

Tinahely Recycling Centre

School Road, Tinahely. County Wicklow

Section 1: Background

Tinahely Community Area Projects Ltd (TCP) is a group of local volunteers that work together to improve Tinahely and its environs for the community and visitors alike.

We have delivered and maintain over 40km of walks in the area, including the Railway Walk and several looped walks bringing significant value to the village.

We have developed, in conjunction with Leader and Wicklow County Council a variety of community projects, including walking festivals, a multi-use games area, a state-of-the-art children's playground, biodiversity and education programmes for local schools and most recently a purpose-built recycling centre.

Tinahely Tidy Towns and Tinahely Christmas Lights are also under our aegis and we operate a community website, tinahely.ie, and Facebook pages Tinahely Community Projects, Tinahely Tidy Towns and Tinahely Recycling Centre.

As Ireland's only community operated recycling centre, we are proud to enter the Pakman awards in the category of Community Recycling Initiative of the Year.

Section 2: Description of Initiative/Project

This unique community-based recycling centre is organised and operated by TCP with the full support and co-operation of Wicklow County Council's Environmental Section, and staffing resources provided by Tinahely Community Employment CLG (supported by The Department of Employment Affairs & Social Protection). Any additional income generated by this innovative project, is used to support TCP expenses such as maintenance.



The story began in 2010, as frustration with existing recycling services escalated. A fortnightly truck from Wicklow County Council arrived on a Saturday morning for an hour. Material was not sorted and dumped directly on the truck. This made it difficult for the community to recycle and the closest facilities were in Avoca, Arklow or Baltinglass. TCP identified this need and the desire for people to increase their recycling material. In 2011, the generosity of a local business, Fitzgerald's Kitchens, enabled the opening of the first community run recycling centre in Ireland, at the rear of their premises.

TCP negotiated with Wicklow County Council to deliver a recycling service for the equivalent cost of the fortnightly truck. In addition, the material would be sorted, stored and transported properly and a weekly collection from Carnew commenced. With extended opening hours and staff support, the quality and quantity of the recycling material increased exponentially.

Last year in 2020, we completed a long process whereby Tinahely Recycling Centre is now a purpose-built facility on its own site, secure and safe with much larger storage space and ease of access for users. We are grateful to Wicklow County Council for their help and support in bringing the project to fruition. It has been designed and developed with best practice, ensuring convenience and safety for users and staff alike. There is a definite emphasis on biodiversity with a number of indigenous trees planted on site and a low mow policy. Sustainability and a pollinator friendly environment are a fundamental element of all TCP's projects.



The centre accepts all normal recyclable materials such as plastics marked 1 to 5, cardboard, paper and magazines, batteries, electric cabling, light bulbs, glass, aluminium, steel packaging and scrap steel. In addition, there is a clothes bank. A donation is made annually to South Wicklow Home Care Hospice from income raised from recycled clothing.



Section 3: Achievements to date

The primary expectation was obviously the increase in quality recycled material and the reduction in dumping in the locality. We use our Facebook page to let people know about recycling initiatives such as the recent mattress amnesty, hazardous waste collections, and the types of materials suitable for recycling etc. However there have been other additional unexpected achievements; a growing awareness in the community of the need to recycle and act responsibly; the visits from local schools where the children are fascinated by the stories of how material is gathered and re-used in a second, third or fourth life; a platform for the local Men's Shed to sell their Bird Boxes and feeders; and the increased value our dedicated CE staff have in the community. They are the real stars of the centre, and users

regularly comment how helpful they are. They maintain the centre, help people with carrying material to the various locations and advise them on what we can and can't accept. A phone number on the Facebook page means people can phone at any time to ask what is acceptable or what our opening hours are, and they do! But it is this 5-star service mentality that ensures people continue to use the facility.

Section 4: Future Focus

We hope to demonstrate that Tinahely Recycling Centre is not just a facility of convenience for our users but a real resource, that can educate, support and build on the strength and resilience of the whole community. Ideas include an education space to accommodate school tours, a biodiversity centre, or office space for like-minded organisations such as the PURE Project. What we do expect is growth and we know we have the flexibility and will to achieve much, much more in Tinahely, thanks to the contribution of all concerned.

But don't just take it from us, here's what some of our facility customers say:

Linda Dolan It's a brilliant service for our community. Very well run and the staff are very friendly and helpful.

Alan Kitson A great local amenity to have and very well ran, 🍌🍌

Vanessa Codd Brilliant service, staff very helpful and always nice and tidy. Well done to the team.

Liz Deegan I use the outreach collection in Carnew on a Saturday morning, it's fab. Don't know what the people in the area would do without it 🍌🍌

Margaret Kearney Couldn't do without it. Well run and the staff are so helpful. A great asset to the community.

Elizabeth Best An excellent service. All of the staff are so helpful, it's very well managed.

Rosemarie Smyth Use it weekly. Could not do without it. Fantastic facility in Tinahely with very helpful staff. Could not do more for you.

Peter Brennan A brilliant service provided by an excellent team

Newell Evans Brilliant work being done there.

Sharon Pierce Fantastic to have this service in Tinahely. It's always so well kept and all the staff are so helpful.

Barton Tinahely An outstanding service mainly because of the efficiency and helpfulness of the staff. Centre is really well organised and shows what community groups can achieve.

Eileen

Thanks for reading about us, we hope other communities are inspired by our achievement. Facebook – Tinahely Recycling Centre