ulmus glabra</i>	30m	Yes		No	PS
Yew	<i>Taxus baccata</i>	14m	Yes	No	Yes	AIPS

A – Grows in a wide variety of soils, C – Climber, H – Suitable for hedging, I – Suitable as an individual tree, D – Tolerates or prefers damp conditions, P – Tolerates smoke or pollution, S – Tolerates shade, V – Invasive, \* – Tolerates dry conditions

<sup>1</sup> Source – Heritage Council (2004) Conserving and Enhancing Wildlife in Towns and Towns.

## APPENDIX 5: INFORMATION ON NEST BOXES AND THEIR REQUIREMENTS

Species	Nest box type and hole diameter	Position of nest boxes
Blackbird	A box with 10cm high open front. Dimensions: 28 x 23 x 17 cm	Fix the box 1.5m to 5.5 metres high.
Blue tit	Entrance hole size diameter should be 2.5cm.	Boxes for tits, sparrows or starlings should be fixed 2m to 4m up a tree or a wall.
Great tit	Entrance hole size diameter should be 2.8cm.	
Starling	Entrance hole size diameter should be 4.5 cm.	
Pied wagtail	A small box with 10cm high open front	Should be fixed up to 5m above ground.
Robin	A small box with 10 cm high open front.	Open-fronted boxes for robins and wrens need to be low down, below 2m, well hidden in vegetation.
Wren	A box with a 14 cm high front panel	
<p><b>Note:</b> It is best to erect nest boxes in the Autumn. Nailing them to trees may damage the trees so it is suggested you erect them with a nylon bolt or wire. Ideally your nest box would be positioned between south east and south west if there is plenty of shade. Make sure that the birds have a clear flight path without any clutter directly in front of the entrance. Tilt the box forward slightly so that any driving rain will hit the roof. <i>Adapted from the RSPB.</i></p>		

## **APPENDIX 6: GREENING YOUR FESTIVAL**

IDEAS FOR GREENING YOUR EVENT – please note ideas overleaf on balloon launches

### **PLASTIC FREE FESTIVALS**

Do not allow single-use plastics at your event. Have water fountains or refillable bottles, glasses and cups. Use paper straws. Use crockery / cutlery where you can wash them.

### **FOOD PACKAGING**

Encourage stall holders not to use Styrofoam containers or other non-recyclable containers. Use where possible compostable plates and cutlery. Choices include:

**Recycled Plastic** – Plastic that's been recycled is more sustainable.

**Bamboo** –Bamboo is a grass that takes only 5-7 years to reach maturity, thus making it highly sustainable. Bamboo is also naturally antibacterial making it super hygienic.

**Wooden**–Wooden is a natural and clean option.

### **RECYCLE STATIONS**

Clearly label and set up recycling stations. If possible – have volunteers at recycling stations to direct what waste goes into which bin.

### **CATERING:**

When planning the menu for your event, try to consider organic, seasonal and local food, which isn't likely to leave a big carbon footprint.

Try to choose coffee and tea from sustainable and fair-trade growers. These can be purchased in most Irish supermarkets.

Getting food quantities right is always a worry. Provide too little and you'll have everyone grumbling (their stomachs, too!), provide too much and there will be waste to deal with. To minimise any waste, be sure, where possible, that you know the numbers attending and any dietary requirements so that your caterer can plan quantities accordingly.

### **LIGHTING**

LEDs are an energy-efficient alternative to traditional light bulbs.

**Prizes** – give away prizes of packets of local seeds, or wind-up torches or refillable water bottles.

## **BALLOONS & CHINESE LANTERNS OR PLASTIC DUCKS – DO NOT RELEASE AS HARMS WILDLIFE AND ADDS TO PLASTIC POLLUTION**

For many people, sending a balloon into the sky is a popular way to remember someone or to celebrate an event. Although popular and well loved, the act of releasing balloons is also an environmental issue. Balloons, and balloon accessories like plastic clips and ribbons, are not biodegradable. In particular mylar balloons, which are essentially foil-coated plastic, stay in the environment forever. Similar to plastic bags, in sunlight they break down into smaller pieces forming dangerous micro plastics. Latex balloons generally degrade more quickly than other types of plastics but can take years to fully decompose depending on conditions and the materials used in their manufacture.

### **ALTERNATIVES TO BALLOON RELEASES**

**Have balloons tied down and do not release them. Ensure they are disposed of at the end of the event.**

**Bubbles:** Make a bubble solution so you can blow bubbles and let the breeze carry them skyward. You can also make giant bubbles and frost patterns in bubbles in the winter. Bubbles are a fun addition to any party; people of all ages love them, and they look so pretty floating around in photos. Just be sure to buy or make non-toxic bubble mix that is eco-friendly. [Here is a recipe.](#)

**Kites:** Flying kites is a great way to promote your event and make it visible for miles.

**Flags, banners, streamers and dancing inflatables** – Many businesses are realizing the benefits of using reusable eye-catching signage. Colourful streamers, flags and banners save money and time over balloons, ribbons and helium. They are also weather resistant, save Helium, and can be reused again and again!

**Bunting** – A great way to decorate for parties and celebrations is bunting! These beautiful waves of fabric can be made at home and uniquely designed with different patterns, shapes, and colours. They are also reusable, fun to make, and are sure to light up the party!

**Wildflower seed bombs** – A great way to give a gift that grows is by making your own flower seed bombs! It's important to only use native seeds – you could collect these from local fields etc. These little pounces will spread life-giving, beautiful flowers. [Make your own seed bombs making sure you choose local seeds.](#)

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**Coloured lights** –  
Coloured lights catch attentions during parties, holidays!

## Prepared for Tullamore TidyTowns Committee

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