



MEMORIAL CYCLE
page 2



ROUNDWOOD RACER
page 6



CHRISTMAS IN BRAY
page 10 & 11

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Tuesday 3rd December 2019

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'DECIDE WHOSE SIDE YOU'RE ON'

'TIME TO SHOUT STOP TO THE ABJECT FAILURE'

A furious row has broken out locally over a Dáil motion of no confidence in Housing Minister Eoghan Murphy. The Social Democrats will use their private members time this week to bring a motion of no confidence in the Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Government, Eoghan Murphy TD, to the floor of the Dáil. Sinn Féin TD John Brady described the motion of No Confidence as an opportunity for Fianna Fail TDs Pat Casey and Stephen Donnelly "to put their money where their mouth is on the housing crisis that they are quick to criticise locally."

Speaking last week as they confirmed the motion, Social Democrats Candidate for Wicklow, Cllr. Jennifer Whitmore, said "It is time for us to shout 'stop' to the abject failure that is this Government's Housing Policy. We can no longer continue to pretend that

this Minister and this Government are getting to grips with our housing crisis. They have repeatedly failed Irish families, our communities and our economy in not providing housing that is affordable to buy or rent."

Cllr Whitmore added: "I have been out on the

doors talking to constituents all over Wicklow and homelessness and the lack of affordable housing is coming up again and again. Every single person I speak to believes that it is completely unacceptable that we now have 10,397 people, including 3,873 children, who are



Last Wednesday the Bray Junior Musical Society group and their teacher Louise Masterson were invited into Leinster House where they gave an impromptu performance of the song 'Funiculì, Funiculà' just outside the Kildare Street gates, waving handkerchiefs in the air and drawing cheers and clapping from passers-by. Stephen Donnelly TD explained, "I'd like to personally thank every single boy and girl who came to visit us and shared their incredible talents. I hope they continue singing and performing for many years to come."

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homeless. That figure does not count those that are hidden homeless, living in family or friends' homes. Or those that struggle to pay exorbitant rents or mortgage payments. This Government's housing policy can only be classed as a complete failure. This cannot be allowed to continue and it's time for all opposition parties to come together to shout 'stop' and to hold Fine Gael to account. This is the only way we can hope for a complete rethink on dealing a housing crisis that is crippling communities all over Wicklow and Ireland."

Whitmore continued "I know a reason put forward for not supporting the motion is that it could cause a general election, and FF are worried that people wouldn't like their Christmas celebrations to be disturbed. However, the Social Democrats

have called for a vote of no confidence in the Minister, not the Government. If the Government loses this vote, it would mean that they would have to replace the Minister. It does not have to mean that a general election is called. In any walk of life, if you fail to perform in your job, you will be removed from that role. The Social Democrats believe that this Minister has failed in his role to solve our housing crisis.

"I would say to FF that it is time to get off the fence and to join all other parties in the Dáil and send a strong message that we will hold our Ministers to account and, if they fail in doing their job, that the opposition will work together to represent the best interests of the country."

Continues on Page 3

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Bill Porter and Sinead Tarmey of the Wicklow Hospice Foundation are pictured in the Arklow Bay Hotel with the winners of Wicklow's Got Talent; 3rd Place Rachel Coyne, 1st Place Ella Heally, and 2nd Place Enda Kelly.

First Saturday Book Sale

The December First Saturday Book Sale, which supports the Shankill Old Folks Association, will take place on Saturday December 7th in the Shankill Old Folks Centre, Lower Road, Shankill, from 10am to 1pm, so make a point of calling into the book sale during that morning and avail of the opportunity to acquire some great reading for over Christmas and the New Year. Also avail of the opportunity pick up a copy of the Rathmichael National School Cook Book as this makes an idea Christmas present. Donations of books, which must be in a good and clean condition, other than school/text books, will be considered for acceptance on that day.

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1pm-2pm: **Germaines, Baltinglass**

3pm-4pm: **Enterprise Centre, Carnew**

3rd Monday (EVERY MONTH)

9:30am-10:30am: **Nicky's Village Mkt, Kilcoole**

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Wicklow Parish gift & cake sale

Wicklow Parish will be holding a Christmas Gift and Cake Sale on Saturday 7th December from 10am to 4pm in Shines Pharmacy on the Main Street, Wicklow Town. This will be a great opportunity to shop for that special Christmas treat for your loved ones!

Snow White and the Eight Dwarves

Come along at 5pm on Saturday December 7th for a magical Christmas evening of panto in the Brockagh Centre, Laragh. Stagebratz Starz Academy is excited to present Snow White and the Eight Dwarves (yes, you read that correctly!) With toe-tapping family-favourite songs, plenty of laughs and fabulous high-energy dance routines, it is the perfect family evening out during the festive period. Tickets cost €12 and €8 and can be purchased now by calling 083-1563897.

Making Waves Youth Theatre: Lost in Transit

Greystones' own Making Waves Youth Theatre is delighted to present Lost in Transit by Ciarán Coogan!

When a group of bored teenagers are stuck on a delayed train, a battered old suitcase takes them to unexpected places. In this lively and engaging play, two contrasting and entertaining stories emerge as our travellers and audience explore the imaginative possibilities of a suitcase lost in transit. Director: Ciarán Coogan. Cast: Aleisha Archer, Archer Bradshaw, Rosie Carter, Michael Clarke, Cian Crean, Eoin Davy, Medbh Devereux, Aisling Dillon-Roberts, Conor Doyle, Alice Jolyet-Cunningham, Amy Kennedy, Lina Kolipost, Katie Lacey Curtis, Conor Lowe, Ciara Shortt, Gráinne Shortt, Ruben Sweeney, Emily Tierney. Thursday 12th December at 6.30pm (Doors 6pm) and 8.30pm (Doors 8pm) Tickets €10. See www.whaletheatre.ie or call the booking office on 01 2010550.

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Danger lies in wait for dogs and cats

Christmas, a time associated with joy and cheer for us, can be full of danger for dogs and cats.

Every animal is intrigued by a Christmas tree. If you put it in the middle of the room, accidents are much more likely, because your pet might jump on it. Position and attach it in a corner, so that it stands securely. Ornaments made from straw and wood are less dangerous than tinsel (which contains lead) and fragile glass baubles. Make sure that the ornaments can't be swallowed. LED lights are also better for households with pets than wax candles. You should also forgo scented

oils and snow sprays altogether, as they contain poisonous ingredients. The popular poinsettia plant is a poisonous plant that your furry friends won't miss. In general, it's best not to leave your pet alone in a room that is decorated for Christmas. Then you and your pets are sure to have a carefree holiday with a little extra attention.

For more tips on enjoying the festive season safely with your pet, call in to your local Maxi Zoo store today!

Christmas carols by candlelight in the Monastic City

This event is a great way to start Christmas, as it takes place in Glendalough, one of the most evocative settings in Co. Wicklow.

Members of the public are invited to come along on Thursday 19th December at 7.30pm for a unique event to celebrate Christmas.

Beginning with a candlelit procession through the monastic gates, you will proceed to the ruins of the candlelit Cathedral for an evening of traditional carol singing in the monastic style.

Some of our most familiar carols would have been sung here by the monks of Glendalough themselves in the 8th and 9th centuries. Tea and Coffee will be provided afterwards in the Glendalough Hotel courtesy of Pat Casey.

This a free event and open to everyone, including children, who must be accompanied by an adult. Assemble in the Glendalough Hotel car park at 7.15pm. Wrap up warm and bring your own lantern/torch and singing voice.

Join the Jim McCawl Memorial Cycle and raise funds for sick children

A memorial cycle for CMRF Crumlin supporter and friend, Jim McCawl, will take place in Brittas Bay on Saturday 7th December at 11am to raise funds for some of Ireland's sickest children in Crumlin Hospital.

Jim passed away in September while taking part in an Overseas Cycle Challenge to raise funds for Crumlin Hospital in Portugal. He attended over 25 Overseas Cycling Events and organised numerous other fundraising events with his Garda colleagues in Arklow.

He's been fundraising for sick children since 1993. Jim's friends, who are organising the cycle event, are encouraging everyone to get involved. There is an adult looped route of 40km and a chil-

dren's looped route of 3km. The adult route will be split into a leisure and active cycle, depending on your cycling level.

You can register for the event on the day at Jack White's Inn in Brittas Bay from 10am. The entry fee is €25 for adults and €5 for children. If you would like a sponsorship card before the event contact Frances on 087 259 8363.

"Jim was the kind of man who wanted to help everybody," Frances McDevitt, long term fundraiser and friend of

Jim, said. "He was so kind. I got to know him about 39 years ago and he asked me to get involved in fundraising. Jim has always been a hugely active fundraiser, from our annual dance event that lasted 28 years, golf events, cycling and more. He was a dear friend and he is greatly missed by so many people."

Frances is encouraging people to come to the Jim McCawl Memorial Cycle - "If you don't want to take part in the cycle you can turn up and cheer on

the cyclists. All support will be greatly appreciated on the day."

Anyone taking part in the cycle who is not part of Cycling Ireland Organisation will have to pay 5 on the day for a one day Cycling Ireland license. Don't forget to bring your helmet or you won't be allowed to cycle.

For more info contact the organisers Joe: 087 232 4744, Niall: 087 267 2108, Tom: 087 242 0684 or Frances: 087 259 8363.



A memorial cycle for CMRF Crumlin supporter and friend, Jim McCawl, will take place in Brittas Bay on Saturday 7th December

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'WICKLOW BUDGET IS A PROPERTY TAX GRAB'

The adopted Wicklow County Council 2020 budget "is proof that the increase in local property tax could have been avoided", according to Independent councillor Mags Crean who was one of five councillors to vote against the budget last week.

Cllr Crean who also voted against the increase in property tax in September maintains that the decision to increase the tax at the time was "a blind decision as councillors did not have access to actual budget figures". Independent councillors Joe Behan and Tom Fortune, and Sinn Féin councillors Dermot 'Daisy' O'Brien and Grace McManus, also voted against Wicklow's 2020 Budget. The Budget was passed with an amendment that compensation owed to the Council from the Government as a result of the valuation of Irish Water infrastructure, believed to be over €300,000, will be divided among the five Municipal Districts to spend as they wish. The budget reveals additional rental income of €3.1 million, additional funds of €1.7m arising from the decision to increase the Local Property Tax in Wicklow, and an increase of approximately €4m in commercial rates. The surplus from the LPT will be used to fund housing services, replacing Central Government funding. The increase in commercial rates will be used to offset losses in income following the rating of Irish Water

and any future income losses that may arise as a result of appeals made to the Valuation Tribunal under the Rates Revaluation process. Wicklow County Council received nearly €2.2m in compensation from the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government in respect of commercial rates for Irish Water. This compensation payment will cease in 2020 as a result of the valuation of Irish Water infrastructure this year, leaving a net shortfall for Wicklow of €600,000. The Council says it will "continue to actively engage with the Department on this matter in order to try and secure some element of compensatory funding to offset this income loss." Speaking after last week's meeting Cllr Crean said "I'm sure the original decision was made in good faith by councillors who believed it to be the only option to protect services but it is now clear that the budget contained other forms of increased income such as rental income of 3 million euro and increased rates. The adoption of the budget was also a lost opportunity to lobby central Government for increased funding, resulting in a type

of tax grab when other options and opportunities could have been examined. "In Waterford City and County Council, the councillors stood together, met with the Minister and negotiated an additional €2 million to assist in the budgetary process following extensive lobbying. We should have done this in Wicklow". Cllr Crean refused to support a budget that she believed had unfairly placed the burden of inefficient management of public monies at a national level onto homeowners locally in Wicklow. She said "At the budget meeting, Wicklow councillors had an opportunity to right a wrong. They cannot reverse their decision of increasing the property tax but they could have taken the opportunity to vote against the budget, meet with the Minister to address the serious lack of central Government funding for Wicklow and income losses related to Irish Water, and then adopt a revised budget with real added value for the county". A proposal put forward by Cllr Behan to adjourn the meeting until Monday 2nd December, so that the Council could "go back to the Department of Environment and look for

the money that we are owed and being denied", was voted down. Speaking at the meeting, Cllr Behan explained: "It would be wrong to make a decision without knowing what the outcome of the talks with the Department of the environment are going to be this week. Look at what has happened in Dublin City. They have postponed budget considerations; they have gone back to central Government to look for the Irish Water rates they are owed." Cllr Pat Fitzgerald was against this idea, saying: "Dublin City Council reduced their property tax by 15%. Now they are begging the Government to make up the difference because they can't balance the budget.

"We are in a different situation; we increased the property tax. Dublin made a mistake to reduce the property tax. We made the right decision as far as I am concerned. I am not in favour of delaying the meeting whatsoever, because of Dublin City Council or anyone else."

Labour councillor Paul O'Brien agreed, adding "I feel we have to do the responsible thing for our constituents and pass this budget today."

Just 59 Garda vehicles to cover entire Wicklow Division

Fianna Fáil TD Pat Casey has said the Minister for Justice has questions to answer as to why there are so few Garda vehicles to cover the entire Wicklow division.

Deputy Casey was commenting as new figures revealed to Fianna Fáil show that the total number of Garda vehicles in the Wicklow Garda division in 2019 is 59. In 2018, 2017 and 2016 this stood at 61, 62 and 62 respectively.

Deputy Casey said, "Over the past four years, despite an increase in the population of Wicklow, we've seen a steady decline in the number of Garda vehicles to patrol the county.

"There are 41 cars, 10 vans, one motorcycle, and six 4x4s patrolling a 2,000km area with 142,425 residents. Wicklow consists of a very mountainous

terrain and six 4x4s just isn't sufficient. The Winter months in particular mean that it is difficult to access rural areas in Wicklow and people in emergencies. In the remote Baltinglass district there is only one 4x4.

"With the vast majority of the population concentrated in the North of the county there is a very real fear that those elsewhere in the county will bear the brunt of a lack of resources.

"Bray to Tinahealy is over an hour's drive and we have very rural roads. We need a robust and mobile police force to patrol them," he concluded.



Pictured is Minister Simon Harris at Blessington Community College with Horan Family, father Raymond, mother Andrea, Freya (student of the year) and grandfather John Horan



Ian Jarrett and Stormy Stan at the switching on of the Christmas Lights in Wicklow Town

Major redevelopment of St. Colman's in Rathdrum

Last week Minister Simon Harris TD visited St. Colman's Residential Care Centre in Rathdrum. Minister Harris said: "I am happy to confirm that plans for a new building will be submitted to the county council early in the New Year.

"St Colman's Residential Centre is an example of how integrated care for Older People should work and this is evidenced by the support the facility enjoys throughout the community. There is a wonderful team in St Coleman's and from talking to the residents it is evident that it is a happy place which is verification of the commitment, professionalism and kindness of the staff. 2020 will be a year of progress for St Coleman's and I look forward to working with the staff and community in the enhancing this much-loved facility".

'DECIDE WHOSE SIDE YOU'RE ON'

Continued from page 1

Deputy Brady called publicly on Deputies Donnelly and Casey to support the no confidence motion in the Minister for Housing, saying "this government has run out of time and ideas to tackle the housing crisis".

Brady said: "The newspapers are filled with horror stories of the impact of the government's housing policy on children across the State. The government's housing policy is now in its fourth year and is simply not delivering.

"The problem has gotten worse and for the many families, young people and pensioners; their housing situation is grimmer than ever. Wicklow is no exception to this crisis. In the month of October alone, 43 families in Wicklow presented to the Council as homeless. This consisted of 100 adults, and 71 children. There are currently 4,388 people on the Council list for housing support, that's up from 3,941 in November 2018.

"Sinn Féin will wholeheartedly support the motion of no confidence in the Minister for Housing. The vote affords an opportunity to Fianna Fáil TDs to make it clear where they stand. Are they on the side of homeless children or on the side of Minister Eoghan Murphy?

"Fianna Fáil either support Eoghan Murphy and Rebuilding Ireland, or they support those who want a housing policy that meets the needs of those waiting for social and affordable homes. Fianna Fáil need to stop hiding behind Brexit as an excuse for doing their job and must start holding this government to account. It is time for Fianna Fáil to decide who's side they are on, those struggling through the housing crisis or Minister Murphy?"

Responding to Deputy Brady's remarks, Pat Casey TD said that "Populist rhetoric designed to play down the Irish Housing and Homeless crisis is as inexcusable as populist stunts designed to make political capital out of the suffering of thousands of Irish Families, our fellow citizens.

"Those politicians who think that a December/January General Election will help ease the Housing crisis at one of the most dangerous periods for homelessness should also reflect deeply on the politics that they are promoting. Populist PR motions days before a Bye-Election reflect poorly on these parties' commitments to Housing solutions.

"These politically motivated tactics are disgraceful, and bring shame to the responsible, mature yet radical actions that need to be enforced to address the Government's failure to provide homes for our people.

"As Vice-Chair of the cross-party Dáil Committee on Housing, I have attended 140 meetings where I have held the Government to account and engaged with all the Housing experts to provide solutions for our crisis in home building. I don't remember Deputy Brady attending a single meeting.

"We all know that we are heading towards a General Election in late spring or early summer. That gives this current Dáil a little over 40 sitting days to pass this bill and to bring in many measures that will provide solutions to increase the supply of homes.

"We need to use that time to concentrate on helping the thousands of homeless families and children during the very dangerous Christmas and January period. Providing some stability is the responsible thing to do here. I won't play political games with Housing and I ask John Brady to do the same."

Fianna Fáil's Stephen Donnelly (and one time leader of the Social Democrats) lashed out at Sinn Féin saying "Fianna Fáil has never had confidence in this government, on housing, health, broadband, transport, or anything else. Ireland has never before had two terms of such a nakedly right-wing government - the impact of that is being felt by every patient, every commuter, everyone trying to buy or even rent a house.

"There will be a general election in the coming months, and we will be asking the people of Wicklow to support us, so that we can repair the damage done, and get things moving again for children, women and men all over the county.

"I won't take any lectures from Sinn Féin - they ran away and hid after the 2016 election. They hide in Westminster, when they could have influenced critical Brexit votes. They have been hiding from Stormont for years now. And after the upcoming general election, they will still be hiding, while all the time giving out about why other people won't solve their problems. They like to talk a big talk, but when people need to step up and govern, or even just turn up to work, they are nowhere to be found," concluded Deputy Donnelly.



On Sunday the 24th November the Archbishop of Dublin Diarmuid Martin joined Parish Priest, Fr Owen Lynch alongside visiting priests and the community of Moneystown in celebrating the 50th anniversary of the construction of the Sacred Heart Church. All year the community led by chair of the committee Wille O' Byrne have worked tirelessly in getting the Church ready for the Golden Anniversary with local volunteers. Mary Timmons, Sacristan presented the Archbishop with the keys of the church and local child, Saoirse Byrne presented the Archbishop with the baptismal register of the parish. Pictured below is 'Tiney' Timmons, the oldest living parishioner in Moneystown, who is celebrating her 99th Birthday this 21st December, 2019.

Operation Hurdle takes to the skies to target Christmas tree thieves

Christmas trees in Wicklow will once again be under the watchful eye in the sky as Gardai launched Operation Hurdle last week, an annual patrol to prevent Christmas tree theft.

The operation was launched by Gardai in 2012 and since then has been invaluable in preventing large scale theft from the often remotely located Christmas tree farms in Wicklow's uplands. Air patrols will be deployed by the Garda Air Patrol Unit along with detectives and regional armed support back up. Before the operation was set up, gangs would target the isolated farms and make off with thousands of euros worth of trees, many of which had taken between seven and ten years to grow to size. Local grower Christy Kavanagh said that up to a fifth of his trees were stolen before the introduction of Operation Hurdle. Gardai say that the amount of tree theft during the run up to Christmas is now almost negligible.

The patrols will be especially welcome news to Christmas tree growers this year as heavy rain has added extra costs, both in time and money to the production of trees. Farmers are expected to be under extra pressure to get the trees ready in time and make up for lost days due to rain and storms.

Up to 450,000 Christmas trees are expected to be sold in the run up to Christmas, many of them grown in Wicklow, with approximately 200,000 exported to Europe.

IMPROVEMENT WORKS FOR SCHOOLS ARE 'A TINY SHUFFLE' IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION

Eight local schools will undergo major improvement works next Summer through Government funding provided under the 2020 Summer Works Scheme. Stephen Donnelly TD said that "I wouldn't go so far as to say the summer school upgrades are a step in the right direction, they're more like a tiny shuffle".

Andrew Doyle TD said the works are a vital investment for the future education of primary pupils and post-primary students in County Wicklow.

"Today's announcement confirms the Government's continuing prioritisation of capital funding for school buildings across Wicklow which will enhance the learning and working environment for pupils and teachers. My colleague the Minister for Education, Joe McHugh has announced that 405 schools across the country will receive more than €30 million for Summer

Works projects for delivery in 2020. Minister McHugh confirmed to me that 7 primary and 1 post-primary schools in Wicklow will receive funding for major improvement works which is positive news for staff and students alike."

The schools to undergo works are: Naomh Padraig NS Arklow, Moin an Bhealaigh NS, Brittas Bay NS, Rathdrum Boys NS, Kilcommon NS, Kilmacanogue NS, Scoil Chualann and St Marys College Arklow.

Two Wicklow schools received funding to upgrade and improve life safety systems like fire

alarms and detection and emergency lighting; 6 schools received funding to upgrade and install new surfaces on play areas and car parks; and schools will be obliged to plan for electric vehicle charging.

"The work will be carried out in schools mainly over the summer months, so the disruption to students, teachers and other staff will be kept to a minimum," Doyle added.

Minister McHugh said: "We have also made sure that schools are getting the notification several weeks earlier than last year to try to give principals and boards of management a better lead in

time to plan and then get the work done."

Projects allocated funding under the 2020 Summer Works Scheme relate to applications submitted by schools in category 10 from the Summer Works Scheme 2016/17 and category 1 from Summer Works Summer 2020 onwards.

Under Project Ireland 2040, the education sector will receive approximately €12 billion from 2018 to 2027. This includes some €8.8 billion for the school's sector.

Stephen Donnelly TD said "Most of the improvements will focus on the so-called 'external

environment' so that's things like playground surfaces, car parks, etc., but some of the schools will have their safety systems upgraded instead. While these upgrades are extremely important for these schools, we can't forget all the outstanding work that the Department of Education has yet to do in Wicklow. Not least of which are extensions for St David's, Temple Carrig and Coláiste Chraobh Abhann which are needed urgently to alleviate the chronic shortage of secondary school places for pupils in the Greystones, Kilcoole, Delgany, Enniskerry areas."

Local schoolchildren benefit from additional funding for Writers in Schools scheme

Wicklow schoolchildren are benefitting from a new writer being added to the Poetry Ireland Writers in Schools scheme, thanks to funding provided by Wicklow Arts Office.

Poetry Ireland delivers the scheme on behalf of both Arts Councils on the island of Ireland. The increased funding from Wicklow Arts Office has enabled them to bring Bray children's writer Sadhbh Devlin onto Writers in Schools where she will have the opportunity to work with hundreds of schoolchildren in the future.

More than 1,300 schoolchildren across Wicklow have enjoyed workshops with some of Ireland's leading writers - including Marita Conlon McKenna and Alan Early - as part of Writers in Schools this year. Sadhbh visited St Brigid's National School, Greystones, recently as part of mentoring and training for writers joining the Writers in School scheme.

Through this programme, Sadhbh had the opportunity to shadow her mentor, children's writer and poet Lucinda Jacob, and then worked with the St Brigid's schoolchildren, bringing out huge smiles in the classroom. Wicklow Arts Office has provided funding for Poetry Ireland to curate a lively and wide-

ranging programme of literary events in schools across Co Wicklow throughout 2019.

Anna Bonner, Writers in Schools Development Officer at Poetry Ireland, said that the organisation is always excited to be able to bring a new writer onto the Writers in Schools scheme.

"Thanks to the support of Wicklow Arts Office, we're delighted to have Sadhbh Devlin joining our dedicated team of artists," she said. "We aim to offer schools a wide range of writers and storytellers to choose from in as many parts of the country as possible."

"We see how the creative energy sparked by these first-hand encounters with writers can trigger an appreciation of the emotional and intellectual power of language that lasts a lifetime."

Wicklow Arts Officer, Jenny Sherwin, said it was a wonderful opportunity for children and schools to work with authors in the classroom. We are particularly delighted to sup-

port national to local partnership in the arts and look forward to continued success with the roll out of the scheme with Poetry Ireland," she said.

More than 1,300 young people in schools located in Wicklow town, Bray, Avoca, Ashford and Rathnew have enjoyed meeting and working alongside writers such as Marita Conlon McKenna, Alan Early, Catherine Ann Cullen and Kevin McDermott during 2019.

The Writers in Schools scheme part-funds visits by writers and storytellers to primary and post-primary schools in the Republic of Ireland (funded by The Art Council) and Northern Ireland (funded by Arts Council Northern Ireland). The scheme has been running since 1977, making it one of the longest running arts-in-education programmes in the country. More than 500,000 children and young people across the island have experienced working with a writer since Writers in Schools was established.



L-R: Maureen Kennelly (Director of Poetry Ireland), Sadhbh Devlin, Lucinda Jacob, Máire Costello (Principal of St Brigid's National School), Jenny Sherwin (Wicklow Arts Officer), Anna Bonner (Writers in Schools Development Officer at Poetry Ireland)

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FLYING FIONN TAKES THE DOUBLE!

Following on from his very successful summer championship win, Fionn Stephens has won the Irish Minibike championship in two classes.

The Roundwood racer dominated the Junior Pro Minimoto class aboard his Bikeworld Blata, winning all three races at all three rounds. He also clinched the Junior gearbox 125cc class on his Bikeworld Stomp 125.

The winter series took place over three rounds, two in Nutts Corner, Belfast, and one in Mondello park, Co, Kildare. Fionn celebrated his 9th Birthday on race day in Mondello with his fellow competitors.

Fionn is hoping to raise the budget to campaign in the Cool Fab British championship next year. You can keep up to date with him and show him support on his Facebook Page, @FSRacing17.

Councillors complain about reduced funding for footpaths

Councillors last week expressed disappointment at the reduced funding for footpaths in Wicklow's 2020 Budget.

Funding from the local Footpath Renewal Scheme which the Council has relied on over the last number of years has now ceased, meaning a reduction of €300,000 in expenditure on footpaths.

Speaking at last week's meeting, Cllr Steven Matthews said "there is some positives in this budget, but they are very minimal. Housing and roads represent half of the budget. What it highlights is the fact that local Government is not funded sufficiently and we have had that discussion over and over again, but it is plainly clear, and Wicklow is faring quite poorly in that measure. We are not being funded significantly by central Government and they are two areas where we would have historically relied heavily on central funding and it's just not there. That is a national discussion, probably not for today, but it is a discussion that will have to take place."

He continued: "In terms of the €300,000 reduction in footpaths, that is going to have very significant negative impact on district engineers' ability to carry out repairs to footpaths required in our towns and villages. Our roads and footpaths are dangerous at the moment for people

who want to walk and cycle."

Also speaking about the reduction in funding for footpaths, Councillor Shay Cullen said "I am disappointed it's been reduced. I think our footpaths across the county are in need of a lot of work. There are quite a lot of older estates in our county where paths are basically disintegrating or are a health and safety concern. We are going to have to look at doing some sort of a survey on our footpaths, particularly in the estates and villages around our county, to get a clearer picture of how serious the problem is. Because there is no doubt we are going to have further claims, if we don't deal with this issue."

Councillor John Mullen from Tinahely said "We have a situation where a footpath has been taken over by nature, the ditch has reclaimed the footpath. It's disappointing and we need to have a proper discussion on how we can get extra funding."

Cllr Pat Kennedy proposed that €100,000 be taken from the Development Contribution Scheme to be divided equally among the five Municipal Districts for footpaths, and this was agreed to.

Patron for new secondary school to be announced 'within weeks'

Fianna Fáil TD Stephen Donnelly said he has received confirmation that the patron of the new secondary school for the Greystones/Kilcoole area will be announced within 'weeks'.

Last week Deputy Donnelly explained, "This is the most up to date information available which came from a Parliamentary Question answered just this Tuesday. After months pressuring the Department of Education to reveal the patronage of our new school I'm relieved to say we should finally find out very shortly."

"I'm also pleased to say that the Minister told me the whole process should be open and transparent, as all assessment reports and recommendations for patrons will be made available online."

"This is a big step forward for parents who have been contacting my office every single day worried about the lack of local secondary school places. Understandably they can't choose a school for their child without knowing who will be in charge. But hopefully as soon as the patron is

announced they can make an informed decision and admissions can be opened straight away."

"While this latest news is reassuring, we can't forget we're still a long way from the finish line. For instance, the location of the school hasn't been decided yet. The official Department of Education report claims the building project is only at the 'land acquisition' phase, so a permanent home hasn't been secured. We're also very unhappy about the proposal to use 'temporary accommodation' when the school opens in September 2020."

"Most people fear this will be code for 'prefabs' which certainly wouldn't be suitable here. The upshot is that we have made a move in the right direction, there's still a long road ahead but we won't give up until our children get the education they deserve", concluded Donnelly.

Speaking recently on the issue, Social Democrats councillor and General Election candidate Jennifer Whitmore said "I am being contacted on a daily basis by parents concerned at the delay in deciding a patron for the new school and the lack of information being given out. It is now nearly 8 weeks since the patronage competition for the school closed, and there is still no information as to who will run the new school."

"Until that decision is made, there can be no progress towards hiring the Principal, establishing a Board of Management or locating accommodation for the school. There is a considerable volume of work that needs to be undertaken before the school can open in September of next year."

"This delay in progressing the school is placing a considerable amount of stress on parents and chil-

dren. In particular, parents of children with any special educational requirements don't know if the new school will be able to meet their needs. I have written to the Minister for Education to ask that he speed up this process and to outline the impact it was having parents and children. I know many parents have also done similar."

"Ultimately, transitioning to secondary school is a big milestone for children and should be an exciting time for them. Instead, we have a large number of students in our locality who do not know what school they will be going to next year, what friends they will be with, or what type of subjects they will be able to do. It's just very unfair, and I believe, unnecessary and I ask the Minister of Education Joe McHugh to please bring some urgency to this decision," concluded Cllr Whitmore.



Pictured are Bray Wheelers members Mark Loughran, Mark Mulcahy, Lloyd Berry, Mark Murphy (Club Chairman), Gillian Peelo, Olwyn Clarke, Edwina Beirne, Barry O'Higgins, Jason Howick, and Phil O'Brien (Club President), with Cycling Ireland Official Brian Nugent.

Bray Wheelers named Cycling Ireland Club of the Year

It was a night to remember for Bray Wheelers at the Cycling Ireland Awards, with the club taking home the title of 2019 Club of the Year, and Life Member Peter Doyle becoming the latest inductee into Cycling Ireland Hall of fame.

The Cycling Ireland Awards Evening saw members of the cycling community recognised in 13 categories, both participants and volunteers, across the various cycling disciplines.

Bray Wheelers were recognised for their "Couch to 50K" programme which ran over 6 weeks during February and March. The programme was designed for newcomers to the club to get into cycling and lead a more active lifestyle, improve their fitness and to meet new friends and became a part of the club. As a result of the success of this program the club managed to sign up 40 new members, many of whom are now continuing onto the 50k to 100k program.

Life Vice President of the Club, Phil O'Brien better known to racers of years gone by as Philip O'Brien, said "It was truly an injection of members of this couch to 50k program. The club was buzzing."

"The likes of Peter Crinnon and Peter Doyle set the bar," added a modest O'Brien who contributed

to the club in those bygone years. Bray Wheelers were also recognised for running successful editions of Shay Elliott, Ken Duff, Christy MacManus, and Ronnie Coated memorial road races, and Kilrudeary CycloCross race. These races take a huge volunteer commitment from Club members to run which Club Chairman Mark Murphy expressed his gratitude for.

Bray Wheelers lifetime member Peter Doyle became this year inductee into the Cycling Ireland Hall of Fame. Peter Doyle represented Ireland in the 1968 and 1972 Olympics, and has Multiple Irish Championships to his name for Road and TT. Peter also won the Tour Of Ireland stage race. Congratulations from everyone at Bray Wheelers. Doyle joins Cycling royalty in the hall of fame, the likes of Sean Kelly, Stephen Roche, and Peter Crinnion (Also Bray Wheelers) who was multiple Irish Champion and represented Ireland at the Rome Olympics.

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'HYPOCRITICAL GREEN PARTY IS AGAINST EVERYTHING IN WICKLOW'

Fine Gael's Cllr Derek Mitchell has attacked the Green Party for opposing N11 and rail improvements in Wicklow and in a statement headed up 'Green Party hypocritical in opposing N11 and Rail improvements', said that the proposal to reduce the N11 to one lane and a bus lane would "paralyse" Wicklow and create "total chaos".

Cllr Mitchell said "The Green Party proposal to cancel the N11 upgrade and convert one lane to a Bus Lane will cause total chaos in County Wicklow. Speaking to the leader of the Green Party Eamonn Ryan on the radio I was surprised to hear that he wants to reduce the car lanes on the already jammed N11. It is essential that the bus lane is extra to the existing two lanes South of Kilmacanoge and there must be many Express Buses.

"North of Kilmacanoge there may well need to be three car lanes. A solution to Wicklow's transport will need rail, bus and N11 improvements. We need to let the engineers study this and make their recommendations which are due next Summer. The Green Party is wrong to think Central Dublin solutions will work on this National Primary Route.

"The Green Party opposed 'improving the South East rail line' in the Regional Planning Guidelines. I asked the Minister for Environment to override this and he has now altered the wording to



Cllr Derek Mitchell

'improve' rail. Now the Green leader Eamonn Ryan says he will shelve upgrade plans for the N11.

"In April 2015 I proposed that rezoning in Wicklow should not take place unless Public Transport and the N11 had been improved. The Green Party and Fianna Fail voted against that as well and with only Fine Gael Councillors in favour this was defeated. Hence the present traffic jams which will get much worse in future.

"The Green Party is against everything in Wicklow and will produce chaos. Currently Irish Rail keeps the Wicklow Rail line virtually empty at rush hour. In 2018 I produced a plan to improve Wicklow's rail and bus services but this will need to be done with Bus Priority measures

for Express Buses."

Responding to Cllr Mitchell's remarks, Green Party Cllr Steven Matthews said "The road needs work to improve junctions and drainage but the third lane is a folly that will fail the commuters of Wicklow. The overall N11 proposal is worrying because it's such outdated thinking and lacking any imagination on improving existing public transport.

"It's extremely worrying that most political parties are looking for this to be fast tracked without knowing much detail but knowing that improving public transport options on the rail line are being largely ignored in the National Transport Authority transport strategy. A third lane or a fourth or fifth has never reduced congestion it will simply bottleneck and back up again at N11/M50.



Cllr Steven Matthews

Instead of looking at traffic gridlock out of one window you'll be looking at it out both sides, with a massive price tag, continued environmental damage and years of construction misery.

"I fully expected Fine Gael to come after the Greens, as Fine Gael is completely bereft of any good ideas on transport, planning, housing and climate change so it's natural they would target us. It's a cynical attack to use Wicklow commuters in this way. Much of the N11 problems are due to a lack of investment in public transport, land use planning over the years and inappropriate zoning often led by FG councillors.

"The N11 proposal is vague, lacking in detail and shows very limited forward planning thought. It's all about being seen to do 'something' but in reality, will do more harm than good and ultimately fail. It's a bit like FG in general, all spin and no all substance or understanding. If we really want to improve commuting for Wicklow residents then TDs and councillors need to work together and start thinking public transport not ridiculous road based solutions. I recently received confirmation from the NTA that no new carriages or ser-

vices are planned for the Wicklow rail line and will instead focus on Kildare, Maynooth and the Northern line, it appears at national level that few of our TDs are fighting for better public transport for Wicklow."

Also weighing into the debate was Independent councillor Joe Behan. He said "Recent newspaper reports have stated that the Green Party leader has said the Greens will halt the proposed upgrades of the N11 if they are in the next



Cllr Joe Behan

Government. This news is causing serious alarm among the tens of thousands of hard-pressed commuters using the road every day. The frustration and stress caused by the unending delays in getting to and from work every day is seriously damaging the welfare of thousands of County Wicklow families. Many parents are leaving their children in childcare from 6am in the morning and not being able to collect them before 6 or 7 in the evening. When there are additional hold ups these times can be even longer and overall they extract a huge emotional toll on children and their parents.

"I firmly believe that a combination of measures, including public transport, park and ride and road expansion will be needed to resolve the N11 crisis. It is also essential that the Government ensures that all transport agencies including the Dept. of Transport, TII, NTA, Bus Éireann, Dublin Bus, Iarnród Éireann, and Wicklow County Council work together to provide a comprehensive solution to one of the biggest challenges facing tens of thousands of people from Co. Wicklow every day."



Pictured at the recent Mary Immaculate College conferring ceremonies in Limerick were Michelle Larkin from Rathdrum, and her teacher Edel Fenlon. Michelle was among the 887 students who graduated from the Leadership for INclusion in the Early Years (LINC) Programme.

Pic: Liam Burke

Bog Meadow lease gets go-ahead

The Bog Meadow Management Committee held an open meeting last Monday night to discuss the proposed Lease from Wicklow county council.

Chairman of the Enniskerry forum Stephen Byrne presented the details of the lease to a packed room made up of all the main user groups of the Bog Meadow and members of the community. Their was a unanimous decision by the community to proceed with the lease.

"The lease will enable the Bog Meadow user group to apply for funding through the leader programme and various other sources of funding," said Cllr Melanie Corrigan, adding "this is a very positive thing for the community of Enniskerry and a great opportunity to work towards getting a proper fit for purpose hall for Enniskerry, A playground for young families to meet, and proper sports facilities to be used by our young people to support their physical and mental health and wellbeing."



COMHAIRLE CHONTAE CHILL MHANTÁIN
WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL

BUILT HERITAGE GRANT SCHEMES 2020

Wicklow County Council invites applications for funding from owners of protected structures and structures within Architectural Conservation Areas (ACAs) under the following two schemes as operated by the Department of Culture, Heritage, and the Gaeltacht;

- Built Heritage Investment Scheme (BHIS) 2020, and the
- Historic Structures Fund (HSF) 2020

Funding supports under the BHIS range from €2500 - €15000 per project. A pilot stream is being introduced this year for small scale works of routine maintenance and minor repairs which were not previously eligible for funding under the scheme. Supports under this new stream will be less than €2,000. There is a total BHIS allocation of €60,000 for County Wicklow.

Under the HSF there are two funding streams; Stream 1 will offer grants from €15,000 up to €50,000, and Stream 2 will offer a small number of grants nationally from €50,000 up to €200,000.

Full details of each scheme including guidelines and application forms are available on www.wicklow.ie or by request from Wicklow County Council Planning Office Tel: 0404 20100, e-mail plandev@wicklowcoco.ie

All completed applications (Form A) should to be clearly marked BHIS or HSF as relevant and returned by e mail to plandev@wicklowcoco.ie or by post to: Planning Section, Wicklow County Council, County Buildings, Wicklow Town.

The closing date for both schemes is Friday 31st January 2020

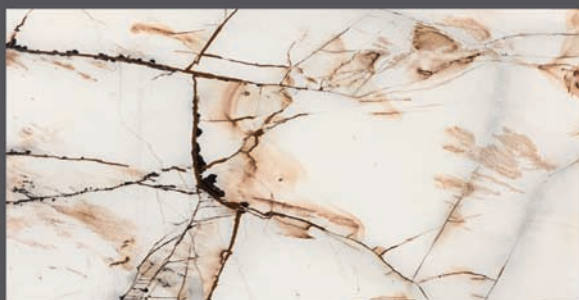
Please note that multiple applications for the same structure under the Historic Structure Funds and the Built Heritage Investment Scheme will not be considered.



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www.megazyme.com

Megazyme is a biotechnology SME based in the IDA Business Park, Southern Cross Road, Bray. Originally founded in Sydney Australia in 1988, the company moved to Ireland in 1996 and now develops, manufactures and supplies analytical reagents for a wide range of industries in which carbohydrates or enzymes play an important role. Examples in the food and beverage space include cereals, dairy, malting, brewing and distilling industries while some products also have applications in the biofuel and enzyme manufacturing sectors.

In 2018 Megazyme celebrated 30 years in business with a gala, black-tie event held in the MarriottDruids Glen Hotel. Over 100 employees, friends and business associates gathered to celebrate the success of the company. During the evening a video of the past 30 years of Megazyme was shown, which included messages of congratulations from across the globe to company founder Prof.



Barry McCleary.

Prof. McCleary, CEO and owner, leads an expert team of 25 scientists within a staff of 49. Megazyme scientists travel all over the world to attend conferences to highlight their work. A new building was opened early in 2019, planned with scientific research in mind and kitted out with state-of-the-art instrumentation. The new Biochemical Research Team is now based there, a group primarily focussed on the development of novel assay kits, which Megazyme is renowned for globally.

New products released by Megazyme in 2019 include three new assay kits which allow for the correct labelling of a food's carbohydrate content ("available" carbohydrates, resistant starch and digestible starch). These new products could have positive implications for those dealing with obesity or Type 2 diabetes. Megazyme's recently launched assay kit for the measurement of lactose in low-lactose products (K-LOLAC) was endorsed by the American Association of Analytical Chemists (AOAC), one of the world's most renowned bodies in the food analysis field, as the reference method for lactose measurement in lactose-free products. This successful endorsement represents the first step for Megazyme's LOLAC kit to become the only recommended method for the labelling of low-lactose dairy products globally.

From an environmental perspective, Megazyme has developed and launched a series



Pictured is Ruth Ivory (Biochemistry Lead).



Pictured is Tadas Kargelis (Organic Chemist).



Megazyme's new website: www.megazyme.com.



Pictured is Stuart Daly (Production Technology Specialist) presenting the League cup to UCC, the winner of the National Amputee's Football League which is sponsored by Megazyme.



Pictured are Vincent McKie (Technical Director), Barry McCleary (CEO) and Iain Power (Facilities Lead) taking part in the Cycle 4 Haiti charity event.



Megazyme

Bray Business Park,
Bray, Co. Wicklow.
Tel: 01 286 1220 fax: 01 286 1264
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Pictured is Claudio Cornaggia (Organic Chemistry Lead).



Megazyme's new K-LOLAC assay kit for the measurement of lactose in lactose-free products



Pictured are Eoin Doyle and John Edwards using an automated packing machine.

of other important and unique assay kits. One of these kits allows for the analysis of a key enzyme in the manufacturing of biofuels (glucuronoyl esterase). This enzyme has recently been identified as a critical component in making 2nd generation biofuel (bio-ethanol production from cellulosic material). This is an eco-friendlier process with Megazyme's new kit being the sole commercially available product for measurement of this important activity. A kit for the measurement of phosphate was also launched. This kit will prove vital to measure water quality as phosphates are generally used in fertilisers and water run-off from farming can affect local rivers or lakes. In addition, it will also be used to assess the nutritional qualities of feed for poultry.

2019 marked the release of a variety of ultra-pure enzymes and oligosaccharide standards which involved valuable contributions by all of the scientific staff at Megazyme. Prof McCleary was so passionate about one particular study related to the measurement of fructan (a key dietary fiber component) in grasses used as animal feed, that he actually started his own plot at the back of the new Megazyme extension. He grew a variety of grass species and analysed them to measure their nutritional content.

This year Megazyme delivered a complete overhaul of its online webstore, www.megazyme.com keeping up to date with the latest technological developments in this space. All of Megazyme's sales are made through the website. The new website is mobile

device friendly to cater for the increasing traffic volumes from these devices. As well as an "e-shop", the website also acts as an online resource for the scientific community that our products serve. Megazyme's new website went "live" on October 14th and has already received orders from 59 countries around the world.

Megazyme is a company with a strong social conscience, in addition to its passion for innovation. Each year, Megazyme donates 2% of annual turnover to worthy causes, both locally and internationally. The company respects its responsibility to contribute to the global community, from charitable donations and campaigning, to supporting fundraising efforts initiated by our staff. Organisations supported by the company include: Peter McVerry Trust, Wicklow Hospice

Foundation, Ó'Cualann Cohousing Alliance, Irish Amputee Football Association, Acquired Brain Injury Ireland, Haven Partnership, St. Vincent de Paul, Greystones Tidy Towns, and Bray Lion's Club.

The company's success is dependent on its people. Megazyme believes that each employee, irrespective of their role or position, contributes directly to the quality of its products and services. Staff wellbeing is extremely important and Megazyme is committed to make the company a safe, happy and healthy place to work. A Wellbeing Programme is ongoing throughout the year. This includes a series of workshops and events on a variety of topics including Healthy Eating, Mindfulness, Pension Planning, Walking Wednesdays, Massage, Herbs for Health.



Megazyme's 30th Anniversary celebrations at Druid's Glen, Christmas 2018.



Bray: the perfect place to soak up Christmas spirit

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Bray Chamber, Bray.ie and Wicklow County Council are once again encouraging everyone to shop locally and support the wide range of businesses in the town this festive season.

With Christmas closing in fast and only a few weeks left to do your shopping, Bray's bustling town centre has everything you might need to put the final touches on your preparations. With its multitude of shops, Bray will fulfill any shopping objective you have set yourself before Christmas.

Gift shops, jewellery stores, supermarkets and fashion shops are just a small selection of what is on offer in this sparkling town, leaving you feeling full to the brim with Christmas cheer. The Christmas Lights in Bray were switched on last weekend, and the town now has that perfect festive ambience for doing your Christmas shopping. People can pick up a gift or simply enjoy some festive cheer at one of the many pubs, clubs and restaurants throughout the town and with free car parking in Wicklow County Council car parks at weekends throughout December, it makes Bray



Lyngo Theatre presents: *Heart of Winter*, at the Mermaid in Bray on Tuesday 17th December at 4pm and Wednesday 18th December at 10am. Tickets are €10/8. A Family Ticket is €30. Age Suitability is 3+, and the duration is 1 hour

the perfect place to soak up the Christmas spirit.

Bray is packed full of incredible event experiences that you can't get anywhere else this

Christmas - from watching "Christmas Movies at Mermaid", visiting "Santa at Killruddery", catching "Candlelight Concerts" to exploring the

"Killruddery Christmas Market", Bray really has something for everyone this festive season.

Cllr Steven Matthews, Cathaoirleach of Bray

Municipal District, said: "Remember for all your shopping needs, places to eat, drink and be merry you can't afford to miss Christmas in Bray."

SFA names 7th December 'Small Business Saturday'

~ Wicklow's Christmas shoppers encouraged to spend locally in small businesses ~

An extra €20 spent in a Wicklow small business this Christmas, would amount to an injection of €2 million for the County's economy

The Small Firms Association has called for 7 December 2019 to be 'Small Business Saturday' and has called on shoppers across Wicklow to support small businesses in their communities. SFA Director, Sven Spollen-Behrens, stated: "Our strong economy and rising employment rates across the country will raise consumer spirits and enable greater spending power over this year's busy Christmas shopping period. If each Wicklow adult spent just €20 extra in small businesses this Christmas, this would amount to an injection of €2 million for Wicklow's economy which would have a huge, positive impact on local jobs and the vibrancy of town and village centres. The first Saturday of December is traditionally a busy shopping day and consumers should use this weekend as an opportunity to focus on buying Irish and supporting all types of small businesses, online and in store, as the Christmas celebrations can add a major economic impetus to the country, to small businesses and help

maintain jobs. Across the country, if each adult spent just €20 extra in small businesses this Christmas, this would amount to an injection of over €73 million for small Irish firms. "Small business must take every

opportunity to offer the widest possible range of goods at the most competitive prices if they are to attract as many Christmas shoppers as possible. Today's shoppers are very value-conscious and there are great deals to be had in small businesses around the country. Retail employs more people in Ireland than any other sector of

the economy. Consumers should think about this when making their Christmas shopping decisions as this time of year is make or break for many small retailers. We are calling on consumers to shop locally in small businesses and buy Irish products. This way, shoppers, businesses and communities can all feel the Christmas cheer."

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Sat. 14th Dec. 2019

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Pop along to our free Santa Paws event in store.

Take a picture of your pet with Santa using your own camera.



Maxi Zoo Bray, Unit 5 Bray Retail Park, Southern Cross Road, Bray, Co. Wicklow

WISHING YOU A MERRY CHRISTMAS & A FANTASTIC 2020. THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT IN 2019!

CHILDREN'S THEATRE
LYNGO THEATRE - HEART OF WINTER
TUE 17 | 4pm & WED 18 December | 10am

DANCE
BALLET IRELAND - SWAN LAKE
FRI 20 & SAT 21 | 7pm & SUN 22 December | 2.30pm

CHILDREN'S THEATRE
BOSCO
FRI 3 January 2020 | 2pm & 4pm

MUSIC
LEGENDS OF AMERICAN COUNTRY
SAT 4 January 2020 | 8pm

CIRCUS
HOW TO SQUARE A CIRCLE
SAT 11 January 2020 | 7pm

MUSIC NETWORK PRESENTS
ANXO LORENZO, JIM MURRAY, DONAL O'CONNOR & JACK TALTY
THURS 23 January 2020 | 8pm

LITERATURE
THE WRITING LIFE: RICHIE SADLIER
FRI 6 March 2020 | 8pm

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Christmas in BRAY

The Giving Tree is back in Bray

Bray Rotary Club will host their annual Christmas Giving Tree next weekend and will be on the steps of the Holy Redeemer Church, 7th and 8th December and again on Saturday 14th and Sunday 15th.

They are now in their 15th year and help in excess of 300 people each year.

How the Giving Tree works is that Gift Tags are placed on the tree with first names and ages of local needy children and also vulnerable teenagers and adults.

Bray Rotary get the names from the four St

Vincent de Paul Conferences in Bray, Purple House Cancer Support, Five Loaves Soup Kitchen, Ark Housing, Bray Community Helpers, Open Door Day Centre and CASA, the Caring and Sharing Association.

The public take a gift tag; buy that person a suitable present, bring it

back to the tree (unwrapped) and Rotary distribute them to the Charities.

Each year they get huge support from the people of Bray, especially families, and have many regulars coming year after year.

Organiser Una Whelan says "We realise people have many calls on their

generosity especially at this time of year but we would be grateful for any help, we are catering for the least fortunate and often forgotten."

If you would like any further information please contact Club Secretary Una Whelan on 086 8091117. Or Club President, Pat Hastings on 0879572797.



Each year Christy Kavanagh, of Kavanagh's Christmas Tree Farm kindly donates the Giving Tree, pictured last Wednesday accepting delivery of this year's tree at the Holy Redeemer Church in Bray were (front centre) John and Una Whelan from Bray Rotary Club, with Monique Jolly (Sunbeam House Dignity Packs), Samantha Murphy, Catriona Reynolds, Conor McCarthy, Ann O'Brien, Aisling Gorman (Purple House Cancer Support), and Conor Doyle (Bray Caring and Sharing Association).



Maxi Zoo is reminding pet owners that danger lies in wait for dogs and cats during the festive period. Many animals are drawn to it as if by magic: the Christmas tree. The colourful ornaments and glittering tinsel are especially tempting to cats. As a result, many Christmas celebrations have ended at the animal hospital because the cat tried to climb the tree and it fell over as a result, or the dog jiggled an ornament off the tree and he cut himself on the shards. If your pet eats tinsel, it can lead to obstructed bowels, while drinking Christmas tree water can also affect your pet's health. For more tips on enjoying the festive season safely with your pet, call in to your local Maxi Zoo store in Bray today!

Happy Christmas to all
from
National Learning Network
Investing in People, Changing Perspectives
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WICKLOW
#christmasinbray

Christmas in Co. Wicklow

Christmas has arrived in Wicklow Town

Christmas has well and truly arrived in the town with the switching on of the Christmas lights on Saturday 23rd November. The entire town is lit up with a stunning display of Christmas lights and decorations.

There's no need to stray far this year when it comes time to do your Christmas shopping. Shopping in Wicklow Town will provide you with all the necessary shops as well as give you a boost of Christmas spirit with the festive lights.



made less stressful as you stroll around the town and feel the true magic of Christmas as you pick up gifts for your friends and loved ones. Business in Wicklow Town is booming and the number of people choosing to shop

Local in Wicklow is testament to the great value and great choice the county town has to offer this Christmas.

Along with the great array of boutiques, clothes shops, toy shops, chemists, salons and electrical supply stores, Wicklow Town has a great selection of pubs, restaurants and cafes to meet up with friends over the festive season or take a well earned break from the Christmas shopping madness.

The county town's selection of businesses always draws people into town around Christmas and you are likely to bump into old friends you haven't seen in years.

Wicklow Town is offering a hassle free festive shopping experience which will not only leave you with more change in your pocket but a smile on your face.

Since the sparkling lights display went up this year everyone is in agreement that the town is looking beautifully festive and is full of seasonal cheer.

So this year enjoy the atmosphere and warm welcome of Wicklow Town while picking up some great value and gains. Soak up the joy of the festive season with a shopping trip to Wicklow Town.



Ross Dalton, Lucy Dalton and Katherine Cregg at the switching on of the Christmas Lights in Wicklow Town

Two hours of free parking in Wicklow Town during Christmas period

Shoppers will enjoy two hours free Christmas parking in all Pay and Display Parking areas in Wicklow town from Monday, 2nd December to Wednesday, 1st January 2020, inclusive.

There will be free parking at the Seafront Car Park for the Christmas period and traders and staff can also avail of this.

The initiative on special Christmas parking arrangements was agreed by the Cathaoirleach and Members of Wicklow Municipal District.

Cathaoirleach Cllr Shay Cullen invited people to avail of the free parking over the Christmas period saying: "It's an excellent opportunity to shop local for the festive season and enjoy all that Wicklow Town has to offer".

Please note the traffic wardens will continue to monitor and enforce illegal parking during this time.

Loading bay restricted hours between 9am to 12 noon, Monday to Friday, will also still apply.

Throughout the rest of the year the following applies to parking in Wicklow Town: Free parking between 9.00 am and 10 am; 15 minute

courtesy period applies; Saturday 2 hours free; Sunday free parking all day.

Parking Tag

Cashless parking is available by using Parking Tag. This service allows motorists to park by phone and extend their parking without returning to the vehicle.

How to use the service

is available on www.parkingtag.ie Motorists can register online or on the Parking Tag mobile app.

Best Dressed Window

Wicklow Municipal District together with the Wicklow Town Team will sponsor a Best Dressed Christmas Window Competition. The winner and runner-up will receive a Christmas Hamper and Wicklow Town Vouchers.

There is no need to formally enter the compe-

tion, but retailers must have their displays ready by Monday, 9th December.

Wicklow Town Team Chairman, Dave Shannon, said: "Each year our businesses make every effort to encourage customers to shop local and the Christmas window displays helps to create a wonderful atmosphere in the town."

The winners shall be announced at the Wicklow Municipal District Meeting on Monday, 16th December.

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Darren, Kara, and Sibeal Walsh at the switching on of the Christmas Lights in Wicklow Town.

Christmas in Co. WICKLOW



Fundraising for a new den for the 7th Wicklow Scouts, were Nora Kennedy and Margaret Davis at the switching on of the Christmas Lights in Wicklow Town



Harvey, dad Paul, Tom, Heidi, Joe, and mum Caoimhe Doyle at the switching on of the Christmas Lights in Wicklow Town



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Wicklow Christmas Market: Where Christmas Begins

Wicklow Christmas Market is set in the magical and historical Abbey grounds in Wicklow Town, taking place from 12 - 6 pm on Dec 7th, 8th 14th and 15th.

Between the selection of local artisan foods, decorations, gifts, workshops and visiting Santa himself at the new Santa Express experience where Oribel the mischievous and fun

elf will transport you on a magical journey aboard the Santa express train to Santa's Wonderland. There will be an abundance of fun and sparkly activities to get you and your family in the Christmas mood.

The Ray of Sunshine morning and afterschool service will be sending Special Needs Assistant Elves to help Santa (certified child specialists who are trained to assist children with special needs), making sure every child visiting Santa is in the best hands.

There will be a number of music and entertainment acts to dazzle your senses, along with a magical family funfair. There will also be an Alpaca experience, where adults and children will get a chance to mingle with all things woolly and wonderful.

Wherever you're from, this promises to be an event worth going to. This is a non-ticketed event, so anyone and everyone is welcome to attend. Come along, and let Christmas begin.

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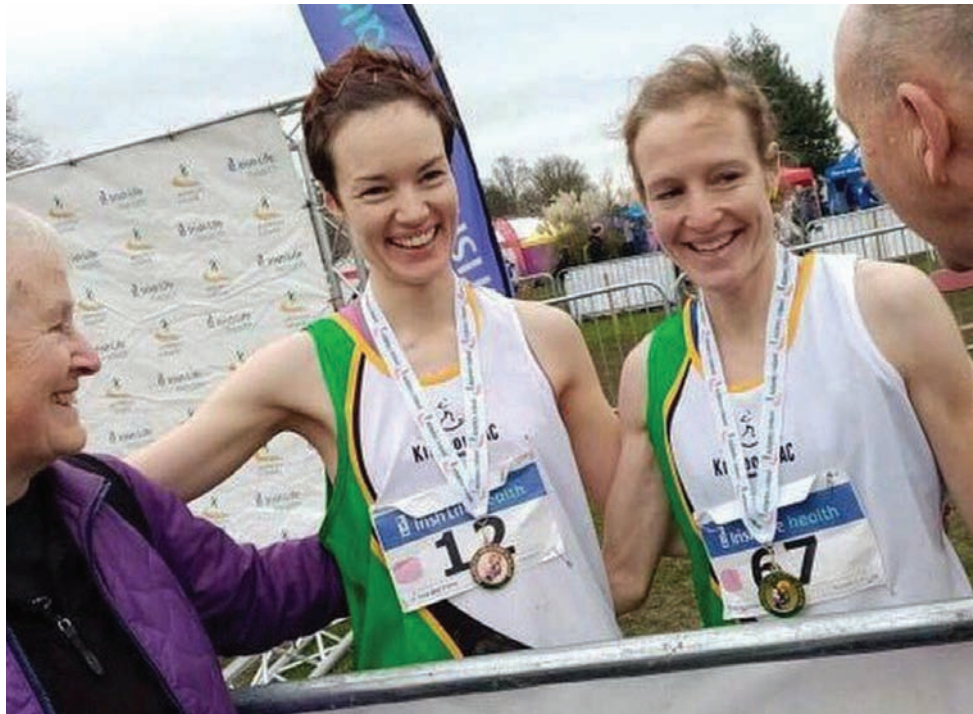
WICKLOW CHRISTMAS MARKET

Nov 30th, Dec 1st, 7th, 8th, 14th & 15th.
from 12 - 6pm. Abbey Grounds, Wicklow Town

- Craft Market • Funfair
- Alpaca Experience • Santa Express
- Artisan Food • Puppet Shows
- Live Music & Entertainment
- Workshops

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www.wicklowchristmasmarket.com



Sisters Una and Fionnuala both took medals at the National Cross Country Championships

Kilcoole sisters share podium at Cross Country Championship

Two Wicklow sisters took podium positions at the National Cross Country Championships. Fionnuala McCormack (formerly Britton) and her sister Una Britton took first and third place respectively at the 8km senior women's event in Abbotstown.

Fionnuala led the field all the way and took the gold medal winning her ninth national title with a time of 28.41. Her sister Una took the bronze medal with a time of 30.32 with Fionnuala making a u-turn after finishing to run back and cheer her sister through the finish.

Fionnuala will now hope to pick up a medal in Lisbon next week as she was announced as part of the 40 strong Irish team for the European Cross Country Championships. The Kilcoole AC athlete has previously picked up gold twice at the event, taking the senior women's title in 2011 and 2012.

35 year old Fionnuala began her international junior career in cross country running in 2001. Since then she has picked up a massive haul of medals and competed at the Olympic games in Beijing in 2008, London in 2012 and Rio de Janeiro in 2016. Earlier this year she achieved a personal best in her marathon time of 2.26:47.

Iconic Bray pub image to feature in collection at 'Gifted' craft fair

The historic Harbour Bar in Bray will form part of a series immortalising the country's vintage pubs which will feature at Gifted - The Contemporary Craft and Design Fair in the RDS, from December 4th-8th.

Roger O'Reilly is intent on capturing the atmosphere of some of Ireland's oldest and most iconic pubs before they call time for good.

"Pubs are an important part of our built heritage but some are in danger of disappearing," said Roger. "We have a wealth of wonderful pubs in Ireland, from the ornate Victorian gems of Dublin and Belfast to more mod-

est establishments such as Morrissey's in Abbeyleix, and I want to capture them and their character before they are lost forever.

"McDaid's in Dublin is known for its literature whereas Danny Mac's in Dingle is famous for its music.

"Each of these pubs have their own intrinsic value to both local and the wider community.

"Often we associate good times when growing up with a particular pub before we get older and move away.

"They hold good memories and capture a part of our youth we hold invaluable.

"I've about 30 so far finished and aim to cover a lot more," he concluded.

Roger O'Reilly of Irelandposters.ie specialises in travel posters in the style of railway advertisements from the thirties.

Roger, who has worked on storyboards for clients such as Coca-Cola and Diageo as well as the TV series 'Vikings' has also created posters of many of the 90 lighthouses around the Irish coast.

Celebrating the best in contemporary Irish design and artisan food, Gifted at the RDS is home to over 500 stands packed with original gifts.

And for those in search of a green Christmas, this year sees Gifted devote two special areas to environmentally friendly products.

The Sustainable Pop-Up features 40 of

Ireland's finest sustainable living brands and the Sustainable Edit, curated by journalist Jo Linehan, founder of The Futurist podcast, showcases 12 top ethical producers.

"2019 is the year of sustainability at Gifted with thousands of thoughtful and ethical gifts for your loved ones," said organiser Patrick O'Sullivan.

"Many of our exhibitors will have signs at their stands saying 'ask me my sustainable story' so shoppers can find out more about the origins of the gifts they are buying."

Traditionally heralding the start of the festive season in Dublin, Gifted also hosts the Spectacular Christmas Food Emporium with over 100 artisan food producers.

There will be 10% off everything at Gifted on the opening day, Wednesday, December 4.

Gifted Contemporary Craft and Design Fair takes place at the RDS Main Hall from December 4-8 from 10am each day. Full details and booking can be found at www.giftedfair.ie

Enable Ireland Wicklow goes purple for International Day of People with Disabilities

Tuesday 3rd December is UN International Day of People with Disabilities and for the second year running disability activist Gary Kearney and the Disability Federation of Ireland are planning to flood landmark buildings in Ireland in purple lights to salute the 643,131 people in Ireland, (over 13% of the population) who live with a disability.

Staff in Enable Ireland in Wicklow are supporting the 'Purple Lights' campaign and will wear purple to mark the day in their Children's Service Centre.

"International Day of People with Disabilities is an opportunity to promote awareness and understanding of the abilities of people living with disabilities and of the various barriers faced by them, while also celebrating the achievements, contributions and courage of each individual. We are delighted to join with people with disabilities around the world to

put a spotlight on disability on the 3rd December," commented Frances Fitzell, Children's Services Manager Enable Ireland Wicklow.

The UN International Day of People with Disabilities is an annual event which takes place on the 3rd December. The observance of the Day aims to promote an understanding of disability issues and mobilize support for the dignity, rights and well-being of persons with disabilities. This year, the theme of the Day is 'The Future is Accessible.'

On this day, Enable Ireland is joining with the UN and others to call on people to work together towards a future which is accessible to everyone, where people are not excluded because of their disability.

Members of the public can show their support for International Day of People with Disabilities by following the #PurpleLights and #IDPWD campaign online.

Enable Ireland has provided disability services in Wicklow for over 50

years, and currently supports over 300 children with disabilities from Marino Centre on Church Road in Bray, and their service in Arklow. They also have a children's respite service in Silverpines House, Bray, where children can come for a break with their friends. Nationally, Enable Ireland provide services to 8,500 children and adults with disabilities in 15 counties. You can find out more about Enable Ireland by visiting www.enableireland.ie.

Pearse Doherty addresses insurance meeting in Wicklow

Sinn Féin TD for Wicklow John Brady was joined by his colleague and party spokesperson for Finance Pearse Doherty TD, who has been spearheading a campaign calling for Insurance Reform, at a public meeting in Bray last Wednesday.

This is the latest in a series of campaign events that Deputy Doherty has held across the state in his bid to reform the insurance industry and end the rip-off of individuals, businesses and families.

Speaking following the meeting, Deputy Brady said "Last night in Bray, I along with my colleagues Cllr Grace McManus and Cllr Dermot O'Brien hosted a public meeting on the insurance rip-off with Pearse Doherty TD.

"Insurance costs have become extortionate, ripping off consumers and closing down businesses. Since 2016 Fine Gael have sat back in the face of rising insurance costs while Fianna Fáil have let them off the hook.

"The insurance industry tells us that fraudulent claims and the cost of personal injury awards are causing premiums to rise. But through the work of Pearse Doherty we know that their figures don't add up.

"Despite the total number of motor insurance claims reducing by 22% between 2014 and 2017, the average motor insurance premium has increased by 53% between 2013 and 2017.

"Premiums are rising. The only other thing that is rising are insurance company profits. Pearse Doherty is leading a campaign to take on the industry and end the rip-off.

"The policies and legislation that he has produced on behalf of Sinn Féin would stamp out fraud, protect consumers, ban price discrimination and reduce premiums for everyone."

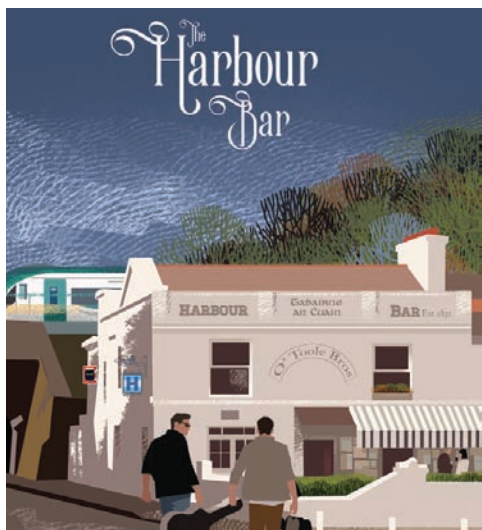
Speaking on Sinn Féin's work to date, Cllr Grace McManus added "Only this month, Pearse successfully campaigned for the Central Bank to open up an investigation into price discrimination by the insurance industry.

"The meeting heard about Sinn Féin's plan to set up a Garda Insurance Fraud Unit to tackle insurance fraud when and if it takes place and to ban Dual Pricing by the Insurance Industry. The meeting also heard about Sinn Féin's Consumer Insurance Contracts Bill law which, if enacted, proposes to abolish Premium Levies and put €230 million back in consumers' pockets while also introducing State Intervention to address the market failure."

Cllr Dermot O'Brien concluded "The issue of insurance is such a huge one and affects the lives of ordinary people and businesses alike throughout Wicklow, so therefore it's important that we continue to campaign to end the Insurance Rip-Off."



Cllr Grace McManus, Pearse Doherty TD, John Brady TD & Cllr Dermot O'Brien



Roger O'Reilly's poster of The Harbour Bar Wicklow

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Pictured is Minister Simon Harris at the Blessington Community School Awards Night last week with Mr Burke (Principal), Student of the Year Franciszek Polak and Mr Kelly (Vice Principal)

BirdWatch Ireland appeals to the public to record sick finches

BirdWatch Ireland's Irish Garden Bird Survey is entering its 31st year this December, and for the first time participants are being asked to record the numbers of sick birds seen in their gardens.

Last year's results showed that Greenfinches fell to their lowest ever numbers as a result of 'finch trichomoniasis' - a parasitic infection that results in the deaths of infected birds. In the 1990's and early 2000's Greenfinches were recorded in around 90% of gardens each winter, but their numbers since have plummeted and fewer than 60% of gardens had Greenfinches last winter.

"The rapid decrease in Greenfinch numbers over the last 10 years has been extremely worrying, and last winter's results suggest their decline hasn't bottomed out yet," said Brian Burke, who coordinates the survey for BirdWatch Ireland. "Thousands of people all over the country take part in the Irish Garden Bird Survey every winter, so we're hoping to use the public's help to get a better handle on where and when this infection is hitting birds over the winter. As well as noting down the numbers of different bird species using their gardens each week, we need participants to tell us about any sick birds they see too."

"We're delighted to have The Ballymaloe Group on board once again as official sponsor of the Irish Garden Bird Survey again this year. Thanks to their generous support we're able to dedicate more resources to tackling issues such as bird illness in a scientific way, which in turn allows us to do even more to protect and monitor Ireland's beloved garden and countryside birds."

Fern Allen of Ballmaloe said, "Ballymaloe are proud to support the BirdWatch Ireland survey. As one of Ireland's leading food brands, Ballymaloe has a responsibility to ensure sustainability is at the core of everything we do. Our commitment to wetlands, rewilding and protection of natural habitats allows birds and other creatures to thrive in the East Cork countryside."

It is important to note that the *Trichomonas gallinae* parasite poses no threat whatsoever to humans, nor indeed to any other mammals, including cats, dogs, horses, cattle and sheep. It is strictly a bird disease and has been recorded in pigeon and bird of prey populations for a long time. It is even thought to have been a problem for the dinosaurs, from which modern birds ultimately evolved. It 'jumped' to finches in Britain in 2007 and was first recorded in Ireland the following year.

Since then it has caused huge declines in Greenfinches in many parts of northern Europe.

Brian Burke noted, "Finch species are the birds that are most likely to be affected by trichomoniasis. The symptoms that infected birds show include fluffed up feathers, difficulty swallowing food, sometimes with food stuck to their beaks, and an unusual reluctance to fly away when disturbed."

"Nobody could have predicted that this parasite would start to impact our finch populations, but thankfully we had the Irish Garden Bird Survey in place before it happened, so we have the data to show just exactly how hard some species have been hit. We get a great response to the survey every winter, and this time around people can give added value to their records by letting us know about any sick birds they see."

"Other finch species can be affected, most notably Chaffinches and Goldfinches, but their populations haven't been impacted to the same degree. Chaffinch numbers did dip when the parasite first appeared, but their numbers have recovered," according to Brian Burke.

"Goldfinches have been doing well and trichomoniasis has done little to slow their growth. They've gone from being recorded in under 15% of gardens in the mid-1990's to over 80% of gardens in recent years."



Greenfinch showing symptoms of trichomoniasis. Pic: Coilin MacLochlainm

Harris meets with social media companies to discuss anti-vax misinformation

Minister for Health Simon Harris last week met with the social media companies, Facebook, Twitter, and Google, to discuss the measures they are taking to combat anti-vaccination misinformation on social media platforms.

Vaccine hesitancy has been identified by the World Health Organisation as one of the ten leading threats to global health in 2019.

The Minister outlined his concerns, saying "The progress we have made in reducing, and in some cases eradicating, vaccine-preventable diseases will be in vain if we allow our immunisation programmes to be undermined by misinformation and disinformation about the benefits and safety of vaccines, particularly on social media".

He added, "Social media is an incredibly powerful tool that can also be harnessed to direct people to sources of factual information about vaccination, so they can make informed decisions. It is in this context that I met with the social media companies today".

The Minister commended the social media companies for being proactive and putting in place measures to tackle this issue and he welcomed their commitment to work with the Department of Health to make further progress.



Minister Simon Harris

However, he added: "The companies themselves acknowledged they

have a responsibility to their users in the area of public health. While some of them have taken measures to combat vaccine misinformation, they acknowledged there was much more work to be done and agreed to liaise with the Department regarding the work of the Vaccine Alliance and with the HSE to progress further initiatives.

"We must do everything we can to ensure people get accurate and reputable information on public health," he concluded.

Wicklow's Netwatch Carer of the Year Awarded

The 2019 Netwatch National Carer of the Year and four regional Young Carers of the Year for 2019 were announced at a gala awards ceremony held in the Westin Hotel, Dublin on Friday, 22nd November.

Broadcasters and patrons of Family Carers Ireland Marty Whelan and Mary Kennedy presented the Wicklow Netwatch Carer of the Year to Margaret (Pearl) Pryor.

Pearl cares for her daughter who has an Acquired Brain Injury for the past nine years. She provides this care with compassion and love, she also promotes and encourages independence and helps her daughter to live as 'normal' a life as possible. Pearl is a brilliant advocate for her vulnerable daughter and will keep fighting for her, she cares and loves every member of her family equally and has never made anyone feel left out or forgotten. She is a very loving and caring person and really deserves this award.

Marcin Filak from Kildalkey, Co. Meath was the overall Netwatch Carer of the Year Award winner. Marcin cares for his wife Ola, who suffers from locked-in syndrome, and their two children, the eldest of whom Piotr (13) has autism. Ola suffered a catastrophic brain stem stroke three weeks after the birth of the couple's daughter Anastasia (2), resulting in locked-in syndrome. Her condition means she is aware of her surroundings but cannot move or speak and now communicates through eye movements. The couple are originally from Poland but moved to

Ireland in 2016.

Now in their 13th year, the Netwatch Carer of the Year awards seek to recognise, celebrate and shine a light on the remarkable contribution of Ireland's 355,000 family carers - almost two thirds of whom provide over 100 hours of care per week. Today, 1 in 10 people provide care for a loved one in the home. By 2030, that figure is expected to rise 1 in 5.

Speaking at the gala awards ceremony, Catherine Cox, Head of Communications and Carer Engagement with Family Carers Ireland said "We are thrilled to announce the Netwatch

Carers of the Year for 2019. We are in awe of the dedication they show in caring for their loved ones. We look forward to this event each year which not only gives family carers the recognition they deserve, but also shines a light on caring in Ireland today and the challenges that many face in their roles. The theme of this year awards is "No one should have to care alone" highlighting the need for a shared responsibility for caring between the family carer, wider family, community and most importantly the state."

Wendy Hamilton, SVP Global Operations, Netwatch said "To be here

today at the awards is a real honour. Some of the Netwatch team have had the privilege of meeting the finalists at the local ceremonies around the country, and they have all been touched by the stories of these amazing families. Marcin, with his wife and kids, is an inspiration to us all - and a reminder of the material contribution carers make in communities all over Ireland. So we are privileged to have this opportunity to show our support for family carers and their vital work through this partnership with Family Carers Ireland."



Margaret (Pearl) Pryor, Wicklow Netwatch Carer of the Year

Christmas in THE UPLANDS

Enniskerry Christmas Market in the Schoolhouse for Art

The Schoolhouse for Art in Enniskerry Village is hosting a Christmas Market and Exhibition to celebrate local arts, crafts, handmade gifts and artisan food the weekend of 6th, 7th and 8th of December. The Market will be open from 4.30pm Friday, the exhibition will launch at 7pm that evening.

The Schoolhouse for Art gallery will display diverse artworks by over 30 artists, art tutors and art students - with something for everyone who loves and appreciates art. Under our custom-made canopy, the Christmas market will not only bring the festive spirit to the historic village of Enniskerry, it will also provide a way for people to buy local and hand-crafted gifts for loved ones this Christmas.

"We encourage people to shop local, hand-made & Irish this Christmas - let's support small businesses, artists and craftspeople!"

"Our mission for this festival is to celebrate and inspire the growth of the traditional and contempo-

rary Irish arts & crafts by supporting local artists and craftspeople. We want to bring more art tourism to enchanting Enniskerry and establish our village as a cultural destination.

"We hope that the local community and visitors to Enniskerry will enjoy the weekend and help us spread some festive cheer!" said Neil Condon, Founder and Director of the Schoolhouse for Art.

"Our goal is to bring people together to experience all that our village has to offer this winter season! Wander through our market and exhibition and bundle up for a stroll through the surrounding area looking out for the beautifully carved wooden sculptures which were

created for the recent 'Big Chiseller' Wood Sculpting Festival organised by the Schoolhouse for Art in October of this year.

From the Bog Meadow to the St Patrick's Church, you'll spot creative wood sculptures, willow sculptures and even a bug hotel - all crafted with care from natural and sustainably sourced materials!

"We still have room for more crafters and market traders under our festival canopy! The more the merrier so get involved! If you would like to participate please email us at schoolhouse for art@gmail.com or call 01 286 9594.

"More information about the festival can be found on our website www.schoolhouseforart.com/festivals."

For more information contact the Schoolhouse for Art at schoolhouseforart@gmail.com or 353 1286 95 95 or see www.schoolhouseforart.com

Shop in the Uplands this Christmas

Christmas shopping isn't all about high streets and shopping centres; a large number of people are looking for a pleasant shopping experience that is less hurried and more personal, the way it used to be!

We are fortunate in County Wicklow to be able to provide both these experiences, bustling shopping streets and family run specialist shops that still provide that personal touch.

Many day trippers will be familiar with the uplands area of Wicklow as a wonderfully scenic location to enjoy walks and picnics in the summer. However the uplands also provides an excellent Christmas shopping experience.

The highest village in Ireland may give off the impression of being a little sleepy, but Roundwood has a thriving commercial heart, which is growing at a pace. If you are worrying about buying the same present for the same person two years in a row, then perhaps it's time you left behind the bright lights of the big cities and towns and headed into the country for that something special for someone special.

Glendalough Christmas Market

This year's Brockagh Resource Centre popular Christmas Market is on Sunday, 15th December. Santa has confirmed his arrival on the day and with a small entrance fee he can be visited in his grotto from 1pm. There will be over 50 stalls, making it the perfect place to do a spot of Christmas shopping.

You're guaranteed to find something special for your loved ones. Parking and entry to market is free. Contact Michelle on 0404 45600 or email brockaghoffice@gmail.com for further enquiries.



McCoy's Shop in Laragh recently sponsored a new set of jerseys for the students in Scoil Chaoimhín Naofa, Glendalough, on behalf of Laragh G.A.A. Club. The children are delighted with their new jerseys and were very appreciative at the official presentation in the school. Pictured are Willie McCoy and his son Padraig along with Stephen Curley and Fergal Olohan from Laragh GAA Club.

Merry Christmas & Happy New Year to all our Customers

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Wicklow 200 launches its 2020 cycling event

Wicklow 200, Ireland's premier cycling sportif will return for its 39th year on 7th June 2020 with registration for the event opening on 6th December.

The cycle and its partner event the Wicklow 100 Challenge start in Bray, taking in many of the most iconic climbs in the Garden County in an event that is among the most arduous and most revered annual cycling events on the world calendar.

Organisers of the event The Irish Veteran Cyclists Association who have run this event at a local level for many years are now partnering with Elite Event Management to grow the event and bring more people to the region for this iconic cycle.

Michael Davis, Chairman of the IVCA said "We are thrilled to bring back the Wicklow 200 cycle for its

39th year. The event is a highlight in the cycling calendar and always proves to be an exciting and exhilarating day for our participants and the organisers alike."

Oliver Kirwan, Event Director with Elite Event Management added, "We are delighted to team up with the IVCA and we are really looking forward to working with them on the Wicklow 200. The cycle is on one of the most stunning routes I've ever encountered and has a great reputation amongst cycling enthusiasts both nationally and internationally."

Starting and finishing at Bray Emmets GAA Club the route takes the riders on some of the most famous climbs in the country such as Wicklow Gap, Glenmalur, Slieve Maan and Shay Elliott and through the stunning and picturesque villages of Rathdrum, Baltinglass, Enniskerry, Laragh amongst others.

Bray will be the scene of much celebration post-event. All participants will receive a customised medal, food, access to the Japanese hot tubs and there will be plenty of entertainment on hand to keep the after-party going all day and night.

Registration will open on Friday 6th December with a launch special price of €65 for both the Wicklow 200 and 100 routes, valid for a limited time only. Visit www.wicklow200.ie for further information and route details and check out the Facebook event page to keep up to date with the latest news.

For more information please contact Annette Grealish on annette@eliteevents.ie or 064-6635512.

New Wicklow local currency app goes live

An app supporting a new local currency for Wicklow has gone live in app stores in recent days. Supported by over 60 local businesses, the VillagePod app supports a new local currency called 'VillageCoin', which is tied one-for-one with the euro.

With a dedicated team of six based from Bray, VillagePod is a platform to help local communities thrive which puts local businesses right at the centre. The platform was conceived and developed as a result of a recognition that local businesses would benefit from a platform that champions them and addresses the technology and marketing disadvantage that many local businesses experience. The platform aims to help people make spending local a habit.

VillagePod founder, Cormac McKenna said "We have been hugely encouraged by the strong take up of VillagePod from local businesses. We started this journey when people told us that they really valued their local businesses and our mission is to help those businesses harness the good-

will that people already have for them. These businesses are the fabric of our local communities and our team is excited to be able to support them. We are also very happy to have received assistance from the Local Enterprise Office in Wicklow which has been key to our ability to launch the platform."

The platform works by allowing consumers to top up the app from their bank accounts using a debit card and then pay with their smartphones. Retailers can accept payments from customers with a small tablet or even a phone. The platform already supports payments to retailers and will shortly also support payments from person to person. It will also integrate loyalty and rewards features for retailers and digital gift cards which will allow retailers to sell gift cards



from social networks like Instagram.

A core feature of the platform is the nomination by each retailer of a local 'cause' - such as a charity, sports club or school - which the retailer supports each time a consumer makes a purchase. Overall costs for business are similar to a typical charge for accepting a credit card.

Louise O'Neill, VillagePod Partnership Manager said "More local businesses are coming on board every day and we welcome all businesses wishing to take payments from the public to contact us and get started on VillagePod - it's free to set up. The platform has been operational now for several weeks in test retailers. A big selling point for retailers is that we are bringing them a platform that up to now has only been available for larger businesses which make huge investments in IT and marketing. We're making these capabilities easily accessible for smaller businesses in a way that resonates with

the public." Louise added: "As well as prominent local 'main street' retailers, we're also now seeing many small businesses such as physiotherapists that up to now only take cash payments adopting VillagePod instead of having to go to the hassle and expense of setting up with a credit card provider."

Greystones retailer Susan Collins, Home of Hair, said "VillagePod is a great way to bring a community together by encouraging people to support local small businesses. I am from Greystones and have been active in my community all my life but through VillagePod I am able to effortlessly give back and support Bray Women's Refuge through the percentage that goes to my nominated charity."

"We are excited to be part of VillagePod. It's such a super and simple idea. There is such a buzz amongst local businesses and customers already" stated Lauren O'Sullivan from Dockyard No. 8.

Bray Library December events

Forthcoming events in Bray Library, Eglinton Road,, Bray, include...

The **Saturday December 7th** 11am talk by Declan Murphy on 'Amazing Birds; facts and figures' - admission free, booking required; and the 2pm 'Christmas Storytime and Arts and Crafts' for those aged 5 and over - admission free but booking required; the **Friday December 13th** 11.30am talk by James Scannell, Bray Cualann Historical Society, recalling 'Christmas 1919 in Bray' - admission free - no booking required; and the **Saturday December 14th** 'Wreath Making Demonstration' with Aoife Munn, at which participants will learn how to make beautiful Scandinavian style wreaths from everyday plants that are all around us. Participants will take their wreaths home - admission free but booking required. Contact Bray Library at 01-2862600 or email: braylib@wicklowcoco.ie.

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Joint Policing Committee meeting held in Baltinglass

The value of public meetings organised by the Wicklow County Council Joint Policing Committee (JPC) was stressed by Committee Chair, Cllr Gerry Walsh, when the JPC met in Baltinglass on Thursday 19th November.

The purpose of the meeting was to give the community a forum in which they could make their views known, ask questions and share their concerns in relation to the prevention of crime in their area.

Attendees welcomed hearing about the new community policing framework currently being developed which will enhance community engagement and public safety.

Recently appointed Superintendent to Baltinglass district, Karen Maloney, said that "the proposed new Community Policing

Teams will work with local communities to prevent and detect crime in their locality supported by community safety fora made up of local Gardai, members of the public and community groups."

Committee Chair, Cllr Gerry Walsh, welcomed the Baltinglass community to the first public meeting of the committee following the local elections held earlier in May this year.

Giving a background to their work, he also outlined the purpose of the newly established Policing Plan Committees which have been set up by the JPC by municipal district areas to implement the objectives contained



JPC Chair, Gerry Walsh

in the six-year Strategic Plan. Acknowledging the large turnout, he said that "the value of public meetings and the JPC reaching out to engage with communities cannot be undervalued and I thank the people of Baltinglass for their interest in contributing to the process."

Chief Executive of Wicklow County Council,

Mr Frank Curran, referred to the funding of just under €2.67m allocated to the Baltinglass for Rural Regeneration which will cover of number of improvement projects in the town including the upgrading of parking and footpaths and the town park, and which will go a long way in addressing pedestrian safety and traffic concerns raised by the local community.

Members of the public were encouraged by Chief Superintendent Denis Ferry to be proactive in reporting crime and called for the continued cooperation of the local community in crime prevention in their area and engagement with the Gardai.



Pictured at the recent Graduation Ceremony at BIFE were (l-r); Louise Fortune, BIFE Deputy Principal, Ray Tedders, BIFE Principal, Minister for Health Simon Harris, and Deirdre Keyes, Chief Executive, KWETB.

PLANNING • PLANNING

WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL

Permission for retention is sought for extensions to side and rear of house, roof lights to front and rear of attic area, location of house as constructed on site, utility building and store at "Valleyview", Killough Lower, Glencap Commons, Kilmacanogue for Richard Rowan. The planning application may be inspected, or purchased at a fee not exceeding the reasonable cost of making a copy, at the offices of Wicklow County Council, County Buildings, Wicklow during its public opening hours and a submission or observation in relation to the application may be made to the authority in writing on payment of the prescribed fee within the period of 5 weeks beginning on the date of receipt by the authority of the application.

WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL

I Damien Gaffney intend to apply for permission for a new single storey dwelling, revisions to existing entrance to create two entrances, removal of existing septic tank and install two wastewater systems and polishing filters, one to serve existing dwelling, one to serve new dwelling, new site boundaries for existing dwelling, demolition of existing garage, new well and associate works at Carrigeenshinnagh, Roundwood, Co. Wicklow. The planning application may be inspected or purchased at a fee not exceeding the reasonable cost of making a copy at the offices of Wicklow County Council, County Council Buildings, Wicklow Town, during its public opening hours and a submission or observation in relation to the application may be made in writing to the planning authority on payment of the prescribed fee within 5 weeks from submission of application to Planning Authority.

WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL

Alphaplan Design (Tel: 086 2461269, Email: eugene@alphaplandesign.com) Seeks planning permission for charge of use from part commercial unit to habitable accommodation, and proposed slated roofed canopy to part of front of commercial premises and associated works at Fountain View, Enniskerry, Co. Wicklow for D. and P. Ward. The planning application may be inspected, or purchased at a fee not exceeding the reasonable cost of making a copy, at the offices of the planning authority during its public opening hours and a submission or observation in relation to the application may be made to the authority in writing on payment of the prescribed fee within the period of 5 weeks beginning on the date of receipt by the authority of the application.

WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL

We Eoin Reynolds and Iseult Nic Ghearrailt intend to apply for permission for construction of detached dwelling to rear of number 7 Knockroe, Delgany, create new lane to site off existing cul de sac, connection to all services, new footpath and wall to front of existing dwelling 7 Knockroe and associate works at Knockroe, Delgany, Co. Wicklow. The planning application may be inspected or purchased at a fee not exceeding the reasonable cost of making a copy at the offices of Wicklow County Council, County Council Buildings, Wicklow Town, during its public opening hours and a submission or observation in relation to the application may be made in writing to the planning authority on payment of the prescribed fee within 5 weeks from submission of application to Planning Authority.

WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL

Planning permission is sought for roadside boundary wall at Ballinabarney, Wicklow A67WF54, Greg Murphy. The planning application may be inspected or purchased at a fee not exceeding the reasonable cost of making a copy at the offices of planning authority, Wicklow County Council, County Buildings, Wicklow, during its public opening hours, and a submissions or observation in relation to the application may be made to the authority in writing on payment of the prescribed fee within the period of five weeks beginning on the date of receipt by the authority of the application.

WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL

Application is being made to Wicklow County Council by John Deegan for Planning Permission for a proposed 2 storey dwelling house over basement with a new road entrance, a percolation area and a new effluent treatment system to comply with current EPA requirements and all ancillary site works at Ballisland, Shillelagh, Co Wicklow. The planning application may be inspected or purchased at a fee not exceeding the reasonable cost of making a copy at the offices of Wicklow County Council, County Council Buildings, Wicklow during its public opening hours and a submission or observation in relation to the application may be made to the authority in writing on payment of the prescribed fee within the period of 5 weeks beginning on the date of receipt by the authority of the application.

WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL

FULL PLANNING PERMISSION Sought for: 1. Proposed Ground Floor Extension (25Msq) to Eastern Side of Existing Dwelling (57Msq) including relocation of existing front door to southern elevation of extension. 2. New Patio door to northern elevation and alteration's to other existing windows & doors. 3. Proposed First Floor Extension (40 Msq) to Existing Roof of Dwelling. 4. All ancillary site works at No. 1, Saint Killian's Crescent, Bray, Co. Wicklow. A98 RH50. Signed: Adrian Reilly. The planning application may be inspected or purchased at a fee not exceeding the reasonable cost of making a copy at the offices of Wicklow County Council, County Buildings, Wicklow during its public opening hours and a submission or observation in relation to the application may be made to the authority in writing on payment of the prescribed fee within the period of 5 weeks beginning on the date of receipt by the authority of the application.

Niamh Kavanagh & Paul Megahey

Niamh Kavanagh returns to the Courthouse Arts Centre with some special songs highlighting memorable moments from her career. Expect familiar faves accompanied by guitarist Paul Megahey. An acoustic set list featuring hits from the Commitments, Prince, a tribute to the one and only Aretha, and of course the Eurovision-winning 'In Your Eyes'. Along with some Christmas favourites, Saturday 17th December 8.30pm €20/€18

Rathmichael Historical Society

Ida Milne will be the guest speaker for the Wednesday December 4th meeting of the Rathmichael Historical Society, the local history society for Shankill, Ballybrack, and the surrounding area, at 8pm in Rathmichael National School, Stonebridge Road (Dublin Road end), Shankill, Co. Dublin, at which she will recall 'The Great 'Flu Pandemic' in Rathmichael National School, Stonebridge Road (Dublin Road end), Shankill. All are welcome to attend. The admission is €5.

THE MIRACULOUS PRAYER

Dear Heart of Jesus in the past I have asked for many favours. This time I ask you this very special one. (Mention request) Take it, dear Heart of Jesus and place it within your broken Heart where your Father sees it. Then, in his merciful eyes it will become your favour not mine. St Anthony and St Jude, helper of the hopeless, aid me in my distress. Amen. Say this prayer for three days. Promise publication and favour will be granted. Never known to fail.

H.M.; M.K.

RECRUITMENT



Kildare and Wicklow Education and Training Board
Bord Oideachais agus Oiliúna Chill Dara agus Chill Mhantáin

Kildare and Wicklow Education and Training Board
invites applications for the following post

SCHOOL COMPLETION PROGRAMME (SCP)

Code KW421/Nov19

Local Co-ordinator for Arklow/Rathdrum/Dunlavin
School Completion Programme
37 hours per week.

The School Completion Programme is part of the Education Welfare Service strand of TUSLA, Child and Family Agency. This is an initiative which aims to have a positive impact on levels of pupil retention in primary and post-primary schools and on the number of pupils who successfully complete upper second level, or equivalent.

Reporting to the Management Committee, the Local Co-ordinator will be responsible for the day-to-day management of the School Completion Programme in 3 Second Level Schools and 1 National School.

For further information on this post and to download an Application Form please see the VACANCIES page of our website at www.kwetb.ie. Completed application forms should be e-mailed to recruitment@kwetb.ie no later than 12 noon, Thursday, 12th December 2019.

Dr. Deirdre Keyes, Chief Executive.



etb

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Kildare and Wicklow
Education and Training Board

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Guinness Records 2020		€12.95	€ 19.99	€ 7.04
Beano Annual 2020		€4.85	€ 10.80	€ 5.95
Dandy Annual 2020		€4.85	€ 10.80	€ 5.95
Diary Of A Wimpy Kid 14: Wrecking Ball	Jeff Kinney	€8.95	€ 12.99	€ 4.04
Ordinary Joe	Joe Schmidt	€17.50	€ 21.99	€ 4.49
Blue Moon	Lee Child	€11.24	€ 15.99	€ 4.75
The Night Fire	Michael Connelly	€11.24	€ 15.99	€ 4.75
A Minute To Midnight	David Baldacci	€11.24	€ 15.99	€ 4.75
Twas The Nightshift Before Christmas	Adam Kay	€7.50	€ 9.99	€ 2.49
The Sun Sister	Lucinda Riley	€11.95	€ 15.99	€ 4.04
The Education Of An Idealist	Samantha Power	€12.74	€ 16.99	€ 4.25
Mrs Cowan's Boy	Rory Cowan	€16.95	€ 19.99	€ 3.04
All In	Jamie Heaslip	€11.49	€ 22.99	€ 11.50
Children Of The Troubles	Joe Duffy	€18.74	€ 24.99	€ 6.25
Criss Cross	James Patterson	€9.95	€ 14.99	€ 5.04
Second Sleep	Robert Harris	€9.95	€ 14.99	€ 5.04
The Day That Changed My Life	Caitlin McBride	€12.74	€ 18.99	€ 6.25
	TOTAL	€208.81	€ 313.43	€104.62

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