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LEGO HERITAGE
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COLM KIRWAN RIP
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MOTOR TAX INJUSTICE

Older people are being punished for obeying Government guidelines, according to Independent Cllr Joe Behan who is up in arms over the intransigence of the Department of Transport and their refusal to help people by waiving some of their motor tax.

Motor tax arrears for the time people cocooned on Government advice will not be waived, it appears. Cllr Behan is now calling for a waiver of motor tax arrears for all citizens, especially older citizens.

"I have been contacted by a number of older people who strictly observed the recent lockdown. They didn't use their cars for at least three months. Now, when they go to renew their motor tax they are being charged arrears back to March," said Cllr Behan.

"This is grossly unfair



Cllr Joe Behan

to the many thousands of older people in County Wicklow who are being punished for obeying Government warnings.

"I contacted Wicklow County Council who contacted the Department Of Transport to ask for a change of heart. It seems there will be no change in this policy. I think it is a disgrace and I am calling for a waiver of motor tax arrears for all citizens, especially Cocooners, who could not use their cars during the lockdown."

Brian Gleeson, Head of Finance Wicklow County Council, replied back to Councillor Behan explaining that the council is restricted by Government legislation in the matter.



Erin Fanning and Ava Keenan are pictured at the Aughrim GAA 24-hour Walkathon held in the Community Field in Aughrim as a fundraiser for the club.

QUEUE-TAINMENT IN AUGUST AT BRIDGEWATER

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Mr Gleeson said "Under the Non-Use of Motor Vehicles Act 2013, there is a system for declaring vehicles off the road in advance for motor tax purposes. The declaration must however be made in the last month of an existing motor tax disc or renewed in the last month of a previously made declaration of non-use.

"The legislation provides that, where a declaration is not made within the required timeframe, arrears of motor tax are payable from the expiry of the previous disc up to the taking out of a new disc.

"Wicklow County Council is therefore unable to waive arrears for the particular situation you mentioned as we are restricted by the legislation. Moreover, the

Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport (DTTAS) has stated that it currently has no plans to amend the provisions of the legislation.

"I wish to point out that the money collected by Wicklow County Council in respect of Motor Taxes is not retained by the Council within its local budget but instead is transferred over to the Exchequer.

"Consequently, there is no direct financial benefit to WCC in collecting these arrears however we are obliged to do so by law. I fully understand and appreciate your frustration at the apparent unfairness of this situation, given the unique circumstances of the Covid crisis, however as outlined above Wicklow County Council is unfortunately restricted by legislation from waiving these arrears."

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Chloe Kinsella, Trish Canna, Dylan O'Keefe, and Niamh Roche at the Knockananna GAA Drive-In Bingo which was held in the local GAA Field

Birdwatch Ireland Wicklow branch update

It is now possible for BirdWatch Ireland branches to resume indoor and outdoor events, including group birdwatching outings and presentations/talks, where Government guidelines on social distancing and safety can be complied with. Birdwatch Ireland's Wicklow branch will be considering those in the context of preparing a draft Autumn schedule.

In an update to members the Wicklow branch committee stated "We have been missing the evocative Summer sound of the Kittiwakes at the seabird colony on Bray Head this year but Covid ensured that very few people got to see those birds as the Bray to Greystones Cliff Walk has been closed.

"However, it finally opened last week so you can get good views of Kittiwakes, Guillemots, Razorbills and Shags with their chicks on the cliff below the Old Toll House Ruins, which is about 700m along the path from Raheen Car Park. If you proceed about 100m past the Toll House and look back at the colony you will get the best views."

The mining heritage of Glendasan Glendalough and Glenmalure

The website glensoflead.wicklowheritage.org/ is a record of the rich history of the mining heritage of the three valleys, Glendasan, Glendalough and Glenmalure, and the people who worked in the mines. You can browse through photos, memories, stories and historical information related to these beautiful landscapes which have a rich industrial

past. This website has been created and managed by a group of volunteers, Glens of Lead, supported by Wicklow County Council and the National Museum of Ireland.

"We record and present that unique history through a variety of media to engender an interest, pride and understanding of this heritage for both residents and tourists to Co Wicklow.

"We're always interested in new recruits and to hear from those whose ancestors worked in the mines so if you're interested please contact us at glensoflead.wicklowheritage.org/. We are very interested in making connections with other mining heritage communities across the world."

King of Greystones Triathlon goes virtual

Due to COVID-19, The annual King of Greystones Triathlon has gone virtual this year. You can now take part anywhere, over the course of three days; Sprint triathlon includes 750 swim, 20 km bike ride, 5 km run. Duathlon also available for non-swimmers. Funds raised will go to the Gavin Glynn Foundation. Details and registration from www.kingofgreystones.com. The King of Greystones is one of the town's most popular annual events.

Open Door Golf Classic

The annual Open Door Golf Classic has been cancelled this year due to Covid-19 restrictions. "We would like to thank everyone who has supported this major fundraiser over the years and hope to run the event again in 2021. We would also like to very much thank everyone who has taken part in fundraising events including walks, head shaves and fundraising lunches. All proceeds from these initiatives will help to fund the activities in the Centre and will benefit many adults in North Wicklow and South County Dublin with physical disabilities. On a final note, we are delighted to announce that the Centre will re-open on Monday 17th August with measures in place to ensure the safety of members, staff and volunteers."

'Wear face coverings on public transport'

People should wear face coverings when travelling on public transport in to protect themselves and others from Covid-19, Minister Simon Harris has said.

Minister Harris made his remarks last Monday as the wearing of masks on public transport became mandatory under the Health Act.

Wearing a face covering is recommended in situations where social distancing is not possible, for example shops and busy public transport, or if you are meeting someone who is vulnerable to the virus, for example people who are cocooning. Wearing cloth face coverings may help prevent people who do not know they have the virus from spreading it to others.

Minister Harris went on to say: "The regulations, which come into

effect from June 13, provide that members of the public shall not, without reasonable excuse, travel by public transport without wearing a face covering. Where a passenger is not wearing a face covering, a relevant person under the regulations may request the passenger to wear a face covering, refuse the passenger entry to the public transport vehicle, or may request the passenger to alight from the vehicle.

"A passenger must comply with these requests or will be met with a refusal of entry. Failure to comply is an offence. The people of Ireland have done so well in following public health

advice since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic and we have managed to flatten the curve thanks to our combined efforts.

"But we must continue to remain vigilant and to protect ourselves and our communities in Wicklow by continuing to follow public health advice and doing simple things that will make the difference between us keeping the virus suppressed or going backwards."

Minister Harris went on to outline the categories of people who are exempt from the mandatory requirement for wearing a face mask:

"The regulations for the mandatory wearing of a face covering on

public transport do not apply to children under the age of 13. Reasonable excuse where a face covering cannot be worn includes where a person; cannot put one on, wear or remove a face covering because of any physical or mental illness, impairment or disability or without severe distress; needs to communicate with another person who has difficulties communicating; removes the face covering to provide emergency assistance or to provide care or assistance to a vulnerable person; removes the face covering to take medication."

Lions Club mugs now available

In the recent photographic competition for members of Wicklow and District Lions Club the winners were presented with beautifully designed mugs.



Due to the popularity of these mugs with the official Wicklow Lions logo on one side and the All Ireland logo on the other they are now available to purchase in Wicklow town from Santiago (Jimmy) Balbontin's stall of goodies outside the Fish Shop in every Saturday.

Jimmy, a stallworth Lion himself, is very much part of the atmosphere along South Quay in the town every weekend.

The mugs make a perfect gift for visitors to Wicklow or for friends and relations overseas. All proceeds from the sale of these beautiful limited edition mugs go directly to the local community through the work of the local Lions Club.



Pictured at the announcement of the next round of prizes in the Get Ireland Growing initiative are twins Ultan and Erin Rohan with their sister Aisling and founder of GIY Mick Kelly. Energia have announced the next round of prizes in the Get Ireland Growing initiative, with €10,000 worth of food growing kits to give away. The winners of the Community GROWBoxes are being announced weekly until August 21st on social media @EnergiaGIG. The grand prize of a community garden worth €3,000 will be awarded to the most inspiring community of growers. For further details see, www.getirelandgrowing.ie to register and enter the draw for your free Community GROWBox.

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'Unacceptable accommodation delays' for NWETSS

The delays in providing accommodation for the pupils of North Wicklow Education Together Secondary School (NWETSS) in time for the upcoming school year, was raised in The Dail last Tuesday by Social Democrats TD Jennifer Whitmore and Sinn Fein TD John Brady.

A licence agreement between the Department and the owners of the old school (the Religious Sisters of Charity) still hasn't been signed. This is needed to allow contractors to carry out extensive refurbishment work before Educate Together moves into the old Ravenswell school building.

Responding to the Wicklow deputies' questions, Minister for Education and Skills Norma Foley revealed that the temporary property where the school is currently being accommodated (the old Presentation College building on the Putland Road in Bray) is not available for long-term lease and the school requires alternative accommodation to facilitate its growth.

The Department has secured the agreement of the Religious Sisters of Charity to use the former St. Philomena's primary school, Ravenswell, Bray to accommodate NWETSS on a temporary basis until a permanent campus is found.

The Department's lease on the old Pres building was due to end on 30th June but has now been extended until October 31st. The school was established in 2016 with an enrolment of 36 pupils and numbers are growing incrementally, with an enrolment of 226 pupils in the 2019-20 school year. An enrolment of 280 pupils is expected for the 2020-21 school year.

Ravenswell requires a complete refurbishment to bring the building up to a habitable standard. No work has been done on the site to date, despite requirements for the school to open at the end

of August. Meanwhile, all equipment is packed in storage until refurbishments are carried out.

Minister Foley stated "It is my Department's intention to have refurbishment works carried out in the building in advance of the school's occupation. It is my Department's intention to have refurbishment works carried out in the building in advance of the school's occupation. This work was interrupted arising from Covid-19 and resumed when the restrictions were lifted.

"A licence agreement between my Department and the Religious Sisters of Charity is required to admit the building contractor on site to undertake the refurbishment works. The licence is being finalised by the Office of the Chief State Solicitor and the congregation's legal representative.

"My Department is anxious to ensure that the refurbishment works can be initiated in the building as soon as possible thereafter and will continue to keep the patron updated on progress. I wish to clarify for the Deputies that my Department is continuing to prioritise this matter and will be liaising with the school's patron when a further update is available."

Deputy Whitmore said the school has been badly let down by the Department.

She said "it became evidently clear in the Dail on Tuesday night that instead of progressing with promised refurbishments, the Department of Education have sat on their hands and are now looking at contingency measures in the case that the new temporary site is not refurbished in time for September.

"I called on the Minister to expedite the process of obtaining a licence from the State solicitor's office, required to enable contractors to carry out the works. All the while, the School Board, Principal and wider school community were not informed of any of these additional delays. The lack of communication from the Department



Jennifer Whitmore TD

to date is astounding and completely unacceptable given the fact that there are only 22 days to go to get accommodation ready for the 280 pupils waiting to start the upcoming school year.

"I believe the Minister has some serious questions to answer on how the school's accommodation crisis has been treated. For that reason, I have written to the Minister outlining key questions I am seeking answers to and have asked for assurances from the Department that the students will indeed begin term in a school that is fit for purpose and for the needs of the student body.

"Time is running out. The school has all its contents still in storage in Co. Meath. They'll need to reinstall IT equipment ensure that come this September, whatever premise they end up in, the school will be safe in the context of COVID-19.

"I am extremely disappointed with the Minister's response to this situation so far. It is unfair to the teachers, staff, students and the wider school community who deserve clarity and certainty regarding their return to school. I have written to the Minister and hope to correspond with her office in the coming days to seek assurances that the process to commencing refurbishment works will be expedited and that any contingency measures will take into consideration the needs of the school," concluded Whitmore.

Deputy Brady, meanwhile, said that he was "flabbergasted" by the Minister's response and the handling of the situation by the Department.

He said "Since the North Wicklow Educate School in Bray opened in

August 2016, they have been treated appallingly by the Dept of Education and Skills. It now transpires that the delay in signing the licence agreement was due to Covid-19 and that the Department are working on contingency arrangements if the school building project is not completed in time for the start of the new school year.

"This is a shocking situation created by the Department. North Wicklow Educate Together have completely packed up in the old Presentation College school building as they had been assured that they would be in Ravenswell in time for the new school year. Now as it currently stands, they don't know where they will be. The situation is made worse by the complete lack of information coming from the Department to the school. The treatment of the school by the Department has been appalling from when it was opened in 2016 in the temporary premises in the old Presentation College school on Putland Rd, Bray. Last year right up until the 12th hour the school didn't know where they would be located for the 2019/2020 school year. Finally, at the last moment the Dept informed the school that a 12-month extension was secured on the lease, but they had to be out by 30th June just gone.

"In January this year it was announced that the school would move temporarily to another old School, the former Ravenswell Building in Bray from September 2020. It now appears that the school is being badly let down by the Department's foot dragging. The Minister needs to immediately take this issue in hand and ensure that the licence is signed allowing the work to proceed so the school can reopen on 28th August as planned. The education of the children has already been disrupted due to Covid19; we don't need it further disrupted by the inaction of the Department."



Piper Therese O'Brien leads the first group of walkers including Aughrim GAA President Des Burton at the Aughrim GAA 24-hour Walkathon held in the Community Field in Aughrim as a fundraiser for the club. Teams commenced at staggered times to ensure social distancing.

Search continues for men seen leaving truck in Newtown

Possible immigration offences are being investigated after a number of men were seen fleeing from a truck in Newtownmountkennedy last week.

The incident occurred close to 11am last Monday morning after the truck pulled into the industrial estate in Newtown to make a delivery. It had come from Rosslare Port in Wexford.

Six men were seen fleeing from the truck and running in the direction of Newcastle Hospital. A eyewitness described them as being in a frightened state and changing their t-shirts.

A major Garda search operation was carried out which included a helicopter fly-over.

The incident is being investigated by Gardai and immigration officials.

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John Brady TD

Minister called on to address financial security of Council

An urgent call has been made for 'clarity on the financial future and stability of Local Authorities in relation to the consequences of Covid-19.' The Social Democrats have signed a letter calling on the new Minister for Local Government Darragh O'Brien to prioritise support for local government to ensure the delivery of local services.

At the June meeting of Wicklow County Council, Councillors were told by WCC's Head of Finance Brian Gleeson that the Council's 2021 Budget will be "significantly impacted" by the Covid-19 Pandemic. The Council is currently identifying areas where cuts can be made, but no hard decisions will be taken until the amount of Government compensation is known.

Wicklow County Council is €4 million worse off in terms of commercial rates than it was at this time last year and there have been further incurred losses of nearly €1 million, including a €400,000 loss in parking revenue and €170,000 in planning receipts. The full impact of Covid-19 on rent collection isn't known at this stage.

Social Democrats Councillor for the Greystones Municipal District, Jodie Neary, says that the lack of



Cllr Jodie Neary

clear financial guarantee for Wicklow County Council has put a lot of the planned work of the Council on the backburner.

Councillor Neary said "We are preparing for a significant impact on our budgeted income as a result of Covid-19.

Without specific guidance from the Government about what financial supplements will be put in place local services will remain in limbo."

In the letter to the Minister, Social Democrats Councillors call for greater informa-

tion on the practical interventions that will be put in place to ensure communities get the services they require. As indicated in the letter Cllr Neary reiterates that if Wicklow County Council needs to pass an emergency budget to adjust their figures that the input and role of Councillors in that process be clearly outlined.

"This is about more than just financial stability," Cllr Neary contends. "This is about ensuring that we as Councillors have all the necessary information at hand to fight for the investment our communities need now more than ever.

"If we are facing budget cuts in the near future then I will be arguing for an equality budgeting process, in which the Council must consider that funding cuts and decisions being made don't adversely affect the disadvantaged and overlooked parts of society. I made this call at the last Council meeting held in Shoreline asking that those most vulnerable be front and centre of any budget considerations, particularly those paying Council rents and who have been financially impacted by Covid-19. Community investment will be vital as we build a resilient society and economy after Covid-19."

Cllr Neary said that the current crisis has only put more pressure on our most vulnerable in society.

"Too many people felt forgotten before Covid-19 was even a part of our lives. A great worry would be that in our unknown future our ability to reach all parts of Wicklow would become severely reduced.

"We must react to the current crisis better than our past mistakes, as a Social Democrat I will be a voice in favour of stimulus and investment and against the failed austerity of the past," concluded Cllr Neary.



Colm Lavery, Claire Lawless, Cathaoirleach of Wicklow County Council Pat Kennedy, and Cathaoirleach of Arklow Municipal District Sylvester Bourke make a presentation to the Ambassador of India Sandeep Kumar who visited Arklow last week.

Patients being hit with €275 stealth Covid charge

Aontú Leader Peadar Tóibín TD has called on private health insurers and the government to resolve the issue of private hospitals now charging patients for Covid-19 testing, and essentially making it a question in this country of who can afford to be tested for Covid-19.

"A constituent of mine forwarded me information that he had received shortly before scheduled hospital appointment, they were told that a 'self-pay Covid surcharge' would apply to their visit to the hospital. This surcharge would be approximately €275, and it would be up to them to see whether their medical insurers would cover the procedure. Many families who have insurance have had their circumstance changed radically because of Covid. For some a charge such as this will prevent them from accessing services. €275 is a considerable amount of money and certainly not one most people could pay without concern.

"To put it in context, if a person was in receipt of the Covid-19 PUP, they would be spending 78% of their weekly payment just to get tested for Covid-19, leaving them with €75 to live off for the rest of the week. That's not even taking into account if they have families or dependants to care for. How is that fair? Families and households across the country have been hit in the pocket, and are fearful of the worsening economic situation? It is wholly wrong and infuriating to see a price being put on people's well-being. A price which many cannot afford."

Bonjour to Brown Booby in Greystones

The first known sighting of a live Brown Booby on Irish shores was made in Greystones last week.

Seven-year-old Sofia-Lily Guilfoyle was one of the first people to spot the bird and capture footage of it. She greeted it with a 'Bonjour' as she recognised that it wasn't an Irish bird.

It appeared in excellent health at first, however its



Pictured is the Brown Booby which made a rare appearance in Greystones last week. Pic: Andres Poveda

condition deteriorated throughout the day, possibly due to exhaustion. Concerns were raised for its health and it was taken to an ICU at the Kildare Animal Foundation where it is currently getting round the clock care and making a slow recovery.

The large tropical seabird breeds on islands and coasts in the pantropical areas of the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, and can be found on the islands in the West Indies and Cape Verde Islands. It's extremely rare to see it in Ireland although four years ago there was one spotted off the shore in Co. Kerry near the Skellig Islands. It's becoming more common to see the Brown Booby near European waters as the temperatures of seas increase due to global warming.

The Brown Booby is part of the Sulidae family of birds and is a close relative to the gannet, a bird we are more used to seeing here in Ireland. It gets its name from the brown plumage of its head and upper body and the fact that its temperament is tame to the point of seeming foolish, showing no fear towards its predators.

The female is about 31 inches in length with a wingspan of 4.9 ft, slightly larger than the male which is about 30in in length with a wingspan of 4.6 ft. They are known to rest on the ground and roost on solid objects.

It's believed that the Brown Booby in Greystones last week spent the previous Monday night on high rocks before coming down to the beach where it wowed beachgoers on Tuesday.

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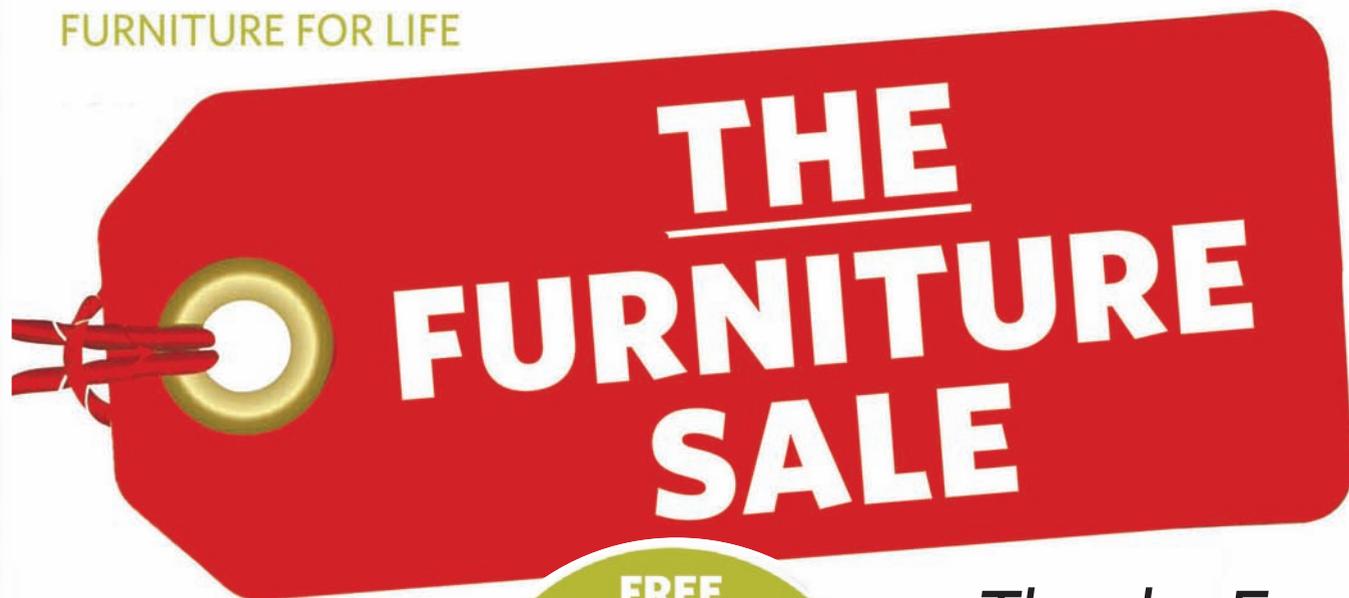
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Sean, Marc and Majella O'Shea at the Aughrim GAA 24-hour Walkathon held in the Community Field in Aughrim as a fundraiser for the club. Teams commenced at staggered times to ensure social distancing.

'Holy Rosary NS urgently needs an extra teacher'

Social Democrats TD Jennifer Whitmore has expressed disappointment that the Holy Rosary National School in Wicklow Town was refused their application to the Department of Education for an additional Third Class teacher.

Speaking on the issue, Deputy Whitmore said "Holy Rosary NS had initially applied for a third teacher for Third Classes but this was refused by the Department. The school's appeal to the Department's decision was also refused leaving the school to contend with 33 pupils in each of the two Third Class rooms for the upcoming school year. A substantially high number when compared to Ireland's average of 25 and the EU average of 20 pupils per class in a primary school setting.

"After parents of the school contacted me, I wrote to the Minister outlining the urgent need for an extra teacher to deal with the school's large class size. I made the point that the large the class size, the more difficult for teachers to work with students. Large classrooms make discussion and group work more difficult making it harder for children to learn.

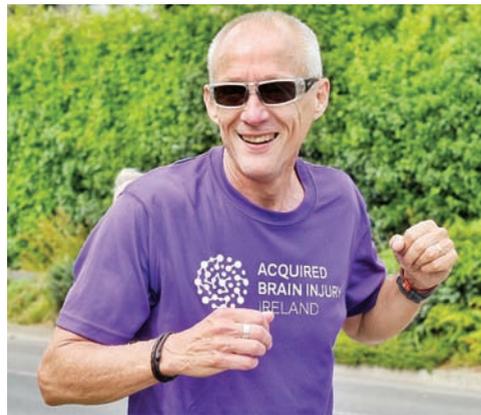
"As you can understand, the parents of the 66 children impacted by this decision, along with the wider school community are very disappointed with this outcome. Transitioning into a new school year is difficult for children anyway without having to face an amalgamation of classes and changes as a result.

"Crucially, I expressed the concern that large class sizes will make it harder for the school to implement health and safety protocols in relation to COVID19. The bigger the class, the more difficult it will be for the school to maintain a safe environment for the students.

"I am disappointed at this refusal by the Department of Education to grant extra teacher resources to address large classrooms in the County. What I can't understand about the Department's rationale is that at this time schools are in dire need of extra resources ahead of the new school year to address COVID19. Funding is being secured to help implement health and safety protocols yet the most effective way to tackle COVID19 in schools is to reduce class sizes. I will continue to make representations on behalf of Wicklow schools in an effort to highlight the growing concern of large classrooms across the County," concluded Whitmore.

Noel's great Greystones run

Last year Noel Bollard had an awful accident and suffered bruising to his brain. Thanks to many doctors, physiotherapists & psychologists he got on the road to recovery and is still fighting to recover fully today.



Noel Bollard

His love for running has really helped him battle through, he started off slowly and in the last few months set himself a goal of getting back to running another marathon.

On the 12th of July Noel ran his own marathon, 42km around his home town of Greystones to fundraise for Acquired Brain Injury Ireland.

He was overwhelmed by the support of friends and neighbours in the lead up to the event with generous donations and words of encouragement.

On the day, the people of Greystones, friends and family cheered him on and video called his son Emmet and his partner Alannah in Australia to make sure they could see his dad's progress throughout the morning.

The marathon ended outside his home in Redford Park where Noel's wife Margaret, daughter Faye and her partner Eoin waited at the finish line alongside his close friends, family and neighbours.

Noel thanked the team at ESB Turlough Hill who generously donated a cheque of €500 and everyone who supported him in the lead up to and throughout his run after the emotional finish. So far Noel has raised over €5000 for Acquire Brain Injury Ireland.

Motion to change Council policy on weedkillers

Green Party Councillor Erika Doyle is hoping to severely limit the use of chemical sprays and weedkillers in parks and near waterlines and has lodged a notice of motion with the council to seek support for the move. If passed it would mean that harsh chemical sprays will no longer be used in the People's Park in Bray.

"I have been approached by park users who were very upset to see sprays being used in the park," said Cllr Doyle. "The result is ugly, damaging for ecosystems and for biodiversity in general. We declared a climate crisis last year and Wicklow County Council also signed up to the All Ireland Pollinator Plan so we should be looking for ways to reduce and eliminate where possible the use of these sprays. The motion asks that as it's council policy, spraying will continue for as long as that policy exists, so I am looking to change the

existing policy.

"The motion asks that the council adopts a policy to reduce the use of pesticides and herbicides throughout the district in public parks, playgrounds and near watercourses. It also asks that the council identifies public open spaces suitable for rewilding or slow to mow to encourage biodiversity."

Councillor Doyle has spoken to residents about the possible implications of removing spraying as a form of weed control.

"Speaking to the engineer he made the point that park users have a



Cllr Erika Doyle

certain expectation of tidiness. While the message of biodiversity loss and the importance of pollinators has become more mainstream in recent years and we now understand the impor-

ance of weeds and wildflowers I understand that some level of management is needed. To get an insight into the views of local park users I posted a poll on a local Facebook forum. Overwhelmingly they voted in favour of abandoning sprays and suggested a community participation in managing any areas that needed attention.

"The motion was due to be heard at last month's council meeting however the meeting time was curtailed due to Covid restrictions so it is hoped it will be heard at the next meeting in September."

Almost 3,000 young people in receipt of Pandemic Unemployment Payment

Almost 3,000 people in Co. Wicklow aged 18-25 are currently receiving the Pandemic Unemployment Payment (PUP). There are 2,836 people in this age bracket in receipt of the PUP, while in total there are 12,890 people in Co. Wicklow getting the PUP.

The figures put Wicklow in the top 10 in the country in terms of young people getting the payment.

The National Youth Council of Ireland (NYCI) - which represents organisations working with over 380,000 young people nationwide - has called on the Government to bring forward a package of measures to support young jobseekers with a €191m investment to address the high levels of youth unemployment in the July Jobs Initiative to be announced next week.

"With 2,836 young people under 25 in county Wicklow in receipt of the Pandemic Unemployment Payment (PUP) and at a time when we have 45.4% youth unemployment, and over 140,000 young people out of work, it is vital that the July Jobs Initiative focuses heavily on the needs of young jobseekers," commented James Doorley, NYCI Deputy Director.

NYCI in its submission to Government is calling for an immediate €191m package of measures to support young people to access education, training, apprenticeships and also to incentivise employers to take on young workers.

"NYCI is calling for investment in programmes such as the Back to Education Allowance, SOLAS training programmes, the Youth Employment Support Scheme, a national Access to Apprenticeship

Programme and Jobsplus Youth that will support up to 28,000 young people.

"Further investment and actions will be required later this year, in light of the scale of the challenge, but we need to make a start now and give young people some hope and support," explained Mr Doorley.

"The latest numbers available are stark. 89,544 young people under 25 are currently in receipt of the Pandemic Unemployment Payment (PUP), which is 22% of all of those receiving the payment.

"It is also important to note that before the pandemic hit, despite job growth in the Irish economy and the welcome decline since the last crisis, youth unemployment in December 2019 stood at 12.6%. This was three times the overall unemployment rate.

"The number of young people on the PUP since the peak in early May has declined by over 32,000. This is very welcome, and we hope it continues to decline further. However, the reality is that even if half the current number on the payment exit, that would still leave 45,000 young people out of work.

"As a society and an economy, we cannot afford to make the mistakes of the past, where young people were left to linger on the dole queues for years on end and the Governmental response was slow and inadequate.

"That is why NYCI is calling for actions and investment now and €191m investment. We acknowledge that this may appear a large sum, but the cost of leaving 28,000 young people on the dole for a year would be €164m, so the net cost of the measures we are proposing would be just €27m. This of course does not take into account the social and financial benefit of the proposed measures for young people, their families, communities and Irish society as a whole. Just last week our neighbours in the UK, announced a €2bn fund to tackle youth unemployment," continued Mr Doorley.

"It is recognised that the new Government will have to borrow to fund a stimulus package in the next few years. While the current costs of borrowing money are low, these funds will have to be paid back overtime. Young people as taxpayers will end up paying back the highest proportion of this investment, so it is only fair and in the interests of intergenerational solidarity, that they should also benefit proportionately from these funds to restart the economy. It also makes economic sense to invest in measures to support young people back into work, because their participation and contribution in the labour market will further drive the recovery," concluded Mr Doorley.

Call for public enquiry into the deaths of 12 nursing home residents

Sinn Féin TD John Brady has called on the Minister for Health Stephen Donnelly to open a public enquiry into the deaths of 12 former residents of St Brigid's Nursing Home in Crooksling which is on the border between Dublin and West Wicklow.

The residents died as a result of Covid-related illness following a move from the nursing home in Crooksling to the Tymon North Community Nursing Home in March. Over 30 members of staff also tested positive for the virus.

Deputy Brady said "The treatment of our elderly citizens in Nursing homes during the Covid-19 crisis is nothing short of a political disgrace. I believe that it's inevitable that there will be a public enquiry. What happened in St Brigid's Nursing Home in Crooksling needs to be specifically looked at as part of a public enquiry. 17 former residents of the Nursing Home died, 12 as a result of Covid-

related illness. 34 staff also tested positive for the virus.

"On the 23 March the first Crooksling resident tested positive for Covid-19, despite this the HSE seemed to fast-track plans to close the nursing home and 46 of the residents were transferred to Tymon North, two residents were moved to Baltinglass Hospital and one resident to the Maynooth Community Care Unit. The transfer of residents happened while eight of the residents were awaiting test results for the virus.

"Calls have been made locally for an investigation into the deaths of the residents of Crooksling, I support these calls. I have contacted the Minister for



John Brady TD

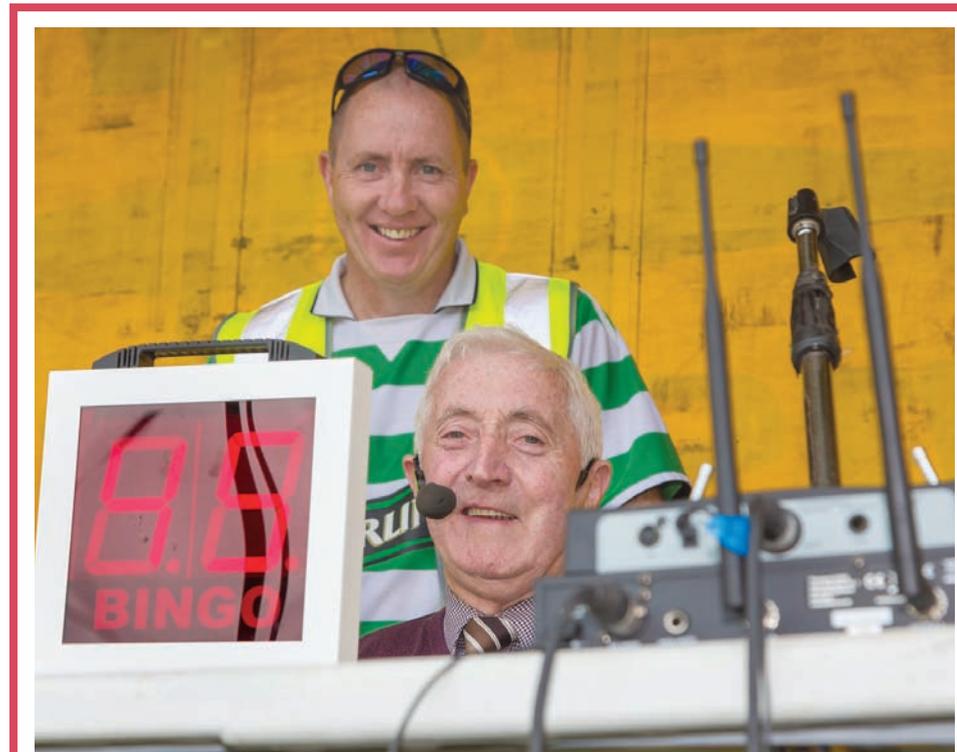
Health Stephen Donnelly and asked him to open a public enquiry to look at the entire situation that happened in Crooksling.

"The terms of reference need to include: who took the decision to move ahead and transfer

the residents from Crooksling, why that decision was taken and when it was taken. It must also look at how the transfer was done."

Deputy Brady concluded "I am very conscious that there are many families grieving at this difficult time and my condolences go to them.

"I believe there was a complete failure by the Government and the HSE to put a proper plan in place for nursing homes and some of our most vulnerable residents were completely failed by the State. We need to get the answers as to why this happened and learn from it, but we also need accountability," concluded Deputy Brady.



Eugene Canina and Liam Lyons at the Knockananna GAA Drive-In Bingo which was held in the local GAA Field

Residents up in arms over proposed loss of green area for parking spaces

Residents of Rockfield Park and Carrigoona Close Kilmacanogue say that they are appalled by the proposed loss of part of the only remaining green area in the estate.

Chairperson of the Residents association Christy Devlin says that they only became aware of the situation last week when employees of a builder operating in the estate who are constructing badly needed social houses informed them that they would be removing established trees and shrubbery to relocate the footpath so as to add eight additional parking spaces.

Mr Devlin also stated the proposed parking spaces are unnecessary as the residents fronting the green area are well catered for by the existing parking in front of their homes. The residents say that they are "disappointed with Wicklow County Council and the elected members of Wicklow County Council who have kept the residents in the dark and did not interact with their association".

Mr Devlin said that their association pay for the maintenance of their estates and receive no monetary assistance from the council and that one particular

resident voluntarily picks up all litter from around the estates on a weekly basis.

The residents held a socially distanced meeting on Monday 13th to discuss the matter and asked that the council defer the works until discussions with the residents had taken place. The residents present expressed their concerns that the last green area that serves as a football playground and is used by all the adjacent estates in the area will be lost and will fight tooth and nail to retain the status quo.

The secretary of the residents are contacting Cllr Anne Ferris, Chairperson of Bray Municipal District who has already contacted the county council on the matter and the Chairperson of Wicklow Council Council, Cllr Pat Kennedy, as well as the local councillors.

Mr Devlin also says that the estate was being used as a car park in the mornings and afternoon by parents dropping and picking up their children from the local school but this will now be alleviated by the new car park beside the remembrance garden which is served by pedestrian crossings. The residents are seeking an urgent and immediate meeting with the council engineers to resolve this matter.

Are you ready to start up activities safely in current Covid 19 climate?

Co Wicklow PPN has organised 2 sessions to support groups, clubs and community centres to safely provide their services to the people they support and work with.

Ready & Able to Re-open Post Covid 19 is an online session, conducted through Zoom which will be run on Tuesday 21st July from 11am to 12.30pm in collaboration with The Carmichael Centre. The second session, Peer Support for Community Centres & Halls takes place on Tuesday 28th July from 11am to 12.30pm in The Brockagh Centre, Laragh. This session is particularly for groups that manage community halls and centres. It will be focused on sharing experiences and providing peer support. Deirdre Whitfield from the community section of Wicklow County Council will also provide information on funding streams available to support these groups in the current climate. This training is suitable for all types of community & voluntary groups. All are welcome but places are limited and booking is essential. For more information and to book a place Email: countywicklowppn@gmail.com. Telephone Helen on 087 189 5145 or Grainne 086 048 7434

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Barbara Foley and Peg Rooney at the Knockananna GAA Drive-In Bingo which was held in the local GAA Field

Harris supports St Catherine's Association's new campus

Minister Simon Harris last week met with the Board and Management of St Catherine's regarding their future plans now that a permanent site has been purchased for the school.

Minister Harris said "St Catherine's have exciting plans in respect of a state of the art campus for the St Catherine's Association. It is essential that all stakeholders get behind their new development to make it a reality for the many families both present and

future that depend on St Catherine's for their support and services.

"I am anxious to see the Department of Education move quickly to deliver the new school now that the site has been acquired. The families and staff at St Catherine's deserve the very best as they assist so many children with special needs and their families in our community. I am meeting with my colleague the Minister for Education to discuss this and will continue to work closely with the team in St Catherine's to bring this project to fruition."

Casey welcomes additional €70m financial support for small businesses

Fianna Fáil Finance Spokesperson Senator Pat Casey has welcomed the supports being given to the small business sector with the passing of the Microenterprise Loan Fund Bill which he steered through the Seanad last week.

"Small businesses across our towns and villages have been devastated by COVID-19. Many had to close their doors for months with revenue disappearing overnight with thousands of individuals and families with no work and little income."

"Microfinance Ireland lends to very small business across the country such as hairdressers, small shops, coffee shops, small garages etc- who cannot secure bank loans, have a turnover of less than 2 million euro and employ less than 10 full time staff."

"With the passing of this bill Microfinance Ireland will be reopening it's COVID-19 Loan Fund

in the coming weeks providing loans from €5K to €50K with reduced interest rates of 4.5% to 5.5% following a six-month interest free period. Businesses can now pre-register for the COVID-19 Business Loan at microfinanceireland.ie."

"Microfinance Ireland also provide Start Up, Cashflow, Expansion and a Small Loan Package, which are all critical if these business sectors which are an integral part of our community are to survive into the future."

Senator Casey also welcomed the fact that 80% of the loans are were made to business outside of Dublin making it a key component to survival of



Senator Pat Casey

business in Rural Wicklow. With phase 4 restrictions not coming into place until the 10th of August, hundreds of small businesses in Wicklow now face the real prospect of closure and these were viable enterprises before Covid arrived to our shores. It is vital that

additional supports be secured and given directly to these businesses to get as many as possible to return to work particularly in the tourism sector."

"Rural pubs for example provide much needed social cohesion in conjunction with economic activity and many cannot open now until the 10th of August at the earliest. I am calling on the Government to work closely with this sector to ensure that as many as possible can reopen and remain viable as we rebuild our shattered economy. As a businessman in this sector I will work closely with Michael McGrath and Paschal Donohoe to ensure this happens."

Showcasing heritage through Lego

The Heritage Council is calling on children across the country to put their imagination to good use this summer by using LEGO bricks to recreate their favourite example of Irish built, natural or cultural heritage.

The competition is open to children aged between four and twelve years, with two age categories: 4-to-7-years, and 8-to-12-years. To enter, children need to build their model, choose their category, write a short description of what their model represents and why it's important to them, and then take a photo of the model and submit it via the Heritage Council website. The Heritage Council plans to feature as many entries as it can on its website and Facebook page.

To provide some inspiration and guidance, LEGO brick artist, Jessica Farrell will build a sample model every week and will post the step-by-step plan on the Heritage Council Facebook page. The sample models will include: Built Heritage: Traditional thatch cottage; High Cross, Dolmen; Natural Heritage: Red Fox; Hedgehog; native Irish honeybee, with flower; Cultural Heritage: Celtic interlace pattern; Galway Hooker boat.

Commenting, Heritage Council chief executive, Virginia Teehan said: "We have seen over the past number of months the important role that heritage has played in people's lives in Ireland and we think that this fun competition will give children the opportunity to really think about their local her-

itage, to examine it in detail, and to recreate what they see through the power of LEGO(r). This is the first time we've run such a competition and we are delighted to have LEGO(r) brick artist, Jessica Farrell on board to show just what can be achieved with these little bricks.

"In terms of entries, we're looking for anything from Irish landscapes, to round towers, to castles, to waterways, to Ireland's wildlife - the possibilities are endless. It's also important for entrants to let us know what their model represents; why they chose this piece of local heritage, and why it's important to them.

"While technical merit will be a significant factor in the judging, the judges will also seek to award prizes on the basis of imagination, interpretation, and the supporting information submitted."

Chairman of the Heritage Council, Michael Parsons added: "As a parent and as a former teacher, I am well aware of the joy LEGO can bring to children and the ingenuity it can spark. I very much look forward to seeing the heritage models the children of Ireland build as part of this competition."

The closing date for entries is Sunday, 30th August, with prizes of LEGO DK books for the winners of each of the 4-7-year-old categories, and a LEGO kit for the winners of the older categories.

Visit the Heritage Council website, www.heritagecouncil.ie or the Heritage Council Facebook page for competition rules and further details.

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Phase 4 of the Reopening Roadmap is being paused



Coronavirus
COVID-19
National Programme

Covid-19 has had an enormous impact on Ireland, on our communities, our businesses and our families. In responding to the crisis the priority has always been the wellbeing of our people and our communities.

Thanks to the extraordinary commitment, sacrifice and solidarity of the Irish people, we have limited the impact of the disease and saved lives, thank you. But the virus is still with us, it still poses significant risks - and we must continue to be cautious.

There has been an increase in cases in Ireland. We are in a good position as regards the progress we have made with the disease. We want to hold on to that. So we are taking a cautious approach and pausing Phase 4 until August 10th to allow us to continue to monitor the changes we have seen in the last 2 to 3 weeks.

We want to take a prudent approach so that we can continue to protect the vulnerable, enable schools to reopen and to continue the careful resumption of healthcare services.

These are the five main things you should know

| | | | | |
|--|--|---|---|--|
| <h1>1</h1> <p>Phase 4 of the reopening roadmap is being paused until 10th August.</p> | <h1>2</h1> <p>We must limit our contacts.</p> <p>You should limit direct contacts with those outside your household.</p> <p>You are advised to limit the number of visitors to your home to a maximum of 10 - from no more than 4 other households.</p> <p>Organised gatherings must not exceed 50 people indoors or 200 outdoors.</p> <p>Continue to avoid crowded spaces.</p> | <h1>3</h1> <p>Face coverings are now mandatory on public transport.</p> <p>All customers in shops and shopping centres are asked to wear face coverings.</p> | <h1>4</h1> <p>Pubs, bars and casinos will remain closed.</p> <p>Pubs and bars operating as restaurants that opened for Phase 3 must be fully compliant with the regulations.</p> | <h1>5</h1> <p>All non essential international travel must continue to be avoided.</p> <p>On Monday 20th July, The Government will publish a Green List of countries which have a similar risk of infection to Ireland. However, we are still asked to avoid all non essential international travel.</p> |
|--|--|---|---|--|

The Pandemic is not over. The Public Health guidance remains the same:



Observe hand hygiene



Social distancing rules still apply



Observe coughing and sneezing etiquette

We are still in this together.
Find out all details, and public health advice at gov.ie



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland



Minister Simon Harris last week met with Kilcoole's scooter enthusiasts who are looking for a safe location in Kilcoole for a scooter park. Minister Harris said: "I would like to pay tribute to the teachers in Templecarrig school who encouraged 14 year old Jake Mitchell to set up a campaign for teenagers to get their own safe facility for scooters and skate boards. Jake's example of positive civic engagement is very heartening I am delighted to be able to support the campaign." The Minister and scooter enthusiasts met with Cathoirleach of the Greystones Municipal District Cllr Derek Mitchell and Cllr Tom Fortune (pictured). The Greystones Municipal District Council is to discuss the provision of a scooter park for Kilcoole.

Wicklow property prices fall 6.2%

The average house prices in County Wicklow for Q2 of 2020 was €316,007 which is 6.2% lower than a year previously, according to the latest daft.ie housing market report.

Sale prices fell by an average of 3.3% in the year to June. The new monthly report gives key figures on the health of both sale and rental markets, with figures showing a 0.2% rise in rents nationwide in the year to June 2020.

The average listed sale price nationwide in June was €253,868, while the average monthly listed rent was €1,402.

Most parts of the country show similar trends, with a modest annual fall in sale prices - ranging from 2.9% in Leinster to 4.9% in Munster - and largely stable rents.

Figures for the number of properties posted for sale or to rent during June indicate a sharp recovery in market activity in June, compared to April and May, particularly in the sales segment. There were over 5,200 properties listed for sale in June, compared to roughly 2,000 in both April and May. Whereas those two months had seen activity collapse by three quarters, the number of homes advertised in June was just 15% lower than in the same month in 2019. In the rental segment, there were 38% more homes advertised to rent in June 2020 than a year previously - with Dublin driving this trend.

Commenting on the report, Ronan Lyons, economist at Trinity College Dublin and author of the Daft Report, said: "Market activity rebounded strongly in June, perhaps reflecting an element of pent-up demand carried over from April and May. This is particularly the case for sales, where over 5,200 homes were listed for sale during the month, compared to roughly 2,000 in

both April and May. Nonetheless, the figure remains below the total for June 2019. In the rental segment, however, significantly more homes were listed in June this year than last. The concern remains that policymakers see this as the underlying problem solved. While the new government may want to favour the construction of owner-occupied homes, the fundamental shortages are in the social and market rental segments and it is those segments that must be the focus for policymakers over the coming years."

"While the new government may want to favour the construction of owner-occupied homes, the fundamental shortages are in the social and market rental segments and it is those segments that must be the focus for policymakers over the coming years."

Responding to the report, the Irish Property Owners Association (IPOA) said that an increase in the number of properties available for rent was to be expected.

Student accommodation previously utilized in the tourist industry in the summer is available, the decision of some multi-nationals and other companies to allow staff to continue to work from home has also resulted in more available rentals.

Stephen Faughnan, IPOA Chairman outlined "The lockdown restricted re-letting and in spite of demand being high, Government guidelines restricted the showing of property as it was not deemed an essential service leading to a stock of empty properties accumulating over the previous three months.

"However as a result of the return to work in June of letting agents, property professionals and some landlords, we would expect to see a more buoyant market and a reduction in the amount of accommodation available which may lead to shortages going forward.

"We expect the Country to continue the return to work and the process of normality returning will increase demand for units and the current supply will be taken up rapidly. While there appears to be a supply surplus currently we must not forget the underlying problem of vast numbers of units being lost to the market as a result of owners getting out of the sector as a consequence of unfair complex legislation, problems with the running of the units and the lack of fair taxation etc."

The emergency legislation continues to prevent tenancy termination and it is likely that this has reduced the number of properties on the market for sale. Stephen Faughnan stated "The emergency legislation is preventing the normal business of managing property, anti-social tenants are protected, resulting in neighbours and other tenants being distressed and breach of obligations cannot be addressed. IPOA are calling on the Minister to allow the private rental market to function in a normal manner and not to extend the emergency legislation beyond the 20th July."

An IPOA Survey noted that 9% of IPOA members intend to exit the private rental market within the year.

Wicklow receives grant to enhance community facilities

Wicklow has been allocated €61,767 as part of the 2020 Community Enhancement Programme (CEP).

Details of the programme were announced last week by Minister Michael Ring TD.

The CEP is funded by the Department of Rural and Community Development and will provide €2 million of grant funding nationwide towards enhancing the facilities available to communities. The Programme has a focus on supporting groups in disadvantaged areas.

Typical enhancements under the Programme include the renovation of community centres and community amenities, improvements to town parks and common areas and spaces, and the purchase of equipment for community usage. The Programme has also sup-

ported energy efficient upgrades, development of community gardens, provision of defibrillators, CCTV, and sports and IT equipment.

The CEP is administered by Local Community Development Committees (LCDCs) in each Local Authority area. Funding allocations for each Local Authority area are outlined in the below table.

Speaking in relation to the Community Enhancement Programme, Minister Ring said: "The CEP provides vital support to community groups in order to help them improve their facilities. It supports small-scale funding for projects which range from purchasing lawnmowers and IT equipment to minor renovations

to buildings. Ultimately the Programme responds to local needs and therefore it also provides some funding towards larger projects where needed.

"We depend hugely on these community groups and I hope that this funding will help them to continue the important work that they carry out within our society. I urge communities to familiarise themselves with the CEP and to apply for funding if they feel that it can be of local benefit.

"While the CEP will be similar to last year, the LCDC in each area will have flexibility to use some or all of this funding for COVID-19 related expenditure by community groups, where this is a priority in individual local

authority areas. This is in addition to other funding announced recently by my Department, such as the €2.5m COVID-19 Emergency fund and the €35m Stability Fund."

The CEP is administered by Local Community Development Committees (LCDCs) in each Local Authority area. Details on how to apply will be available from each LCDC shortly.

In order to allow flexibility, the Department is not setting a national closing date, but will allow each LCDC to set its own, to best suit its area. The Department will require that all closing dates are no later than 30 September 2020. Groups should check with their LCDC for further details.

'The Sea to Me' - a sea swimming experience

Taking a dip in the ocean is a popular activity in Ireland. Many are taking the plunge around our coast each day and believe swimming in the sea offers many health benefits. Sea water is known to have benefits for the skin and has been shown to have a positive effect on mental health.

Last week the Marine Institute's Oceans of Learning series explored the link between the ocean and our health and wellbeing, including the benefits of sea swimming. Niall Meehan, a designer and photographer based in Wicklow, is also an avid year-round sea swimmer. Niall shares why sea swimming is so important to him.

"I sometimes wish I listened more. If I did I would have the perfect story to illustrate my relationship with the sea. A few years ago I was at an event where a very learned person was talking. It was evening time in the middle of June - therefore I would have been up since about 4:30am for the swimrise. (Mitigating circumstances right there). Learned Person was describing a concept in 'didn't hear' philosophy where you don't name the bird. If you name the bird its song becomes that name and yields the opportunity for other expression. He may well have said something totally different, but that was what I heard. And it sounded precisely like the sea and me - not precise at all.

"I don't ask or expect. I don't crave the glorious summer sunrises over glassy seas. I don't spurn the freezing February mornings with their numbing north-easterlies. I am happy to take what it gives. As our relationship has flourished I have come to the realisation that I don't need to put a label on this bird. I have realised the symbiotic relationship between fragile human and the might of the sea doesn't need to be any more complex than acceptance and giving. (By the way I bags #swimbiotic). I accept I am not a fish, a seal or even a humble barnacle - I am a visitor in this briny world and I play by the rules. Love and respect for the sea in equal measure.

"I know there are some who describe their relationship with the sea in spiritual terms and I get that. However for me it evokes visceral feelings. It connects me to the natural world in a very immediate and instinctive way. It makes me feel alive. So while my swim buddy on any given day may be having a spiritual experience, I on the other hand will be wearing my here and now t-shirt. We are though, connected by our shared experience.

"A fundamental aspect of my sea swimming experience is the connection that I have with the people I swim

with. We are connected through friendship and the will to support and accept each other in a community. I have no doubt that our group - based in Greystones, Co. Wicklow - is no different to any of the many similar groups dotted around the country. In fact I know it, as I have met many of them. When I am floating about in my little patch of water I know they are doing the same in their water, and we are connected. Similarly the sea connects me - digitally - to swimmers beyond my horizon. Sometimes on a clear day as I leave my house to go swimming I can make out the Welsh mountains and feel connected to the swimmers in the lakes of Snowdonia. I feel connected to Cornwall; to Scilly; to Brighton, Walberswick, Cullercoats, Portobello, Oronsay and Tiree - just a small sampling from our next door neighbour.

"My cleansing and fulfilling daily swim has now also become a new outlet for self-expression. Through my Sea Studio photographs I am striving to connect on an emotional and experiential level with the viewer. I want the viewer to experience the scene as if they were there - not looking at a sea scape, but being in a sea scape.

"The sea to me is about connection: internally with myself; externally locally with my community and across the world through my citizenship of a borderless, panglobal nation of swim tribes. It has made my world bigger. Tap in, go for a swim, reconnect."

Follow Niall's swimming adventures and pictures on Instagram @niall_verso or @seastudio.ie and @humansofswimrise.



The Cove in Greystones, by Niall Meehan

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Lynda Bolger, Sue Kinsella, Dawn Byrne, Paul Canna and Padraig Lancaster at the Knockananna GAA Drive-In Bingo which was held in the local GAA Field

Plight of Wicklow mother raised in the Dail

Social Democrats TD Jennifer Whitmore has highlighted the plight of a Wicklow mother struggling to cope during Maternity Leave due to the disruption caused by the pandemic.

Deputy Whitmore outlined the woman's desperate plea for the Government to extend Maternity Leave so that she could have more time to physically and emotionally heal.

Speaking in the Dáil, Deputy Whitmore said "I found out about this woman because I picked up the phone and listened to her story. This woman was pregnant with twins but tragically lost one of them and struggled throughout her pregnancy with grief. The birth was also very difficult, and she has been emotionally and physically scarred by this experience.

"Due to the lockdown, she has not had access to counselling or physiotherapy. She needs extra time for her body and mind to heal and begin accessing the supports denied to her by COVID19. She is now due back to work in September and is forced to make the difficult decision of whether to stay with her baby and heal or return to work.

"I wish the Government listened to her as I did and voted on Tuesday with the Dáil Motion to extend Maternity Leave by three months. They did not listen and women like the one I spoke to on the

phone, have been left behind to deal with the consequences of raising a child during Maternity Leave under a pandemic.

"We cannot view Maternity Leave as a luxury. It's a necessity for women who have found this time during COVID19 very challenging. Many mothers have been without their usual health checks and support networks normally afforded to women before the pandemic. The loneliness is palpable. Other mothers from Wicklow have described to me the isolation they have endured during lockdown, unable to meet with friends and family, visit parks or playgrounds and struggling with breastfeeding with-out any support groups to go to.

"Women are not only facing the struggle of Maternity Leave under lockdown, they are facing barriers returning to the workforce. The lack of any roadmap for children and education sectors and a dominant focus on the economy has resulted in few childcare options and huge uncertainty around the reopening of schools. Women have been doing it all up to now in absence of any cohesive policy and strategy aligning the reopening of creches and

schools with that of the reopening of the economy. No thought was given at the top levels of how this misalignment of policies would adversely affect women, children and families.

"The Government's response to mothers was instead, extend paid Parental Leave but this was a cynical move. Women do not have the luxury of waiting until Budget 2021 before this will be granted and it will be too late for the mothers calling for an extension to Maternity Leave. Paid parental is completely different to Maternity Leave and misses the point women have been making all along. It's about the correct leave at the correct time. Once again, the voices of women were not listened to which sets a worrying tone for this new Government"

Whitmore. Speaking after last week's vote on the motion, John Brady TD also expressed disappointment. He said "I know that so many mothers across Wicklow and those who are part of the Extend Maternity Leave 2020 Campaign Group will be bitterly disappointed with the vote on Thursday evening. TDs had a clear choice to

make in the vote on Thursday - some chose to stand with those mothers, others turned their back on them.

"I have been contacted by many mothers who have been deeply anxious about returning from maternity leave during this uniquely difficult time. Many have felt robbed of support that they desperately wanted but couldn't have while raising a newborn during the lockdown. They have missed medical check-ups which were postponed due to the lockdown, as well as being denied support from family and friends.

"Now, due to childcare shortages, many are struggling to find any childcare facilities willing to take a young baby. They are anxiously watching the date that they are due to return to work inch closer, without having appropriate arrangements in place for their baby to be looked after.

"The Government's amendment which passed in the House this evening offers no solution to the issues facing mothers and families - it does nothing for mothers whose maternity leave is coming to an end and who have no-one to look after their baby."

Direct Provision representative to join Community Forum

People residing in Direct Provision Centres in Co. Wicklow will now be represented on Wicklow's Community Forum.

The move comes after pressure from Green Party Councillor Lourda Scott and others, who wrote to the Department of Housing and Local Government.

Welcoming the news, Cllr Scott said she was "delighted" that the Council is on board.

"It's really important that vulnerable people can represent themselves and have input into this really important forum," she said.

Chief Executive of Wicklow County Council, Frank Curran, informed Cllr Scott that members of the Forum would welcome a representative from the Direct Provision Centre onto the Forum to articulate the issues in relation to Covid-19 which affect residents of Direct Provision Centres."

The Community Forum has remained active throughout the pandemic, and meets regularly on Zoom.

The County Wicklow Community Forum was established in January 2011 as the representative voice for all community and voluntary groups in County Wicklow. The Forum identified the issues that matter and tries to influence policy in a way that improves the quality of life and opportunities for people within the county.

Membership of the Forum is open to all community and voluntary groups, clubs and organisations, working on a voluntary, cooperative or not for profit basis for the benefit of the community.

Harris launches Further Education Strategy for next five years

Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science Simon Harris last week launched the National Further Education and Training Strategy.

The strategy sets out a five-year roadmap for the sector which is built around three key pillars of building skills, fostering inclusion and creating pathways and aims to address the economic and societal challenges faced over the coming years.

Minister Harris said "Further education and training is for everyone. It provides an opportunity for everyone to engage in learning whilst delivering on the critical skills needs of the economy and the future world of work.

"It was a lifeline for many during the economic recession, and once again FET will be critical to our post-COVID recovery.

"This strategy will aim to address some of the key challenges we face including the digital divide, female participation and the skills mismatch we are seeing.

"Last week I met with the team in the Bray Institute for Further Education. BIFE is an excellent example with a hands-on approach to education which is practical and gives students real life experience with their chosen career.

"There is no shortage of ambition in this country. The New Further Education strategy will offer better opportunities for people and will help the economy rebuild and recover from the social and economic shocks as a result of Covid-19."

The strategy will end the confusing array of vocationally focused programmes and replace it with a new Level 5 and Level 6 proposition, and consolidate existing FET provision within a single integrated college structure.

Traditional areas of FET strength like healthcare, personal services and construction will be built upon but climate change and sustainable development will also be a critical focus for FET.

Mental health and wellbeing will be embedded within FET. Staff will have mental health learning embedded within their professional development and learners will have it embedded in the curriculum.

The strategy offers a new range of apprenticeships with a strong focus on increasing the diversity, with particular goals around increasing female participation and providing access to people with disabilities.

Minister Harris added "At the heart of this strategy is inclusion. There are many cohorts with diverse needs, such as people with disabilities, new migrants, and the long-term unemployed.

"All these require focused types of support to address their particular circumstances and needs. This strategy requires a more targeted approach to addressing barriers around participation, completion and progression for marginalised and prioritised cohorts.

"We will reach out to particular groups and facilitate a pathway to re-engage with education through FET. Addressing the needs of people with disabilities will be a primary focus."



Social Democrats TD Jennifer Whitmore offered her support to a group of mothers who formed the Extend Maternity Campaign and called for the extension of Maternity Leave and Pay by three months. Deputy Whitmore met with campaigners outside Leinster House during a photo call, echoing their call for the extension saying "women who've had babies over the COVID-19 period have found themselves in difficult situations without the usual health supports or support networks afforded to women before the pandemic and now facing problems accessing childcare before returning to work."

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REFRACTORY OSTEOMYELITIS (INFECTED BONE)
SKIN GRAFTS AND FLAPS (COMPROMISED)
THERMAL BURNS
CRUSH INJURY, COMPARTMENT SYNDROME,
AND OTHER ACUTE TRAUMATIC ISCHEMIAS.
ENHANCEMENT OF HEALING IN SELECTED PROBLEM
WOUNDS (DIABETIC WOUNDS)
EXCEPTIONAL BLOOD LOSS (ANEMIA)
INTRACRANIAL ABSCESS, ACTINOMYCOSIS
NECROTIZING SOFT TISSUE INFECTIONS
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CLOSTRIDAL MYOSITIS AND MYONECROSIS, (GAS GANGRENE)
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Minister Simon Harris with Huw O'Toole of Hub 13.

Remote working Hub in Newtown seeking to build on its success

Minister Simon Harris last week visited Hub 13 in Newtownmountkennedy, a fully self funded facility to facilitate people who would otherwise be working in Dublin, who live locally but wish to work remotely or spend part of their week or month in a local office environment.

Minister Harris said "Hub 13 has already been up and running a year and I am delighted to be finally able to visit it."

The facility has 3 permanent offices, 7 co-working desks, and meeting and business lounge rooms. Hub 13 is seeking to build on its success become a pioneer in a rapidly evolving network of remote working Hubs located in County Wicklow.

"The changes to work practices accelerated by the Covid-19 shutdown in recent months has become a major issue for the new government. As a Minister I was keen to see first hand how we can ensure safe appropriate working spaces for remote workers who do not have the space or equipment in their own home for remote working.

"The Department of Business this week launched a public consultation to inform the delivery of guidance on remote working for both employers and employees.

"This government wants to deliver greater participation in the labour force through flexible working solutions and Hub 13 is an excellent example of how this can be done.

"Hub 13 not only provides work space for those who want to avoid the daily commute to Dublin but also to counter the isolation and enable users to develop deeper roots in their community. I would like to pay tribute to Huw O'Toole and all the team in Hub 13 for the magnificent facility they have created."

Cllr Flynn Kennedy calls for review of Bray Fire Service

Bray's part-time fire service no longer meets the town's needs, according to Bray Municipal District Fine Gael councillor Aoife Flynn Kennedy who is calling for a review of the Fire Service in Bray.

Cllr Kennedy said "Bray is a large town which has seen significant growth in the last number of years, I believe strongly that a part-time Fire Service is no longer adequate to meet the needs of the town and surrounding areas."

Cllr Flynn Kennedy highlighted the growth in population, the number of new developments including retail and residential, as well as the developments planned for Bray and surrounding areas as one of the factors for the need for a full independent review of existing services. She stated that a review of the need for a full-time Fire Services was carried out internally by Wicklow County Council in December 2014, however much as changed since then. She is now calling for a new

review to be commissioned, but to be done so independently of the Local Authority to allow for increased transparency and a wider scope of comparison with other large towns.

"The type of developments have also changed, we now have our new Primary Health Care Centre, Bray Town Centre will be opening soon and we have a large scale development on the Southern Cross Road, now is the time to plan for the safety of both the Fire Service Staff and all those living in Bray, Enniskerry, Kilmacanogue and the surrounding areas," stated Cllr. Flynn Kennedy. Cllr Flynn Kennedy highlighted the dedication of the staff in Bray Fire Service who have had to deal with unimagined

loss within their own team. She stated that these men and women are committed to keeping us safe but are being asked to do so on a part-time basis. She also highlighted the difficulties with recruitment for a part-time fire services, and the vacancies and challenges that Bray Fire Service is already experiencing.

Cllr Flynn Kennedy submitted a motion on this issue in February but due to Covid-19 restrictions this motion has not yet been heard. It is anticipated that the motion will be discussed at the next Bray Municipal District meeting where she will be seeking the support of all Bray Municipal District Councillors to bring the matter before Wicklow County Council for approval.

A life well lived

Colm Kirwan (O'Ciardubhain), Bray and Castleisland, RIP

Former Wicklow and Bray councillor and teacher Colm Kirwan has sadly passed away.

He was born in Galway on the 28th July 1953 to parents Sean O'Ciardubhain and Mairin Ui Ciardubhain (nee O'Connell). The family moved to Castleisland in 1963 and Colm attended the Boys national school and subsequently the local secondary school where he excelled particularly in maths and Latin. He attended U.C.C. where was conferred with a B.A. in English, Geography and History and subsequently the H. Dip to qualify as a teacher.

In UCC he served as the full-time General Secretary of the Students Union for a year where he was prominent in many campaigns to reduce fees and improve services for students. He was also very active in the Anti-Apartheid movement in Cork.

His first teaching post was in Waterford City but he moved to Wicklow shortly afterwards to commence a long and fruitful career teaching in three schools in the county, namely Dunlavin, Avondale and Rathdrum. He was to return to the Community College in Castleisland as Deputy Principal in 2003, a school where his late father Sean had taught.

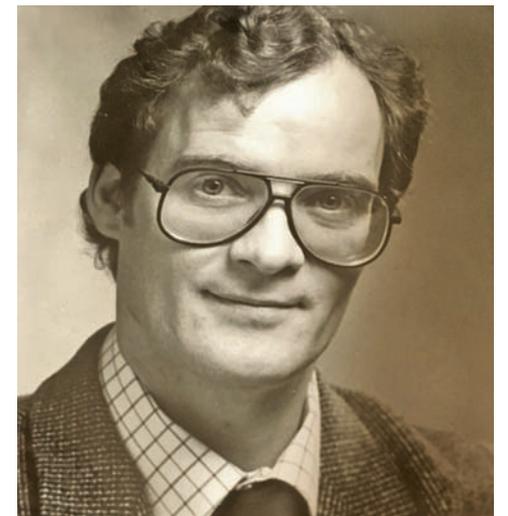
Colm was an active campaigner for people all his life. In Wicklow he played an active role in the Teachers Union of Ireland (T.U.I) serving on local, regional and its National Executive for

many years. Politically active in the Workers Party, Democratic Left and the Labour Party he was co-opted as a county councillor to Wicklow County Council in 1994 to replace Liz Mc Manus TD when she was appointed Junior Minister. Mc Manus described him as 'a public representative of absolute integrity and commitment'. In that capacity he served the people of Bray and the county involving himself in many issues including the Save Bray Head campaign. He contested the local elections in 1999 but failed to retain his seat.

"County Wicklow has lost a good friend with the death of former member of WCC Colm Kirwan. He was a true stalwart in local politics and the GAA. I extend my deepest sympathy to his Brenda and his family. May he rest in peace." said former Minister of State Liz McManus.

Colm was always very active in the GAA between coaching various teams and in organising. He coached both football and camogie at Avondale Community College and was involved with the Wicklow vocational school team that won an All-Ireland in 1983. Colm was an avid fan of everything involving the GAA.

On his return to Castleisland in 2003 he immersed himself in the Desmonds where at various times he served as Treasurer, P.R.O. and lat-



Colm Kirwan, 1953-2020

terly Secretary up to his death. He spearheaded the club fundraising organising the club lotto and overseeing the launch of a new development for the Desmonds playing field. Members of the club speak of his passion and organising abilities particularly with fixtures and accommodating all who sought access to the club facilities. With his beloved wife Brenda he seldom missed a match involving the Kerry team. He was widely regarded as a font of knowledge on everything to do with the Kingdom. In later years he was engaged in researching a history of the Desmonds and also supported local history research in the town.

He married Brenda Tangney in 1987 and they shared a long and happy life together. In Bray and

Castleisland her support and commitment to his work were invaluable. He described her as his soul mate whose support enabled him to engage with his community work. He brought compassion, insight, principle and integrity combined with hard work and commitment to everything he was involved in. The outpouring in Castleisland following his untimely death bear testimony to his work on behalf of others. Colm died on the 7th July in the Bons Secours Hospital, Tralee. He is survived by his wife Brenda, twin brother Eamonn, brother Domo, sisters Nuala, Grainne, Neasa, numerous nephews and nieces, members of the Tangney family and many, many friends. Ar deis De go raibh a anam.

Tractor and baler burst into flames near Rathdrum

A tractor and baler went up in flames on the R754 near Rathdrum on Saturday 11th July.

Fire Services were called to the scene of the blaze on Saturday evening and used foam to extinguish the flames, but not before both the tractor and the Claas baler it was pulling were both destroyed. Nobody was injured in the incident.

According to Farm Contractors Ireland (FCI), fire risks with balers can be minimized by making sure that the baler is air hosed at the end of each day. In very dry conditions it may be necessary to air hose the machine during the day.

They say "It is important to keep crop, chaff, twine and net wrap material from building up on the machine near potentially hot areas, such as bearings, on ends of baler rolls and around the slip clutch. Avoid high pressure power-washing in the areas adjacent to the bearings on ends of baler rolls to prevent damaging seals. Check bearings on ends of baler rolls regularly for early signs of failure and replace if showing signs of overheating." If you do need to use a welder, cutting torch or grinder on the baler, be especially careful. First remove any chaff or crop from the area of work. Do not smoke

when working around a baler in these very hot conditions.

"Tractor drivers have been burned trying to deal with a baler fire. If the fire gets out of hand do not attempt to control it, personal safety must always come first. Baler fires once started will quickly ignite, inflaming the entire machine and there may be some time to detach the machine from the tractor." Always carry a dry chemical fire extinguisher (many balers have water fire extinguishers) on the tractor. Large capacity water fire extinguishers are useful because application of water can cool hot parts to prevent a fire."



Helping Bray bounce back safely

Last week a strong united message came from all the Bray Municipal District Councillors as they collectively echoed the need to help Bray businesses bounce back as we emerge out of the COVID-19 crisis.

Cllr Anne Ferris, Cathaoirleach of Bray Municipal District said: "Coronavirus has had a huge impact on us all. As the country gradually reopens safely we need to continue to work together in order to save our local economy and contain the spread of the virus. As councillors we are encouraging the community to continue to avail of the great businesses that are on our doorstep. Our message is simple - invest in our town, shop local first and let's have unity in our community."

In recent weeks several initiatives have been implemented across the town to help drive a message of "Unity in the community" during these uncertain and challenging times. They include:

Council engineers implemented some temporary changes throughout the District to ensure a safe space for people to navigate and businesses to operate in; The Council's cleaning staff have cleaned street surfaces in high footfall areas around the town;

Free standardised temporary ground graphics have been issued to local main street businesses in order to help them implement queuing measures to encourage social distancing; Shop Local First campaign was launched back in March to encourage consumers to spend locally and help businesses bounce back; "Unity in our community" flags fly high on the seafront to show a symbol of local strength, unity and pride; Temporary ground graphics will showcase "Positivity Stones" which aims to help promote positive mental health and wellbeing; "Soak up the long summer days in Bray safely" tourism campaign has been launched and it focuses on promoting the town post-COVID-19 and includes messages about "taking a staycation in Bray safely" to helping the retailers, hospitality and tourism sectors bounce back.

Bray.ie has launched its summer tourism campaign for 2020. The aim of the initiative is to

encourage Irish consumers to take their summer staycation in Bray to help boost the local economy again.

Eugene Finnegan from Bray Tourism said, "As we emerge out of the Covid-19 crisis and we start to get back to normal, well a new kind of normal and you're looking for a breakaway, Bray is the perfect safe staycation location, whether it's a family holiday or simply a week-end break. We're home to some of the best experiences in the country, and we won't disappoint you."

Local businesses have created a safe environment for both customers and employees and are ready to give everyone a big welcome back.

Cllr Ferris said "Why not soak up the long summer days in the County Wicklow town. Our accommodation providers offer affordable experiences and seasonal offers to cater for all your needs. Take a look around our website bray.ie to help you plan your visit."

All businesses open have introduced COVID-19 preventative measures. These public health protection measures will consist of limiting the numbers entering business premises, ensuring social distancing is adhered to and that a rigorous cleaning plan is in place.

In order for local businesses to prosper again, we are appealing to consumers to adapt to these new measures, have respect and patience. If you have a query our advice is to reach out to a business directly prior to visiting the store or premises via social media.

"While we look forward to welcoming visitors back to Bray, most people who arrive into Ireland from another country need to restrict their movements for 14 days so we would ask people to please refrain from coming to our town until they have completed this quarantine period. More information is available via www.dfa.ie."



Yacht with two on board brought to safety by Wicklow RNLI

A 20ft sailing yacht with two people on board was brought to safety by Wicklow RNLI on Sunday 12th July.

The inshore lifeboat launched at 11:45am with Graham Fitzgerald (helm) and crew Alan Goucher and John Stapleton to reports of a small yacht in difficulty.

The yacht was located four minutes later one mile east of Wicklow harbour. Volunteer crew member Alan Goucher was transferred onto the yacht to assist the two sailors, after they experienced problems with the mast and their outboard engine failed.

A towline was established and the yacht with two sailors were brought safely alongside the East pier at

Wicklow harbour at 12:15pm.

This was the second callout for Wicklow RNLI volunteers over that weekend. On Saturday evening Wicklow all-weather lifeboat launched shortly after 7pm under the command of Coxswain Nick Keogh, to join Arklow lifeboat and the Dublin based Coast Guard helicopter 'Rescue 116' in a search for a yacht in difficulties.

The initial reports suggested the yacht's position was nine miles south between Wicklow head and the Arklow wind farm.

Wicklow lifeboat was stood down by the Coast Guard and returned to station at 7:45pm after the stricken yacht was located by Rescue 116 near Courtown and assisted by Arklow lifeboat.

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LOCAL Wicklow Times

WE DELIVER!



A member of the public views some of the photos at an exhibition in The Lexicon public library, Dun Laoghaire. It will remain on display there until 31st August. Situated on the 4th floor, the striking collection of images capture Irish life in 2019 - the ups and downs, the happy and sad, across all aspects from sport and leisure to politics and arts. The exhibition consists of 120 images by press photographers from across the island of Ireland. Pic: Paul Sherwood

Greystones gallery re-opens with 'closed door' policy

Tom Byrne's art gallery in Greystones, above Bochelli's on the Main Street, re-opens this week on 20th July with a 'closed door' policy.

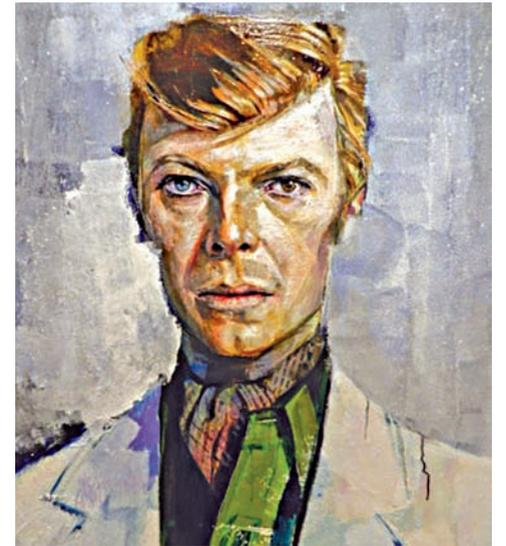
Since opening the gallery five years ago, Tom has had some memorable commissions coming through the doors, from a commissioned exhibition of 16 portraits of the rebel leaders of 1916 for the national gallery in Athlone, to a tapestry collaboration with Robert Ballagh and Jim Fitzpatrick for Phoenix Park, a sale of a large portrait of W.B. Yeats to Lissadell house (Yeats' ancestral home).

Tom was also commissioned to paint 16 portraits for the Greystones train station. His studio attracts visitors from patrons from all over the country. The writer and director Peter Sheridan and his wife are regular visitors, and have commissioned five paintings. TV presenter and fashion guru Emily O'Donnell has had her portrait commissioned for her mum there, and J.P. McManus added to his vast collection at the gallery also. Tom receives many varied portrait com-

missions and enjoys each and every one. Another memorable one was a Nigerian tribal King living here, who travelled from Balbriggan to get his portrait done for his 50th birthday, commissioned by his friends.

Lately Tom's work has taken on an international flavour, having been commissioned to paint famous Dutch artist Marten Toonder. He's enjoyed notoriety in Amsterdam and many Dutch tourists have come to his gallery. Similarly Tom was commissioned to do a portrait for the Pope's visit in Lithuania, which brought great attention to his work there and led to a commissioned exhibition of 20 portraits on Irish and Lithuanian history to tour Lithuania celebrating Lithuanian independence. The Irish portraits were on loan from his patrons but the Lithuanian portraits will hang permanently in the museums there.

Tom is also famous for his large abstracts, that hang in many homes all



David Bowie, by Tom Byrne

round the world and have been featured in numerous magazines and used a lot by interior designers.

Tom accepts all private commissions, and also regularly has exhibitions of his work both in his gallery in Greystones and also in Dublin. Feel free to call in for a free private consultation to view his

art or commission a painting. Tom will bring paintings directly to your home to see what their like with no fulfillment to purchase.

If you are calling in please observe the closed door policy. To find him on main street Greystones just look out for the giant portrait of Samuel Beckett on the Gallery wall.

Coming up at Signal Arts Centre...

Ordinary People and Extraordinary People by Ray Corcoran

Ray Corcoran has been involved in the arts for over four decades. A native of Kilkenny, Corcoran has spent the past twenty years living and working in Bray. His exhibition 'Ordinary People and Extraordinary People' runs in the Signal Arts Centre from Monday 20th July to Sunday 2nd August.

In this exhibition Corcoran has attempted to capture local people that are known to him as well as people who will be known to the wider public. This exhibition will challenge the observer, to examine and question the value that society places on the various types of work that people undertake and whether the ultimate impact of this work is a force for good or not.

Corcoran recalls the reservations he had about staging the show insisting that there are far more important considerations gripping the country at present. It was the encouragement of a number of close friends however that ultimately persuaded the artist to proceed with the exhibition believing that it may offer the viewer a small piece of respite and escapism during this very dark period. In an effort to minimise close contact at this time, Corcoran has chosen not to hold an opening reception and instead hopes that visitors to the gallery can come in and view the exhibition at the leisure.



Tom Griffin, by Ray Corcoran

8th Annual Signal Open

The 2020 Signal Open (an exhibition by various artists), takes place in the Signal Arts Centre in Bray from 4th-16th August.

Over the last 250 years 'Open Submission' exhibitions have become established as an essential element of Arts infrastructure. They act as one of the most accessible routes for artists to have their work seen by the public and are almost invariably amongst the stepping stones in an artist's career.

These exhibitions provide an opportunity for artists to come together as a community to show and sell their work and provide the public with an eclectic insight into what's happening in the arts both locally and nationally.

A founding tenet of Signal Arts Centre is the belief that there is a huge amount of talent that goes unrecognised and that an opportunity should be there for all artists to exhibit their work. The Signal Open is just such an opportunity.

The Signal Open Exhibition is now in its 8th year and has become an annual event in artists' calendars. We have been delighted by the response and the quality of work submitted each year and we are very grateful to all of the artists for their support.

The 8th Annual Signal Open Exhibition takes place at the Signal Arts Centre from Tuesday 4th - Sunday 16th August 2020. The 'Best in Show' winner will be awarded €1,000.



Sing Me to the Sea - the 'at home' version

Sing Me to the Sea - the 'at-home' version - is a magical watery adventure for children with Profound & Multiple Learning Difficulties (PMLD) & their families performed in driveways and gardens.

It will be touring across Wicklow from 17th - 21st August. Bookings can be made through the Mermaid Arts Centre Box Office on 01-2724030.

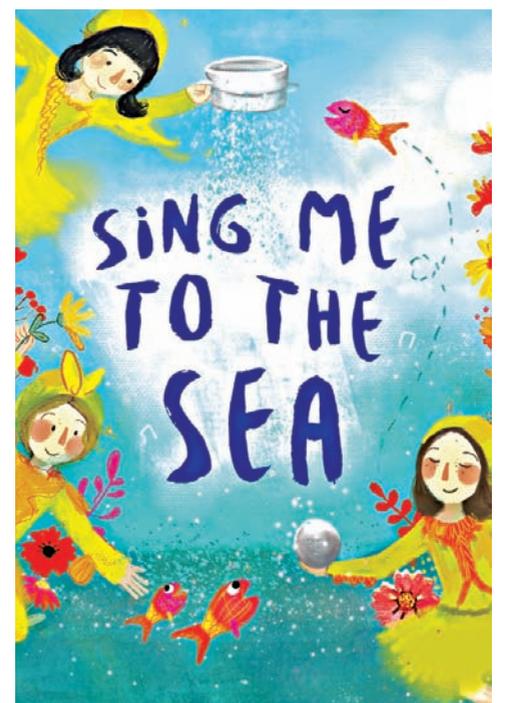
Due to tour to hydro-pools this July and September, this magical watery adventure is now scheduled to tour in August in collaboration with Mermaid Arts Centre, The Civic and Riverbank Arts Centre. Rather than cancel the tour, Anna Newell Theatre Adventures and ourselves were determined to bring high quality live art experiences to this very particular audience and so the 'dry land' 'at-home' version was invented. The "at-home" version is specifically for children/young people with PMLD.

Taking the responsiveness of the show to a whole new level, this re-imagined 'dry land' version will be performed in the gardens/drives/outside the windows of homes of families of children with complex needs. Still full of ethereal live harmony singing and gorgeous costumes (created by award-winning composer David Goodall and renowned costume designer Susan Scott), reflective silver balls, rainbow fish and water moving through colanders like waterfalls will all happen at an appropriate distance from our audience members, with their accompanying adults mirroring the action to add the up-close sensory element.

A process of a virtual pre-visit will take place to ensure that each different private 'at-home' adventure is magical, calm and, of course, safe.

Anna Newell is a Bray-based theatremaker who has been making theatre adventures for many different

audiences since 1989. She was the first Irish-based theatremaker to create theatre designed especially for children and young people with PMLD and her work for Early Years audiences has been seen on 6 continents and off-Broadway. Sing Me to the Sea is co-produced by The Civic, Tallaght and funded by the venues. Wicklow tour is supported by Wicklow County Arts Office and The Sunbeam Trust with additional funding from Arts Council of Ireland.



€55,000 raised for sickest children

A massive €55,000 has been raised by the INTO, teachers' union, for CMRF Crumlin, which is part of the Children's Health Foundation family. This year due to COVID19 restrictions and social distancing guidelines, tickets were available online from €10 with the chance to win incredible prizes up to a value of €10,000.

All proceeds from the 2020 draw will provide continued support for the Inflammatory Bowel Disease (IBD) research project in the National Children's Research Centre (NCRC).

"The INTO is delighted and very proud to once again support CMRF through their annual members' raffle," says

Mary Magner, President of the INTO. "Thank you to our members in County Wicklow for their generosity in raising €55,000 in the 2020 raffle. This year despite restrictions with COVID19, our members got behind the online raffle. It will benefit thousands of children all over Ireland in their most vulnerable sick moments,

and their parents through periods of strain and worry."

The Children's Medical and Research Foundation (CMRF) Crumlin, the fundraising body for CHI at Crumlin and the National Children's Research Centre, has praised the INTO for their continued fundraising. "Every year, we meet

fundraising groups like the INTO and we're just overwhelmed by their generosity and their ability to create such a fantastic fundraiser," says Chief Executive of Children's Health Foundation, Denise Fitzgerald. "On behalf of all the children that these funds will ultimately benefit through the research funded we thank the INTO for their amazing ongoing support."

The hospital treats upwards of 150,000 children each year from all over Ireland.

"Every family in our school communities knows of a child who has received treatment in Crumlin hospital," says Mary Magner. "We support the hospital in providing the best possible care for children and are mindful of the constant need to invest in research projects.

"Therefore, the proceeds from the 2020 INTO members' draw will be used to fund the Inflammatory Bowel Disease (IBD) research project."



INTO President Mary Magner and INTO Deputy Secretary General Noel Ward present €55,000 to CMRF Crumlin Schools and Youth Development Executive Sinead Nolan. CMRF Crumlin Head of Community Fundraising Antoinette Kelly and Hospital Liaison Manager Gerry Cully are delighted that the funds raised will further support research into Inflammatory Bowel Disease (IBD).



Emergency services were called to Bray Golf course last week, for the second time in recent weeks, to attend to another fire at the old clubhouse building. A Garda investigation has been launched to determine how the fire was started. The old clubhouse is located on Ravenswell Row, and the alarm was raised by locals. There were no injuries in the incident.

BAP launch new Disability Bray website

A brand new updated version of the Disability Bray website www.disabilitybray.ie has been launched recently by Bray Area Partnership.

Disability Bray is a community website with information and listings on all areas of disability. The site has a focus on the Bray and North Wicklow areas, and so has lots of information on local supports and services, but much of the information listed is also of relevance to anybody living anywhere in Ireland.

There are eight main information sections on Disability Bray: Education and Training, Work, Getting Around, Housing, Health and Wellbeing, Recreation and Social, Supports and Services, and Finance. Under each are sub-sections with local and national information, contacts, supports, services and resources.

There are also News and Events sections and anybody with disability-related local community news or events is invited to submit them for inclusion on the site.

"We're thrilled to see the new updated site go

live", says Michelle Rogers, Communications Officer at Bray Area Partnership. "It looks amazing and is packed with useful information - we're really grateful to the team at Absolute in Bray for the brilliant design and also their endless patience through the whole process!"

The new Disability Bray website could not have been created without the support of member organisations of the Partnership's Disability Network, who gave input from their members and service-users on what they would like to see on the site.

Thanks are also due to Wicklow County Council for the initial funding for the website and to the Partnership's Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP), which resources staff time for the development and ongoing administration of the website. To find out more see www.disabilitybray.ie.

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Glen Valley Fitness raised over €13,000 for St. Colman's Hospital in Rathdrum. Pictured are Bernie Byrne, Florance Webster, and Catherine Behan, from Glen Valley Fitness, presenting the cheque to May Kavanagh, Director of Nursing, and Lisa Kinsella, Activities Dept.

Wicklow businesses urged to re-focus on Brexit readiness

Since March, Covid-19 has overshadowed Brexit. However, for businesses with exposure to the UK, it really is time to re-focus on a political process which may have a longer-lasting impact on the Irish food and agribusiness sector than Covid-19.

At an individual business level, with diminished cash reserves, many workforces, including management teams, are feeling the strain of the past four months.

These very businesses face the challenge of gearing up again to handle Brexit on top of the ongoing management of Covid-19. Notwithstanding this, Covid-19 has shown the resourcefulness of the food and agribusiness sector, the logistics capability, and its ability to keep supermarket shelves stocked.

It was also good to see that companies who use the UK as a land-bridge to the Continent will be able to use "green lanes" at continental ports from Cherbourg to Rotterdam and avoid inspections and hopefully delays. UK companies will need to go through the "red lanes" for inspection.

Also positive is that many of the larger food and agribusinesses have a risk mitigation plan in place for Brexit, are

actively planning and meeting on a weekly basis once again, have a Brexit co-ordinator internally and have external advisory support especially on tariffs. In summary, they are investing resources in preparing for a range of Brexit scenarios.

However, even with their risk mitigation plan in place, the difficult reality is that there is still no clarity on what type of Brexit they are preparing for. This uncertainty continues to impact on decision-making and planning.

It's a different scenario for the SME sector who have exposure to the UK market. We have consistently found that these businesses don't have the resources to invest in deep Brexit planning. This is a big concern. We need more support for this cohort. The Enterprise Ireland (EI) Be Prepared Grant in place for Brexit is only available to EI clients. This grant should be opened up to non-EI clients too, just like the EI



David Leydon, Head of Food & Agri-Business at ifac.

ers, we are advising that they have their customs registration number (EORI number) in place, that they are clear on the correct tariff and tariff classification for their products, that they have a deferred payment account for customs duties on products they import, and that a VAT assessment has been completed for both GB and NI.

Additionally, at this stage, communications with stakeholders, customers, suppliers, logistic providers, and bankers should be increasing on Brexit with some scenario planning taking place. Given the challenges of Covid-19, having a strong financial plan in place is imperative and having headroom for a difficult start to 2021 is necessary.

Financial Planning Grant in response to Covid-19. Hopefully, this will be part of the memo Minister Coveney is bringing to Cabinet by mid-July to deal with Brexit. For SME business own-

'Half measures to restart economy will no longer cut it'

Chambers Ireland last week published its recommendations to Government on the measures that will be necessary to protect jobs, prevent businesses from failing, and support the recovery.

Representing 40 Chambers, more than 8,000 businesses and with a geographic reach in all major cities, regions and towns, Chambers Ireland calls for Cabinet to use all resources available to reboot the economy.

Chambers Ireland Chief Executive Ian Talbot said "Measures introduced to date to support businesses to re-open have played a positive part in reducing some of the economic damage. In particular, the introduction of the TWSS has been extremely successful in protecting jobs and incomes, while businesses trade through the pandemic. However, it will be critical that supports like this are continued for vulnerable sectors.

"The possibility that COVID-19 will result in a shallow recession with a V shaped recovery, is unre-

alistic. Instead, this crisis will likely affect us over a period of years rather than months."

Ahead of the July Stimulus, Chambers Ireland calls on Government to take several far-reaching actions, including the following: The extension and reform of the Wage Subsidy Scheme for vulnerable sectors. This reform must include allowing vulnerable sectors, many of whom are seasonal, to hire new staff under the Wage Subsidy Scheme; A 12-month waiver of commercial Rates for impacted businesses, with an accessible mechanism, and commitment to ensure that Local Authorities receive additional central funding to make up for the short-fall; A new expansive model for grant aid so businesses can tackle the mounting costs of debt and outstanding invoices. The introduction of the "Restart Grant" was a welcome first step in supporting business to re-open, but ultimately did not go far enough. Without a significant intervention from the State, the debt burden will become insurmountable for many, with closures and job losses inevitably following.

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Are there any frogs in Wicklow?

The all Ireland Hop To It Frog Survey was first launched in 1997 by the Irish Peatland Conservation Council (IPCC). The survey was a huge success with records obtained from all over Ireland.

To date, over 5,400 frog records have been databased by the IPCC for researchers and conservationists to use.

Why is the Common Frog so important? The Common Frog (*Rana temporaria*) is the only species of frog found on the island of Ireland and is listed as an internationally important species. Frogs are protected under the European Union Habitats Directive and by the Irish Wildlife Act. Hence, why IPCC continue to monitor this animal throughout Ireland.

IPCC's Campaign Officer, Paula Farrell says, "Frogs act as indicators conveying the health of a habitat. They breathe through their skin in the water and therefore, are sensitive to pollution. Their absence from an area where numbers were high in the past is very concerning."

In the last 10 years, IPCC have received only

95 record from Wicklow. So, have all the frogs disappeared in Wicklow?

IPCC are asking you to Hop To It in 2020 and become a citizen scientist helping to protect and monitor this important wetland Amphibian in your community. This survey asks members of the public to watch for the various stages of the frogs life-cycle in their gardens and wider local community. If you have seen or find frog spawn, tadpoles, leggy tadpoles, froglets or adult frogs IPCC are encouraging you to take part in the Hop To It Frog Survey. It is easy to get involved, simply visit the website of the Irish Peatland Conservation Council www.ipcc.ie and submit

your frog record online information why not by following the link. If you would like further contact the IPCC at bogs@ipcc.ie.

Gospel: Matthew 13:47-53

Jesus said to the crowds: 'the kingdom of heaven is like a dragnet cast into the sea that brings in a haul of all kinds. When it is full, the fishermen haul it ashore, then sitting down they collect the good ones in a basket and throw away those that are no use. This is how it will be at the end of time; the angels will appear and separate the wicked from the just to throw them into the blazing furnace where there will be weeping and grinding of teeth. 'Have you understood all this?' they said 'Yes'. And he said to them, 'Well then, every scribe who becomes a disciple of the kingdom of heaven is like a householder who brings out from his storeroom things both new and old'. When Jesus had finished these parables, he left the district. C.J.

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REF: 31/2020

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CLOSING DATE FOR RECEIPT OF COMPLETED APPLICATION FORMS IS 12 NOON ON THURSDAY 6TH AUGUST 2020.

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WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL

Full planning permission sought for:
1. Proposed ground floor extension to rear (20 msq) first floor extension to side (25msq) & attic conversion into habitable room (27msq) including new dormer window to rear of existing dwelling. Total extensions (72msq).
2. All ancillary site works at 23 Putland Villas, Vevay Road, Bray, Co. Wicklow, A98 Y9N1. Signed Carole & Declan Cobbe. The planning application may be inspected or purchased at a fee not exceeding the reasonable cost of making a copy at the offices of Wicklow County Council, County Buildings, Wicklow during its public opening hours and a submission or observation in relation to the application may be made to the authority in writing on payment of the prescribed fee within the period of 5 weeks beginning on the date of receipt by the authority of the application.



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†Includes delivery & related charges. Models are shown for illustrative purposes only. ††GMFV payable if you renew or retain the vehicle at the end of the agreement. Further charges may apply subject to kilometre limits/condition of vehicle. **Lending criteria, terms and conditions apply. Finance by way of PCP agreement provided by Toyota Financial Services Ireland DAC. Finance example is based on a fixed rate APR and is inclusive of a documentation fee and purchase fee of €63.49 each. No deposit required however a maximum term of 37 months applies. Rate quoted is correct as at 19.05.20 and is subject to change. Rate of 2.9% APR available on AYGO x-play + (x-shift) 5dr and 3.9% APR available on Toyota C-HR, Corolla Hatchback, Saloon, Touring Sports, Camry, RAV4, Prius and Yaris Hybrid and Yaris Petrol models purchased between 21.05.2020 and 30.06.2020.