

# **Douglas Tidy Towns**

Litter Management Plan 2021

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### Introduction

Engagement and research was conducted during 2021 to establish root causes of littering in the Douglas environs.

Key stakeholder groups participated in this effort and their ideas, perceptions and reflections are represented in this report.

Stakeholders included primary school students, secondary school students, business leaders, City Council litter and Parks staff, city councillors, community members including Douglas Tidy Towns (DTT) Volunteers, residents and members of other community groups.

This plan describes current perceptions of our community in relation to littering. It outlines the research methodology used and data captured from our stakeholder groups and makes tangible recommendations for consideration. These recommendations can be delivered by a variety of contributors and collaborators with leadership provided by the DTT Committee.

### **Context and Background**

DTT was established in 2000 and since then, one of the key activities has been volunteer litter picking throughout the Douglas Area. The team of volunteers undertakes litter picks as part of planned Saturday activities (as well as more informally during the week), covering both the main streets and key green areas such as the Community Park, the Ballybrack (Mangala) Woods and the Tramore Valley Walk.

DTT supports resident groups on clear up days in their estates and organises 'blitz' days including participation in the annual National Spring Clean Month in April each year.

Local schools and Scout Troops have been highly engaged, in particular Gaisce students who volunteer with us for 10-week periods.

The amount of litter that pollutes our footpaths, streets, green spaces and lampposts is one of the major environmental issues facing the village and results from lack of awareness, illegal/indiscriminate dumping, litter from retail and fast-food outlets, informal outdoor social gatherings, fly tipping, and distribution of advertising materials.

Over the last 20 years, volunteers have collected tonnes of rubbish and seen the resulting impact on the environment and community. The problem of litter and waste will not be eradicated unless a multi-dimensional approach is taken and cross community collaboration is mobilised to tackle the problem.

As a result, in 2021, the DTT Committee set out to conduct extensive research with the key groups of stakeholders in order to develop this Litter Management Plan. This plan outlines key findings and recommendations which are targeted at the prevention and control of litter in Douglas.

This is a medium-term strategy document from which the community can draw tangible actions and work in collaboration with a broad cross section of community members, including city council staff and councillors to achieve.

### Methodology of research

A number of stakeholders were identified in the community from whom it was important to capture perspectives, ideas and suggestions. The following groups were engaged from within the boundary of the Douglas Tidy Towns:

- Primary school principals, teachers and students
- Secondary school principals, transition year co-ordinators and students
- Business owners and managers
- City Councillors
- City Council Staff
- Douglas Tidy Towns volunteers and committee members
- Other Douglas Community members interested in litter issues

The voice of the primary school students was captured through an anti littering poster competition. 170 children participated in the competition and 9 winners were selected (see appendices page 9). SuperValu Grange came on board to sponsor turning these entries into metal signage to be placed around the village. Access to all the entries and winning posters is available through Douglas Tidy Towns website and social media. Special thanks to the Judges; Councillor Mary Rose Desmond, SuperValu Marketing Manager, Stephen Goggin, and Carol Gordon from Cork Craft & Design.

Both secondary schools in the catchment area engaged in the project and undertook 8 hours of workshops with 2 volunteers from the Tidy Towns and designed and distributed the survey resulting in 444 secondary school students in Douglas contributing their perceptions about the littering issue and their ideas and suggestions to improve it.

Unfortunately, there was a low level of engagement from the business sector. 40 local businesses were contacted and asked to complete a survey looking for their perceptions and asking about their preferences to engage with solving the litter problem into the future. There were 5 responses of which McDonalds, Douglas Court and The South County provided contact details and expressed an interest in further collaboration. There is opportunity here for a follow-on project to build more new relationships with some of these businesses.

As a key supporter of the work of the Tidy Towns, 5 councillors who have engaged with us previously were asked for comment and special thanks is given. Members of the Cork City Council staff team were contacted and particular thanks is given to Stephen Scully of the Parks Department, Noel Long, Litter Warden Supervisor and all who took time to provide much advice, guidance and input, which has been incorporated into this plan.

A survey comprising of both quantitative and qualitative questions was circulated amongst Douglas Tidy Towns Volunteers, Committee member and 'friends of the tidy towns' to capture the experience, perceptions, suggestions and recommendations of this most engaged group who spend countless hours collecting litter in the community and have detailed insight into the causes, location and potential improvements. A huge thank you to the 48 community members who took the time to provide detailed answers which were critical to the formation of the core recommendations in this plan.

### **Core Findings**

### **Litter Pollution Index**

The National Litter Pollution Monitoring System measures the extent and severity of litter pollution using the Litter Pollution Index (LPI) below. (More details on litter.ie)

- 1. Unpolluted or litter free
- 2. Slightly polluted
- 3. Moderately polluted
- 4. Significantly polluted
- 5. Grossly polluted

During the research we asked people where they felt Douglas was on this index. Of the 497 community members who participated in the research, 52% believed that Douglas was "3 - Moderately polluted", 29% believed it was "2 - Slightly polluted" and 19% believed it was "4 - Significantly polluted".

However, Cork City Council Litter Wardens also perform Litter Surveys using the same index by checking 10 areas around Douglas along with grid surveys to count the quantity and type of litter found in a fixed grid location. Of the 110 surveys conducted by the Cork City Council this year the average score for Douglas is "2 - Slightly Polluted". Noel Long, Litter Warden Supervisor for Cork City Council, also commented that along with Ballincollig, "Douglas is one of the best community areas in Cork and this is in no small part due to the efforts of the Douglas Tidy Towns Volunteers". Noel further noted that "when an area is so clean, and you see one bad spot on one section of street it stands out even more as the rest of the village is so well presented."

It is noted that the community members surveyed mostly perceived the level of litter pollution as worse than the scientific surveys conducted by the Cork City Council Litter team and the difference between what is perceived and the scientific scores. It is acknowledged that perception of the presentation in the village is very meaningfully connected to how people feel about living in an area.

### **Bins**

Additional bins were highlighted as a need in stakeholder engagement. The secondary schools, the Douglas businesses and DTT volunteers all strongly felt that additional bins in Douglas would help address the litter issue. 56% of Regina Mundi students and 35% of Douglas Community School students supported this measure (appendix 2 page 16 and appendix 3 page 19). There was widespread agreement between the students and volunteers on where additional bins were needed. Locations strongly supported included the Community Park, outside fast-food outlets and the Mangala.

In the past bins have been set alight in the Mangala. The arson issue was discussed with the Council Litter Warden. Often bins being ignited is due to a transient situation in communities and it may be worth revisiting. Perhaps placing a bin in the Mangala once again to assess the current risk of fire.

Funding has also been secured for solar compacting bins. Solar compacting bins or Big Belly Bins have been trialled with great success in Ardmore and Tramore. These bins can compact their contents allowing them to hold greater volume and reduce the speed with which they become full. These bins also have sensors telling city council staff when they are full thereby allowing for better use of staff resources. There is a current supply issue with this equipment. More information is needed. Of the local businesses that responded to the survey, all five expressed an interest in sponsoring additional solar compacting bins.

Students in Douglas Community School expressed their desire to have segregated waste bins in their school and to install a water bottle refill station to help eliminate single plastic bottle use. They also mentioned the difficulty of not being able to see the bins in the community in the dark and suggested the bins could have reflective material or brighter colour added to them to increase their visibility. The pupils of Regina Mundi highlighted the incorrect use of recycling bins on their campus and expressed a desire to have this addressed by staff and administration.

### **New Volunteers**

Current volunteers and community members made several suggestions on how to engage new volunteers for DTT. Social media, particularly Instagram, was the most favoured option by far (24% of responses). Other suggestions included notices in the parks and bus stops in addition to a presence at Park Events throughout the year (see appendix 4 page 23).

### **Signage**

Signage to reduce litter and the installation of dog waste bins was a key piece of feedback from current DTT volunteers and community members. More that 20% of responses suggested both of these actions (appendix 4 page 23). In addition, there will be 9 extra signs throughout Douglas Village that the primary school children in the community created through a poster competition as part of this project.

Following a discussion with the area City Litter Warden Supervisor (Noel Long) new signage with positive messaging about dog waste is now available and can be installed in the community at the locations identified as key problem areas for dog waste.

### **Problem Areas**

Volunteers felt three main areas were a significant issue in relation to litter. The Mangala (20%), East Village (13-15%) and Community Park (13%). The Litter Warden Supervisor recommended placing a call into the City Council Litter Freephone Hotline 1800222226 so that an official log can be maintained of problem areas. The warden can then directly follow up with businesses and community members as needed. Some of these problem areas may be improved due to recommendations in the 'Bins' section above.

### **Education & Awareness**

Both secondary schools participated in two workshops. The initial workshop allowed the students to break up into small groups and discuss the effects of litter on biodiversity and ecosystems. In order to determine why there is still littering in their community and what can be done to address it they created a survey and sought the opinion of their peers at school. At the second workshop the data was reviewed, and key recommendations were made that would form part of this Litter Management Plan. The results are outlined in appendices pages 16 and 19. The students also believed that changes could be made to help litter and waste management on their school campuses. Suggestions included water refill stations to reduce the use of plastic bottles and education around the correct use of recycling bins.

The primary schools participated through a poster competition. Each local school was contacted to explain the purpose of the activity and classroom teachers engaged the students directly. The schools were very happy to be involved and participate.

The Litter Warden plans to engage with the primary and secondary schools to follow up with school visits and workshops to maintain awareness and continue building on the engagement. Tidy Towns will also work on this through our Litter Heroes Programme.

### **Equipment and Process**

10% of volunteers would like us to invest in one or two more plastic wheelie trollies that can carry a few litter bags at a time. At the time of the survey, we had 1 wheelie trolly and 2 metal wheelbarrows at base. Two additional wheelbarrows have since been purchased.

10% of volunteers suggested that it would be helpful to have a stock of bin bag rings (often used by council litter pickers or festival clean up crews) that can hold the bin bag open while walking. This have now been purchased and are in use.

16% of Volunteers would like the ability to separate their collected litter into recycling bins back at base. Care must be taken as there is a risk that soiled recyclables may not be processable. We are working with City Council to provide recycling facilities in the Community Park, so that this can happen without creating a sanitation hazard.

21% of Volunteers would like the option to be able to have a reusable sustainable bag, (for example a woven animal/farm feed bag) that they can take home with them, keep hygienic and reuse every week. This is being reviewed with the City Council who provide our bags.

A small number of volunteers felt nervous about touching broken glass or dog waste, reinforcing the messaging to new and existing volunteers to only collect things they feel safe collecting and to make use of the Volunteer WhatsApp group messages to direct the group to problem areas.

The Government has indicated support for return schemes for aluminium cans and plastic/glass bottles (Waste Action Plan for a Circular Economy Sept 2020). Cork City Council is aware of this and plan to roll out schemes in the future. Perhaps separation of these items could take place following litter collection.

### **Business engagement**

As part of the Douglas Sustainable Communities programme, a warmer face to face approach may be needed to seek 1:1 meetings with key managers and business owners in Douglas to develop quality relationships and collaboration over time. More awareness needs to be raised of ibal.ie (Irish Business Against Litter) amongst the local businesses.

Tidy Towns is looking at partnering with Douglas/Frankfield Men's Shed to work with Douglas Village business to development planting schemes, etc. which will be acknowledged through our DTT supporter window stickers. It is noted that DTT has received some invaluable help from a number of businesses including ongoing support from Douglas Court Shopping Centre, the staff in the new Japanese restaurant Okura who have been watering the new parklet outside their restaurant and the staff of McDonalds who have been litter picking and also helping us by letting us fill watering cans to water planters. SuperValu Grange also send staff every Saturday to litter pick and are kindly sponsoring production of the primary school anti-littering signage.

### **Douglas Litter Management Action Plan**

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Based on the findings of the research, the following action items are recommended by the community. Included below are suggested timelines, potential action owners and an initial list of suggested possible required resources.

These recommendations could be delivered by a variety of contributors and collaborators with leadership provided by the DTT Committee.

Suggested Action Item	Recommended Timeline	Potential Owner	Possible Resources Required
Formally request to the council that additional 8 bins are installed in the locations identified from the data and seek installation. Specific recommendations are:  • Permanent TSB 51°52'40.3"N 8°26'10.9"W  • Bus Stop ID: 240751 and Stop ID: 201191  • East Village 51°52'39.2"N 8°26'03.2"W  • 2 In the community park on the church side path. One at start and end of path.  • In the Mangala, under cameras, 51°52'08.1"N 8°26'16.1"W and 51°52'17.6"N 8°26'12.4"W	Q2 2022	DTT/CCC	Collaboration with Cork City Council
<b>Anti-Littering posters</b> installed as metal signage designed by students of Douglas Primary Schools	Q2 2022	DTT	Supervalu provides funding for production. Sign installation contracted to be sourced.
Formally request from the council installation of new positive messaging <b>dog fouling signage</b> in key areas identified in research and seek installation	Q1 2022	DTT/CCC	New signage available

Suggested Action Item	Recommended Timeline	Potential Owner	Possible Resources Required
Solar <b>Powered Compacting Bin</b> installation in parks. (Big Belly Bins)	Q4 2022	ccc	Supply chain restraints, funding already secured
Establish an <b>Instagram</b> page to attract new volunteers.	Q4 2022	DTT	
Pilot simple <b>Litter Collection Tally</b> Tool	Q2 2022	DTT	Google form link sent in WhatsApp group each Saturday morning.
Further develop engagement with specific <b>businesses</b> to build collaborative relationships over time.	Q4 2022	Douglas Sustainable Communities Programme	
Report problem areas through <b>Litter Hotline</b> to allow follow and action through the law.	Ongoing	All	1800222226
<b>Develop</b> the Litter Heroes Programme	Q2 2022	DTT	Pickers, Hi-Viz, Gloves
Address Volunteer <b>equipment</b> requests	Q2 2022	DTT	Bag rings, wheelie trollies, sustainable bag choice

### **Summary**

As a result of engagement with stakeholders in the community regarding litter management we now have clear goals and objectives to address and improve the issue.

DTT will now drive the actions set out in the Litter Management Plan and review the outcomes periodically.

The implementation of the DTT Litter Management Plan will complement the Douglas Sustainable Communities Programme and our work to address biodiversity loss and climate action. This will improve the quality of life for everyone in the Douglas community.

### **Acknowledgements**

Thank you to the volunteers of Douglas Tidy Towns, students, teachers, schools, local businesses, City Council staff and elected officials, local community groups and residents who gave up their time to assist in the research and identification of actions to improve our community. Your contribution and ongoing efforts to make our community beautiful are much appreciated!

## **Appendices**

### **Appendix 1:**

Primary School Poster Competition Winners, full listing available on website

5th & 6th Class

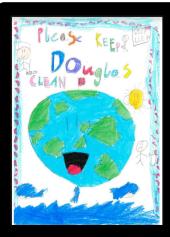






Junior Infants, 1st & 2nd Class







3rd & 4th Class



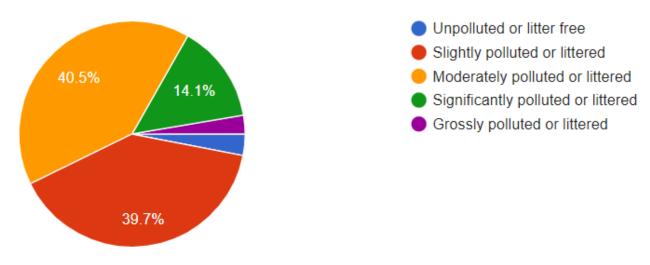




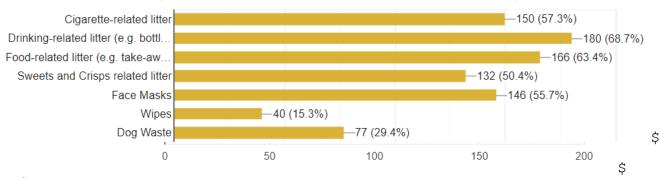
### **Appendix 2:**

## Douglas Community School Survey Results (262 Respondents) Designed and shared by Transition Year Students of Douglas Community School

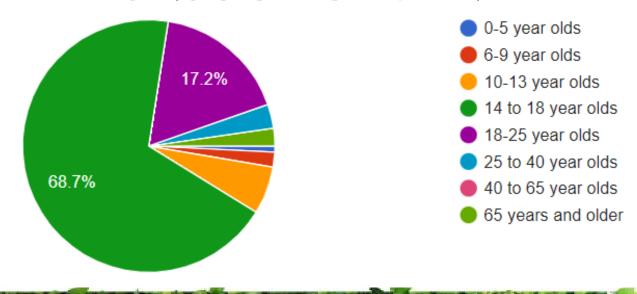
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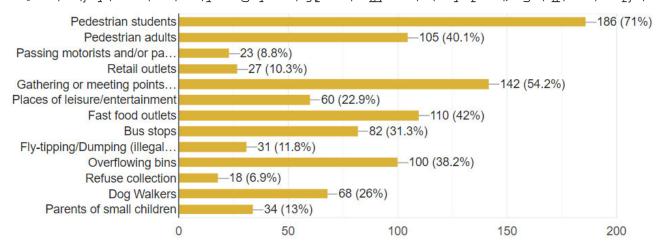
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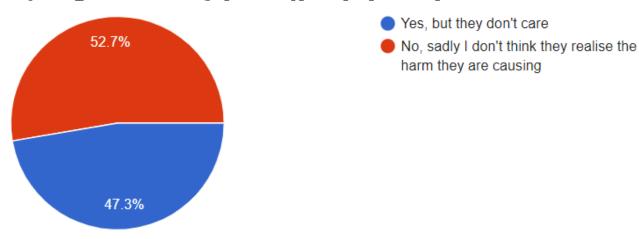
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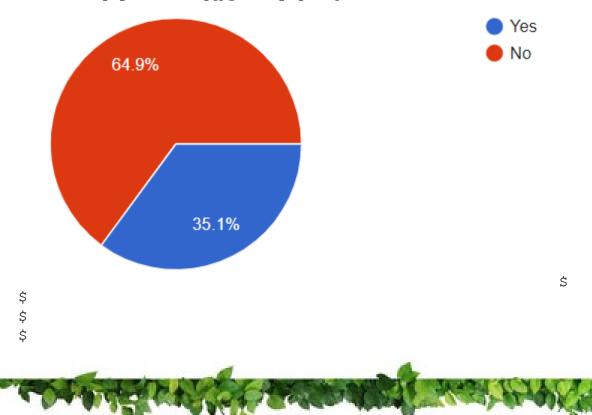


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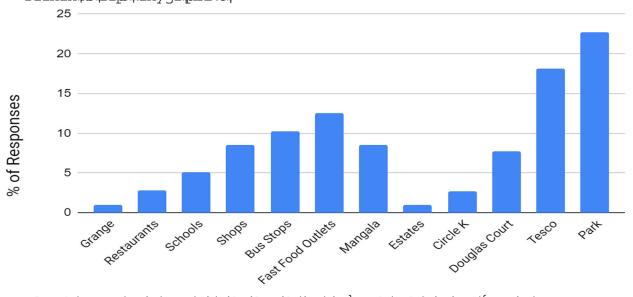
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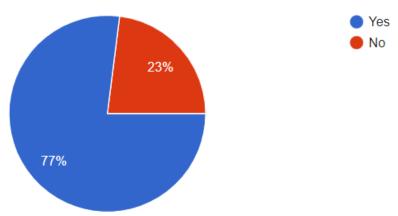
Litter Management Plan ~ Developed 2021

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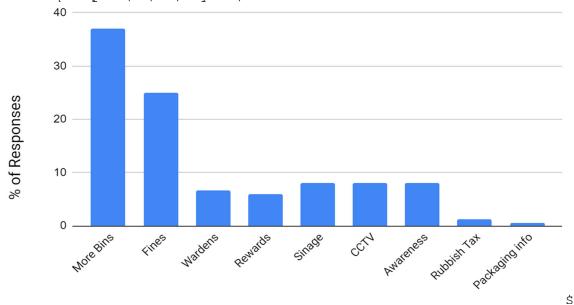
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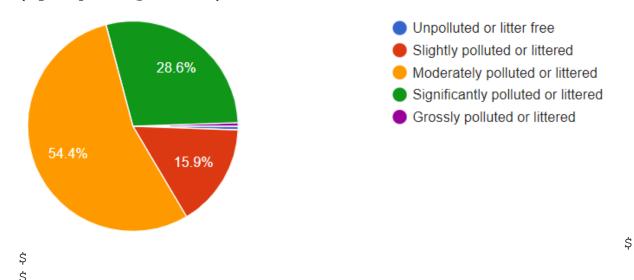
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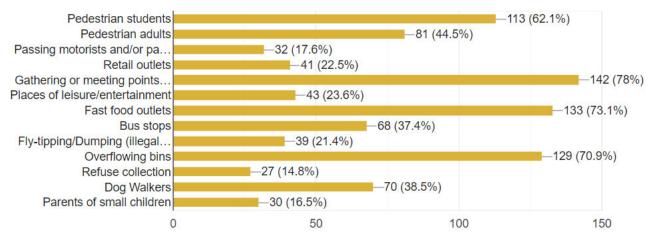
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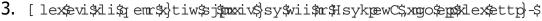
### Regina Mundi Secondary School Survey Results (182 Respondents) Designed and shared by Transition Year Students of Regina Mundi

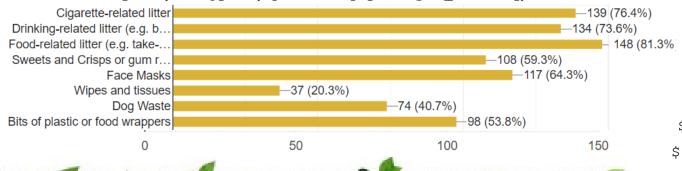
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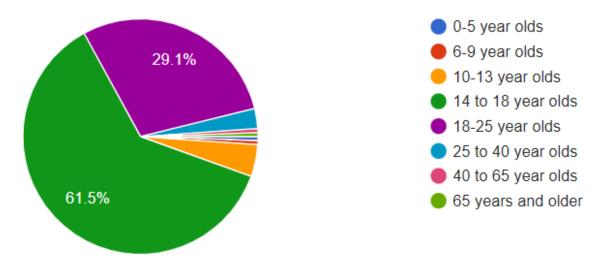




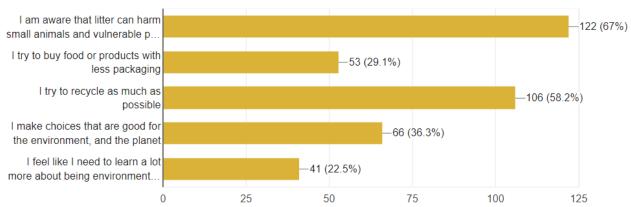


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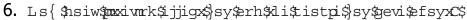
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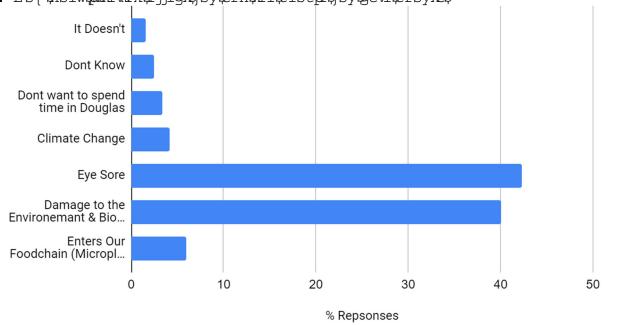


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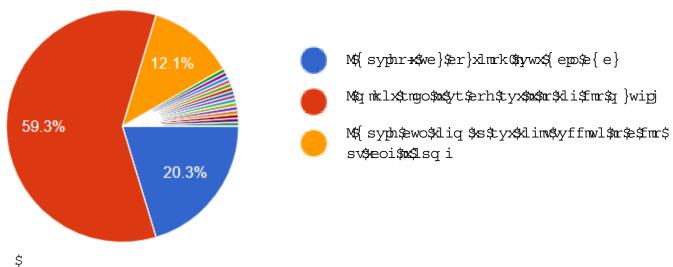


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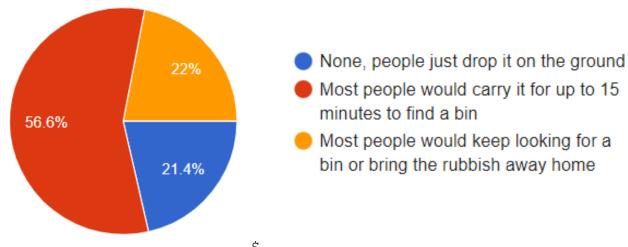




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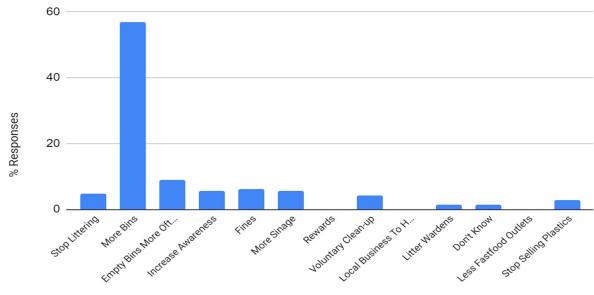


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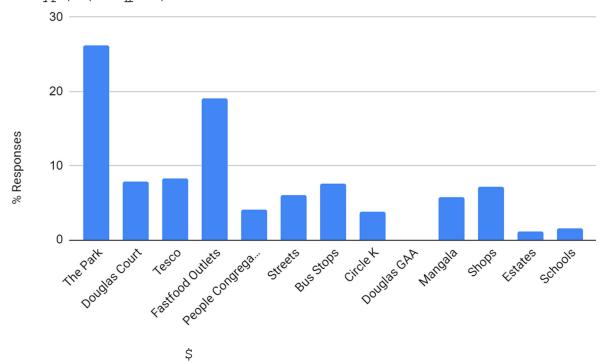


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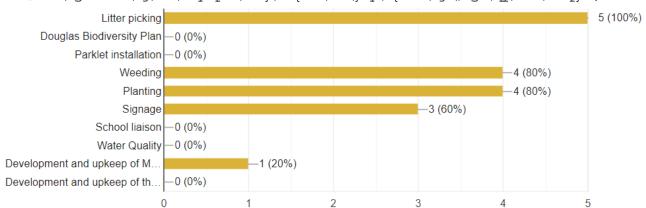
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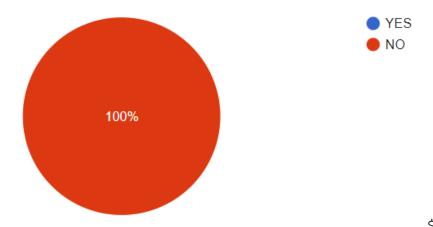
### **Appendix 4:**

### Business Owner/Manager Survey Results (5 Respondents)

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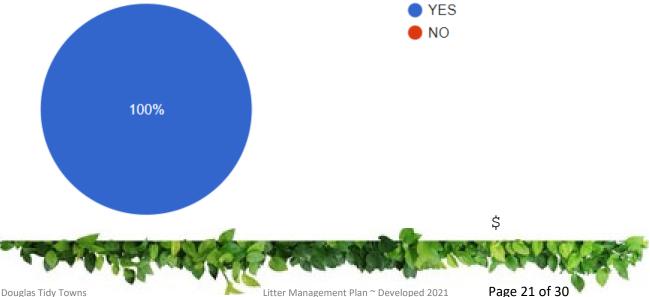


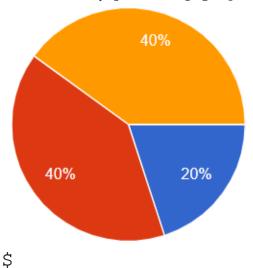
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Unpolluted or litter free

Slightly polluted

Moderately polluted

Significantly polluted

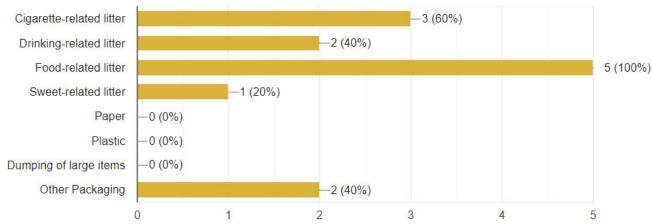
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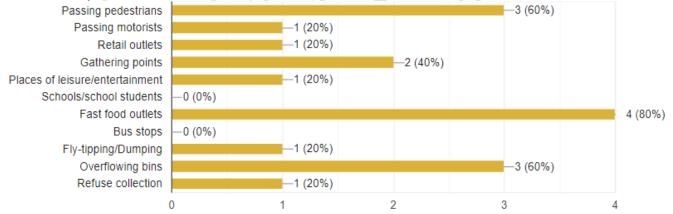


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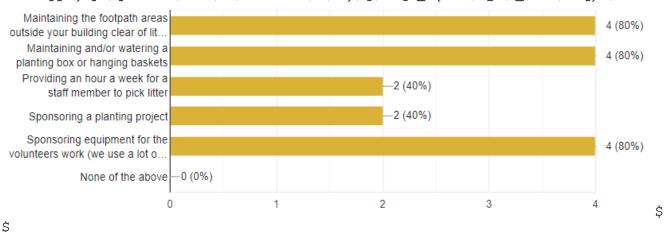
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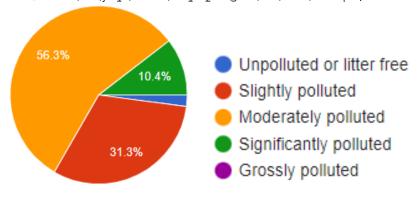


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### Appendix 5:\$

### Volunteers and friends of DTT Survey Results (48 Respondents)

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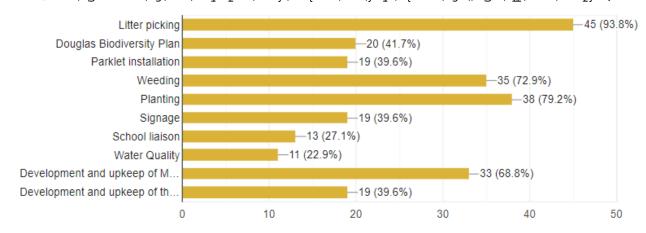
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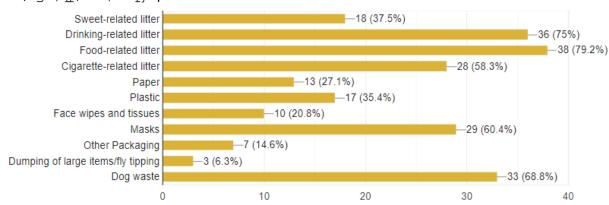
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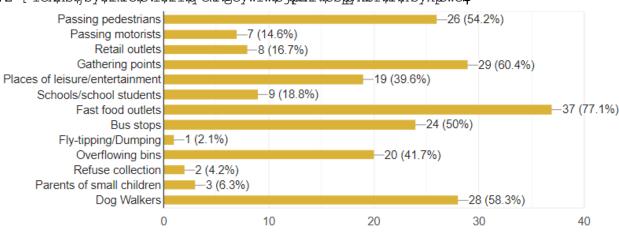
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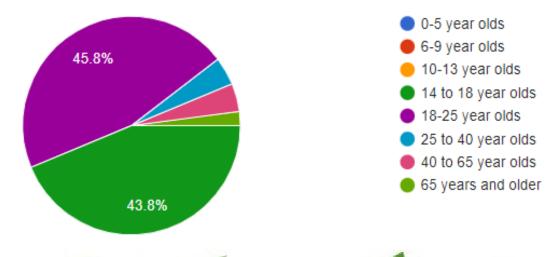
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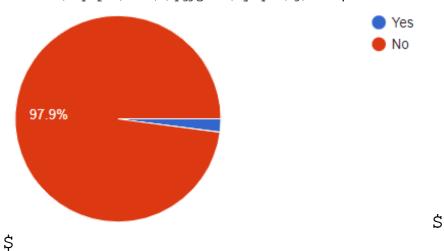
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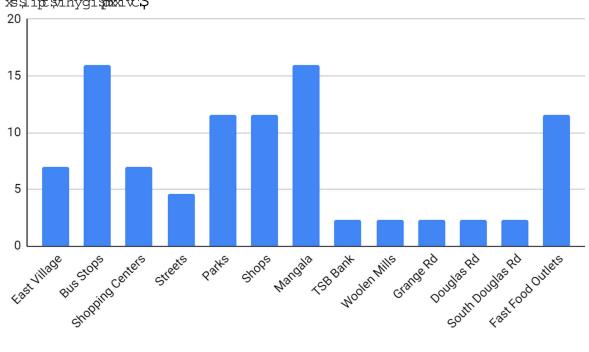
**Douglas Tidy Towns** 

Litter Management Plan ~ Developed 2021



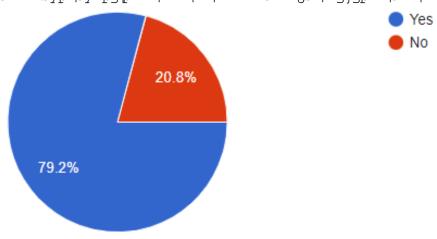
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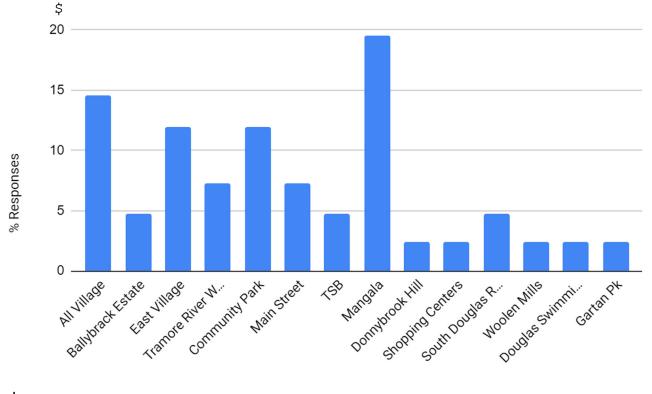
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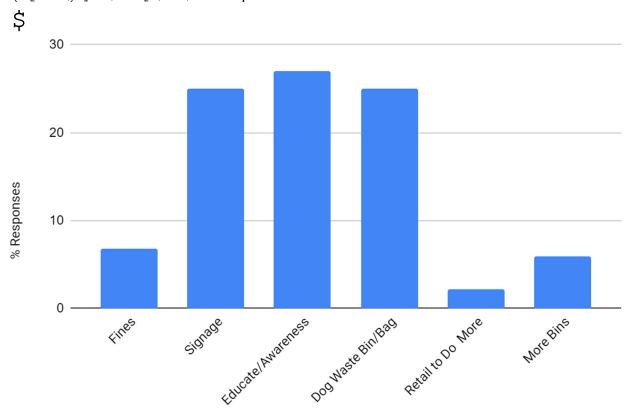
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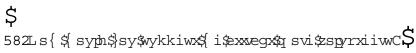


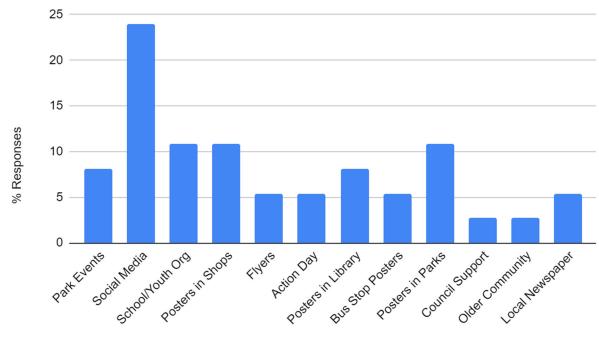
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