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WICKLOW ELECTION 2020

The massive surge of support for Sinn Fein across the country was very evident here in County Wicklow where the wave carried John Brady TD to the top of the poll by a considerable margin. While it was triumph for Brady, it was heartache for Fianna Fail's Pat Casey (FF) who lost his seat on the 11th count.

Brady was elected on the 1st count, with a massive surplus, and received almost twice as many first preference votes as Simon Harris (FG).

Brady's incredible victory was finally announced shortly after 8pm on Sunday, sparking scenes of celebration as he was held aloft surrounded by his family and supporters, as he raised the tricolour. The 2nd count then began and the first

day ended at approximately 10:30pm after Brady's surplus votes were distributed.

This was Brady's fourth time running for the Dáil and his second time doing so successfully. In 2016 he took the 2nd seat, with 11,151 first preferences, and was elected on the 2nd count. In 2011 he narrowly missed out on the 5th seat, as he was pipped to the post on the 19th count by Stephen

Donnelly, who ran that year as an Independent.

At the time of going to press, Jennifer Whitmore (SD) and Simon Harris (FG) are poised to take the 2nd and 3rd seats, with Steven Matthews (GP), Stephen Donnelly (FF), Andrew Doyle (FG), and Billy Timmins (FG) all battling it out for the 4th and 5th seats.

The election results have shown that



John Brady celebrates after topping the poll in Wicklow to be elected on the 1st count. Pic: Michael Kelly

support for Harris remains very high in his home constituency, despite a disappointing election for Fine Gael nationally, though his vote was down from his last election in 2016 when he received almost 11,000 first preferences and took the 3rd seat on the 2nd count. This time he received 8,765 first preferences and is sure to retain his seat. Pat Casey (FF) and Andrew Doyle (FG) also fared slightly worse than they did in 2016. While they each received over 6,000 first preferences four years ago, this time they did not get more than 5,000.

None of the sitting Wicklow TDs took a bigger hit, however,

than Stephen Donnelly (FF), who topped the poll as a Social Democrat in 2016 with 14,348 votes. After joining Fianna Fail in the intervening years, this election saw his vote down by almost two thirds, as he got 5,467 first preferences.

For Billy Timmins it could be another painful narrow defeat after he lost his seat four years ago when he ran as a Renua candidate. With a total valid poll of 71,320, Brady got almost a quarter of the vote, with 17,297 first preferences cast for him. With the quota set at 11,887, Brady's surplus was 5,410. The total electorate was 101,332 and there were 559 spoiled

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WICKLOW ELECTION 2020

(continued from p 2)

Labour's Paul O'Brien did best in his own Municipal District of Wicklow, where he picked up 740 votes, but it was also a similar story for him as he struggled outside of his own Municipal District. He received 1,727 first preferences and after Brady's surplus was distributed, he sat at 1,912.

John Snell former Sinn Féin and now an Independent got more

first preferences than Behan, Cox, and O'Brien, and was the second most popular candidate in the Wicklow Municipal District where he picked up 2,130 votes. However, he too didn't do well outside of his own area and after Brady's surplus was distributed, he sat on three-and-a-half thousand votes.

The end of the 2nd count also saw the elimination of

Independent candidates William King from Drumcondra and Anthony Fitzgerald from Bray, who were both very late entrants in the campaign.

Resuming on Monday morning, count 3 saw the elimination of Independent John Larkin (Ind) from Newtownmountkenny, and Count 4 saw the elimination of Charlie Keddy (Ind) from Kilcoole. With just 530 votes between them,

the distribution of their votes failed to make much impact on the landscape. National Party candidate Eileen Gunning from Greystones was eliminated at the 5th count along with Tom Dunne (Ind), leaving over a thousand votes to be distributed. 123 of these went to Billy Timmins, keeping him ahead of Casey and within touching distance of Doyle. However, Donnelly remained in 5th place, 560 votes ahead of Doyle. The 6th count saw the elimination of Aontu candidate Seamus Connor, leaving his 1,351 votes to be distributed. Behan picked up over 300 of these, bringing his total to over 4,000, while Whitmore picked up 113 of them, edging her slowly closer towards the quota. The end of the 6th count left Mathews still ahead of Donnelly by about 500 votes, and Donnelly ahead of Doyle by about 600 votes.

Labour's Paul O'Brien was eliminated at this stage, with his 1,975 votes to be distributed. The main beneficiaries were Whitmore who gained 427 votes, Mathews who gained 330 and Joe Behan who gained 297.

Sharon Briggs (People before Profit) was eliminated then and her 2,448 votes mainly benefitted Whitmore who gained 787 votes, (Putting her ahead of Harris), Mathews who gained 443 and Joe Behan who gained 338. Valarie Cox was then eliminated and her 2724 votes distributed which gave Whitmore an additional 565 (maintaining her lead over Harris) and Mathews 338.

John Snell was then eliminated and his 4,654 votes distributed.

Jennifer once again was transfer friendly and received a whopping 1,161 votes followed by 790 going to Joe Behan which allowed him to pass Pat Casey (FF) who was eliminated and his 5,323 votes distributed.

At the time of going to press this was the situation with a long night of counting expected.



Social Democrats candidate Jennifer Whitmore with young supporters Flavia Bastos and Ruby Allen at the count centre in Greystones. At the time of going to press Whitmore is poised to take either the 2nd or 3rd seat.



Fine Gael candidate Simon Harris watches the vote come in with his sister Gemma.



Poll topper John Brady celebrates with his family.



Stephen Donnelly talks to a young supporter at the count centre in Greystones

THANK YOU

To all who voted for me

To all who canvassed

To all who helped with Social Media

To all who leaflet dropped

To all who supported my campaign in any way

Joe BEHAN

Tel: 086 8375602 E: joebehan@outlook.ie



The final day of the Cumann na mBunscol (North East) 3rd/4th Classes Indoor GAA blitzes took place on Thursday 30th January in Shoreline Leisure, Greystones. Another extremely successful day saw 13 boys teams and 7 girls teams participate on the day. The morning session saw St. Laurence's Greystones take on St. Laurence O'Toole's NS Roundwood, both schools providing 2 boys and girls teams. The mid morning session saw Ravenswell NS Bray, St. Cronan's Bray and St. Brigid's Greystones partake in an all boys 5 team blitz. The final session of the day saw Greystones Educate Together, St. Coen's Rathnew and Newtownmountkennedy Primary compete in both the boys and girls blitz. The games were officiated by the Young Whistlers.

Avoca-Ballinlash water supply removed from remedial action list

Over 1,300 water consumers in Wicklow received good news last week following the removal of the Avoca-Ballinlash water supply by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) from their Remedial Action List (RAL).

The latest report from the EPA shows that Irish Water has reduced the number of schemes on the RAL in Wicklow from 22 to seven since 2015.

The RAL identifies drinking water supplies that are 'at risk' of failing to consistently supply safe, clean drinking water. The Avoca-Ballinlash water supply was given the thumbs up by the EPA following extensive investment and upgrade works by Irish Water working in partnership with Wicklow County Council.

Works are continuing on seven other Wicklow water supplies, with a view to having them removed from the RAL as soon as possible.

Andrew Boylan, Water Compliance Specialist with Irish Water says: "The publication of the latest RAL by the EPA confirms that whilst improvements have been made in many areas, the scale of the challenge faced by Irish Water in ensuring the delivery of clean and safe water in Wicklow and throughout the country remains.

"As a single national utility Irish Water has been able to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the performance of Ireland's drinking water treatment plants and focus investment where the risk to our customers is highest. Nationally Irish Water has adopted a prioritised programme of works which will require an investment of €2 billion by 2021. Significant improvements are being achieved year on year by this approach right across the country."

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NTA discuss rail and road improvements

Representatives from the National Transport Authority (NTA) attended last week's meeting of Wicklow County Council where they spoke about plans to improve the DART service from Greystones a 20-minute service, and improve the N11 with a bus lane.

After last week's meeting, Cllr Derek Mitchell (FG) said "The NTA are keen to provide a DART every 20 minutes to Greystones, 50 percent more than now. This is great news for Greystones. The Government has already allocated €2 billion for DART expansion and Greystones DART enhancement can be funded from that. The NTA have to do further studies and the physical work will take some time but they described it as 'one of the more important projects in the DART expansion programme'."

Cllr Mitchell went on to say that the idea originated from a paper which he wrote in 2018, subsequently verified in a Jacobs study. The Park n' Ride will be expanded in conjunction.

"They hope to install bus lanes on the N11 well

ahead of any of the main works. They are currently trying to amend the consultants' contracts to design it. They may have to widen some places and limit it to professional drivers only. The final Bus Connects scheme will be published soon and will be implemented in 2021. I'm glad that the Government has given the funds to improve our public transport."

Andrew Doyle TD said "This solution needs to be part of a joined up approach which includes increasing capacity on our rail network from Arklow to Dublin. Increasing the number of bus corridors and express buses and opening new park and ride facilities along the N11. Increasing the frequency, reliability and speed of the public transport network in Wicklow will help reduce the number of cars

using the N11 at peak times."

Cllr Steven Matthews (GP) questioned the NTA about getting extra rail carriages for the Wicklow line and about electrification of the line south of Greystones.

They responded that "when we get in additional DART fleet there will be a lot of the deiseal fleet cascaded on to other routes. It doesn't preclude electrification in the future."

However they said that bringing the DART to Wicklow would be "challenging": "because, there's a single line effectively from the north of Bray Head all the way down. It is very unusual for an electrified commuter DART service to operate on anything other than dual lines. Our strategy is to get a much more frequent service into Greystones, and then a

much more frequent shuttle service south of Greystones that allows people to connect in a way they can't connect at the moment because the service is so infrequent. We think that's the better solution rather than to go off in a different direction to look for full electrification and twin-tracking which with all the problems and environmental challenges on that line is likely to be many, many years away."

Cllr Jennifer Whitmore (SD) asked about Local Link buses, and Anne Graham, CEO of the NTA said "there's blatant demand for local link services throughout the country and we're delivering as much as our funding can deliver. We're carrying out a study which we're calling 'Connected Ireland' which at a county by county basis is looking at

the level of service particularly in rural areas could be provided which would allow people living in rural areas to avail of their services without a car.

"It is looking at the possibility of having a service in the morning to get you to the next town or even to be able to connect into a larger town to get on to a more regional service to bring you to your work and employment and education."

Regarding the BusConnects plan, Ms Graham said "the consultation on Wicklow's bus network is completed, the final network is to be published in Q2, 2020 and we will commence implementation of the new network in 2021. In terms of bus corridors, the second round of consultation on the 16 bus corridors will commence in Q1, 2020.

Council to seek meeting with Dept of Education over school places

Wicklow County Council is to seek a meeting with the Department of Education regarding the the lack of school places in Colaiste Chraobh Abhann (CCA) in Kilcoole and elsewhere around the county. The issue was raised by Cllr Joe Behan (Ind) at last Monday's Council meeting.

Cllr Behan said "What I'm proposing is that we write to the Department of Education and ask them to urgently move to provide temporary accommodation for those pupils at Kilcoole Primary School to allow them to at least enrol in Colaiste Chraobh Abhann, and also to bring forward the planning application to build the required extension to CCA. Nothing else will do in this situation."

He continued, "Newtownmountkennedy is a feeder area for Colaiste Chraobh Abhann for historical reasons and Newtown is getting a secondary school and there's major implications for young people from Newtown and Kilcoole if something isn't happening in Newtown as well. As part of the proposal I want to ask that the department be required to tell us if they plans to

develop a second level school in Newtownmountkennedy as well because I think it is going to be absolutely necessary."

Seconding the proposal, Cllr Tom Fortune (Ind) said "This situation is really crazy. The paperwork for the work that was to be done in that school was signed six years ago. And I'm at a loss as to why nothing has happened. The school is bursting at the seams, there's a PE storeroom being used as a classroom. There's no room for any more pupils, and even if there was there's no resources. We really need the TDs in the county to come together and to go and find out exactly what is going on. Up to last week there were 40 children who had basically no place. This is not going to go away and it does need to be sorted and there needs to be an answer given back to

the very sensible committee put together to try and make something happen."

Cllr Shay Cullen (FG) also highlighted the situation in Roundwood and Newtown: "We have a very serious situation in Roundwood which has been a feeder school for the last ten years. We absolutely need a secondary school to be built in Newtownmountkennedy; Almost a thousand houses are to be built in Newtown over the next couple of years with no planning for a secondary school. I have regular contact with the staff in CCA, they're doing a fantastic job under very difficult circumstances but this is a situation that is affecting Kilcoole, Newtown and Roundwood, and I think whatever discussions are taking place need to incorporate all three areas."



A protest outside Colaiste Chraobh Abhann in Kilcoole last week

'800 Wicklow families in arrears need Government scheme'

Over 800 family home loans are in arrears for two years or more in County Wicklow, according to the latest figures.

Reacting to the figures, Housing and homeless campaigner Fr Peter McVerry has called for the Government's mortgage to rent scheme to be made mandatory for banks when dealing with families in unsustainable debt.

The scheme allows mortgage holders at risk of losing their homes to switch to paying a fair income-based affordable rent to their local authority while remaining in their current dwellings. Almost 60 mortgage to rent cases have either been completed or are being actively progressed.

Fr McVerry also called on the incoming Government to increase

the scheme's eligibility criteria so that a meaningful attempt can be made to solve many of the cases where homeowners have been in arrears for at least two years.

Fr. McVerry has challenged politicians seeking election to the next Dail to do "something drastic" to end the spiral of misery for so many families.

"What this housing crisis needs right now is radical thinking. Solutions won't happen overnight but if the will is there, then it can happen pretty quickly," said Fr McVerry, a member of the Advisory Board of mortgage to rent operator Home For Life.

"If the next govern-

ment was serious about tackling this huge mortgage debt legacy from the past decade, it should make it illegal over the next three years to evict people without an offer of mortgage to rent.

"However, the next government has to sit down and change the thresholds which limit the mortgage to rent scheme.

"I am on record as saying that many more families should be included in this scheme because it is the only way for many of them to resolve their current circumstances.

"The stress and misery that people are enduring there must be an immediate review of extending the mortgage to rent

boundaries.

"It saddens me to think that every week there are thousands of homeowners living in needless fear of a knock on the door or a visit from the postman."

He urged those who find themselves in such difficulty not to bury their heads in the sand because the arrears just won't go away.

"Instead, I would encourage them to engage with their local MABs people or their lender so that their cases can be dealt with," said Fr McVerry.

"If they do that, then they should be able to stay in their home if they pay a rent like all local authority tenants."



Philip Rothwell and Newtown jockey Adam Short shared a winner at Naas recently where Wolfsofallstreets scored a two-length win in the 2m handicap hurdle. Owned by Carol Hogan and Eric Newnham, the 12/1 chance got to the front before the second last flight and made the best of his way home to win from Youngnedofthehill and 4/1 favourite Bythesametoken.

Average rent in Wicklow rises to €1,417

Rents fell marginally across the country by 0.1 percent in the final three months of 2019, according to the latest quarterly Rental Report by Daft.ie, the first time since mid-2012 that rents have not risen quarter-on-quarter. In Wicklow, however, rents were on average 3 percent higher in the final quarter of 2019 than a year previously. The average listed rent is now €1417, up 84 percent from its lowest point.

The late-2019 trends differ across urban and rural parts of the market. In Dublin, Cork and Galway cities, rents rose between September and December, while outside the major cities, rents fell on average.

Year-on-year trends are more similar, however. Compared to end-2018, rents in Dublin at the end of 2019 were 3.5% higher and in Cork and Galway were 5.5% higher. In Limerick and Waterford cities, rents were 3.9% and 4.3% higher respectively than a year ago. Outside the cities, rents were 4.7% higher in late 2019

than a year previously.

The number of homes available to rent nationwide continues to rise, albeit from a very low base. There were 3,543 properties available to rent across the country in February 1, up 10% from the 3,216 available the same date a year ago. While this marks the 17th time in the last 19 months that availability has improved year-on-year, the number of rental homes on the market is still down 80% from its 2009 peak.

Commenting on the report, Ronan Lyons, economist at Trinity College Dublin and author of the Daft Report, said: "With the election of a new government, housing - and in particular the rental sector - are likely to be key parts of the new government's priorities. Despite the desire for a quick fix, such as rent freezes, no such quick fix exists. By worsening insider-outsider dynamics, rent freezes are likely to further harm those most affected by the shortage of accommodation. And, if somehow applied to newly-built rental homes, rent controls could prove calamitous for a country that desperately needs new rental homes but has very high construction costs."

Students exercise their lateral thinking language skills in the 12th All Ireland Linguistics Olympiad

Students from Loreto Secondary School Bray and SEK-Dublin Windgates joined over 1,000 secondary school students nation-wide taking part in the Preliminary Round of the 2020 All Ireland Linguistics Olympiad (AILO) last week.

Run by the ADAPT SFI Research Centre for Digital Media Technology, the AILO contest challenges secondary school students to apply logic and reasoning skills to solve complex puzzles in unfamiliar languages. The contest helps students to develop transferable skills relevant to maths, coding and languages.

Researchers from ADAPT have run over 30 free national workshops to help students improve their problem-solving strategies and prepare for the Olympiad. Speaking ahead of the round, Prof Vincent Wade, Director of ADAPT said, "The All Ireland Linguistics Olympiad (AILO) challenges students to use their lateral thinking skills to solve puzzles in languages from all over the globe. Students must analyse the data they are given to work out the 'rules' of this new language".

The top 100 students from the Preliminary Round will qualify for the National Final on 11th March in Dublin City University. Four students will go on to represent Ireland at the International Linguistics Olympiad (IOL) in Latvia in July 2020.

Council graded in EPA report

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) released its report on local authority environmental enforcement performance for 2018. The report shows that local authorities have increased their enforcement activities, with 168,000 inspections being undertaken in 2018, together with almost 20,000 enforcement actions and over 850 prosecutions initiated. Local authorities also managed over 78,000 environmental complaints during the year.

Wicklow County Council was given a grade of 'above target' and 'on target' with regards to overall assessment, enforcement systems, waste enforcement area, and water enforcement area. This is the middle grade, with 'excellent' being the best and 'below target' being the worst grade. Wicklow was given a rating of 'excellent' in air enforcement area.

The report states that "Illegal dumping/littering indicators such as National Litter Pollution Monitoring System and IBAL annual surveys indicate positive progress is being made in this area. In addition, PURE project data supports this finding in the areas in which they operate.

The report found that local authority inspection planning and implementation was effective and took into account national priorities. The EPA identified, however, areas where local authorities

could improve their environmental enforcement. Dr Tom Ryan, Director of the EPA's Office of Environmental Enforcement said "This report shows overall good performance by the local authorities in undertaking their environmental enforcement functions, however there are areas where improvements are needed. In particular, more focus is needed on the enforcement of waste segregation in households and businesses, along with an increase in farm and air quality inspections. There is also an opportunity to improve information sharing between enforcement agencies to ensure that illegal waste activities are identified and tackled.

The EPA will be engaging with local authorities to make this a priority in 2020."

The EPA advises that local authorities need to focus on ensuring good segregation of waste by businesses and householders, to support better waste recycling. This includes increasing the roll-out of segregated collection (e.g. brown bins) and their use by the public and businesses. The EPA also found that there is a need to improve coordinated action, and the timely sharing of data, between local authorities and other enforcement bodies to address illegal waste activities.

This report found that farm inspections had reduced by 650 and the EPA recommends that the number of inspections be returned to previous levels, at a minimum. The EPA also recommends that farm inspections should be targeted at areas where water quality is at risk.

While focussed on the work of local authorities, the EPA highlighted that the public has a pivotal role in addressing these environmental issues.

Commenting on the report, Valerie Doyle, Senior Inspector said: "We all need to play our part addressing the environmental challenges facing us. This can include making sure we segregate our wastes at home and at work so that as much as possible is recycled. From an enforcement perspective, the public should take responsibility for reporting environmental pollution by using the EPA's SEE IT SAY IT smartphone app or by calling the National Environmental Complaints Line 1850 365 121 or their local authority."



Chloe Farrell, Isabella Downey, Layla Hitchin, and Emma Phillips make a donation to Pauline Leonard and Eileen Earls of Wicklow Cancer Support in Wicklow Town



Bray Choral Society recently presented the Bray based charity W.H. Five Loaves with a cheque for €5,000. Pictured are Tommy Gordon (manager, W.H. Five Loaves), Carol Hunter (former chairperson, BCS), Catherine McCarthy (current chairperson BCS) and Frank Kelly (musical director, BCS).

Bray Chroal Society present cheque to Five Loaves

Following a full house attendance at their Christmas concert in December, Bray Choral Society were delighted to be able to present local charity W.H. Five Loaves with a cheque for €5,000.

W.H. Five Loaves are very grateful to the people of Bray for their generous support for the concert and for the charity. The event has had a knock on benefit in highlighting the charity in the Bray area, with all types of donations to the charity well up on previous January periods.

Five Loaves delivers vital support to the homeless of Bray through the provision of daytime shelter, hot meals and washing facilities, as well as the means of basic survival for rough sleepers. With the growing problem of homelessness, all donations are greatly appreciated and make a real and immediate difference to people's lives.

Bray Choral Society is looking forward to a very exciting year in 2020. On March 22nd the choir is singing the Mozart Requiem in the National Concert Hall with the Dublin Orchestral Players, followed on May 16th by the BCS Summer Concert, which this year features two beautiful works of the American composer Dan Forrest. In June, BCS takes up the personal invitation from the composer Howard Goodall to sing his work "Invictus - A Passion" in Carnegie Hall for its New York premiere.

Positive meeting about East Coast Greenway

The East Coast Greenway Taskforce emerged feeling positive from a meeting held in Wicklow County Buildings on Friday the 31st January.

The meeting was chaired by Frank Curran, CEO of Wicklow County Council, and was also attended by Minister Simon Harris, senior representatives from WCC, Irish Rail, National Parks & Wildlife Service, Wicklow Tourism, Failte Ireland, OPW, and Cllr Irene Winters, Cathaoirleach of WCC.

The Greenway Group said "Excellent progress was made with detailed presentations on the challenges involved in designing a route along this environmentally sensitive coastline, along with possible mitigating solutions. We also had a detailed presentation on the coastal erosion risks from Dublin to Arklow, the acceleration in the pace of erosion, along with likely solutions.

"We expect to receive

an update with the steps involved in the process in the coming days along with a realistic timeline to a planning application and hopefully completion. We are delighted with the Taskforce meeting and look forward to next steps, and we thank Minister Simon Harris for enabling this to happen.

"As more and more Greenways have opened around the country over the last couple of years, we have the following observations: Failte Ireland recognise Greenways as a major driver of additional tourist visitors to Ireland and an undoubted commercial success; The economic return on investment for local authorities when funding Greenways has been excellent in all cases; The physical and mental health benefits from

already established Greenways for local residents has been highly significant. As a society we are tackling major issues with mental health and obesity. Greenways have a major part to play in both areas.

"Co Wicklow is being left behind as Greenways open up all over the country. This is not acceptable. The towns along the route, particularly Wicklow Town, are in urgent need of a project of this scale to inject badly needed additional tourists and revenue to help investment. Greenways, if designed properly, can greatly benefit any environmentally sensitive areas by ways of mitigation, controlling where people walk etc, and should not be seen as a danger to either landscape or wildlife.

"The 16,000 people

who have signed our online petition, proves beyond any doubt that the people of County Wicklow want to see the project delivered, and are getting frustrated with the current pace of progress.

"It is in that context that we will continue to press hard for the East Coast Greenway timescale to be completed in the shortest possible time. We are asking all of the general election candidates, if elected, to commit to prioritising the Greenway and to work closely with WCC, to move things along. Notwithstanding Minister Harris setting up the Taskforce, we would have liked to have seen a greater level of involvement from our Wicklow TDs, rather than positive soundbites over the last 3 years. Soundbites will not deliver the Greenway."

Speed lobby with Wicklow election candidates

Approximately 75 local people attended a recent Meet the Candidates General Election 2020 event in Bray, where they got the chance to quiz candidates about the issues that matter to them and find out what candidates would do about them if elected.

The event was put on by the County Wicklow Public Participation Network, the Disability Federation of Ireland and Bray Area Partnership, with Cornerstone Church at the Well providing the venue. The event took place on Friday, 31st January.

General Election 2020 candidates who attended the event were: Councillor Joe Behan, John Brady TD, Seamus Connor, Valeria Cox, Stephen Donnelly TD, Anthony Fitzgerald, John Larkin and Councillor Steven Matthews.

Each candidate had two minutes to address the audience and put their case for election, with their

speeches being live-streamed via Facebook by Garden County Radio.

Candidates then spent 10 minutes at each table in the room to answer specific questions from community members, in a rotating 'speed lobby' format.

As well as individuals, community organisations from the north Wicklow area were well-represented on the day - with students, members and service-users from New Court School, Cairdeas Clubhouse, Bray Old Folks Association, Tres Brazilian Cultural Centre, Peacehaven Trust, CASA Bray, Wicklow Triple A Alliance, Bray Men's & Women's Shed, Together for Choice, Sunbeam House, Lakers, U3A, Extinction Rebellion, One Future, Wicklow Dementia Support, BIFE, residents associations - and more.

A truly memorable ending to the event was provided by Josh O'Connell, aged 16, from New Court School, who sang a beautiful version of 'What a Wonderful World'.



Wicklow's election candidates at the Speed Lobby event; Valerie Cox, Cllr Steven Matthews, John Larkin, John Brady TD, Anthony Fitzgerald, Stephen Donnelly TD, Seamus Connor, and Cllr Joe Behan



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Over 700 public lights out around the county

Clr Gail Dunne (FF) raised the matter of public lighting outages at last week's meeting of Wicklow County Council. There are currently over 700 public lights not working around the county. Clr Dunne requested that representatives from Airtricity be invited to the next County Council meeting.

Clr Dunne said "As most of us are out canvassing at the moment we're seeing how many lights are out. One area of Wicklow town, this week, I went down and found out that lights had been out for over three-and-a-half months.

"I don't think that's good enough. If the lights are out there should be a time when it is fixed and that should be adhered to, and it is not. I feel Airtricity need to come to a council meeting and explain what is going on. With over 700 lights out throughout the county, this is a disaster.

"Old people are afraid to open their doors because there's no lighting within the area. I'm really tired of it, I brought this up so many times at both municipal level and county level, we're not listened to."

Clr Steven Matthews (Green Party) thanked

Clr Dunne for raising the matter, adding: "It is not just Airtricity; when you have cable damage or cable supply issues, ESB Networks have to be brought into the equation, we don't seem to have any reach in ESB at all to address the issues. There are also access issues, where Airtricity are not allowed to climb a pole and if they can't get an elevated platform in, they have to rely on ESB."

Clr Pat Fitzgerald (FF) said "this has been an ongoing issue for the last few years, but I don't think I've seen it as bad as it is now. I reported one outage on 18th March and it was fixed on 20th December.

"We've a small little townland outside of Arklow with two lights out of order for the last two months so the excuse that people are not trained up or can't go up ESB poles or whatever,

that doesn't fit with me to be honest. We need to get Airtricity on board, they got the contract, they should have enough people to do the work."

Clr John Mullen (FF) said "My predecessor, Clr Pat Doran had four lights put up last April in Carnew and they were only turned on last Wednesday, nearly a year later."

Cathaoirleach, Clr Irene Winters (FG) described the number of lights which are out in all five Municipal Districts as "shocking": "We have a new LED programme coming but that's not an excuse for not repairing the lights in existence." She suggested that the Council's audit committee look for a clawback on the contract with Airtricity.

The council has rolled over the contract with Airtricity utility services to bring it to the stage where the national ener-

gy retrofit programme takes place, and it's hoped that will go to tender in Q3 this year.

Airtricity has five full-time crews operating in the county - three in the east of the county and two in the west. A council official explained to councillors that a crew can fix ten lights within a day but that this has been hampered by the fact that the contractor is now required to replace it with a LED fitting which means replacing the whole head, and this limits each crew to fix between two and five lamps a day.

There are approximately 15,000 public lights in total around the county. It is WCC's intention to move as quickly as possible in pushing Kilkenny County council on the national retrofit programme (the lead local authority for the roll out and tender for the LED retrofit).



Students from Gaelchoilaiste na Mara in Arklow are pictured at their Strike for Climate Action last Thursday in St. Mary's Park, Arklow.

Council green lights County Campus Enterprise Hub

Councillors last week voted unanimously in favour of the plans to develop an Enterprise Hub at Wicklow County Campus (Clermont) in Rathnew. The construction tender will go out soon and construction is set to commence in the third quarter of this year for an estimated opening in Q4 of 2021.

Councillors were informed that the 10,000sq ft enterprise hub will provide a mixture of hot desks, creative pods, co-working spaces, a screening facility, a podcast studio, conference centre, and private office space. It is estimated that the development will create 150 jobs over five years, support 40 new businesses, and allow 15 clients to grow to high potential start-up status.

It is hoped that the hub will further develop Wicklow's film industry by providing a central 'one-stop shop' for all the necessary supports for start-up and established screen content businesses.

"We want it to leverage the skills and expertise already present in the county and the region, and to

support and strengthen the screen sector in the region resulting in a strong regional level enterprise ecosystem and cluster," Linda Healy, Senior Enterprise Development Officer, told councillors.

Clr Gerry Walsh, Chair of the Council's Economic Development & Enterprise Strategic Policy Committee (SPC), said "this is an exciting project for the county and an item that's been regularly voiced on our SPC over the last two years in particular. I'm glad to hear it is a one-stop-shop for start-ups and it will mitigate against and help with the long distance commutes."

Also welcoming the green light for the enterprise hub, Andrew Doyle TD said: "From its early stages, Clermont Campus was poised to become a major creative hub to provide training, mentoring and employment in industry. The Enterprise Hub will fulfil that vision. Enabling Wicklow people to work and build their businesses in their own community is immensely gratifying and this Hub has the potential to create another 150 jobs here. The inclusion of a Podcast Studio adds another dimension to the space, encouraging businesses to broaden their offering and reach new markets."

Former St Gerard's student wins DCU Business School scholarship for academic excellence

Danielle Crowley, former student of St Gerards, has been presented with a €500 Academic Scholarship to study at DCU in recognition of her achieving more than 550 points in the Leaving Certificate.

Over €70,000 worth of scholarships were presented to fresher students at DCU. Awardees were joined at a special presentation ceremony at the Helix by their parents and former school principals and teachers. Each student received a commemorative certificate and the school principal/ teacher were presented with a plaque to display in the school marking the significant achievement of their past pupil.

The DCU Academic Scholarship Awards were presented to 144 students from throughout Ireland on achieving more than 550 CAO points at Leaving Certificate or equivalent. A scholarship of €500 is awarded to students who gain the required number of points, meet the specific entry requirements and register to study with any of DCU's five faculties: Engineering & Computing; Humanities & Social Sciences; Science & Health; Institute of Education and DCU Business School.



Danielle Crowley, former student of St Gerard's, with Professor Brian MacCraith, President of DCU, Guidance Counsellor Sheila Maguire and Professor Anne Sinnott, Dean, Faculty of Business Studies.

Raheenleagh Wind Farm Fund is open

Raheenleagh Wind Farm has announced the latest round of funding for communities located in Co Wicklow and Co Wexford. The fund is open for applications until Friday, 28th February 2020.

The community fund initiative aims to provide financial support to local community and voluntary organisations in proximity of the wind farm, helping them to deliver beneficial projects and initiatives which fall within one or more of these broad themes: Education and Skills; Health, Safety and Wellbeing; Environment and Habitat Conservation; Energy Efficiency and Sustainability; Culture and Heritage; Recreation, Sport and Social Inclusion; Tourism.

Frank Kelly, Stakeholder Manager at ESB, said: "Through our Community Wind Farm Fund, ESB's aim is to help the communities in which we operate our wind farms to become more sustainable through

the support of positive local initiatives and activities. We remain committed to creating a brighter future for all by being a good neighbour and we encourage all local organisations to apply for this funding."

Monies have already been committed by the community fund to develop a range of projects in the region, which will make their mark for many years to come as communities continue to enjoy the benefits of the investments. Patrick Maguire, Asset Manager at Greencoat, stated: "We are delighted to support these worthy projects neighbouring the wind farm. It is great to see the level of community activity and spirit in the area, we look forward to

helping build on this over the life of the wind farm. At Greencoat, we are committed to be a good neighbour and supporting the local communities in which we operate."

The 2019 fund committed to investing over €60,000 to a total of 10 projects, seven of which are located in Co Wexford and three in Co Wicklow. The projects are all located in the vicinity of Raheenleagh Wind farm.

The community fund is being administered by SECAD and organisations can apply online via www.windfarmcommunityfunds.ie/. Interested organisations should read the Fund Guidelines on the website at www.windfarmcommunityfunds.ie/ before applying.

Raheenleagh Wind

Farm is a renewable energy project developed by Raheenleagh Power DAC a jointly owned subsidiary of ESB and Greencoat, constructed on the Coillte Raheenleagh forest in Co. Wicklow. The wind farm is located approximately 8km west of Arklow and straddles the Wicklow and Wexford border. The wind farm features 11 turbines with a combined generating capacity of 35.2MW. It can generate enough renewable electricity to power around 22,500 homes a year.

The Raheenleagh Wind Farm's community benefit fund, established in 2015, will prioritise projects and initiatives that support and benefit the area surrounding Raheenleagh Wind Farm.

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Home maintenance and repair projects are projects that must be done to maintain the integrity and value of your home. They include areas like roofing, exterior painting, window upgrades and furnace upgrade.

These should be carried out if needed before any interior repairs or renovations are considered.

Buyers expect a home with solid structure and systems, then they look for the cosmetic home improvements. Also, most home purchases now involve an independent home inspector who will be looking critically and objectively at your home's condition.

Doing a kitchen remodel home improvement project when your roof is leaking is like getting a facelift when you need heart bypass surgery. One is critical and one is

not. If you don't have the structure and building systems in shape, then expect to have the Buyer create their own value for it and have that deducted from their offer price, if you get an offer at all.

Here is a list of some important home maintenance and repair things to check for and have done before you try and sell:

Roof and Flashing: Make sure the roof does not leak. If leakage is occurring have it fixed immediately. It's probably a result of flashing failure. Check flashing around the chimney, walls, etc. Make sure broken shingles are

replaced. Check to make sure tree branches and leaves are not touching the roof.

Chimney: Make sure the bricks are not loose or missing mortar. If they are, have the bricks tuckpointed to prevent water leakage and structural failure. Check that the roof flashing around the chimney is in good shape and does not have any gaps or openings for water to penetrate.

Gutters and Downspouts: Make sure these are clean and flowing well. If they are clogged, clean and flush the gutters and down-

spouts. Clogged gutters are the source of many problems such as paint failure, leaks, wood rot, sagging gutters. Improper downspout outlets are also a problem that can cause water in the basement and cracked foundation walls. Make sure the downspout outlet drains away from the house on soil that is sloping away from the house. If downspouts are allowed to drain into the house or into crocks that run to the basement or foundation, water problems can occur including ground settlement resulting in cracking of the basement wall.

Brick Wall: Make sure that the brick wall is solid and in good repair. Replace damaged brick including cracked brick and tuckpoint any missing mortar joints.

Foundation: Repair any cracks in the foundation wall. If you see cracks

check that the downspouts are not draining into the house foundation and footings. Downspouts and the yard should drain away from the house. If the basement wall cracks are severe, you may need structural repairs including foundation underpin-

ning. This is serious and you need to consult an expert foundation repair contractor.

Plumbing Fixtures: Check that the plumbing fixtures are in good working order. Identify the type of faucets you have and replace any leaking

washers or cartridges if the faucet leaks. Check the drainage of toilets and sinks and unclog as necessary.

Furnace: Make sure the furnace has clean air filters and is in good working order by performing a seasonal furnace checkup.



The Kitchen - a room of many functions

Over the years the kitchen has developed into a room of many functions, becoming the centre of family life. A place to cook, dine, relax and entertain, the kitchen must offer an efficient and comfortable environment. Installing a kitchen is a major outlay, which requires planning and budgeting, no matter what your price bracket.

The first consideration is analyzing how much you are willing to spend. No matter what your requirements, everyone has a preference for either traditional or contemporary looks. However, while some homeowners prefer to opt for the timeless appeal of traditional styling, others are choosing more cutting edge, ultra-modern designs. With a notable move towards stainless steel and aluminium, the European influences of light maple woods are being introduced as an alternative to the traditional concept.

The importance of layout cannot be stressed enough; after all, you will be working in the kitchen and so it is not sufficient that it only just looks effective. You have a choice of three ways of how you can go about installing a new kitchen. If you are one of those talented individuals who God has blessed with a 'good pair of hands', you can carry out all the work yourself.

If you bring the dimensions of your kitchen along to a

kitchen specialist entre, they will help you to design a kitchen to your budget, and will also assist with advice of suitability of various materials. The second method is somewhat similar to the first, but recognizing that you neither have the time nor the ability to install the kitchen, you employ the services of a good carpenter and plumber. However, a word of caution - make sure you get a reference from them for similar work they have done, and check it out thoroughly. A kitchen centre will be able to supply you with names of reliable workmen who regularly do work for their customers.

The final approach is the one where you hand over the entire job to kitchen specialists. They will call to your home, measure up, design plans, bring you samples of material and install the final product. Specialist kitchen companies, especially ones operating locally, are very protective of their reputations as they depend on it for referrals.





Install a patio or garden decking

Make sure your garden is up to scratch for those long summer evenings and lazy weekend BBQs. Decking and patios are a great extension of indoor space and can provide a seating and dining area; try shading with an awning and install lighting and outdoor heaters to make the most of the space. If you want outdoor areas for storage and growing fruit or vegetables, now is the perfect time to install that shed or greenhouse.

Maintain your garden

General garden maintenance like mowing, weeding and repairing fencing is important too. Gardens can look untidy very quickly. Make sure that your lawn is well cared for, grass can suffer in extreme heat so you may need to install a sprinkler system and fertilise regularly.

Check that your fencing, shed or greenhouse hasn't been damaged during the winter and Spring and clear the garden of debris. You may find that outdoor furniture and fittings are covered in mould or mildew from the wet conditions, these can be easily cleaned with a soap and water mixture. Garden paths or driveways may also have come under attack from moss or algae, which is simple to remove too. Spring is a good time to repaint or stain outdoor furniture to protect it from further weather damage and to start composting.



Exterior home improvements

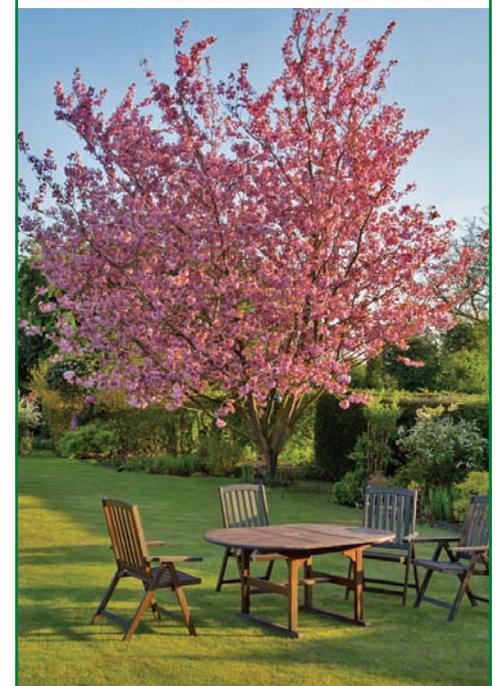
As we move into Spring, the better weather and longer days mean you can carry out all those other exterior home improvements you've been putting off such as plastering, painting and cleaning outside walls, windows and doors. Don't forget to check the condition of your roof and clean your gutters too. Your roof is the most important part of your home; it has to be in good shape. Spruce up the exterior of your weather-worn walls, but first, check that they don't have any cracks in them. Painting will also protect your home from damp - don't forget that window frames can also be transformed with a lick of paint or gloss. Painting your front door can also make a big difference to your home.

Home extensions and conversions

Longer, drier Spring days are ideal for large scale home extension and conversion projects. An extension means lots to organise, so consider hiring an architect, quantity surveyor or project manager to keep everything on track. On the other hand, if you already have an unused loft or basement, why not convert that instead? Conversions are cheaper than extensions and eight times out of ten, they don't need planning permission. Conservatories are also a low budget way to resize your home.

Lay a new driveway

If you are looking for a simple way to revamp the exterior of your property, then laying a new driveway could be the answer. There are a variety of driveway materials to choose from; tarmac, gravel or cement are low-cost options, whereas stone or clay paving slabs are a more attractive but expensive driveway material.



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SKC Providers Ltd. has been established in Rathnew, Co Wicklow since 2010, while their second branch opened in Drumshanbo, Co Leitrim in 2012 and their third branch in Gorey, Co Wexford in 2015. All branches sell a comprehensive selection of quality heating, plumbing and bathroom products to not only trade professionals but also to the general public.

"We supply and stock the full range of heating and plumbing materials, pipes, fittings, boilers, cylinders, pumps, heating controls, solar hot water systems, underfloor heating, radiators, heated towel rails, stoves etc., all at very competitive prices.

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FLOORS & CARPETS

Just changing or updating your flooring can make a room seem larger, more open and fresh. And today the choices are endless whether you want to opt for wooden floors, carpets, tiles or stone, the sky really is the limit. When considering changing your flooring it's important to think of a few things.

When trying to decide on what type of flooring to use in a particular area, think of the space available to you. While it may seem an obvious question many people have got caught up in the impulse of buying and living to regret it afterwards. Perhaps the carpet is looking a little shabby and needs replacing but your budget is tight. Is there much point in scrimping on the budget and buying a lesser quality carpet?

If you choose a look that's too 'trendy', you could be left with an eyesore in years to come, so stick to the classic look.

It is probably best to start off with a realistic budget in mind, compare prices and as the old consumer's mantra goes 'shop around'. There is value to be had everywhere and to save yourself some money, all it takes is a little bit of time and effort.

Wooden Floors

This is one area of the flooring market that in recent times has experienced a phenomenal growth in popularity. Wooden floors may have advantages. Not only do they give a home a classic timeless beauty, but also they are really durable. There are numerous species of timber

used in flooring from the hardwoods like oak, maple and ash to softwoods like birch or pine. Speciality woods like bamboo are also available.

Carpets

The main plus point of carpets is choice. There are endless colours and patterns of carpets available now that can suit any colour scheme or décor. The range in price is also phenomenal. So, whether you want a cheap short-term fix, or some plush padding for your paws, there is endless choice.

Tiles

Tiles are ideal flooring options for the kitchen and bathroom in the home as they are imperious to moisture and are very easy to clean and maintain. There are three types of tiles: ceramic, porcelain and glass. The difference between the three is how they are made, there is not much difference in price or durability of ceramic versus porcelain.

So remember, choose wisely and pick a floor that you can live with.



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WINDOWS & DOORS

Selecting doors and windows for your home and conservatory can be a daunting task because of the sheer choice that now exists. Not only is no home complete without them, but they also provide security, ventilation and restrict the entry of strong wind and other elements.

Do your homework before investing to ensure that you adhere to building regulations, buy the best quality within your budget and have them correctly installed.

Skimping too much on doors and windows is a false economy and can cause major problems in the future. It is recommended that you do some research and make your own decision as to which to go for. Advice from builders should be welcomed but make sure you do your own homework as well.

You may want to take into consideration the weather conditions of where you live before choosing your doors and windows. Also keep in mind that windows and doors can help reduce your electricity bill. If fitted well they will help block the escape of heat and stop the entry of cold wind from outside. Don't forget that the frames in which the windows and doors are fitted should be strong and the colour should be compatible with the home décor.

There are a number of materials to choose from including timber, aluminium, PVC, aluclad/composites, steel and structural frameless glass. There are pros and cons to all possibilities depending on your house type.

It is worth remembering, that if you have existing timber frames in good condition, there are companies who can machine these in situ and fit real double glazed units into them. By doing this you get to keep your treasured timber and perhaps, avoid a lot of re-tiling, plastering and decorating.

Internal doors are another thing to consider. Recent years have seen an advancement of different and stylish internal doors. As well as wood, they can be made of glass or steel. The front door gives a first impression of a home and a well chosen door can make your home stand out from the crowd as well as providing proper insulation and security.

The windows and doors of your conservatory are another area to consider. Conservatories have a number of uses whether it be as a playroom, dining area, an office or something else. Light is key, and your choice of windows and doors can help maximize and manipulate its potential.

Important decisions might include whether you want blinds on the windows, or if you want a glass roof that lets in the light, or a roof that shuts it out.

Just as your conservatory should compliment your home, a conservatory's windows and doors should also compliment, and are essential to, the style of the conservatory itself, whether it's a Victorian design, a Lean-To, a pavilion, Bespoke or Edwardian conservatory.

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‘A bedroom should be cosy and relaxing’

We spend about a third of our lives in the bedroom so it's important to get things right with regards to décor, furniture and colours.

Since much of our time in the bedroom is spent relaxing or sleeping, many people prefer to choose calm and serene colours when it comes to the walls. This can mean choosing a more toned down version of what your preferred colour might be.

In the bedroom, the ceiling takes on more importance than it does in other rooms, since many of us spend time looking up at it while lying in bed. You can make the ceiling more interesting simply with some added texture, colouring or design. Think of the ceiling as extra wall in the room rather than ignore it.

A bedroom should be cosy and relaxing, and the positioning of the furniture can matter a great deal with regards to this. The bed shouldn't be an obstacle you have to constantly walk around, and other items of furniture such as desks and dressers should be tailored according to the size of the room; if the dresser is too large for example it will be too domineering in a smaller room. On the other hand, if your bedroom is large, small items of furniture will look lost.

Less is more when it comes to the amount of furniture in the bedroom. A bed, a bedside locker, a wardrobe and a dresser are generally thought of as

essentials. A dresser can sometimes fit inside a wardrobe to maximise space. If you have a TV in your bedroom, perhaps it can be mounted on the wall to save space also, and if you must have some shelving for books or DVDs, this can be mounted on the wall as well. Many people also like to have a chair and desk in their bedroom, but be careful; clutter can accumulate very easily in the bedroom and the more surfaces there are, the more likely that is to happen. The option of adding drawers or boxes which fit under the bed is a great way to reduce clutter and store things out of sight. This is of particular importance when it comes to children's bedrooms and the conundrum of where to put all those toys.

A reading chair can be a great addition to a bedroom, but if space won't allow, then adding a window seat could be an option. Finishing touches can be provided with rugs, pictures on the walls, potted house plants and some ornaments.

Lighting in the bedroom is key to setting a certain mood or serving a function; many people like to have a dimmer switch for this reason, but additional lighting will most likely be required in the form of a bedside lamp for reading. Fairy lights are another way of adding additional lighting that can change the atmosphere of the room. Whatever your preference, it's important to have options.

The Bathroom - A room for relaxation

Choosing the right tile for your bathroom remodel can up the 'wow' factor and give your space an extra source of colour and texture. However, with thousands of tile options out there, it can be tough to choose the correct one. There are several things you want to look for when shopping for tiles for your bathroom remodel, including size, shape, colour, and price. You will also want to consult with a bathroom remodelling contractor to ensure that the job is done correctly for a professional finish.

The material you choose for your bathroom tile can make a big impact on its final look. Each material also ranges in resiliency, smoothness, amount of shine, and price so choose carefully.

Each room in your home should have a set colour scheme, even your bathroom. Building a colour scheme can sometimes be difficult, especially when you do not know where to begin. One tip to get started with your bathroom remodel is by choosing the larger pieces of furniture first, such as your cabinet and vanity colours. Once you have those pieces picked out, create a colour scheme for the rest of the room. When shopping for tiles, navigate towards lighter colours that



will help make your bathroom accessories pop. It's not always the most glamorous part of a bathroom remodel but choosing the right vanity can make or break your bathroom's design. If it's placed awkwardly in a traffic route, uses poor or mismatched materials, or doesn't have enough storage, the rest of your bathroom will suffer.

We are all familiar with the humble shower cubicle. Again, these can come in a vast range of shapes, sizes, colours, materials and designs to suit pretty much any given taste. The choice of shower door, cubicle size and finishes can complete the overall look of your bathroom.



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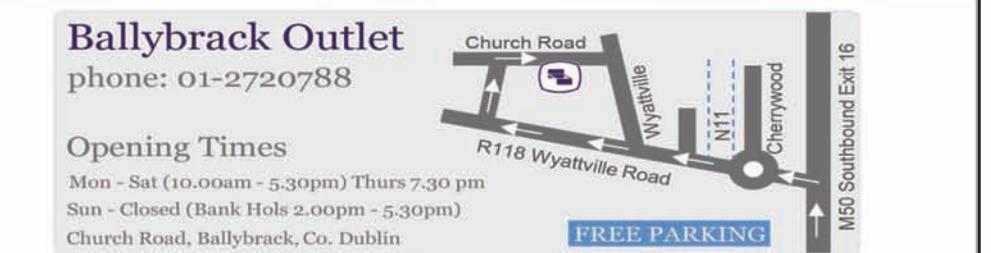
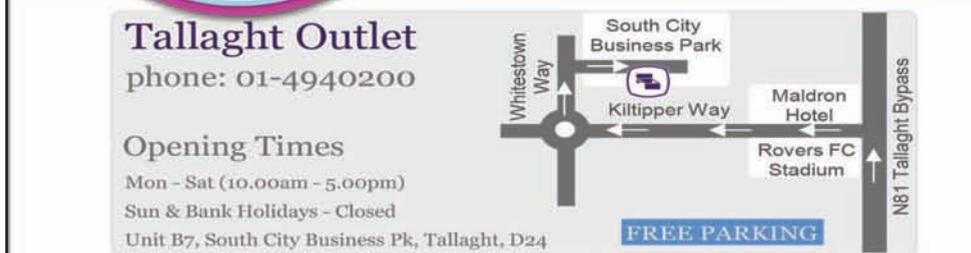
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Church Road, Ballybrack, Co. Dublin





Do your homework - whatever room you're tackling

After a long, dark winter, spring's bright sun and warm winds will soon be coming as a breath of fresh air. As winter becomes a memory it's time to remind homeowners to take stock of important work in the home to be done for themselves or perhaps potential buyers down the road.

Be aware, however, that when you undertake a project on your home you are making an important decision which will influence your daily life for many years. If you haven't got the DIY skills, then such an important investment will need the help of expert and professionals to avoid mistakes and to ensure that your needs and vision are properly realized.

The decision to improve your home is an important financial commitment and thought and careful planning are needed. People can be excused for being wary of home improvement but numerous people have been making the most of the hard economic times and have been able to negotiate better deals to get reasonably

priced materials. Contractors eager for work will also be more willing to offer affordable rates. So get planning for your ideal home improvements.

There are many options when it comes to paint, flooring and wallpaper and it is important to choose the right one for you and your home. Whether it be wooden flooring, tiles or carpet, different people have their own preferences of what the most suitable type of floor for each room may be. You may want to give each room its own aesthetic or keep a common theme going throughout all the room of the house.

Tiles in the kitchen and bathrooms are a popular choice, while elsewhere in the home the switch from carpet to wood or vice versa is a common change and improvement that many people make.

If you are planning on renovating your kitchen, bedroom, living room or any room of your house, don't rush in without knowing exactly what you're looking for. Hire a professional or if you're planning a DIY job, make sure you know what you're doing, make a check-list, don't scrimp on materials and

choose the best time to carry out the renovation.

Installing a kitchen, for instance, is a major outlay which requires planning and budgeting, no matter what your price bracket. The first consideration with doing up any room or having any major interior work done is analyzing how much you are willing to spend. No matter what your requirements, everyone has a preference for either traditional or contemporary looks, and also their own preferences for colours and textures.

The importance of layout cannot be stressed enough. With regards to the kitchen, for example, you will be working in it so it is not sufficient that it only just looks effective.

Whatever room you're tackling, or whatever work you are having done to the interior of your home, you should do some homework first and have a fixed idea in mind of what you want. Buy the magazines, decide on what you like and what you hate. Get an overall concept in mind. Be realistic with your budget. It's also worthwhile to spend a little extra to ensure your comfort and happiness.

Once the main part of the work is completed - the installing of the new kitchen or new flooring, etc - it's time to furnish the room. This is where you give the room its character and bring it to life, making the selection of furniture one of the most important decisions and something you shouldn't just leave as an after-thought.

The right choice of sofa, table, bookcase, bed or cabinet can make the room, but equally the wrong choice

can ruin the room and haunt you. When choosing furniture, don't just pick something that looks nice in the shop; you must always visualise how it will look in your own home and how it will compliment the other furniture and décor of the room. Do you want a wooden or glass table, for example, and if you choose wood, do you want pine or oak or something else?

In the bathroom, a dash of paint, a few tasteful additions in terms of ornamentation, lighting - even plants - will go a long way towards improving it. But these are mere small changes. We can affect real drama in the bathroom with a change of suite, window dressings, tiles and even floor coverings.

The compact dimension of a bathroom should not inhibit the choice of furniture. The basic components of a toilet, basin, bath, plus all brassware and basic accessories can be fitted into the smallest of areas without sacrificing convenience or mobility for users. As with all other rooms, careful preparation, planning and organisation are all essential ingredients for creating the perfect bathroom, but there are several things you can do to help maximize the feeling of light and space in a bathroom, for example; choose plain colours and simple patterns. These will help to maintain an uncluttered look and the lighter colours will create the illusion that the room is bigger than it actually is.

Here in Wicklow, you will find many outlets for choosing the perfect kitchen, flooring, wallpaper, furniture and furnishings.



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Wicklow schools take part in Safer Internet Day

Safer Internet Day 2020 takes place this week on Tuesday, 11th February, and hundreds of students from across Wicklow are taking part in school-based events.

Safer Internet Day is an EU initiative to promote a safer internet for all users, especially young people. It was first marked in 2004, has grown beyond its traditional geographic zone, and now takes place in approximately 150 countries worldwide.

In Ireland, Safer Internet Day is co-ordinated by Webwise, part of the Professional Development Service for Teachers (PDST). It is co-funded by the Department of Education and Skills, and the European Union's Connecting Europe Facility.

events this week to promote Safer Internet Day, including the following schools: Moneystown National School, Roundwood; East Glendalough School, Wicklow Town; St Brigid's National School, Greystones; St Fergal's National School, Bray; Blessington Community College, Blessington

Nationwide, almost 700 schools and organisations have registered Safer Internet Day events on the Webwise website. Webwise estimates that more than 170,000 students will take part in activities that will help raise their awareness of

online safety. Registered activities include school assemblies, student mentoring, positivity weeks, online safety talks and workshops addressing topics such as online consent, digital wellbeing, social media use and respectful communication.

According to National Director of PDST, Ciara O'Donnell: "Digital media is rapidly changing and continues to provide new opportunities for young people to engage, connect, create and learn. It is vital for young people to develop digital skills and an understanding of how these new technologies work. I com-

mend the schools - and particularly - the Safer Internet Day Student Ambassadors, who will play a leading role supporting awareness-raising campaigns in their clubs, schools and communities."

On Safer Internet Day, Webwise will launch a new, curriculum-based programme - called Connected - to support schools to introduce basic digital media literacy into the Junior Cycle. The programme addresses online well-being, false information, big data and rights; and will be free for schools to download on www.webwise.ie



Darragh Bouchier, Nicole Little, Ciara Ryan, Emma Lewis, and Leon Shannon are pictured at the peaceful school protest last week at Colaiste Chroabh Abhann in Kilcoole

Many schools across Wicklow have organised

Glendalough Visitor Centre wins Merit Award for Excellence in Hospitality

Glendalough Visitor Centre, one of Wicklow and Ireland's most popular visitor destinations, was celebrating after being recognised at the CIE Tours International Annual Awards of Excellence.

The Awards which are now in their 30th year, recognise the best hotels and tourist attractions across Ireland following an assessment of feedback from over 25,000 customers throughout the year. Each winner achieved a customer satisfaction rating of over 92% from CIE Tours International visitors with Gold Award Winners achieving the highest satisfaction ratings in their categories.

island of Ireland won awards, with 13 overall category winners being awarded a Gold Award.

Speaking at the presentation of CIE Tours International Annual Awards of Excellence Elizabeth Crabill said: "30 years ago CIE Tours International introduced its annual Awards of Excellence to recognise Ireland's hospitality ambassadors - the people and businesses throughout the country who put Irish tourism on the global stage through the warmth of welcome and quality of service provided to our international visitors."

Ireland remains an attractive tourism destination for visitors from North America drawn by the diversity and richness of the experiences offered and the warmth of the traditional Irish welcome which should not be underestimated. "The Irish holiday experience is unique and continues to grow in popularity, so much so that we're launching new winter tour holidays to Ireland for the first time in 2020. This growth is driven in no small part by our Tour partners, many of whom we are recognising tonight, who are continuously improving their offering. I warmly congratulate tonight's winners on their achievements and I thank all our partners who work closely with us throughout the year".

Glendalough Visitor Centre was presented with a Merit Award for excellence in hospitality and quality of service by Fiona Ross, Chairman and Elizabeth Crabill, Chief Executive Officer, CIE Tours International. In total 84 hotels and tourist attractions from across the



Stephen Cotter, Chief Operations Officer, CIE Tours International, presents the CIE Tours Award of Excellence to Patrica Ross and George McClafferty of the Glendalough Visitors Centre

Let's Get Buzzing

Members of community groups and interested individuals in County Wicklow are invited to a one-day 'Let's get Buzzing' workshop on Saturday, 22nd February, in Ashford Community and Heritage Centre.

Organised by Wicklow County Council, the aim of the event is to support community led actions for biodiversity and climate action. The four workshop themes are: The County Wicklow Swift Recording Project; The All-Ireland Pollinator Plan; Biodiversity and Climate Change; Exploring (and recording) your local river.

The focus will be on practical "hands on" actions under each theme. The event will be of interest to Tidy Towns groups, Residents' Associations and other community groups and will provide a valuable opportunity to network and share knowledge and experiences.

Co-ordinated jointly by Wicklow County Council's Heritage Officer and Environmental Awareness office, there will be additional inputs from the National Biodiversity Data Centre and the Local Authorities Water and Communities Office, as well as the East Wicklow Rivers Trust and Ashford Tidy Towns group.

The programme runs from 10am to 3pm and includes a field visit to the nearby Vartry River to take a 'kick sample' and examine the aquatic invertebrates present and what they tell us about water quality.

The event is free, but booking is required to secure a place as there is a limited capacity. To book email jcallery@wicklowcoco.ie or dburns@wicklowcoco.ie. For further information and to access the full programme see www.wicklow.ie.

Bray students demonstrate commitment to Global Goals

Students from St. Patrick's Loreto Primary School, Bray have been commended by humanitarian aid agency, GOAL, for demonstrating their contribution and commitment to helping achieve the Global Goals.

Third-class students were named runners-up in the GOAL Changemakers Award for developing a 100 per cent recyclable Christmas wrapping paper. Primary school students all over Ireland were asked to share their actions for global change through the Awards.

For months leading up to Christmas people discuss the gifts they are going to buy, the food they are going to eat and the novelty items that offer short term entertainment but long-term damage to the environment.

The St Patrick's Loreto students discussed the unsustainability of many traditions at Christmas and felt they should take action in their community. They felt a very pressing issue is the excessive waste caused by wrapping paper and gift wrapping.

In a bid to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 12: Responsible Consumption and Production the school created their own wrapping paper which was 100% recyclable. To explain their actions and raise awareness to a wider audience, the children crafted Christmas bauble shaped information cards to accompany the wrapping paper. The seventeen Sustainable Development Goals were listed on the festive information leaflets.

To continue their efforts in 2020, the class have decorated a box in the classroom for toy donations that will be donated to local charities throughout the year. The young students submitted their entry to GOAL via a song they composed themselves.

Third-class teacher, Breda Dunleavy, said: "The class loved getting involved in the GOAL Changemakers Award as they are all so passionate about this topic.

They worked together and displayed fantastic teamwork where they all treated each other equally and showed each other respect which in turned contributed to global goal 10: reduced inequalities. The award is wonderful because the project was driven by the students and it inspired me to watch them discover how the tangible changes they make will help tackle global issues."

The students discussed their entry and said: "We know that metallic wrapping paper is not recyclable and a more sustainable option should be available. We wrote the notes about the global goals because we want to share what we know with other people. We know about the global goals but not everybody does so we wanted to share our knowledge."

The judging panel, comprised of Newstalk presenter Jonathon McCrea, children's author Sarah Webb, activist and founder of Flossie and the Beach Cleaners, Flossie Donnelly, and GOAL deputy-CEO Mary Van Lieshout, were blown away by the quality of the entries.

Jonathan McCrea said: "It was great to see such a variety of entries and innovative ideas from young people committed to helping achieve Global Goals. The high quality of entries made judging difficult, and it is clear we have some amazing changemakers among our young people."

GOAL Deputy CEO, Mary Van Lieshout, said: "The judges were in awe of how children are making a difference at home and in their schools every day. Young people are the future and it is imperative that they believe in and promote a sustainable, fair future. We must equip them with tools to make that happen. We want a planet earth that's sustainable and here for future generations and it is inspiring to see our young people taking the lead on this."



At the launch of the Arklow 'Walk Through the Centuries' event in Arklow Library were Wicklow County Council Heritage Officer Deirdre Burns, Claire Lawless, and Laura Larkin

Coming up at The Mermaid...

Corpus Christi (Cert:16)

Oscars 2020 International Feature Film nominee Corpus Christi screens in Mermaid on Monday 17th February at 8pm.

Daniel, 20, lives in a young offenders' institute, where he has found God and wants to become a priest. But his violent past means that's an impossibility. However, while released on parole, he is mistaken for a young novice at a rural village and steps into the role when the local priest falls ill.

Bringing a vibrancy and charisma to the village, Daniel/Tomasz discovers an unexpected skill for pastoral care and begins to reach out to a local community, which has been recently traumatised by a terrible accident. Helping them forgive and heal, he finds his own path to redemption.

Tickets cost €9/7 and are available from Box Office on 01-2724030 and online at mermaidartscentre.ie

Exhibition on Screen: Lucian Freud, A Self Portrait

For the first time in history the Royal Academy of Arts in London, in collaboration with the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, is bringing together Lucian Freud's self-portraits. The exhibition will display more than 50 paintings, prints and drawings in which this modern master of British art turned his unflinching eye firmly on himself. One of the most celebrated painters of our time, Lucian Freud is also one of very few 20th-century artists who portrayed themselves with such consistency. Spanning nearly seven decades his self-portraits give a fascinating insight into both his psyche and his development as a painter, from his earliest portrait painted in 1939 to the final one executed 64 years later. Screening in Mermaid Arts Centre on Thursday 27th February at 8pm.

Tickets cost €9/7 and are available from Box Office on 01-2724030 and online at mermaidartscentre.ie

The Goldfinch (Cert:16)

The Goldfinch screens in Mermaid on Monday 24th February at 8pm. Oscar winner Nicole Kidman and Baby Driver star Ansel Elgort lead a top-flight cast in this gripping adaptation of Donna Tartt's Pulitzer Prize-winning novel. Following his success with Brooklyn (TIFF 2015), director John Crowley takes on a larger canvas in this sweeping, coming-of-age tale of criminal plots, personal secrets, and the transformative power of art.

Young Theo saw his privileged life with his mother shattered one day on a visit to an art museum. In the aftermath of an attack among the masterpieces, one priceless 17th-century oil painting goes missing. What happened to the The Goldfinch? And how will its disappearance follow Theo across America throughout his whole youth and on to his Dutch hideout?

Tickets cost €9/7 and are available from Box Office on 01-2724030 and online at mermaidartscentre.ie



Nicole Kidman and Ansel Elgort star in The Goldfinch

Susan Montgomery exhibition in Mermaid

There will be an exhibition of artwork by Susan Montgomery in the Mermaid Arts Centre, opening on Friday 14th February and running until Saturday 28th March, 10am to 6pm.

Susan Montgomery is a visual artist from Wicklow living in West Cork. She graduated from DLIATD in 1997. She is a member of the Tellurometer Project collective since 2012 and has exhibited widely throughout Ireland in both group and solo exhibitions.

For Montgomery, the use of paint as material endeavours to articulate the existence of fragility and temporality in the context of her personal

experience of the everyday. Findings, arrangements and observances from domestic and rural landscapes develop into abstractions that take the form of paintings. There is an attempt to decipher the delicate and often encumbering tension between large and small, rhythm and interruption, interior and exterior, self and other, night and day, stillness and movement and what happens within the slipping between the boundaries of these.



Maude's Sunday coat, Valentia, oil on linen 2019, by Susan Montgomery

What's Inside?: An Exhibition by Rachel Bernard

'What's Inside?', an exhibition by Rachel Bernard, will run in the Signal Arts Centre in Bray from 17th February to 1st March.

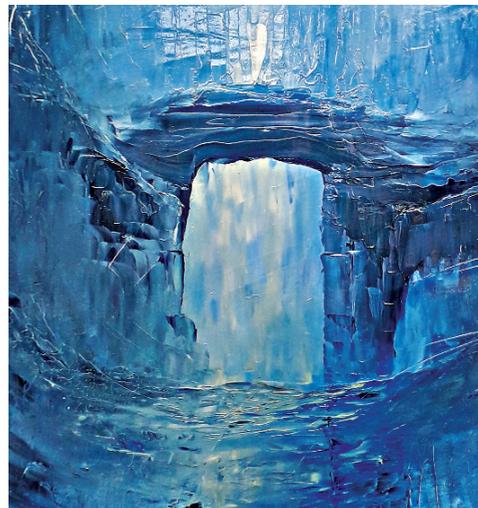
Rachel Bernard is an artist who originates from Brittany in France and has been living in Ireland since 2005. Her preferred medium is oil.

Originally working with heavy texture and a palette knife to brush and fine ink, she has developed a range of styles which include surreal and abstract paintings. Her desire is to keep moving forward in developing new ways to express her feelings and influences. Following huge learning experiences, working in Signal arts to running her own gallery and studio, she then worked from a smaller establishment where she could produce works whilst conducting art classes.

She now produces paintings from home. This gives her the freedom to work without the escalating costs of renting in the Bray area. Her most recent works follows the theme of human emotions, and she loves the challenges of transferring these to works of art. The range of paintings vary from large to small to suit both taste and budgets.

Her latest works can be viewed on www.taylorbernardart.myportfolio.com

All welcome! Opening Reception Friday 21st February 7pm - 9pm.



Jerry Fish returns to Tinahely

The Courthouse Arts Centre welcomes back once again the ever popular Jerry Fish on Saturday 15th February. Jerry Fish is renowned as much for his showmanship as he is for his music. He's a carnival creator, circus ringmaster - complete with Vaudeville moustache - a playwright, singer, songwriter and poet.

What a year 2019 was for Jerry Fish, bringing his Electric Sideshow to a brand new family festival Kaleidoscope and once again at Electric Picnic, a 'festival within a festival' highlight at both.

Now the circus is leaving town and Jerry returns to theatres and venues to bring us his enchanting "Songs & Tall Tales of Jerry Fish." Every show a unique live theatrical experience that dissolves all boundaries between performer and audience.

Mr. Fish's genre-bending and idiosyncratic style of entertainment has made him a household name within the Irish Music industry. With two Platinum selling solo albums, an MTV award and IRMA Music Award, and a solid reputation as a supreme and spectacular showman.

His new release a recording of 'True Love Will Find You in The End' (feat. Wallis Bird) with arrangements by his friend and renowned composer Cian Boylan is playlisted on Radio 1 and getting national airplay across all stations and media. This is a chance to hear an exclusive live performance of his new single and a whole lot more.

Saturday 15th February 8.30pm €22/€20



EPA invites second level students to enter 'The Story of Your Stuff' competition

The Story of Your Stuff competition combines creativity and science, giving students the chance to win €500 for themselves and €500 for their school, alongside new Climate Topic Prize.

The young people who influence the trends of today will be the decision-makers of tomorrow, and must be encouraged to consider how their everyday decisions can have a positive impact on the environment - and the world. That's according to Director General of the EPA, Laura Burke, launching The Story of Your Stuff, an EPA competition aimed at secondary school students, which seeks to empower young people to make environmentally conscious decisions about their 'stuff' and everyday activities.

Now in its fourth year, the competition brings together curiosity, creativity and science, and aims to get young people thinking about sustainability, climate action and environmental protection, and to spread the word among their friends and family. Entrants are tasked with highlighting the environmental impact of an

everyday item or activity by creatively telling its story through a visual medium. Students can choose to investigate the story of any everyday item or activity, such as a pencil or a bottle, or their journey to school, or their energy use.

Entrants to the competition will be in with a chance to win €500 for themselves and €500 for their school, while a new 'Climate Topic Prize' will be awarded to the entry that best addresses key climate considerations, such as carbon footprint, greenhouse gas emissions or climate action. The top five shortlisted entrants, their classmates and their teacher will be invited to a showcase finale event in UCD in early April, where, as well as seeing the work of the other finalists, they'll also delve in to the world of science through workshops with students and staff of the college's science faculty,

and hear from The Story of Your Stuff Ambassador (to be revealed), before the winning project is announced.

Speaking at the launch, Ms Burke said: "Many young people are rightly concerned about the climate and environmental emergency now facing us worldwide, something that has been well flagged by evidence from scientists, including the EPA. Urgent transformational change is now required to meet these challenges, based on what the evidence is telling us. The EPA is calling on second-level students to enter The Story of Your Stuff competition and to use their artistic talents to create stories to inspire others to make low carbon and environmentally conscious consumption choices.

Entrants are encouraged to use the resources of the EPA website, particularly the EPA's Ireland's Environment web

resource to assist them in their research. The site offers easily accessible information about local environment, environmental indicators, reports and research on topics such as climate change, water, air, biodiversity and waste management.

EPA lead for The Story of Your Stuff, Colette Ryan said: "The Story of Your Stuff competition gets people thinking, talking and making changes. The quality of the entries each year is so impressive and a testament to the wonderful students who take the time to explore the story of their stuff and to the teachers who guide them, and the competition is a highlight of the year for all of us at the EPA. We look forward to seeing the projects from this year's entrants."

Competition guidelines and tips are available at storyofyourstuff.ie. The deadline for entries is Monday, 9th March.

Toyota's Hybrids achieve lowest CO2 emissions of best selling brands

According to data from the Society of the Irish Motor Industry (SIMI), Toyota is the clear winner when it comes to reducing the CO2 output from the top 10 car brands. Toyota's CO2 output is the lowest, achieving 17% lower emissions than the top nine other car brands in Ireland.

By Martin McCarthy

According to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the CO2 output from transport in Ireland has increased in five of the last six years, with 2018 the last reported year increasing by 1.7%. With consumers looking for real alternatives to their traditional petrol or diesel car, they have clearly made self-charging hybrids their preferred choice. Hybrids have become the fastest growing powertrain, up 104% in 2020. So, what impact will this have on Ireland's CO2 output?

SIMI's figures show that the average CO2 output from all new Toyota hybrids sold in 2019 was

86.84g v's an average of 112g of the remaining top 10 competitors. This 17% difference is significant and highlights the role self-charging hybrids play in reducing CO2. This is already exceeding the EU target of 95g set for all car manufacturers by 2021. In fact, Toyota is the only top 10 car brand in Ireland to do so and 2 years ahead of target.

Therefore, it is clear that hybrids play a significant role in reducing Ireland's CO2 output. We know that hybrid supply is more readily available than pure electric cars, as 50 Hybrid batteries can be produced for every 1 battery electric vehicle. Today, self-charging hybrids make up 15% of total Irish market sales in 2020 and will save 64,000 of CO2 over their lifetime.

Commenting on the news, Steve Tormey, CEO of Toyota Ireland said, Toyota is committed to playing its part and leading Ireland towards zero emissions motoring as we have been doing for the past 22 years with self-charging Hybrid electric vehicles.



2nd and 3rd class boys and girls had a brilliant time on Thursday 6th February at the Cumann na mBunscol indoor hurling and camogie blitz which took place in Shoreline, Greystones. Children from St Patricks, Wicklow town; St Cronan's Bray (pictured), and Greystones Educate Together came together and had two hours of non-stop games. This was the first blitz a lot of the 2nd class children have been to and will have encouraged them nicely for their future years of Cumann na mBunscol blitzes! Cumann na mBunscol wish to say a big thank you to the schools and parent helpers for supporting the blitz and to the Young Whistlers who had their first outing as referees. The next blitz will take place on Thursday 13th February.

Anam Cara Wicklow Bereavement Information Evening

Anam Cara Wicklow, the organisation that offers support, information and resources to all bereaved parents, will be hosting a Bereavement Information Evening on 17th February from 7:20pm in the Parkview Hotel in Newtownmountkennedy.

Unfortunately, over the festive season many parent's lives will have been thrown into turmoil with the death of a child, whether it be from an accident at home or abroad, road collision or an illness Anam Cara are there to offer help, support and provide information on many other resources.

This event is open to all bereaved parents regardless the age of your child or circumstances of their death. Anam Cara provide a safe and comfortable space for them to hear a bereavement professional, experienced in supporting bereaved parents, give a short talk about the challenges families face into after the death of their son or daughter. They will also get the opportunity to meet other parents who have also been bereaved and are in the same situation as they are.

A bereaved mother recently commented "The grief that follows the death of your child is devastating, isolating and at times overwhelming. Some parents feel lost and struggle with their conflicting and intense emotions. Anam Cara events like this do help"

Anam Cara CEO Sharon Vard stressed that this event is open to all bereaved parents "regardless of the age your child died, the circumstances of their death or whether the death was recent or not.

Anam Cara gives bereaved mothers and fathers a chance to meet and connect with other bereaved parents in a safe and comfortable setting. Here we can find a level of support and understanding that - even with the best will in the world - it can be difficult for family and friends to offer.

On their website, anamcara.ie, you can access information about other events in your area, and Anam Cara resources. These include the Anam Cara Information Pack (eight leaflets) developed by bereaved parents and the Anam Cara Videos on A Dad's Grief, Sudden and Traumatic Death, and The Grieving Family.

All Anam Cara events are provided free of charge for as long as necessary.

To help Anam Cara organise the event please RSVP before the 14th February to info@anamcara.ie or 085 288 8888.

Wicklow people urged to volunteer for Aware's support line

Aware, Ireland's national charity supporting people affected by depression, bipolar disorder and mood-related conditions, has launched a volunteer recruitment campaign for its support line.

The Aware Support Line is a national freephone service which operates from 10am to 10pm 365 days a year, located at Aware's HQ at 9 Upper Leeson Street, Dublin.

The Line provides telephone support to people concerned about issues relating to their own mood or that of a friend or family member. It operates against a backdrop of an estimated more than 450,000 people experiencing depression in Ireland at any one time, while there are approximately 45,000 people here diagnosed with bipolar disorder.

According to Bríd O'Meara, Aware's Director of Services, volunteers gain as much as they give on the Support Line: "Our more than 400 volunteers nationwide are a crucial lifeline for people impacted by depression and bipolar disorder. They play a key part in our work supporting people affected by stress, depression, bipolar disorder and mood-related conditions, and are passionate about nurturing people's positive mental health.

"On our Support Line, volunteers listen carefully to callers, their questions, concerns and reasons for

calling, so as to best understand and respond. They are compassionate and non-judgemental, treating people with dignity and respect, and provide information and signpost people to pathways to recovery such as other services and therapies.

Volunteers for the Support Line should have good communication skills, including being fluent in written and spoken English, and be comfortable speaking on the phone. They will need to be over 25 years, and available for three hours a week, for a minimum of 18 months.

Comprehensive training is provided to volunteers in responding to different scenarios that can arise, and so no prior qualifications or experience is required. People interested in registering their interest to become an Aware Support Line volunteer can email Emma at recruitment@aware.ie or telephone 01 237 4926. Training for the next volunteer intake commences on Saturday February 22nd.

If you are worried about depression or bipolar disorder, please call the Aware Support Line on Freephone 1800 80 48 48.



Christopher Stacey, Footfalls Walking Holidays (centre); Ciara O'Connor, Tourism Ireland (right); and a visitor to the Tourism Ireland stand at CMT in Stuttgart.

Maxi Zoo raises over €38,000 from 'Give Paw' campaign

Ireland's largest pet retailer, Maxi Zoo, is pleased to announce that its annual 'Friendship Connects, Give Paw' fundraising campaign raised a phenomenal €38,252 for the 2019 charity partner, Dogs Trust.

The campaign which ran from October to January was launched by top Irish Model and TV personality Glenda Gilson and her very own four-legged friend, Yazz.

The funds raised in the campaign's fourth year saw Maxi Zoo sell limited edition 'Give Paw' bracelets for €2.50 each across their 20 stores nationwide, with 100% of the proceeds going to Dogs Trust. These vital funds will be used to provide all of the dogs in their rehoming centre with the resources they so deserve, from food and dog treats, to interactive toys.

Following on from the success of the 'Give Paw' campaign, Glenda Gilson commented "As a true dog lover I'm delighted to have been part of this campaign which raised an incredible amount of money for Dogs Trust. Every dog deserves a second chance and Dogs Trust works so hard to find them their forever home, which is why this campaign was so special."

Anthony Cremin, Marketing Manager of

Maxi Zoo Ireland said "We're so grateful to everyone who supported our 'Give Paw' campaign for Dogs Trust and are very pleased to be able to contribute the outstanding amount of €38,252 to our very deserving charity partner. As a nation of pet lovers, it's no surprise that the public really gets behind this campaign every year, so we'd like to thank our customers, first and foremost, for helping us to make a real difference in this way."

Louise Sherwin, Philanthropy and Corporate Fundraising at Dogs Trust added "We are thrilled with the amount that Maxi Zoo's 'Give Paw' campaign has raised for the dogs and puppies in our Rehoming Centre. Maxi Zoo shares our passion for giving our dogs the very best care we can, and their efforts, and those of their customers, will go a long way towards ensuring that the dogs in our care are as happy and comfortable as possible. On behalf of all our furry friends here in Dogs Trust, I extend our sincerest thanks to all those



Maxi Zoo, has announced that its annual 'Friendship Connects, Give Paw' fundraising campaign raised a phenomenal €38,252 for the 2019 charity partner, Dogs Trust. Pictured at the presentation of funds were Anthony Cremin, Marketing Manager at Maxi Zoo, Max the Mascot, Tim Cummins, Chief Financial Officer at Maxi Zoo, and Noelle Long, National Purchasing and Marketing Director at Maxi Zoo.

who supported this amazing Maxi Zoo campaign."

'Friendship Connects, Give Paw' is an annual campaign that is run by Maxi Zoo and the Fressnapf Group across Europe. The 2019 campaign raised a total €1.3 million for animal charities across Europe.

For further information about getting involved in Maxi Zoo's 2020 charity initiatives, chat to the pet experts at Maxi Zoo Gorey at Unit 4 Mill Retail Park, Gorey, visit @MaxiZooIreland on Facebook, or www.maxizoo.ie and www.dogstrust.ie.

Tourism operator says Guten Tag!

Tourism Ireland in Germany kicked off its 2020 programme of promotions at CMT (holiday exhibition) in Stuttgart. Tourism Ireland was joined at CMT by 17 tourism businesses from the island of Ireland and Germany - including the Footfalls Walking Holidays (based in Roundwood).

CMT is one of the biggest travel fairs in Germany, attracting more than 260,000 visitors - or potential holidaymakers for Ireland - looking for ideas and suggestions for their next holiday. CMT also attracts leading tour operators and travel agents, as well as travel and lifestyle journalists, during the nine-day event.

Peter Nash, Tourism Ireland's Manager for Central Europe, said: "CMT is our first travel fair of 2020 - which provides us with an excellent platform to encourage German travellers to put Wicklow and Ireland on their holiday 'wish-list' for 2020 and remind them about all the many things to see and do around the island of Ireland."

"Germany is our third-largest source of visitors. Tourism Ireland will roll out an extensive and targeted programme of promotional activity again in 2020, to continue to grow German visitor numbers and, in particular, to encourage more of them to come and explore our regions and less-visited attractions during the off-peak season."

In 2020, Tourism Ireland will roll out a new 'twinning' initiative - which will see each overseas market 'twinning' with a specific region in Ireland. Germany will twin with Mayo and Sligo this year - placing a special focus on both counties, including ease of access.

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Filmmakers awarded in mental health short-film competition

Aspiring filmmakers gathered in St Patrick's University Hospital, Dublin on Friday 31st January for an awards ceremony to announce winners of Walk in My Shoes' annual Frame of Mind short film competition.

This year, the competition, which aims to promote mental health awareness through film, saw 20 entries shortlisted across two categories; General and Secondary School. Participants were invited to produce an original short film, up to three minutes long, which they believe challenges stigma or highlights the importance of positive mental health, with each shortlisted film

screened at the awards ceremony on 31 January.

On the night, Fergus Keane took home first place in the General category with his film Stereo Self-Talk, while Niamh O'Connor's Two-Faced was named as runner-up.

In the Secondary School category, Loreto College Crumlin scooped the top prize with Rise Up, and Templeogue College came in as runner-up with With You in a Heartbeat.

The first place winner of each category received a cash prize of 1,000, with runners-up each receiving 500. The judging panel included award-winning actress, Jordanne Jones; RTÉ Guide Film Editor, Michael Doherty; Chair of St Patrick's Mental Health Services' Service User and Supporters Council (SUAS), Sean

Fitzpatrick; and Director of Services at St Patrick's, Tom Maher. Speaking at the awards ceremony, Metal Heart star, Jordanne Jones, said: "Film is a very powerful, creative outlet and it's empowering to see so many filmmakers here today to share their encouraging and affirming messages of positive mental health, while also challenging mental health stigma."

The winning videos can be viewed online at www.walkinmyshoes.ie

The winning videos can be viewed online at www.walkinmyshoes.ie



Julia Healy doing shadow puppetry at the pilot of 'We Connect' at the Scout Hall in Greystones



Greystones Art Group - Portraiture in Oils demonstration

Greystones Art Group's upcoming monthly art demonstrations will be by Tom Byrne in oil portraiture.

Tom Byrne is highly regarded as one of the hottest painters around. He is a widely collected world renowned artist his work examines the beauty and glamour of our culture with equal part stary-eyed wonderment, brutal honesty and aspirational longing.

The demonstration will take place on Wednesday 12th of February from 8pm to 10pm at Coolnagreine, Trafalgar Road, Greystones. Admission is free for members and €5 for non members. Visit www.greystonesartgroup.com or email info@greystonesartgroup.com for further information.

Upcoming BirdWatch Ireland Wicklow branch February events

Tuesday 11th

Dippers, fishers, geosers and wags" - birds of the Avonmore River Catchment a presentation by Oran O'Sullivan. Glenview Hotel at 20:00. Free admission but a small contribution to room hire costs would be appreciated.

Saturday 15th

Wicklow Bird Race. Meet at 7am at car park, south end of Bray promenade, for 07:15 start. Race Finishes 18:45 at Beehive Inn (south of Rathnew). Teams of 3/4 people per car, €5 per person.

Saturday 22nd:

Joint outing to Altamont Gardens with the Carlow Branch. Meet at Altamont Gardens at 10:30. Car-pool from Greystones Park and Ride at 08:30 (contact birdwatchwicklow@gmail.com if you need a lift). Note there is a €3 entrance fee per person.

PLANNING • PLANNING • PLANNING

WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL

I Françoise King intend to apply for permission for 12 sqm agricultural structure shed used as shelter for two horses for a 10 year period and associate works at Ballycreen Lower, Auhtrim, 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

I Dan Whelehan intend to apply for permission for construction of 12 Polytunnels, new parking area and associate works at Carrigmore, Glenealy, 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

I Sinead Kenna intend to apply for permission for the construction of a new dwelling, garage, new entrance, wastewater treatment system & polishing filter, new well and associate works at Sleanaglouh, Moneystown, 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

I hereby give notice of submission of significant further information to Wicklow County Council in relation to planning application 19/1050 for John Murphy who is applying for permission at Ballard, Laragh, Co. Wicklow for dwelling, garage, wastewater treatment unit and polishing filter, well entrance and lane onto public road and associate works, wishes to state that significant further information or revised plans, as appropriate, in relation to the application has been furnished to the Planning Authority, and is available for inspection or purchase at the offices of the authority during its public opening hours. A submission or observation in relation to the further information or revised plans may be made in writing to the planning authority within the period of 2 weeks beginning on the date of receipt by the authority of the revised newspaper and site notices. A submission or observation must be accompanied by the prescribed fee within except in the case of a person or body who has already made a submission or observation.

WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL

I, Leone Crinnion, seek planning permission for construction of a 2-bedroomed single storey dwelling on my site, having an existing road entrance onto the Quill Road, with a site area of 0.11 hectares, and for connection to public services adjacent to and on the site, and for all associated site works, on site in the townland of Kilmacanogue South, Quill Road, Kilmacanogue. 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.



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CLOSING DATE FOR RECEIPT OF COMPLETED APPLICATION FORMS IS 12 NOON ON THURSDAY 5TH MARCH 2020 SHARP.

Wicklow County Council reserves the right to shortlist candidates in the manner it deems most appropriate

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