



## All-Ireland Pollinator Plan: Local Authority Pollinator Award 2024

### ENTRY FORM

Name of Tidy Towns Group and County: .....

Tidy Towns Region (as per your national Tidy Towns application form): .....

Tidy Towns Population Category (A-H) (as per your national Tidy Towns application form):.....

Has your group entered this Pollinator Award before? Yes ..... No.....

If Yes, please state which year(s)

.....

Nominated contact in Tidy Towns: .....

Postal Address: .....

.....

Phone number: ..... Email:.....

#### Data Protection

I confirm that my contact details as above may be used in communications relating to the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan Local Authority Award. Any personal information which I provide in this way is not made available to any third parties, save as required by law, and is used by the National Biodiversity Data Centre and Local Authority Heritage Officers/Biodiversity Officers only in line with the purpose for which I provided it. Any personal information which I provide will be treated in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation.

Please tick your consent to process your data for this application \_\_\_\_

Example Application

## About the Local Authority Pollinator Award & €10,000 prize money

The Local Authority Pollinator Award aims to encourage Tidy Towns groups to implement pollinator-friendly actions in their towns and villages as part of the Tidy Towns competition. Wild Irish bees, crucial to the pollination of our plants, trees and vegetables, are in decline - this is because we've drastically reduced the areas where they can nest and the amount of food our countryside provides for them. The aim of the award is to reverse this trend by encouraging Tidy Towns groups to take simple pollinator-friendly measures in their local area. The Local Authority Pollinator Award supports the [All-Ireland Pollinator Plan](#) and is sponsored by the Heritage Offices & Biodiversity Offices of Local Authorities across Ireland.

The award categories and prizes are listed below. Awards will be given in all categories subject to satisfactory criteria. For more details see [www.TidyTowns.ie](http://www.TidyTowns.ie) or [www.pollinators.ie](http://www.pollinators.ie)

Category	Large Town or Urban Centre	Village or Small Town
National	€1000 (either population category)	
Midlands and East	€1000	€1000
North West and West	€1000	€1000
South and Mid-West	€1000	€1000
South East	€1000	€1000
Best Newcomer Award	€1000 (either population category)	

### What types of activities are we looking for?

Local communities can lead the way in driving a better and more sustainable balance for pollinators and bringing more networks of pollinator-friendly habitats back into our landscape. A **guidance document** is available – ‘**Local communities: Actions to Help Pollinators**’, which outlines 23 actions you can take to help pollinators in your local community. Please refer to this when filling out your application form. See <https://pollinators.ie/resources/> so download a free PDF of the guide.

A **partnership approach** to supporting pollinators is important. We encourage you to work with your local authority and other groups in your area. Please provide examples of this in your application form.

On our website, [www.pollinators.ie](http://www.pollinators.ie), you will find lots of **useful resources**, including pollinator-friendly planting lists and signage templates. We highly recommend you take the time to look at these resources, as the recommendations of the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan have been used to develop the assessment criteria of this award. You can also find advice for other sectors, such as Schools and Businesses, which may give you ideas on how you can get everyone involved in your town or village.

**We particularly encourage a whole-town/village approach, rather than isolated project areas – this is a more effective way to help pollinators and will have a greater positive impact for biodiversity.** The evidence-based actions offered by the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan are either zero or low-cost. They range from changing your mowing regime; to planting pollinator-friendly trees and shrubs; and raising awareness. You can identify which actions are the most appropriate for your community. The more actions you can do, the more pollinator friendly your local area can become.

## INSTRUCTIONS FOR ENTERING THE POLLINATOR AWARD

1. Please take a **'whole town/village'** approach, rather than a single project in one area.
2. Please fill in the attached application form to let us know in **no more than 3,000 words** how your community is implementing pollinator-friendly actions.
3. Within the application, please provide dates for each project mentioned, focusing on work undertaken in the **past 12 months**.
4. Only ONE application will be accepted per group, and applications must come from an official Tidy Towns group (as agreed with the National Tidy Town Unit) which has entered the Tidy Towns competition in 2024.
5. **The questions on the application refer directly to Pollinator-friendly Actions (A-G) outlined in the guidance document 'Local Communities: Actions to help pollinators', which can be downloaded from the Pollinator Plan website <https://pollinators.ie/resources/>. It is advised you refer closely to this document when planning your town's actions, and filling in this application form.**
6. Points are allocated for each question on this application form. All questions must be answered, using this form only.
7. Your entry must consist of a **single PDF file** (comprising the application form, with your photos and map embedded) and this file must be less than 10MB in size. We cannot consider extra documents with further information, including biodiversity action plans. Please include all relevant information on your application form, summarising where necessary.
8. Please provide a map of your town/village marking the locations of each of your pollinator-friendly actions. A hand drawn map is perfectly acceptable. This makes it easier for us to see clearly what pollinator actions you have undertaken throughout your town/village. The map should also be embedded within the application form, ideally under question 1.
9. Please provide **captioned photographs** to help demonstrate your work. Photos must be embedded within the application form.
10. Email your entry to [pollinatoraward@biodiversityireland.ie](mailto:pollinatoraward@biodiversityireland.ie) with **"Pollinator Award 2024: Your Town/Village name"** in the subject line.
11. Please read and tick the Data Protection paragraph above.

### Closing Date:

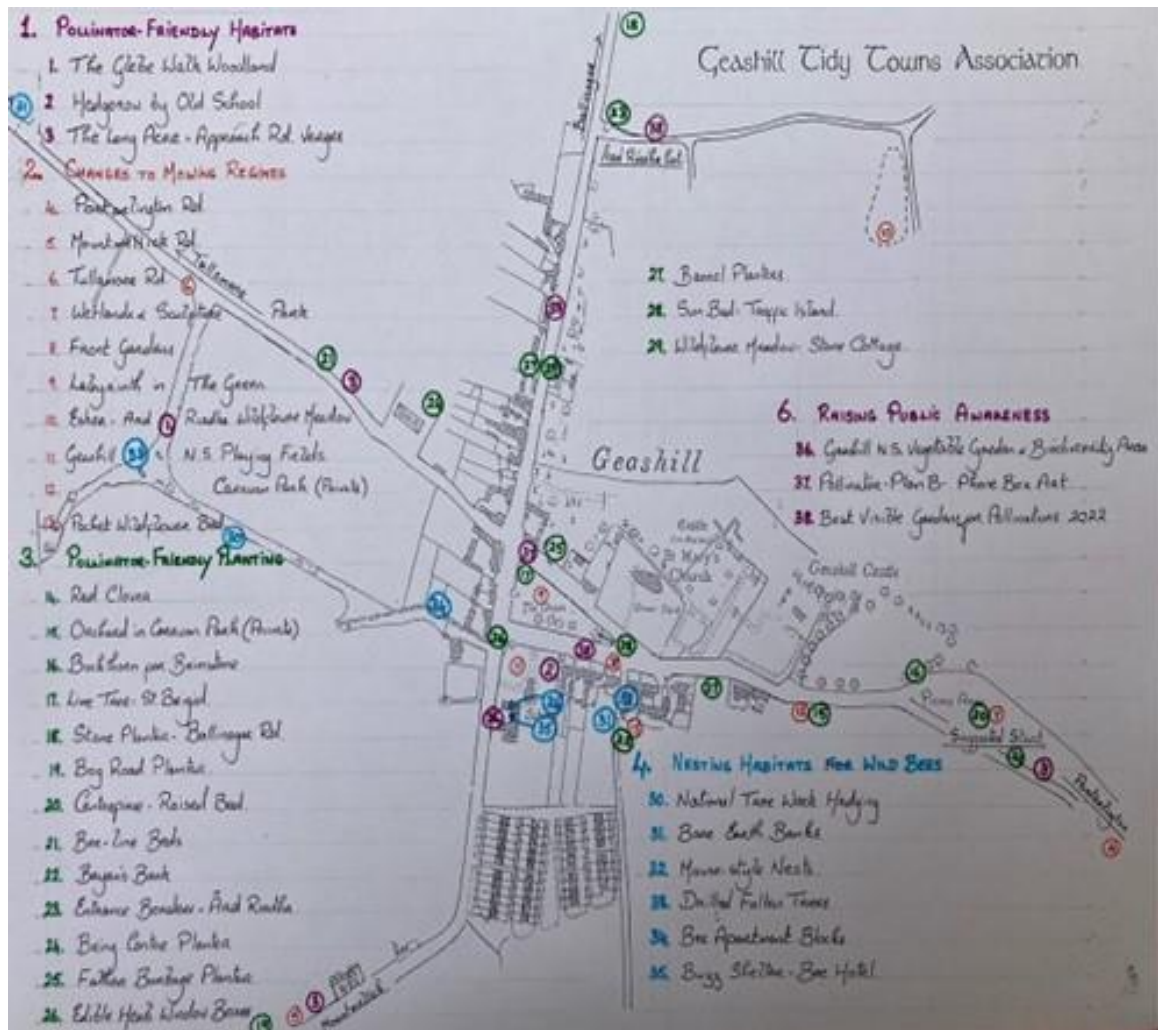
**Judging the Award:** All entries will be assessed by a panel of suitably qualified judges including representatives of Local Authority Heritage Officers, Biodiversity Officers, and National Biodiversity Data Centre staff.

## All-Ireland Pollinator Plan: Local Authority Pollinator Award 2024

### A. Identify and protect existing areas that are good for pollinators. (See Action A. in guidelines:

Local Communities: Actions to help pollinators

1. Provide a map showing areas that are already good for pollinators and biodiversity, and label them e.g. native flowering trees, hedgerows, and wild areas. (2 points)



**Judges' tip:** This map is included courtesy of Geashill Tidy Towns, winners of the Small Town Pollinator Award, Midlands & East, in 2022. (The answers in the rest of this example form do not relate to Geashill). This is just one example of how you might create your map – you could use your town's map on [Actions for Pollinators](#), create it digitally using programmes like Paint, or websites like Google Maps, or draw it by hand.

**2. Outline how you are managing these existing areas for pollinators.**

**(5 points)**

Currently we have areas of hedgerows, long and short-flowering meadows, a small orchard (planted in November 2019), and various areas of perennial planting. We also have lots of native trees as well as non-native trees and shrubs dotted around the town, especially at the school. In each case we are managing these according to the Pollinator Plan guidelines. We have identified where we have gaps between the different pollinator-friendly habitats and are currently investigating how to fill these. Ultimately, our aim is that each pollinator food source will not be further than 100m from the next.

**3. Provide a list of pollinators that have been recorded in your area. Carry out an area-based search on Biodiversity Maps (<https://maps.biodiversityireland.ie/>). Any pollinators recorded in your area will be listed under the datasets: Bees of Ireland; Hoverflies of Ireland. (3 points)**

Barbut's Cuckoo Bee (*Bombus (Psithyrus) barbutellus*), *Bombus (Bombus) lucorum*, *Bombus (Bombus) terrestris*, *Bombus lucorum* agg., Common Carder Bee (*Bombus (Thoracombus) pascuorum*), Early Bumble Bee (*Bombus (Pyrobombus) pratorum*), Heath Bumble Bee (*Bombus (Pyrobombus) jonellus*), Honey Bee (*Apis mellifera*), Large Red Tailed Bumble Bee (*Bombus (Melanobombus) lapidarius*), Moss Carder-bee (*Bombus (Thoracombus) muscorum*), Small Garden Bumble Bee (*Bombus (Megabombus) hortorum*)

*Eristalis pertinax*, Marmalade Hoverfly (*Episyrphus balteatus*), *Scaeva pyrastris*, *Volucella bombylans*

**4. Have you had an ecologist/ Biodiversity Officer conduct a biodiversity survey in your community and give advice on how to manage it? If so, give details of their suggested actions and which ones you have undertaken. (Note: the survey doesn't have to have taken place in the past 12 months)**

**(5 points)**

No, but we plan to discuss this with our Biodiversity Officer later in the year.

## **B. Mow less in grassy areas to help local, native wildflowers grow naturally (Action B)**

*Note: The All-Ireland Pollinator Plan does not recommend the use of wildflower seed mixes in natural or semi-natural areas. Studies have shown these mixes can contain non-native species and inadvertently introduce invasive species. Reducing mowing is the best way to encourage local, native wildflowers to appear naturally. For more information, see <https://pollinators.ie/wildflower-seed/>*

**5. Create a long-flowering meadow.** Describe how you have managed grassy areas in your community as long-flowering meadows (one cut and lift per year). This can include more than one location. Include the area in m<sup>2</sup>. **(8 points)**

We have started managing an area of the community park as a long-flowering meadow (approx. 40 x 10m). We chose this space carefully – it's not a litter trap and won't interfere with the activities of park users.

At this small size we are confident that we can cut and remove the grass each September. We started this management three years ago and have been delighted to see more species naturally appearing year on year. We have used interpretation to explain the reason for managing the grass this way and have mown a path through the meadow so residents can enjoy it. We are fortunate that in September, we can give the grass cuttings to a local allotment for their composter.

This year, we are planning on expanding the area of long-flowering meadow slightly and would like to run a community hay-making day in September to scythe the meadow, teach traditional skills, and raise awareness of its biodiversity value. We're working with our Heritage Officer to arrange this.

**6. Create a short-flowering meadow.** Describe how you have managed some areas as short-flowering meadows (cut every 4-6 weeks starting in mid-April). Include the area in m<sup>2</sup>. **(8 points)**

In collaboration with the council, we are managing all verges on the approach roads to the town as short-flowering meadows (approximately 200m<sup>2</sup>) The edges are mown and signage is used to show management is deliberate.

We have another area of short-flowering meadow (approx. 30m x 60m) in the community park. We cut this once a month, after the Dandelions have finished flowering in April. We mow a more regular strip along paths and areas of high footfall to show management is deliberate. We have been delighted to see species like Clovers and Selfheal appearing later in the year, providing important food for pollinators.

**7. Let Dandelions Bloom.** Describe how you have managed grassy areas so that Dandelions are allowed to bloom in spring (first grass cut of the year in April after they have flowered). Include the area in m<sup>2</sup>. **(4 points)**

We delay mowing in all grassy areas managed by TidyTowns (approximately 6,000m<sup>2</sup>) until mid-April to let Dandelions bloom.) We use signage to explain why certain areas are unmown, and the value of Dandelions to pollinators.

**C. Pollinator-friendly Planting.** Tell us about pollinator-friendly planting you have done in your community. **Native plants** (trees, shrubs, wildflowers) are always the best choice for our pollinators. They have evolved alongside our pollinators, so are perfectly adapted to give them what they need. But in some areas of parks, non-native ‘**ornamental**’ species can help provide additional sources of food. These species should never be planted in natural or semi-natural areas, or the wider landscape.

***Native planting***

**8. Maintain or plant a native flowering hedgerow.** Describe how you manage or have planted native flowering hedgerow. Include the length of the hedgerow in m. This could be on public or private land. **(5 points)**

We have 500m of native flowering hedgerow in the town, on public land and in private gardens and farms. Species include Hawthorn, Blackthorn, Elder, and Holly. In 2023 we worked with local Transition Year students to run a hedge-laying day, adding approx. 30m of new Hawthorn hedgerow to land owned by the GAA Club. We planned the location of this hedge carefully, making sure it created an ecological corridor by connecting the long-flowering meadow in the park with the new orchard of fruit trees at the school.



**9. Plant native pollinator-friendly trees.** Provide a list of the native pollinator-friendly trees in your community (e.g. Hawthorn, Blackthorn, Willow, Rowan, Wild Cherry, and Crab apple). Ensure there is a range flowering from March through to October. This could be on public or private land.

**(4 points)**

We have over 100 native pollinator-friendly trees in the town including Hawthorn, Blackthorn, Rowan, Wild Cherry and Rowan. We plan to source native Crab apple and plant them later this year.

### ***Ornamental planting***

**10. Plant an orchard of flowering fruit trees.** Provide a list of pollinator-friendly fruit trees in your community, or describe how you have created fruit tree orchards (one orchard = five fruit trees).

**(3 points)**

We have one small orchard in the town which is located at the school. It consists of three apple trees, one pear and one plum tree. We're planning to run a 'dispersed urban orchard' project later this year, where we hope to distribute fruit trees to residents for planting in their own garden. We'll record where these trees are planted and use this data to add to our map of the town's habitats.

**11. Add pollinator-friendly bedding plants to containers & hanging baskets.** If you have any containers or hanging baskets, provide a list of pollinator-friendly plants you have added to them.

**(1 point)**

We have been gradually reducing our containers and hanging baskets as we understand that perennials are more sustainable and require less water. We still use them in prominent positions to add colour in the town. In these cases, we incorporate Bidens and Bacopa into each basket to help provide food for pollinators.



**12. Plant pollinator-friendly bulbs.** Provide a list of pollinator-friendly bulbs you have planted in your community. If you can, tell us what percentage of bulbs are pollinator-friendly (aim for a minimum of 50%). **(2 points)**

We have large amounts of spring flowering bulbs in the town. Many of these are Daffodils and Tulips to provide colour for the public. But we know these aren't great for pollinators, so in November 2023 we also added more pollinator-friendly species like Crocus and Grape Hyacinth. Currently these account for approx. 30% of our bulbs and we plan to slowly increase this in coming years.

**13. Plant ornamental trees and shrubs.** Provide a list (up to 10) of key ornamental pollinator-friendly trees and shrubs in your community. **(2 points)**

We have a range of pollinator-friendly trees and shrubs in the town. These include Lime, Laburnum, Field Maple, and Juneberry Tree. Some of our shrubs are used for defensive planting like Firethorn and Berberis. We also have Viburnum, which we planted in spring 2024. We often spot winter bumblebees on our Mahonia and Daphne.

**14. Plant pollinator-friendly perennials.** Tell us about pollinator-friendly perennial beds or planters. Ensure there is a range of species, flowering between February and October. **(3 points)**

We have a wide range of pollinator-friendly perennials in our beds and borders around the town. Most of this planting took place in spring 2024 to supplement and replace existing annuals with little value to pollinators. Currently the combined area of these beds and borders is approximately 30m<sup>2</sup>. We have assessed these to make sure we have something in flower from early spring through until the autumn. Some of the most important are:

Spring – Lungwort, Comfrey, Perennial Wallflowers

Summer – Hebe, Lamb's-ear, Lavender

Autumn – Heathers, Michaelmas Daisy, Vervain

**D.** Provide wild pollinator nesting habitat. Please refer to our 'How to guide: Creating wild pollinator nesting habitat' at <http://pollinators.ie/resources/>

**15. Provide nesting habitat for bumblebees.** Describe how you protect or manage areas of long grass as nesting sites for bumblebees and other insects. Include the area in m<sup>2</sup>. **(2 points)**

Hedgerows: Long grass is left to grow at the base of all hedgerows in the town. It is unsprayed and undisturbed to provide nesting habitat for bumblebees. This is approximately 500m<sup>2</sup> in total.

**16. Provide nesting habitat for mining solitary bees.** Describe how you manage or have created areas of bare earth for mining solitary bees. Include the area in m<sup>2</sup>. **(2 points)**

There are some existing bare earth slopes near the back of the community park. These are south-east facing and have evidence of solitary mining bee activity. We don't spray these areas and manually scrape back vegetation every year. Altogether these areas are approximately 10m<sup>2</sup>. We're hoping to add more bare earth banks in the coming year.

**17. Provide nesting habitat for cavity-nesting solitary bees.** Describe how you manage or have created nesting sites for cavity-nesting solitary bees. **(1 point)**

In January 2024, we worked with our Men's Shed to drill holes 10cm deep into small, unvarnished wooden blocks. We know that solitary bees only forage within a few hundred metres of their nest, so we have placed them in several locations around the town close to our long-flowering meadow and pollinator-friendly perennial flower beds.

## **E. Eliminate or reduce the use of pesticides**

*Note: Please answer either 18 or 19, you do not need to answer both.*

**18:** Tell us about how you have **eliminated** pesticide use (note that herbicides can still be used on invasive species) **(20 points)**

We do not use pesticides at all in areas managed by the TidyTowns. We're working with our local authority to trial alternative methods of removing unwanted plants, but mostly we're letting plants like Dandelions bloom and provide food for pollinators.

**19.** If you haven't eliminated pesticides, tell us about how you are **reducing** their use as a step towards total elimination, including the percentage of reduction. **(10 points)**

We have a pesticide reduction policy in the town. We have cut down on pesticide use year on year, with the goal of total elimination by the end of 2026. Since implementing this policy three years ago, we have cut down on pesticide use by 75%. Where pesticides are still used, we implement best practice use to limit the impact on biodiversity.

For demonstration purposes, example answers have been provided for both questions 18 and 19.

## **F. Raise awareness of pollinators in your local area**

**20. All-Ireland Pollinator Plan resources.** Tell us how you have promoted All-Ireland Pollinator Plan advice and resources in your community. **(1 point)**

With the help of our Heritage Officer, we got copies of the booklet 'Pledge Your Garden for Pollinators' which we have distributed to residents' associations around the town. We also send copies of the bumblebee and solitary bee posters to the local school, as well as the guide 'How to Develop a Pollinator Plan for your School'. The guides for businesses, sports clubs and farmers have been helpful in having conversations with different members of our community and encouraging them to take pollinator-friendly actions.

**21. Run pollinator events.** Tell us about a pollinator event you have organised in the past 12 months. **(2 points)**

In summer 2023 we ran a guided pollinator walk around the park with the help of our Biodiversity Officer and a local ecologist. It was very well attended, and we hope to run more next year. We are planning to run a workshop in harvesting wildflower seeds this year.

**22. Working with others.** Tell us how you have worked with your local authority and other groups to help pollinators and biodiversity, and create wildlife corridors in the past 12 months. **(5 points)**

We work closely with our local authority to collaborate on pollinator-friendly actions around the town. Our Heritage Officer helps us find out where we can access funding and resources for pollinator and biodiversity projects.

We have spoken to local businesses, farmers, and landowners to encourage them to take part in our 'pollinator network' around the town. Local residents have been encouraged to join this too – we distributed Pledge Your Garden booklets in March to help them learn about what actions they can take for pollinators in their garden.

Much of our tree and hedge planting work is done with the help of other community groups and the local college and Men's Shed. One of our proudest achievements this year is creating edible pollinator-friendly herb beds in the town square, with environmentally-friendly planters made by the Men's Shed. These will provide nectar and pollen right in the centre of the town, and residents can sustainably snip away at the herbs for their own use.

We use our social media pages, town website and newsletter to promote the work we are doing, show the impact of our actions and encourage more people to get involved.

Over the coming years, we have an ambitious target to work together to ensure that no bee has to fly more than 100m to find food in our town.

**23. Put up pollinator signage or interpretation.** Tell us about any signage or interpretation you have that raises awareness of pollinators and your actions to help them. **(2 points)**

In our long-flowering meadow we have a 'Managed for wildlife' sign to show the public that this area is being managed deliberately. Near the entrance to the park we have an interpretation board with information about which pollinators to look out for in the park. We have signs on the roadside verges which are managed as short-flowering meadows. In March 2024 we replaced all our old and faded signage. We have used sustainable materials for all of our signage.

## **G. Tracking progress and receiving recognition**

**24. Log your 'Actions for Pollinators' on the online mapping system.** Have you added sites in your community to the Actions for Pollinators online map? If so, please include the username used to add your site. **(5 points)**

TidyTowns\_123

**25. Submit annual Flower-Insect-Timed (FIT) Counts.** Have you submitted an annual FIT Count? If so please provide the recorder name used to submit the data. **(2 points)**

We have been submitting FIT Count data which we found very convenient to do using the app. This year we aim to submit at least 10 ten-minute counts from the park across the season. A number of our Tidy Towns team are involved, so recorders names include John Murphy, Karen Kelly and Jim Byrne.

**26. Take part in the Bumblebee Monitoring Scheme.** Have you taken part and submitted data to the Bumblebee Monitoring Scheme run by the National Biodiversity Data Centre? If so, please provide the name of your transect route. **(3 points)**

We have not yet joined the bumblebee monitoring scheme, but this year we plan to take the free online course to learn to identify the different species. We hope to then join the scheme in the following year.