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DON'T BLAME THE DEER!

A new report evaluating the role that deer play in the spread of Bovine TB (bTB), has labelled Wicklow as a Bovine TB 'hot-spot' and suggests that Wicklow's large deer population might be to blame. However, this is hotly disputed.

The report in the peer-reviewed scientific journal, Microbial Genomics, titled 'Mycobacterium bovis genomics reveals transmission of infection between cattle and deer in Ireland', was published on June 18th by Crispell et al.

It's understood that deer can act as a spill over host for the infection where high deer densities are present, however there is no clear evidence to show deer are a source of infection for cattle. Whilst badgers are recognized as being a source of infection for cattle, similar evidence

on the role of deer in Ireland is lacking, the report says.

In the last decade, Wicklow has had the highest herd-level prevalence of bTB in the country. The report states that in Co. Wicklow, "high densities of deer have been implicated in the local spread and persistence of M. bovis infection in cattle. Our analyses suggest that M. bovis is transmitted between cattle and deer populations, and that deer may be acting as an important source of infection in Wicklow."

James O'Keeffe, SVI, Head, Department of

Agriculture's Wildlife Unit said regarding a 2018 Department study "this information does not inform us about the direction of spread of disease, and cannot be used to draw any conclusion about which species may be infecting which other species."

A recommendation to the Minister of Agriculture in 2015 by the Irish Deer Management Forum, confirmed "that there is no evidence to link Bovine TB incidence in deer in Ireland to Bovine TB outbreaks or persistence in cattle herds."



New Minister for Higher Education, Simon Harris visited Bife college of Higher and Further Education in Bray last Friday. Pictured l/r are Deirdre Keyes CEO of KWETB; Cllr Tom Fortune, Board member, Minister Simon Harris, Gabriel Allen Deputy Principal of Bife and Ray Tedders, Principal of Bife. See page 3

In 2018, Dr Eoin Ryan, Chief Veterinary Inspector at the Department said there is "no evidence of link between wild deer and the spread of TB."

No study to date has shown the directionality of bTB transmission from wild deer to cattle (or badger) or vice-a-versa.

The Crispell et al report states that "Our analyses reveal that cattle and deer share highly similar M. bovis strains, suggesting that transmission between these species is occurring in the area. In addition, the high level of diversity observed in the sampled deer population suggests deer may be acting as a source of infection for local cattle populations. These findings have important implications for the control and ultimate eradication of bTB in Ireland."

The report also notes that the similar M. bovis strains in cattle and deer could result from a common source, such as badgers.

"Defining the role of deer in the bTB system in Wicklow will require further research," the report states. A spokesperson for the Irish Deer Commission said "while deer like many other wildlife species are susceptible to TB at low levels, the report highlights that good deer management can help reduce the spread of potentially infected wild deer by carrying out informed data led culls annually to reduce wild deer numbers and maintain them at sustainable levels. Also, good deer management ensures we do not drive deer into new areas by over-culling or sustained increased hunting pressure."

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A local fundraising challenge has succeeded in raising over €3,500 for Pieta House. Organisers of '100km for May' created a Facebook page and set people the challenge to run, walk, or jog 100km throughout the month of May. Over 150 people took part from Wicklow town, Newtown, Greystones, Ashford and as far as Away as Australia. By the end of the Challenge €3,512 had been raised for donation to Pieta house. Pictured are Anne Marie Nolan, Leah Kelly & Takis Apostolopoulos at the presentation of the cheque.

Oh My It's 3005!

Summer Stars is the national reading programme for children taking place in all 330 public libraries in Ireland. It is a completely free programme and open to all children. As well as online stories, competitions and book reviews, Wicklow County Library Service are proud to announce a unique creative writing event for children entitled "Oh My It's 3005!" with renowned writer Maeve Devoy.

Children ages 8-12 can take part in the webinars from 27th July to 31st July, online. Maeve will take them on a futuristic journey to the year 3005, exploring worlds and letting their imaginations grow.

Registration is essential and free. To register, please contact greylib@wicklowcoco.ie. Participants must be able to access Zoom on the days in question. For any further details, please check out your local library.

La Touche Festival of History postponed

The La Touche Legacy Committee and Greystones Archaeological and Historical Society have confirmed that this year's Seminar/Festival of history has been postponed due to Covid-19. It has been rescheduled for the 10th/11th September with a launch lecture in May 2021. Chairman of the La Touche Legacy Society, George Jones, said "We thank all our supporters and attendees over the years and are looking forward to your continued support next year. In the meantime keep safe."

GAA Cul Camps

From Bray to Baltinglass, all Wicklow GAA clubs are in with a chance of claiming incredible prizes as part of Kellogg's sponsorship of the Kellogg's GAA Cul camps. At a time when fundraising has been limited, this provides GAA clubs with an incredible opportunity to claim great prizes through a simple

mechanic. In order to nominate your club, all that is required is to pick up a promotional box of Kellogg's Corn Flakes, Rice Krispies or Bran Flakes. Using the unique on-pack code, log on to kelloggsculcamps.gaa.ie/competition and nominate the club of choice. For more information on the Kellogg's GAA Cul Camps visit gaa.ie/kelloggsculcamps

Support for Kilcoole skate park campaign

Minister Simon Harris TD is supporting the campaign for a skate park facility in Kilcoole. Minister Harris said: "I was very impressed by the campaign 14 year old Jake Mitchell from Kilcoole is undertaking to develop a skate park. Jake has decided to be proactive and campaign for the council to develop a safe skate park for this very popular outdoor activity."

"After the impact of the lockdown it is important that young people are supported in safe outdoor sporting and recreational activities."

"I would also like to pay tribute to the staff of Temple Carrig Secondary School who developed the 'Do Something Great' award to motivate students during the lock down period. The school's initiative spurred on Jake to begin his campaign and I am delighted to be able to support it".

New online course in suicide prevention training

LivingWorks Start helps participants to identify people who are at risk, confidently ask them about the topic of suicide and connect them with resources that can help them stay safe. It is a level 2 alertness skills programme and not as advanced as safeTALK or the two-day intervention skills workshop, ASIST. You can complete the programme on any device or computer. You will have 60 days to complete the programme. The programme uses a mix of guided online content, video and interactive questions. The course is for those aged 18 and over. This course is made available in Ireland by the HSE National Office for Suicide Prevention and LivingWorks. Limited places, for further details email, job title and work location to michaeln@mentalhealthireland.ie.

Short story competition open to children in Greystones Municipal District

Social Democrats Cllr for Greystones District Jodie Neary has launched a short story competition in association with her successful Bee Route Project. The Bee Route Project was devised by Cllr Neary who worked with Greystones, Delgany and Kilcoole Tidy Towns giving out free Bee Route Starter Packs and lavender to locals in a bid to get people to grow pollinator-friendly plots in their gardens.

Over 150 participants have signed up to the project so far. The success of the project has inspired the launch of the Bee Route Short Story Competition, open to all children aged 5-12 from across Greystones, Delgany, Kilcoole and Newcastle. The theme will be: The Sunflower and the Bee. Children are asked to write a short story (by themselves!) of up to 300 words on this subject

The Competition has been developed by Cllr Neary alongside Wicklow Good News broadcaster Jillian Godsil and producer Marlena Murphy, to encourage children to discover more about biodiversity and to keep their curiosity growing throughout the summer months.

The competition will run for approximately five weeks ending on August 7th. A panel of judges will consist of local artists, writers, Council represen-

tatives and people associated with the gardening world. Please send your short story to jodie.neary@socialdemocrats.ie

Speaking on the Short Story Competition, Cllr Neary says "The theme for this competition will be: The Sunflower and the Bee. When writing, children can take inspiration from watching bees buzzing around their new pollinator-friendly sunflowers if they participated in the Bee Route Project or imagine a bee passing through well-known spots across Greystones, Delgany, Kilcoole and Newcastle. It can be anything they want associated with bees, pollinators and nature".

Cllr Neary says, "I want to encourage children to take part in the competition not only to raise awareness about biodiversity, but also to document their relationship with the natural environ-

ment during COVID19 lockdown. Children have such fantastic imaginations and are best placed to really appreciate our surrounding natural environment and they have taken advantage of the lockdown to explore their surroundings in great detail. I know that people would love to read what children have discovered over the last few months, and that's just in their own back gardens!"

"I often feel that children are left out of national discussions on the topic of biodiversity when really it's children we should be targeting. We need to nurture their curiosity which will be essential in the future preservation of our natural heritage. This is one way we can facilitate people to participate in preserving our natural heritage. I look forward to the contributions and to announce the winners in August. The competition

is open to all children regardless of whether they participated in the Bee Route Project or not," concluded Cllr Neary.

Age categories will apply to the following age brackets: 5-6 years, 7-8 years, 9-10, 11-12 years. Winners will be announced during National Heritage Week from 15th August - 23rd. The competition is being sponsored by the Arboretum and the top five winners will receive vouchers - €100 for the overall winner and €50 for another 4 runner ups! They will also get to have their picture taken by the very kind Eva Blake at a location to be confirmed, together with the other winners (social distancing style!), and individually.

Furthermore, kids will also get to have their stories posted on the Wicklow Heritage Site for National Heritage Week



Kilbride trainer Prunella Dobbs was among the winners at Leopardstown on Wednesday 1st July where Airgead prevailed in a driving finish to the concluding 7f handicap. The 10/1 chance was a third winner on the night for high-flying Shane Foley who brought the four-year-old with a perfectly timed run to pip Highly Approved and Colin Keane in the dying strides. It was a second Leopardstown win for Airgead. The margin here was a head and when he scored over a mile at the track last August, the winning verdict was a neck. Dobbs said, "This horse loves it here. My heart was sinking since I arrived as I felt this ground wouldn't suit him with all the rain around. Shane gave him such a good ride, settled him out early and made the break at just the right moment. We'll look for something similar and he seems to thrive around Leopardstown." Photo: Shane Foley gets the Prunella Dobbs-trained Airgead up on the line to win the concluding seven-furlong handicap at Leopardstown on Wednesday. Photo: Caroline Norris, Racing Post

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'BIFE IS AN EXAMPLE OF A CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE IN HIGHER EDUCATION' SAYS NEW MINISTER

Last Friday the new Minister for Further and Higher Education made his first official visits to a Higher Education college, Bray's Institute for Further and Higher Education (BIFE).

Minister for Further and Higher Education Simon Harris TD said: "I am excited to be appointed Minister for Further and Higher Education. I have a long commitment to Further Education having previously served on the board of BIFE. "BIFE's success is evident in the 1,200 plus full-time learners studying at degree, diploma, and certificate levels, and over 3000 learners studying part-time courses. BIFE is a leader in Further Education not only in Wicklow but nationally. "BIFE's film and media courses build on Wicklow's existing strengths as a location

for the film industry and last week's announcement of the new Greystones Movie Campus shows how BIFE courses are at the cutting edge of future job opportunities. "As Minister for Further Education I want to broaden access to Further Education and drive inclusion and equality within the sector. 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. "I have already met with employers' groups to discuss opportunities of

bringing research and innovation together with further education and the government in the July stimulus will announce additional measures as to how Further Education can support the recovery." Speaking at the college, CEO of Kildare and Wicklow Education and Training Board (KWETB), Deirdre Keyes, from Greystones, said "It was an honour for us to welcome the first ever Minister for Higher Education to one of our colleges, especially one that he is so closely associated with, having served on the Board of Management and officiated at many

graduation ceremonies. I believe Higher and Further education in County Wicklow will grow and thrive with such a committed Minister. Ray Tedders, Principal of Bife also said he was delighted to welcome the Minister to the college. "Minister Harris has been a good friend and supporter of Bife down the years and our teachers and thousands of present and past pupils appreciate his support. Here at Bife we have exciting development plans which I look forward to presenting to the Minister as soon as he is settled in."



Minister for Higher Education, Simon Harris pictured with Bife principal, Ray Tedders and CEO of KWETB, Greystones resident Deirdre Keyes in Bife last Friday when the Minister made his first official visit.

€20,000 of cannabis seized from Bray grow house

Gardaí in Wicklow have seized €20,000 worth of cannabis plants and arrested a female in relation to a surveillance operation carried out at a house in Bray.

Last Wednesday afternoon, 8th July, Gardaí attached to the Bray District Drug unit and assisted by the District Detective unit obtained a Section 26 warrant under the Misuse of Drugs Acts. A search of a house was carried out and a grow house was located in the attic of the house.

A number of cannabis plants were seized, at various stages of maturity. The seizure, subject to analysis, has an estimated street value of €20,000.

One female, (38 years) was arrested at the scene and detained under Section 4 of the Criminal Justice Act, 1984 at Bray Garda Station. She has since been released from custody without charge and a file will be prepared for the Director of Public Prosecutions. Investigations are ongoing.



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Harris supports West Wicklow Pool campaign

Minister Simon Harris TD is supporting the application by the Community Pool for West Wicklow Committee for funding under the Town and Village Renewal Scheme.

Minister Harris said, "The Community Pool for West Wicklow Committee has stepped up their campaign and I am fully behind it as it goes from strength to strength. I would like to commend Deirdre McCormack and all the team for their excellent work. The objective of a Pool for West Wicklow is now to be included in the next County Development Plan and the success of their campaign is reflected in the fact they are supported by communities and representatives across county Wicklow.

There is a clear need for this facility for people in West Wicklow. In fact, West Wicklow is the only Municipal District in County Wicklow which does not have a public swimming pool. This needs to be rectified".

Local councillor Avril Cronin added: "I have been working to advance this project at local authority level. This is an incredible community group has come together and has worked so hard to drive this project forward. They need and deserve the full support of the local authority to make their plan a reality. There are so many benefits to swimming for people of all ages and I urge Wicklow County and I want to see this project advance to the next level".

Average Wicklow house prices fall 0.8% in past three months

The price of a three-bedroomed semi-detached house in County Wicklow fell by 0.8% over the past three months, according to a national survey carried out by Real Estate Alliance.

However, agents in the county are reporting a larger than expected increase in enquiries since they reopened their doors after lockdown.

The price of the average three-bed semi in Wicklow fell by 2.4% to €283,000 in the past year, the REA Average House Price Survey has found.

"Viewings are currently very strong, and purchasers have a lot of confidence in the market," said Karl Tracey of REA Forkin in Bray, North East Wicklow, and Wicklow Town.

"Houses with home offices are highly sought after, and broadband speed has become very important for homes in rural Ireland.

"There is a surge of new home developments in the North Wicklow area which is keeping second-hand prices at a steady level, allowing for a small decrease this quarter."

REA Forkin reported that the average three-bed semi prices fell by 4.8% to €300,000 over the last year in North East Wicklow, with a 1.9% drop this quarter.

Average Bray prices fell by 4.3% over the past year, and 1.47% this quarter, to €335,000. Wicklow Town reported a 3.1% fall over the past 12 months to €310,000, with prices remaining static this quarter.

Time to sell increased by one week in North East Wicklow this quarter to 16 weeks, while in both Wicklow Town and Bray it remained unchanged at 15 weeks.

REA Murphy of Blessington and Balinglass reported that house prices rose by 3% in Balinglass over the past year to €175,000, remaining unchanged this quarter. Time to sell in the area rose from 12 weeks to 16.

Blessington prices remained at €295,000 since this time last year, and time to sell in the area increased from eight weeks to ten this quarter.

The REA Average House Price Survey con-



centrates on the actual sale price of Ireland's typical stock home, the three-bed semi, giving an accurate picture of the second-hand property market in towns and cities countrywide.

Across the country, despite fears of a downturn in the market due to lockdown, the price of a three-bedroomed semi-detached house fell by just -0.15% over the past three months to €234,667, an annual decline of -0.56%.

"Although sales slowed during the lockdown, they did happen

and, despite fears, very few fell through or had to be renegotiated," said REA spokesperson Barry McDonald.

"Changes in the world of work are having an immediate effect on the second-hand housing market with a nationwide trend emerging of buyers looking to move 15 minutes outside of their urban location where they can get more space for the same money.

"We are finding that people are looking for three things - more space, gardens and a

guarantee of better broadband, where transport was previously the highest priority.

"While the current outlook is positive, and there seems to be a lot of pent-up demand, it may be Q3 before we see the effect of Covid-19 on the market and on the outcome of mortgage approvals granted before the lockdown."

According to Daft.ie's latest report, in Q2 2020 the average house prices in County Wicklow was €316,007 which is 6.2% lower than a year previously.

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Water supplies are vulnerable to failure, report finds

Ballymorris and Johnstown South in Co. Wicklow are among the 17 public water supplies in the country where boil water notices are currently in place, according to the EPA's report on Drinking Water Quality in Public Supplies 2019, released last week.

Twenty-three households are affected by these two boil water notices. At Ballymorris the issue is related to Turbidity at the plant, while at Johnstown in Arklow the issue is to do with Coliform Bacteria (this has been an ongoing issue affecting this water supply since 2015).

Overall, the report shows that the quality of drinking water in public supplies remains high. In Wicklow's 57 water supplies there was 100% microbiological compliance and 99.3% compliance with chemical limits. There were three boil water notices last year, affecting 1,366 people; one water restriction affecting 281 people, and one supply with directions, affecting one person.

However, increasing uncertainty in Irish Water's planning and delivery of critical improvements to water treatment plants is making

supplies vulnerable to failure, posing a risk to the health of a large portion of the population.

On 2nd April 2019 a direction was issued to implement an Action Programme to upgrade the Avoca Ballinacash water treatment plant. By the end of 2019 this direction had not been complied with despite the deadline being September 30th. The report states that enforcement action was not considered however due to verified progress with works.

The report notes that works were carried out in March 2019 at water supplies affecting Enniskerry, Wicklow, Bray, Greystones/Windgates/Templecarraig, Kilmacanogue, and Newtown/Newcastle/Kilcoole, due to elevated levels of Trihalomethanes (THMs) - chemicals formed along with other disinfection by-products, when chlorine or other disinfectants used to control

microbial contaminants in drinking water react with naturally occurring organic and inorganic matter. This was also the reason for works in September 2019 at the Aughrim/Annacurra supply.

In Q1 of 2020, upgrade works were carried out at Vartry due to seven water supplies being affected by elevated levels of THMs.

Launching the report, Laura Burke, EPA Director General said: "The supply of safe drinking water is of critical importance for our wellbeing and for social and economic prosperity. Delays in delivering public water improvements puts water quality and the public's health at risk. The growing uncertainty in Irish Water's planning and delivery of critical improvements to water treatment plants is undermining confidence in the security of supply of safe drinking water. Irish Water needs to urgently address

the underlying causes for the delays and shortcomings highlighted in this report and prioritise investment to ensure that public supplies are safe and secure, and that public health is protected."

The EPA has also seen delays in completing the national disinfection programme and a significant reduction in work planned to remove 'lead' from supply connections.

Andy Fanning, EPA Programme Manager, said "Disinfection is the most important step in water treatment and makes our water safe by keeping water free of harmful bacteria, viruses and parasites. Lead presents a different problem where the only remedy is to remove the lead pipework. With the reduced programme for removing lead pipes the EPA estimates that it could take Irish Water up to 60 years to remove all public-side lead connections.



Ronan Murphy, CEO of Horse Sport Ireland (centre), with Katie Maegan from Alltech, Sharon Fitzpatrick and Liz Brennan from the IBC committee and Joanne Hurley from GAIN, at the launch of the Irish Breeders Classic at the Barnadown Equestrian Centre in Gorey. Pic: Sportsfile

'Give us back our walk'

A group of concerned residents from Greystones are calling for a section of the cliff walk access route to be re-opened to the public.

The cliff walk was closed for a period during lockdown but was re-opened at the start of this month. However, the section from Darcy's Field to Greystones Harbour, believed to have been closed off by the developer of the housing development at the harbour, has yet to be re-opened.

A temporary alternative pathway has been created, which Cllr Tom Fortune says is problematic due to the terrain here being dangerous.

Residents held a meeting on Friday 3rd July, and are now seeking a meeting with Glenveagh Properties, Wicklow County Council, and Sisk.

After attending the meeting, Cllr Fortune said "In my opinion all of this may have been avoided if the developer would just communicate with the community. The residents are very concerned and

frustrated about what is happening, to a large extent because there has been no communication."

On Saturday 4th July, Cllr Fortune was shown the situation by a Redford Park resident. "I walked with him from the Grove into Greystones Harbour, I was there from 11:30am to 1pm and met approximately 250 people on that section of the walk in that time," explained Cllr Fortune. "When you come to Darcy's Field where the park has been developed it's been blocked off, so you have to currently take a sharp left turn at Darcy's Field and follow this temporary arrangement. The problem is that the terrain is very dangerous and sloped for the greater part. We witnessed a lady almost falling at one stage. I also observed while I was there that potential house purchasers were viewing the houses and then walking around the park while the public using the Cliff Walk could only look in."

Cllr Fortune is calling for security personnel to be provided while this temporary situation exists.

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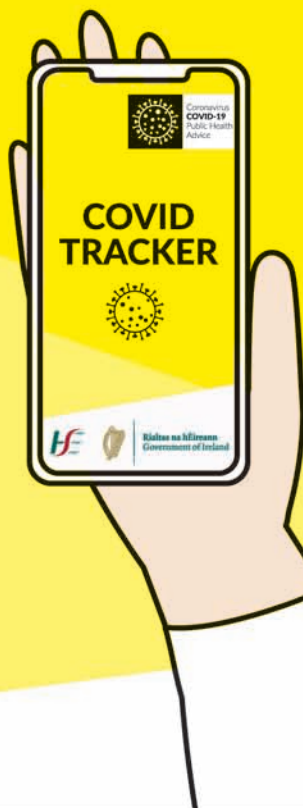
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Minister Simon Harris met with East Coast Mask Makers in Enniskerry - a not for profit group making free cotton masks for care givers and the vulnerable. Minister Harris said "I'm delighted to be able to thank Sinead O'Reardon and Sinead McGuinness and all the team for all their voluntary work during the Covid-19 crisis. This is a wonderful group of people who selflessly responded to the emergency having made 20,000 masks so far. Their example was inspiring during the most difficult days in the past few months and I wanted to express a heartfelt thank you to them".

'Enniskerry's pedestrian scheme is an example to wider community'

Wicklow Minister Simon Harris along with Cllr Melanie Corrigan last week visited the new pedestrian area in Enniskerry Village.

Minister Harris said "I am delighted to see the lengths local businesses and the community have gone to facilitate safe social distancing for shoppers to protect customers.

"The government is rolling out the Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme to support villages and towns for the development of new and existing outdoor recreational infrastructure in rural areas."

Enniskerry and Bray West Councillor Melanie Corrigan added "The Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme has been crucial to the development of the recreation facilities enjoyed by growing numbers of locals and tourists in rural areas in recent years. These facilities are now more important than ever in light of the COVID-19 emergency. We have applied to the Town and Village Renewal Scheme for additional funding and I am looking forward to enhancing disability access to the new pedestrianised area and further enhancements of the village."

ALONE raises concerns about access to safe public transport

ALONE, the organisation which supports older people, has highlighted the significant lack of accessible and safe transport available to older people amid the COVID-19 pandemic. ALONE has received a substantial number of calls to its National Support Line from older people who are now finding it difficult to access transport due to the country beginning to reopen.

As older people rely on public transport to attend important medical appointments and collect necessities like groceries and medication, we are now worried for their safety. While there is strong evidence that older people are keen to attend necessary hospital appointments, many are apprehensive about using public transport in case they come into contact with a carrier of the virus. The organisation has also raised concerns regarding older people with mobility issues, who may not be able to use public transport and rely on other means of transport such as family members or private ambulances.

ALONE are cognisant of the wider systemic issues faced by older people in accessing safe and affordable transport and further delays to appointments are not viable at this time. The organisation said that the cost of getting taxis to and from appointments means that they are not a viable alternative transport for many older people. ALONE have been assisting these transportation queries by providing a redirection for

older people to the Irish Red Cross who have been helping older people attend appointments across the country. With transportation continuously arising as problematic for older people, COVID-19 has only compounded this issue further.

ALONE CEO, Seán Moynihan said, "Many older people who cannot drive or do not have access to a car rely on public transport to go about their daily lives, however the arrival of COVID-19 in Ireland has caused older people to become anxious when using public transport. The only other option for older people is to take taxis to their appointments, which is something that many older people cannot afford on a regular basis. As a result of this, many older people with underlying medical conditions are missing essential checkups, because they do not want to put themselves at further risk by using public transport. This is an issue which is affecting older people in both rural and urban areas."

He continued, "While we were pleased to hear the news that the

wearing of face coverings is now mandatory on public transport from the 29th of June, older people are still apprehensive to use public transport as they are one of the groups most affected by COVID-19. We are asking members of the public to remember the older people in their lives who may be struggling, and if it is safe to do so, offer to take them to and from appointments."

Since March, ALONE's National Support Line has received in excess of 26,174 calls for support. ALONE staff and volunteers have made more than 127,475 calls to older people who needed support, and provided more than 21,549 units of practical support, delivered from the support line, staff and volunteers. ALONE is providing ongoing support to more than 13,300 older people who require support for difficulties with loneliness, health, finance, housing, accessing services, COVID-19 and other challenges. ALONE is encouraging older people who need advice to call ALONE on, 0818 222 024 from 8am-8pm, seven days a week.

Casey appointed Government Finance Spokesperson in Seanad

Wicklow Senator Pat Casey has expressed his delight and honour at being appointed the Fianna Fáil Seanad spokesperson by An Taoiseach Micheal Martin.

"To be appointed to one of the most important portfolios in the Seanad is an honour for me and my family and as we rebuild our shattered economy after the Covid crisis and I am determined to play a positive role in ensuring that we return jobs and growth to all areas of Ireland as quickly as possible," said Senator Casey.

"Speaking to An Taoiseach we have prioritised the return of the crucial tourism and hospitality sector which has been totally crushed by the Covid lockdown. Having decades of experience in this area along with being

an employer I understand the needs of the small and medium business sector in Ireland and in particular a tourism county such as Wicklow.

"This Government must support the vital SME sector in Wicklow to get back on their feet and provide the jobs and growth that we so badly need. The next year will be tough but I am confident having spoken to the Taoiseach that economic recovery for all is top of the agenda.

"I also spoke to Micheál about growing the Fianna Fáil Party in Wicklow after a very dis-



Senator Pat Casey

appointing General Election. He has asked me to work with our organisation in Wicklow to study the lessons from the election campaign and develop the growth of our

republican movement within our garden county.

"As the only Wicklow member of the Oireachtas from outside Greystones and Bray I am acutely conscious of the lack of representation in the Dáil from East, South and West Wicklow. I am determined that these areas of the County are not left behind in the necessary rebuilding that needs to take place. I am committed to continue my work with the communities, businesses and farm families of Wicklow, Arklow and Baltinglass to ensure a fair recovery."

Council to proceed with Tidy Town Awards

Wicklow County Council has decided to proceed with its annual Tidy Towns and Environmental Awards.

The Council said it appreciates that Covid-19 has led to the postponement or cancelling of some projects and initiatives and has made it very challenging for groups to organize activities and complete work.

However much has been done and continues to be done on the ground in communities across the county. The national Tidy Towns competition will not take place this year, which makes it even more important that the work of local tidy towns groups is recognized, the Council says.

The closing date for entries is 31st July with an extension for schools until 4th September to allow for submission of entries after schools reopen.

The aim of the Environmental Awareness Awards is to showcase best practice in environmental awareness and actions across County Wicklow.

"Through the awards we aim to recognise the diverse range of groups engaged in environmental awareness projects. The competition is open to any group working at local level, which has undertaken a project that demonstrates good practice," the Council said.

"The awards have links to best practice in the National Tidy Towns Competition which aims to help us build more sustainable communities. They are

however open to all types of community groups including Tidy Towns groups, Coastcare groups, sports and recreational clubs schools, local businesses and housing estates.

"These awards aim to recognize some of the great work and innovative ideas being developed to make Wicklow more resilient to Climate Change and protect our natural resources. Communities across the county will be key partners in delivering action on both mitigation and adaptation with relation to Climate Change and also the protection of biodiversity at local level and Wicklow County Council would like to recognize your contribution.

"As much detail as possible should be included either on the form, or by submitting additional documents detailing projects, noting which categories of award you wish to have considered on this form.

"The application can be made by the community group carrying out the works or in the form of a nomination of another group. Application may be made for more than one award. In any given year awards may not be given for all categories. An award will only be made where Wicklow County Council believes works undertaken are of high value as an example to all in County Wicklow. Where justified a second recognition may also be given in an award category." The awards are open to all relevant towns, villages and community groups, schools and organisations in county Wicklow.



Last year's Bray Tidy Towns winners

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A survey of Newcastle residents has revealed they are largely against plans for a large residential and commercial development in the field behind the Castle Inn.

PLANNING NEWS

EGS lodges new application for sports hall

East Glendalough School in Wicklow Town has submitted a new application for a sports hall, having now secured the necessary funding to go ahead with the project.

Permission was previously granted in September 2019, however due to lack of funding the school was unable to proceed with the construction at the time.

The secondary school has now applied for planning permission for alterations to the previous approved planning permission.

Alterations include a reduction in size of the proposed scheme to suit the funding which is currently available to the school.

The school has been fundraising for the necessary funding, through initiatives such as the 'Buy a Brick' fundraising campaign.

The proposed development consists of the provision of a 710.7 sqm, 8.85m high sports hall business with high level glazing facing south and north, ancillary spaces and all associated site works. The original application last year was for a 1,350 sqm sports hall.

Wicklow County Council is due to make a decision on the application on 27th August.

Application lodged for 99 houses in Delgany

A planning application has been submitted for a residential development of 99 houses on Chapel Road, Kindlestown Upper, in Delgany.

The application site is located approximately 800m to the Northeast of the centre of Delgany Village, and a stream runs through it. The cover letter of the planning application states that "The proposed development will contribute positively to the character and nature of the neighbourhood. The character of Delgany is that of an established village with a strong relationship with its natural surroundings. The proposed development continues the character maintaining established views and areas of public open space with established natural character."

The development would consist of two and three storey dwellings including 12 four-bed two-storey detached dwellings, 6 four-bed three-storey semi detached dwellings, 10 four-bed two-storey semi detached dwellings, 44 three-bed two-storey semi

detached dwellings, 4 three-bed semi detached bungalows, 19 three-bed two storey terraced dwellings, and 4 two-bed two-storey terraced dwellings. There would also be a crèche.

The Council is due to make a decision on 27th August.

Planning permission sought for Employment Park

Workplace equipment supplier AJ Products (Ireland) Ltd have re-applied to Wicklow County Council for planning permission for an employment park in Delgany.

AJ offices and warehouse are currently located in Kilcoole, however due to expansion they wish to relocate to a purpose-built building as the headquarters for their Irish division.

The development in Drummin East in Delgany would be Employment Park consisting of a purpose built building of total size 1095sqm comprising of warehousing/distribution, ancillary office space together with access roads/roundabout, footpaths, cycle tracks, car parking (circa 30 spaces), bicycle storage, and landscaping (with access from Greystones Southern Access Route) on lands zoned for 'employment uses'.

AJ offices made a similar application last year, and have reduced the building size in the new application by 14sqm. A decision is due to be made on the application by 3rd August.

Amendment to Avondale redevelopment

Coillte have lodged a planning application with Wicklow County Council to amend the previously permitted development to provide enhanced visitor facilities at Avondale House & Forest Park on a site area of circa 19.7 hectares within a total landholding of circa 200 hectares.

The amended development consists of alterations to the walking trail (comprising sunken walkways, tunnels and elevated timber walkways and lookout over Avondale river), accessible timber lookout tower (overall height 38 metres from ground level) with ground floor level associated facilities, entrance to existing walled garden, landscaping and all related site development works.

Newcastle locals are against proposed mixed-use development

Newcastle residents have let their views be known on the matter of the proposed mixed use development in the field behind The Castle Inn, which Wicklow County Council is due to decide on this week. In a survey carried out by the Newcastle Residents Association, over two-thirds of respondents said they were against the development.

The development would consist of 22 houses, 13 apartments, and three commercial units. A planning application was submitted to Wicklow County Council by ABBD Developmet Limited, in March. The deadline for public submissions ended on 23rd June.

The Newcastle Residents Association carried out a survey and welcomed the "full and robust" response from the local community.

The survey had 179 respondents, with 71% saying they were not in

favour of the development. Of the 28% in favour of the development, most of these were only 'somewhat' in favour. Development in general is not opposed among

the responses to the survey, but preference has been expressed for smaller scale, sustainable developments that respond in a sensitive way to the local area, and that centre the needs of the existing community are preferred.

Most opposed to the development say that it will be disproportionately large for the scale of the

village and will negatively impact and over-burden the capacity of existing infrastructure.

The main concerns of local residents include: Height and volume of residential units; Lack of adequate sewerage facilities for existing population; Lack of adequate infrastructure to support existing population, in particular the safety of L5050 to the N11; Concern that the commercial units will lie vacant, as seen with the Rockingham development; Concern that the

scale of the development is more suited to a town with a larger existing population.

Most in favour of it say it will grow the community and bring more business to the area. They say it's a considered and affordable option for locals who wish to live in the area. They also welcome the inclusion of the park and say there is potential for more village amenities in the commercial units.

Wicklow County Council is due to make a decision on the application on 14th July.

Permission refused for Newtown residential development

An Bord Pleanála have overturned a decision by Wicklow County Council and refused permission for a development of 43 apartments and 28 houses on Church Hill in Newtownmountkennedy.

A third party appeal had been made following Wicklow County Council's decision to grant permission for the development. The planning application was lodged by Knockree Developments Ltd. The development was to include a number of other facilities including a ground floor creche with play area, car and cycling parking and ancillary features.

The appeal was made by a local residents group who had concerns about design issues, amenity and transport, and who argued that it was contrary to development plan policy on such issues.

The appeal site, with a site area given as 1.56 hectares, is part of an elongated area of unused grassland within the older northern part of the town. To the south of the site is a line of derelict buildings associated with a former fever hospital, with open land behind it in the shallow valley of a small stream.

The site is close to two historic buildings, St. Matthews Church and Season Park House, and would have been visible from Fishers, a protected structure. It was submitted in the appeal that there was insufficient information available to assess the overall visual impact of the development on the village and the design and density appeared not to integrate with the existing fabric of the village.

There is a current appeal under the Derelict Site Act relating to a proposed Levy on the site. A recent decision on the lands to the south overturned the proposed Levy for that site.

The site is zoned 'Town Centre' in the Newtownmountkennedy Local Area Plan 2008. The town is considered a 'Level 4' settlement in the County Development Town, with a target increase in population from some 3000 in 2011 to 6000 in 2028. There are a number of protected structures in the vicinity, but none on the site.

The ABP Inspector also recommended that permis-

sion be granted, however the ABP Board did not accept this. In making its decision, ABP stated "the proposed development is dominated by roads and surface car parking and results in a poor design concept for the site, fails to establish a sense of place, would result in a substandard form of development that lacks variety and distinctiveness including the road frontage and removal of the historic wall and includes a poor quality of urban design in the historic core of the town, all of which would be seriously injurious to the residential amenities of future occupants and the amenities of the area. The proposed development would, therefore, be contrary to these Ministerial Guidelines and would be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area."

"In deciding not to accept the Inspector's recommendation to grant permission, the Board considered that the proposed development did not adequately address the key criteria under the 'Urban Design Manual - a Best Practice Guide', was dominated by roads and surface car parking, with a poor design concept that lacks variety and distinctiveness and includes a poor quality of urban design, including along the road frontage, all of which would be seriously injurious to the residential amenities of future occupants and contrary to the provisions of the "Urban Design Manual - a Best Practice Guide", and would, therefore, seriously injure the residential amenities of future occupants, and would be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area."



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Minister Simon Harris with Cathaoirleach of Greystones Municipal District, Cllr Derek Mitchell launching the 'Think Local, Buy Local' campaign. Pic: Alan Rowlette

Hotel bookings highlight challenges facing tourism

The latest industry survey conducted by the Irish Hotels Federation (IHF) shows national occupancy levels of 23% and 26% for the peak summer months of July and August respectively, based on confirmed bookings, compared to an average of 90% for the same period last year.

Last week, Minister Simon Harris met with Wicklow members of the Irish Hotels Federation. "Tourism is a major employer in County Wicklow and the challenges posed by Covid 19 have been overwhelming for the industry," Minister Harris said after the meeting. "I know Wicklow Hoteliers have undertaken considerable planning to reopen their businesses and they deserve our support. I discussed with the Wicklow Hoteliers their proposals in regards of supports for both business and employment.

"The government will be bringing forward extensive measures in the July stimulus to be announced before the end of the month. The views of our local hoteliers will inform some of these sector-specific supports and I will be bringing their concerns to the cabinet and the new Minister for Tourism and they can count on my full support."

Occupancy for September, traditionally a popular time for US visitors, currently stands at 22%. IHF Wicklow branch chair, Gerard O'Brien said that the figures show there is plenty of availability in hotels and guesthouses in every county including Wicklow. However, she added that the substantial drop in occupancy levels highlighted the unprecedented challenges facing the sector and the requirement for immediate interventions to support tourism businesses in Wicklow and across the country.

"When we look across the water to the UK, we see the decisive action taken this week by the UK Government in their Plan for Jobs. The slashing of their VAT rate from 20% to 5% is a clear sign of their commitment to support the recovery of their tourism and hospitality industry. Given how closely our economies are intertwined a similar cut here is necessary. The UK is not only Ireland's biggest market for overseas tourists, it is also our biggest

competitor," said Mr O'Brien.

Mr O'Brien also called for urgent clarity on the guidelines for gatherings in light of the decision this week by the Northern Ireland Executive to allow the capacity for indoor gatherings including weddings to be determined by the size of the venue from 10th July. "Currently capacity here is limited to 100 people regardless of the size of the venue. We are calling on the Government to allow hotels that can safely host larger weddings to do so based on the size and scale of the venues, rather than imposing a general limit on how many people can gather at any venue, regardless of safe capacity," he added.

Almost 90% of hotels in Wicklow and across the country are expected to be open again by the middle of the month. Mr O'Brien said that hotel and guesthouse owners have been heartened by the strong support from people who are donning the green jersey and taking a staycation this year. However, she said that this continues to be a critical time for the tourism industry, and the almost 270,000 livelihoods it supports. It is important to note that 70% of these jobs are outside of Dublin, highlighting its vital role in spreading employment opportunities and prosperity across the entire country.

Here in Wicklow tourism supported 13,900 jobs and generated €135m in local revenues before this crisis.

"Time and again, tourism has proven itself as a hugely successful engine for economic growth, particularly in regional Ireland. In the aftermath of the last recession, tourism created 90,000 new jobs. Last year alone it generated over €9 billion in revenue. We are committed to working closely with the Government and with Minister Catherine Martin to safeguard tourism, Ireland's largest indigenous employer, so that it can

play a key role again and be a significant lever in the country's economic recovery. However, this requires specific sectoral supports now in relation to liquidity and competitiveness."

Five Urgent Measures Immediately Required - Wicklow hoteliers are calling on the Government to implement the following measures as a matter of urgency:

Continuation of the Wage Subsidy Scheme and inclusion of seasonal employees. The scheme should be extended to include seasonal employees as well as take account of employees previously on reduced hours due to seasonality. The scheme should be continued until the impact of Covid-19 restrictions has fully abated.

Gatherings - the size of gatherings should be linked to venue capacity as opposed to an arbitrary cap on numbers. Greater clarity is now urgently required for gatherings beyond July.

A reduction in tourism VAT to 5% until December 2021 followed by a permanent restoration to 9% to assist recovery and secure a viable and sustainable future for tourism. International competitiveness is an urgent issue with Irish hotel VAT now higher than 28 European countries with which we compete.

Liquidity measures tailored to the specific challenges facing tourism to help businesses survive and restart: i) significantly increase grants to assist tourism businesses reopen and survive; ii) 0% interest on Government guaranteed finance; iii) a Government supported scheme for deferral of capital and interest payments for a period of one year. Local Authority rates and charges - the three-month waiver period should be extended for tourism businesses to coincide with business interruption due to Covid-19 and for a minimum of 12 months. After that, payment of local authority rates should be based on reduced levels of activity due to the crisis.

'Think Local, Buy Local' campaign launched

Minister Harris formally launched the 'Think Local, Buy Local' campaign for Greystones Municipal District last week.

Wicklow County Council and Greystones 2020 have launched a campaign to restart the local economy in Greystones Municipal District, recognising the need to support the local economy to restart and thrive as quickly as possible. Working with local businesses, they have developed a marketing campaign for the town and introduced a few measures.

They have: Developed a new dedicated business hub within the greystones.ie website (greystones.ie/business-hub), a one stop shop for resources and support; Set up a 'Business hub' WhatsApp group for the business community to facilitate interaction and support for each other; All businesses in the district (Greystones, Kilcoole, Delgany and Newcastle) to be included on the greystones.ie business and services directory if not already

listed; A public awareness campaign throughout the community will be launched throughout the district with public signage, social media, and local media; Working in partnership with the Greystones Municipal District who are offering free safety signage, free temporary outdoor dining licenses & ongoing 'Think Local Buy Local' marketing support. If you would like your business listed or would like to join the Greystones District Business Hub 'WhatsApp Group', please see greystones.ie. Gráinne McLoughlin, Chairperson of Greystones 2020 said, "The Covid-19 pandemic has disrupted daily business activity for us all, but we know that small businesses may find it particularly difficult to understand how to adapt and remain resilient in such a rapidly changing situation. We in Greystones 2020 are

committed to supporting them in any way we can. Together we are stronger - Ní neart go cur le chéile."

Minister Simon Harris commended the work of Greystones 2020 committee to maximise all the new public and private investment in the town. Minister Harris said: "I am delighted to be able to support the incredible work of the Greystones 2020 committee. This is a fantastic initiative that builds on the strengths of our local town by developing plans for combining public and private investment in the town. The Greystones 2020 team have a number of fantastic initiatives that will add to the vibrancy of our community and I look forward to working with them in the years ahead. I encourage everyone to keep tagging 'greystones' and #thinklocalbuylocal' and encourage local businesses in Delgany, Kilcoole

and Newcastle to join."

Cllr Tom Fortune, Cathaoirleach of Greystones Municipal District, welcomed the collaborative approach of this community-based initiative to help address the challenges facing businesses as they emerge from the Covid-19 pandemic.

Greystones District Manager, Michael Nicholson, encouraged everyone to support local businesses and to adhere to social distancing and hygiene protocols.

The Council has introduced a fast track licence application procedure for the above usage of public space only. All fees will be waived for a period of three months, application forms can be downloaded from Wicklow.ie and submitted online with a site location map attached to plandev@wicklowcoco.ie. Changes to parking and pedestrian facilities are also being introduced to support local business.

Accounting technician apprentice scheme to create 20 Wicklow jobs

Wicklow students have been encouraged to consider a national accounting technician apprenticeship programme available at Bray Institute of Further Education which will create 20 jobs in Wicklow this year and 150 positions nationally.

The accounting technician apprenticeship is a funded, work-based learning programme which sees apprentices earn at least €19,700 a year. Leaving Certificate students and mature learners can apply for the programme through Accounting Technicians Ireland.

One of Ireland's top accounting professionals has given his backing to the accounting technician apprenticeship which allows participants work, earn and learn, saying it offers businesses a chance to reduce the risk of 'group think'.

Grant Thornton Managing Partner Michael McAttee's own accountancy career began with evening classes organised by Accounting Technicians Ireland.

The accounting technician apprenticeship provides a real alternative for Leaving Certificate students who prefer practical training to a full-time college programme, or for students who may have embarked on a college course and found it didn't suit them.

It is also an attractive option for existing employees and mature learners who would like to pursue a career in accounting.

The programme sees accounting technician apprentices work in the office four days a week and study in a local college on the other day during the two-year apprenticeship, which begins in September.



ATT's Michael McAttee.

Successful graduates may then progress on to full accountancy with Chartered Accountants Ireland or one of the other professional accountancy bodies.

"The most important thing to avoid in any business is 'group think'. If all your graduates come through college degree courses, you may find a certain mind set there," said Michael.

"Our students, when they complete the apprenticeship, gain a much in-demand accountancy QQI Level 6 award and two years of solid work experience, placing them in a strong position to progress in business or to further study."



Purple House Cancer Support



Founded in 1990, Purple House Cancer Support (formerly known as Bray Cancer Support Centre), is Ireland's first community-based Cancer Support Centre.

They provide professional Cancer Support & Psycho-Oncology services to people affected by Cancer, supporting families affected by Cancer Nationwide in Ireland. All of their services are provided free of charge. They accept donations where possible to cover the costs of their services. They cater for patients, survivors, carers, families, friends and healthcare workers, and provide services to people of all ages, children and adults. They provide practical help, emotional support, counselling, psychotherapy bereavement counselling, support groups, classes, workshops for children and complimentary therapies. They help over 1,500 families each year in Ireland.

Purple House Cancer Support Centre recently moved premises and is now located at 2 Duncairn Tce, Quinsborough Road, Bray.

"We rely on fundraising & donations to fund our services on a daily basis and we thank all of our supporters for helping us to help so many people in Ireland. We work in partnership with the HSE, the medical profession, the Irish Cancer Society and other relevant agencies. We are independently governed and operated. We are not funded by any national cancer organisations.

"Like many not for profit organisations, Purple House would not be able to survive without the commitment and dedication of our team of staff, volunteers and supporters. We are also heavily indebted to the local communities in Ireland for their continued support.

"The cancer journey can be a difficult and painful experience, but it also can be an enlightening, learning process. If you need help along your journey, please call in and talk to us - we are here to support you."

Purple House has disabled access. Their trained Cancer Support Staff and volunteers are on hand to offer a sympathetic listening ear in total confidentiality.

Purple House support people affected by Cancer Nationwide throughout Ireland through their Telephone Counselling & Psychotherapy Service, Telephone Support Service, Support Groups and Classes through Zoom.

A confidential telephone support service is available Monday to Friday, with a 24-hour answer machine referral service for out of hours service.

Counselling is provided by qualified psychotherapists and professional counsellors. There are personal development classes in areas such as relaxation, art therapy, mindfulness, yoga, Moving Beyond Cancer & more. Call (01) 2866966 for more information or see www.purplehouse.ie.



There are nearly 20,000 people in Co. Wicklow living with a disability and there are over 5,000 carers. There are approximately 4,000 people in Wicklow with a disability related to mental health, nearly 2,000 with an intellectual disability, about 1,500 with blindness or severe vision impairment, 3,000 with deafness or severe hearing impairment, and 5,000 with a learning difficulty.

About a quarter of people with a disability in Co. Wicklow are in employment. This is compared to about 54% of the general population. About a fifth of people with a disability living in Co. Wicklow, meanwhile, have no access to a car or van. This is compared to just eight percent of the general population.

There are over 7,000 people in Wicklow who have difficulty with basic physical activities.

All of this means the topic of disability is becoming closer to our hearts for many of us, as we are increasingly likely to have a friend or family member who has a disability. However, thanks to the many support services in place, living with a disability doesn't have to mean being held back in life. In Co. Wicklow, there are many services and organisations to provide support, care, education and employment, to improve the everyday lives of those with a disability who live, work and socialise in Co. Wicklow.

Wicklow Mental Health Association's Website - A Valuable Resource

Wicklow Mental Health Association promote positive mental health through their website with information on how to live positively and providing up to date advice on the many support services available.

These include minding your mental health during COVID-19; local and national support groups providing information on specific mental health conditions such as schizophrenia or eating disorders; issues that may impact upon your mental health such as addiction, bereavement, financial problems, or sexuality.

There are several help lines relating to issues or at times of crisis situations such as If you or someone you know is at risk of suicide or self-harm.

There are details on how to access HSE services, a list of accredited counsellors and psychotherapists from the Irish-Counselling Service and accredited counsellors and psychotherapists registered with the Irish Association Of Humanistic & Integrative Psychotherapy. Please visit www.wicklowmentalhealth.org for more information

Pauline Moran

Pauline Moran is a Paediatric Occupational Therapist, she has recently moved her successful private practice from Dublin to a state-of-the-art clinic in Kilcoole. She qualified in 1994 from the London School of Occupational Therapy, Brunel University. She began working with children in 1996. Therefore, she has over 23 years experience working with children with a variety of different conditions. Her area of special interest is Sensory Integration (SI). She is an advanced Practitioner in SI with the University of Ulster and Sensory Integration Network UK/Ireland. She is SIPT Certified and is an advanced practitioner in Therapeutic Listening. Pauline loves to see her clients progress and reach their full potential. She educates, liaises, and works closely with parents, teachers, schools and other professionals. She works holistically with the children, referring the children to other professionals when required. She is following all the HSE guidelines to keep everybody safe.



Wicklow Town Dyslexia

The Dyslexia Association of Ireland (DAI) runs special out-of-school classes, called Workshops, for students with dyslexia. Dyslexia is a specific learning difficulty which affects the acquisition of fluent and accurate reading and spelling skills; approx. 10% of the population is affected. Dyslexia can make learning to read, write and spell difficult... but not impossible! Workshops provide appropriate specialist tuition in a small group (5-6) setting. Each session lasts two hours. During the session children will work on different skills to help reading and spelling- for example phonological awareness, word attack skills, and recognising sight words. There are also activities such as drama and board games. The emphasis is on building the confidence and self-esteem of the child with dyslexia. The Wicklow Town workshop runs on a Tuesday from 4.30-6.30 p.m. in Coláiste Chill Mhantáin, and caters for children from 1st-6th class. There are two terms in the year and the cost of tuition is €360 per 12 week term. Reduced rates are available for families on social welfare/low income. All decisions around reopening and managing the workshop will be led by HSE public health advice and guidelines. If you would like more information please contact Jennie at wicklowtown@dyslexia.ie



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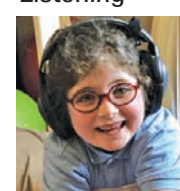


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087 1344126 or pbmoran@me.com



Weekly Covid19 Timetable Daily Support Services:

Nationwide Telephone Counselling - Hospital Transport -
Support Groups on Zoom - Food Hampers - Telephone Support

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Telephone Counselling Available daily Nationwide with our Team of Accredited Counsellors & Psychotherapists	Telephone Counselling Available Nationwide with our Team of Accredited Counsellors & Psychotherapists	Functional Movement Class 11am on Zoom with Rachel from Remedy Pilates & Physiotherapy	Creative Writing 4.30pm - 6pm on Zoom with Author Tanya Farrelly Contact us to join	Telephone Counselling Available Nationwide with our Team of Accredited Counsellors & Psychotherapists
Hospital Transport Volunteer drivers for Chemotherapy & Radiotherapy treatment	Hospital Transport Volunteer drivers for Chemotherapy & Radiotherapy treatment	Hospital Transport Volunteer drivers for Chemotherapy & Radiotherapy treatment	Ukulele Class 6.15pm - 7pm on Zoom with Tanya Farrelly. Contact us to join.	Hospital Transport Volunteer drivers for Chemotherapy & Radiotherapy treatment
Food Hampers Daily Food deliveries to Cancer Patients in isolation	Relaxation Class 11am - 12pm Zoom with our Counsellor Emer	Children's Art Therapy Group 2pm Closed group on Zoom for Children	Support Group 11am - 12pm Zoom with our Counsellor Emer	Call 01-2866966 You Are Not Alone
Chair Singalong 8.30pm - 9.30pm on Zoom. Contact us to join				

Purple House Cancer Support Centre - No. 2 Duncairn Terrace, Quinsboro Road, Bray, Co. Wicklow
Call: 01-2866966 - Email: info@purplehouse.ie - Web: www.purplehouse.ie



A multi-agency meeting was held in Glenmalure to discuss ways to tackle the increasing problem of littering by campers. Attending were representatives from Wicklow County Council, the PURE Project, and local residents from Glenmalure Valley. Pictured is Wicklow County Council Environmental Officer Tommy Nolan handing out a refuse bag to a camper.

New Bible Chapel at Glendalough officially opened

Fourteen years ago, God's Cottage, Glendalough, suffered the loss of the sawmill yard buildings in an arson attack which completely destroyed them. It was a major loss.

However, in place of the main sawmill building, God's Cottage has now built a Bible Chapel as a place of prayer and pilgrimage for all Bible believing Christians right at the heart of Glendalough.

The Bible Chapel at God's Cottage is the only one of its type

in the whole world. The Catholic Church teaches that Jesus is as truly present in the Bible as in the Sacred Host. Yet, while there are many

Blessed Sacrament Chapels, this is the first Bible Chapel within the ambit of the Catholic Church, though this Bible Chapel is ecumenical rather than solely Catholic.

The official opening had been scheduled for Sunday 5th April, but had to be postponed due to Covid-19. It was eventually held on Monday 29th of June. Again, due to Covid-19, the actual ceremony took place at the Mass rock in the adjoining field, with Mass celebrated by Fr. Thady Doyle.

There are perhaps up to 100 chapels or churches worldwide within the wider Protestant community that are called Bible churches, but it usually just implies that the people who worship there are Bible believing Christians, and not that the Church itself is dedicated to the promotion of the Bible in the same way that a Blessed Sacrament Chapel is dedi-



The old ruins of God's Cottage

cated to the promotion of adoration of the Blessed Sacrament.

In this Bible Chapel, the Bible on the altar faces towards the people, inviting a person to read, and the seven "I am" statements of Jesus are framed and on the walls in a way similar to which one normally finds the Stations of the Cross on the walls of Catholic Churches.



The new Bible Chapel in Glendalough

Communities, families and local groups in wicklow invited to explore heritage

Local groups and communities in County Wicklow are being invited to develop projects for National Heritage Week.

The Heritage Council has recently announced plans for a modified National Heritage Week, taking into account ongoing restrictions on events and gatherings due to COVID-19.

Rather than focusing on the organisation of in-person public events, local heritage groups and organisers, families and communities are being invited to develop projects around this year's theme of 'Heritage and Education: Learning from our Heritage' and to register these on www.heritageweek.ie

The new approach is designed to promote the sharing of experience and knowledge and offers the opportunity for groups in

Wicklow to showcase their local research and hands-on heritage projects.

Many groups in Wicklow have experience of carrying out projects such as developing new walking trails, creating a local wildlife habitat, planting for pollinators, researching their local history, or restoring and reusing old buildings and they may wish to use Heritage Week to highlight that story and showcase their efforts on a National stage.

Accepted formats for showcasing may vary from online talks or exhibitions, to a video, podcast, slideshow presentation or blog, to media coverage, a dedicated

website or moderated social media account, or by means of small, restricted social gatherings, which comply with official public health advice.

All those interested in participating are encouraged to register their project now on www.heritageweek.ie. Registered projects will be showcased during National Heritage Week from 15th to 23rd August and will be considered for a Heritage Week Award.

Deirdre Burns, Heritage Officer with Wicklow County Council, stated: "In Wicklow we are very fortunate to already have a community heritage website which is freely available to all to

store and share Heritage Week projects.

"If groups are interested in using our website to publish their project online, they can visit www.wicklowheritage.org, where they will have the option of contributing to the County Wicklow Heritage site or alternatively, depending on their location, they may wish to contribute to one of the other mini sites: Glens of Lead, Donard- Glen of Imaal, Delgany, Glendalough and Medieval Bray."

Any groups or individuals seeking advice or guidance in developing a project for Heritage Week are invited to contact Deirdre directly at dburns@wicklowcoco.ie

Funding sought for Delgany Village Accessibility Scheme

Minister Simon Harris TD has written to the new Minister for Transport seeking funding for the Delgany Village Accessibility Scheme.

Minister Harris said: "The new programme for government commits to extensive development of cycling and walking facilities.

"To date the National Transport Authority (NTA) has only funded the design of the Delgany Village Accessibility Scheme. The new programme for government commits to a substantial increase in funding for cycling in the transport budget. I am looking forward to the implementation of this in County Wicklow.

"The County Council has funding for the design of the Delgany Village accessibility scheme and additional funds from the Department of Transport will be needed to ensure the scheme is developed as rapidly as possible".

Minister Simon Harris has sought an update from Wicklow County Council as to the likely timetable for an initial design of the Delgany Village Accessibility Scheme and when this will go out to public consultation.

Minister Harris said: "The Delgany Community Council was awarded funding from the 2019 Town and Village Renewal scheme fund for a Public Realm

Design plan for Delgany.

"The Delgany Community Council have conducted a wide ranging consultation with the community and local businesses to develop this plan called 'A Vision for Delgany'. Progress on the Delgany Village Accessibility Scheme is an important part of this.

"I encourage as many residents as possible to share 'A Vision for Delgany' with their neighbours and friends online. The Community Council is anxious that they have as wide an input from Delgany residents to ensure they can capture everyone's personal suggestions about how the area can be improved.

"I would like to pay tribute to the hard work and dedication of all the volunteers in Delgany Community Council and they can be assured of my wholehearted support in this exciting project."

Greystones Councillors passed the Delgany Accessibility Scheme at a special meeting in early 2019. Increased traffic flow in Delgany in recent years has made the village less safe for pedestrians.

The councillors by resolution agreed to the proposed scheme subject to incorporating a vehi-

cular entrance to Ivy Cottage, subject to road engineering review and proper planning.

The scheme aims to improve pedestrian accessibility and safety in Delgany at Bellevue Hill junction and traveling east to Killincarrig Roundabout. It follows on from a Road User Audit commissioned by The Council in 2012 which identified a number of road safety and accessibility issues in the village.

According to the report prepared by consultants AECOM Ireland Limited, the improvements include footpath build-outs and reduced corner radii at the mouth of the junction to narrow the carriageway and reduce crossing distances for pedestrians; a raised table across the junction to reduce vehicle speeds and serve as an entry treatment to the village; provision of a disabled person's parking bay on the east side of the junction; provisions of trees and bicycle stands on the new footpath area on the east side of the junction.

The scheme includes road widening to provide appropriate pedestrian facilities from Convent Road around the bend to Priory Gate.

POST LOCKDOWN DEALS



All over Co. Wicklow the shoots of recovery are starting to become visible as the county's economy gets back into gear following months of lockdown. Now more than ever your local businesses and services in the towns and villages around Co. Wicklow, need your help to aid their recovery. Many businesses have had to alter their services to cope with the current situation.



Many of us will have long shopping lists after months of minimal purchasing, but before you rush off to the big city think of your local area first. Places like Newtown and Kilcoole have much to offer and they are well worth spending some time and money in. Some businesses have moved online and are offering delivery or collection, while others have kept their store open but might have changed their opening hours or made other changes.



Arklow is bouncing back

Wicklow County Council, Arklow Town Team and Arklow Chamber of Commerce are fully committed to supporting the local business community in getting back up and running. They ask that you consider local businesses first and support us in reopening the Arklow District.

A wide range of potential solutions are being considered to help support the Arklow District businesses as COVID-19 restrictions begin to ease.

Arklow Chamber of Commerce has already launched a successful community-based initiative, raising positive awareness of the many business sectors in Arklow and the surrounding areas.

The "Back Soon #Love Arklow" video is a compilation of local businesses exhibiting enterprise and community spirit at its very best.

All businesses in the district will receive a pack highlighting the supports available to them through the various Government initiatives. They will also be invited to submit suggestions on any new measures that could be implemented in the short-term to assist in reopening our towns and thereby our shops and businesses.

In this context, to assist local businesses in expediting the required consent for use of public spaces for seating and tables to maintain social distancing requirements, Wicklow County Council has introduced a fast-track licence application procedure. All fees will be waived as a temporary measure for the summer months.

Applications for licences under Section 254 of the Planning Acts can be submitted online. Please contact plandev@wicklowcoco.ie to apply. Please note that liquor licensing laws and local bye laws prohibit the consumption of alcohol on-street and it cannot be served to patrons of licensed premises for consumption outside.

Wicklow County Council can also provide standard temporary ground markings in order to help businesses implement queuing measures to encourage social distancing. Please contact arklowmd@wicklowcoco.ie if you wish to avail of same.

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A multi-agency meeting was held in Glenmalur to discuss ways to tackle the increasing problem of littering in the area by campers. Attending were representatives from Wicklow County Council, the PURE Project, and local residents from Glenmalur Valley

Fundraising campaign seeks to ready Bray Wanderers for return to the pitch

Bray Wanderers FC is trying to raise €30,000 to get the club ready for the recommencement of the 2020 SSE Airtricity season on July 31st.

At the time of going to press approximately €4,000 had been raised. The club states that "we now turn to getting the club and team ready for the return to action on the pitch. The COVID-19 pandemic has been a challenge to us all, including Bray Wanderers FC, and the welcome return of football to the Carlisle Grounds brings with it many challenges which we must tackle.

"2020 has been a real test for the club so far in terms of survival alone. Our players and backroom teams have all made huge sacrifices during this period to ensure the club's survival for which we are extremely grateful.

"Our underage teams across boys and girls teams have also not kicked a ball in over 4 months, and their return to football is still to be confirmed by the FAI.

"Our volunteers, supporters and the local community have also rallied around to ensure that the club continues to function over the past few months and as

ever we are thankful to them all for their continued support.

"Primarily we must ensure that the Carlisle Grounds are safe for the return of football with many new measures to be introduced to comply with COVID-19 related health and safety guidelines to ensure hygiene standards and allow for suitable social distancing as with any workplace.

"This is to ensure the safety of players, management, officials, volunteers and hopefully for the return of supporters (dependent on HSE guidelines). This will involve modifications to various facilities throughout the stadium including dressing rooms, medical room as well as cleaning procedures.

"There will place a significant financial burden on the club and we are asking anyone who can help to assist the club during this challenging time to donate what they can. With this support we hope to see supporters, both home and away fans, back in the Carlisle as soon as possible and enjoying our wonderful League!"

New mental health tenancy support service for Wicklow

HAIL (Housing Association for Integrated Living) has announced a new mental health tenancy sustainment service for the Wicklow Area (CHO Area 6) funded by and in partnership with the HSE and Wicklow County Council.

The new Visiting Support Service will support people with mental health difficulties who are living in Local Authority or private rented accommodation and receiving social housing support, who are at risk of losing their tenancies and entering homelessness.

"People who have an existing mental health difficulty such as schizophrenia, bipolar or depression may need at times some extra support to manage their home and can really benefit from this service," explains Sandra Fox, Head of Services with HAIL. "We will work with clients and their community mental health teams on their

personal recovery goals and encourage them to better manage their home, to be good neighbours and to live independently.

"Support offered could involve helping people to maintain family connections, socialise or source further education or employment. Or it could be help with budgeting, paying their rent and utility bills or managing conflict as a result of stigma. Each case is different."

HAIL is an Approved Housing Body whose mission is to provide quality housing and individually tailored services to support tenants and clients, primarily those with mental health difficulties, to integrate and

live independent lives in the community. The housing body already operates the visiting service in the greater Dublin area. "Visiting support is typically offered for around 6 months," says Sandra. "Clients are visited in their own homes and support is provided on a one-to-one basis."

Commending the collaborative initiative, Frank Curran, Chief Executive, Wicklow County Council commented that "Wicklow County Council has continued to develop relationships with the specialist Approved Housing Bodies operating in the region and this collaboration has been critical in

dealing with the many and complex issues that can arise from tenants suffering from mental health. The Housing Section had the foresight to set up a Mental Health forum in 2018 with representatives from the HSE, Wicklow County Council and HAIL, which has led to the appointment of a Tenancy Support Officer by HAIL, jointly funded by Wicklow County Council and the HSE, for the County."

The service is now operating in Wicklow between 9am and 5pm Monday to Friday. Call 01 671 8444 or visit www.hail.ie for more information.

Cycling set for boom as 60% of workers consider changing commuting habits

Cycling looks set to boom in Wicklow as commuting habits change in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.

New nationally representative research has found that nearly 60% of Leinster workers are open to rethinking how they travel to work, with a combination of improved road infrastructure and concerns over using public transport expected to result in more Irish people than ever turning to a bike for their commute to work.

This nationally representative research, commissioned by One4all and undertaken by Coyne Research, was conducted to gauge public sentiment towards commuting following the COVID-19 pandemic, with the results confirming that changes in commuting habits are being considered by a large portion of the Irish population as a result of the virus.

Following an increase in the popularity of cycling as a leisure activity during the recent lockdown, many workers are looking towards bicycles to help them get fit, go green and save money, with 55% willing to trial cycling to work over the coming weeks and months.

As a result of this increased positive sentiment towards cycling, the research found that half of

Leinster workers (51%) would sign up to a workplace Cycle to Work scheme if it was offered by their employer.

This is a major jump from 2019, when similar research by One4all found that only 14% claimed to already avail of the scheme, with only an additional 13% saying that they would consider signing up.

Under the Government's Cycle to Work scheme, bicycles and safety equipment up to the value of 1,000 can be bought free of any Tax, PRSI or USC, a saving of up to 52%. One4all Bikes4work helps businesses take advantage of this Government initiative for tax-free bikes in the easiest way possible.

Despite many workplaces such as retail shops and construction sites now open, with many more workers expected to return to other workplaces and offices over the coming weeks and months, the vast majority (87%) of people are still concerned about using public transport to commute to work. Concerns with using public transport are highest amongst Gen Z (18-24 year olds) with 91% of respondents saying they would be uncomfortable using busses or

trains due to COVID-19.

The research points towards cycling being a viable alternative for many workers based in Leinster's cities and towns, with the majority of Leinster respondents (74%) agreeing that biking to work would be a good way to maintain social distancing during their commute, with this figure rising to 83% for those working in Dublin.

Given the economic cost of the pandemic on the population, the study affirmed the cost savings of commuting on a bike, with 90% of working adults in Leinster agreeing that doing so would save them money and 82% deeming a bike a worthwhile investment.

In acknowledgement of the increased investment in cycling infrastructure across Ireland in recent years, almost two thirds (65%) agreed that recent upgrades to cycling infrastructure have made travelling by bike safer. As a consequence of this, half of respondents (51%) feel that their car could be substituted by a bike in most scenarios. For more information about Bikes4work please see below or visit: bikes4work.ie/

Imagine never escaping the lockdown

A Wicklow worker from Irish Wheelchair Association is asking people to get behind the organisation's #NotMyIndependenceDay petition, which urges the new Government to ensure independence for people with disabilities.

Irish Wheelchair Association launched #NotMyIndependenceDay this week, a campaign to urge the new Minister for Children, Disability, Equality and Integration to ensure that people with disabilities can live the life they choose, with independence.

Michelle Kent Byrne, Irish Wheelchair Association worker in Wicklow said: "As Covid-19 restrictions ease, many people are looking forward to getting 'back to normal', visiting friends, getting haircuts, going to pubs and gyms. But not everyone will be enjoying their full freedom.

"Lockdown restrictions give just a small flavour of what life is like every day for people with disabilities. Lack of wheelchair accessible transport, lack of home support hours, discrimination in the job market and inaccessible buildings and public amenities, are just some of the challenges that restrict people with disabilities from living an independent life.

"Irish Wheelchair Association has launched its #NotMyIndependenceDay campaign to petition Roderic O'Gorman, new Minister for Children, Disability, Equality and Integration and the new Government to commit to ensuring that policy decisions in housing, health, social welfare, education, environment - across every department - take disability into account in a meaningful way.

"We are also calling on the new Government to ensure that disability organisations are properly funded for the vital services they carry out on behalf of the State after years of underfunding by successive governments," said Michelle. People with disabilities have waited too long for their day of independence. We hope that this new Government will finally listen to us and recognise the rights of people with disabilities from Wicklow and beyond to full participation in Irish society. We want no half measures, no crumbs from the table. We want real investment in providing people with disabilities the right to live the life they choose, with full inclusion into society."

The organisation is asking people from Wicklow to support the campaign, by signing its #NotMyIndependenceDay petition on iwa.ie/petition.

Low number of Wicklow businesses availing of Restart Grants

Jennifer Whitmore TD is encouraging local businesses in Wicklow to avail of the Government's Restart Grant scheme set up in response to COVID-19. The call comes after figures released to her by the Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation revealed that when compared to other counties, the take up of the grant in Wicklow was lower than expected.

Speaking on the figures, Deputy Whitmore said "I was surprised to see that only 500 businesses in Wicklow have applied and been granted the Restart Grant scheme as of 6 July. This amounts to a total of €1,931,284. Compare this to Wexford which saw 994 businesses granted a total of nearly €2m, it paints an interesting picture.

"Given the fact that over half of the jobs available in Wicklow are provided by SMEs and small, local businesses, you would expect a larger take up of the Restart Grant Scheme. As a tourist destination facilitating seasonal businesses, Wicklow is also home to local towns and villages servicing large population areas. Small

businesses are not only important service providers, they are important local employers. It's vital that they are supported throughout the State's response to the pandemic.

"The Minister did indicate to me that a further €17,844,688 of grant funding has been approved as of 6th July and will be paid shortly. I would hope that this means many more applications from businesses in Wicklow are due to be granted. In the meantime, it's important that information on supports is reaching the SME sector in its entirety so that no business falls behind because they were not aware of the supports available to them.

"I've spoken to a lot



Jennifer Whitmore TD

of local businesses throughout Wicklow since being elected. I've spoken to some business owners who have experienced shut down or are close to closing their shop doors for good, as a result of the lockdown. Now that we enter the summer months, we need to help businesses rebound as much as possible. Many businesses

have found themselves scrambling to find a new way to continue doing business. They have been incredibly creative in finding ways to survive the current level of uncertainty, but they need further assistance to keep up with the changing environment.

"I would urge any businesses who need assistance, to contact their Local Enterprise Office (LEO) as well as checking out the various grants available online. I will endeavour to raise the concerns and issues facing the SME sector with the Minister in my work in the Dáil and help our local employers to continue playing an important part in our towns and villages across Wicklow" concluded Whitmore.

7,235 jobs at risk in local drinks sector

"Even if Wicklow's 151 pubs regain half their normal capacity by the end of 2020, which is an optimistic scenario, as many as 3,500 jobs could be permanently lost, not to mention countless more in supporting trades like catering, security, and entertainment," according to a report authored by DCU Economist Anthony Foley published last week.

The report, commissioned by the Licensed Vintners Association (LVA), the Vintners Federation of Ireland (VFI) and Ibec representative group Drinks Ireland, as part of the 'Protect our Pubs' campaign, states that on-trade pub alcohol sales will decline by 50% or more for the second half of 2020 and this is the most optimistic market expectation.

As of last week, over 60% of pubs remained closed - small businesses in our towns and villages. For the pubs that have, or intend to reopen over the coming weeks, Government guidelines will mean a significant change in how they operate with reduced capacity and time-limits on customer visits.

A recent LVA/VFI report outlined the stark impact on capacity of operating under social distancing guidelines. When applied in any 100m² area in an on-licensed premises, standing capacity will diminish to 12.5%, while seating capacity is reduced to 34% of pre-crisis levels - 66% of capacity is wiped out.

The report states that over 50,000 people are employed in the

drinks industry in Ireland. It finds that of the 19,205 businesses in the hospitality sector (pubs, hotels, restaurants), 96.5% of these employ less than 50 persons meaning the sector is dominated by small businesses - businesses that are extremely exposed and at risk of shedding half their employment capacity should supports not be made available.

The LVA, VFI and Drinks Ireland is calling for a temporary reduction in the hospitality VAT rate; and extending it to apply to alcohol sales in the on-trade (pubs and bars), until 31 December 2020 as part of the July stimulus package promised by Government. The measure is being sought to support pubs - Wicklow businesses - who will struggle in the short term until they can resume operating and viably trade at increasing levels of capacity in 2021 and beyond.

According to detailed analysis contained in the report, the cost of reducing the likely second half 2020 on-licence alcohol sales to 9% VAT from 23% VAT is €143 million. An amended European

Commission directive makes it possible to extend and apply a lower VAT rate on on-trade alcohol in Ireland - a fact unknown to many who believe it may be disallowed under EU VAT Directives.

The 'Reduce VAT on On-Trade Alcohol' report was published as part of the 'Protect our Pubs' campaign by LVA, VFI and Drinks Ireland which seeks to highlight the important social and cultural role that the drinks and hospitality industry play in our communities and to demonstrate the loss that would be felt should some pubs not reopen due to Covid-19.

An amended European directive gives the new Government power to apply and extend a lower hospitality VAT rate to on-trade alcohol sales (pubs, restaurants, hotel bars), according to Drinks Ireland. The group is calling for a temporary reduction in the hospitality VAT rate; and extending it to apply to alcohol sales in the on-trade (pubs, restaurants, hotel bars), until 31 December 2020 as part of the July stimulus package currently being negotiated by Government.



Award-winning solicitors Rachael Liston and Clare Flavin have set up their own specialist medical and professional negligence practice in Zoe House in Greystones. The new practice will focus on securing justice for clients and making the health service more accountable, say the partners. The two women previously worked together at Orpen Franks in Dublin, where they headed up a medical negligence department and were winners of Medical Negligence Law Firm of the Year at the Irish Law Awards in 2019.

The Best in Show

Award-winning dog groomer Kelly Murphy's dream was realised last month when she opened up her own grooming shop in her hometown of Bray.

The luxury boutique-style dog groomers, catering for all types of dogs, is located on the Vevay Road and opened on June 8th. For the last few years Kelly has been working towards this goal.

Since completing a two-year course in BIFE, Kelly has competed in numerous competitions all over the country, placing in each discipline, and has done extensive training with some of Ireland's top groomers.

Kelly calls this a great learning experience, and she has clearly taken on board the lessons. Applying what she learnt, Kelly eventually was awarded the Novice Groomer of the Year Award by the Irish Professional Dog Groomers Association.

Kelly took her education to the next level when she travelled to the Pets Icon International Grooming Academy in Kuala Lumpur last January for 10 days' training at the well-known and highly regarded academy. Kelly was one of six groomers

from Ireland to attend the intensive course, and told *Wicklow Times* that she was able to learn invaluable lessons and techniques to do with textures and show grooming. "I have done all this so I can give my clients the highest standard of service," says Kelly.



Flanagan Kerins Furniture to be supported by €1 million support fund

Bray-based Flanagan Kerins Furniture is to benefit from Virgin Media's €1 Million support fund as part of their #BackingBusiness initiative which includes free on-air advertising including creative, production, profiles across its full schedule covering Virgin Media Channels One, Two and Three.

Flanagan Kerins Furniture immediately moved their business online once lockdown came into effect in March and began offering contactless doorstep delivery for online orders. Since the recent reopening of their physical store, they are now offering private showings to anyone in vulnerable groups as well as in store collection.

Peter Flanagan, Co-Owner of Flanagan Kerins Furniture said: "Flanagan Kerins are delighted to have been selected to take

part in Virgin Media's Backing Business campaign. It demonstrates a recognition of the value of small businesses in the community and a creative commitment to helping them to recover and grow beyond these current turbulent waters. We hope to attract new customers and reinforce the relationships of our current loyal followers."

Flanagan Kerins will feature on Virgin Media's weekly 60" ad break campaign and will also be promoted across Virgin

Media's official social media channels.

The Virgin Media #BackingBusiness initiative is designed to underpin the renewal and recovery of businesses in communities throughout Ireland in response to the ongoing COVID-19 crisis. It's open now to businesses across the country and aims to give them a national platform to showcase their resilience and ingenuity during these challenging times. It will feature as many Irish businesses as possible, and

entering is really easy.

All business owners have to do is to send in a short email, outlining who and where they are, some of their main products or services and how they have coped and reinvented themselves through the current crisis. The ideal way to do this is to take a short video by mobile phone (including shots of the business premises). You can simply email submissions to backingbusiness@virginmedia.ie or WhatsApp them to 089 611 1111.



Liffey Portraits: From Source to Sea by Tony Gunning

Bray artist, Tony Gunning, presents 'Liffey Portraits: From Source to Sea', an exhibition of paintings that celebrate a river that has been in his blood since birth. The exhibition will run in the Signal Arts Centre from 28th September to 11th October.

The Liffey travels through three counties, Wicklow, Kildare and Dublin on its eighty-mile journey to the sea. Tony currently lives in County Wicklow but has also lived in Kildare and Dublin in close proximity to the river and worked in an office overlooking it for twenty-five years.

The locations portrayed reflect the artists personal connection with the river but will have resonances with anyone who has ever come in contact with it.

Tony has been a professional artist for twenty years with fourteen solo shows to his credit. He has also exhibited at the Royal Academy of Arts in London, the Royal Hibernian Academy in Dublin and the Royal Ulster Academy in Belfast amongst others. He won the curators award at EV+A in 2007 and won the Bank of Ireland Emerging Artist Award in the same year. His work is in many public and private collections including the Waterford Municipal Collection and the Bank of Ireland Collection.

July at Mermaid...

June has skipped by and July brings exciting times ahead for MermaidArts Centre.

"After an extraordinary few months we are delighted to be back in the building. We are busy working behind the scenes to make Mermaid a safe and welcoming place for you to return to once we reopen on Monday 20th July."

The Betelnut Cafe re-opened on Monday 29th June with limited socially distant seating in place.

Connect Bray Neighbourhood Youth Project with Colm Keegan and young people from Little Bray Project

Mermaid Arts Centre in partnership with Wicklow County Council Arts Office and Creative Ireland present: Connect Bray Neighbourhood Youth Project with Artist Colm Keegan and young people from Little Bray Project.

Artist Colm Keegan (Writer/Playwright/Poet) ran a series of workshops with young people from Little Bray Youth Project at the start of 2020. Colm and the young people have written and created their own spoken word poetry for this special online performance. Participants: Emily Murray Nelson, Jade Locke, Clare Kinsella & Kieva Keating. With thanks to supporting Youth Workers Yvonne Murray (Youth Project Co-Ordinator) Thomas Murphy and Hazel Adamson Kane.

Anna Newell Theatre Adventures presents: BigKidLittleKid

Anna Newell and her team brought BigKidLittleKid to Mermaid in October 2019, and performed to over 100 children and their adults with 4 performances over 3 days. Mermaid is now delighted to be able to digitally share this wonderful piece of children's theatre with audience members.

BigKidLittleKid is a quirky, playful, energetic and engaging look at being on your own and being with someone else; and how size can really matter. Are you a big kid or a little kid? Or both? Performed by Nicky Harley and Mary-Lou McCarthy.

Created by Anna Newell with music by David Goodall, with whom Anna has created shows for early years audiences that have been seen on 5 continents and off-Broadway, BigKidLittleKid promises to delight and enchant its audiences with its unique take on the complicated world of sibling rivalry.

2019 full production funded by the Arts Council/An Chomhairle Ealaíon in partnership with The Civic, Tallaght; the Mermaid, Bray and Draiocht, Blanchardstown. (Initial R&D funding by the Pavilion, Dun Laoghaire & Mermaid, Bray).

Anna Newell is a Bray-based theatremaker whose work for early years has been seen on 5 continents including off Broadway. She invented the world's first BabyDay, helped start babytheatre in South Africa, was the first theatremaker to create home-grown Irish work for children with complex needs and was a recipient of one of the inaugural Tonic Theatre Awards for 'women who are changing the face of theatre and the performing arts'.

Contact the Box Office on: 01 2724030

Into the Matrix: an exhibition by Liminal

Signal Arts Centre is to open a unique exhibition by Liminal, a Wicklow-based group of artists; Fabienne Herbert, Nessa McCormack, Anne Walsh and Christine Theobald.

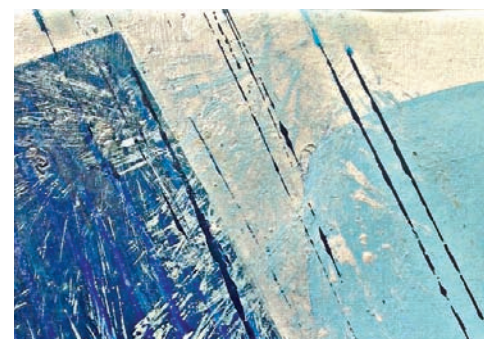
'Into the Matrix', which the artists each embraced and interpreted in their own individual styles and media speaks to them collectively of pattern, movement, texture, structure, connection, intrigue, and the intuitive.

The body of work in this exhibition ranges from felted art pieces by Anne "that bear witness to mysterious under-worlds, where the slow but powerful action of water and minerals creates natural art works" to acrylic paintings by Nessa "as an interpretation of observed micro elements in nature expressed through vibrant

colour, abstract marks and simplified compositions".

Fabienne explains her printmaking, natural dyeing and thread work as "an exploration of the relationship between repetition, pattern and space, both in natural and man-made worlds, and how it impacts our behaviour." Christine pushes the technique of wet felting into abstraction, in which she "seeks to make visible a perception of colour, contrast and geometric elements observed from nature."

Liminal's four artists met through their shared love of fibre arts.



Committed to deepening their art practice, they came together to find strength in working collaboratively and innovatively. Sharing an understanding of what it means to seek a sense of place in what has become their

adopted county Liminal represents their experiences of occupying 'spaces in between'.

'Into the Matrix' exhibition runs from August 31st - September 13th in Signal Arts Centre, Bray.

Grab your camera & get snapping as Clean Coasts' Love Your Coast photography competition opens!

Clean Coasts' 11th annual Love your Coast photography competition is now open for entries, capture the uniqueness of our coastal communities, environments or waterways and enter your best shots by 9am, 17th August.

With some of the most spectacular coastlines in the world, make sure you bring your camera as you explore the Irish coast this summer and capture its beauty. There is a prize fund of €5,000, up for grabs across five categories, Coastal Heritage, Coastal Landscape, People & the Coast, Wildlife & the Coast and Underwater. Every year this competition draws a large amount of interest from Ireland's amateur photographers, coastal enthusiasts and the conservation minded. There is a diverse range of categories ensuring there is something for everyone.

The Love Your Coast competition aims to celebrate Ireland's diverse waters by capturing its stunning coastline, beautiful beaches, epic cliff faces and raging rivers.

Working with communities on the ground, Clean Coasts' mission is to help foster pride in our coastline, supporting Clean Coasts communities, groups and volunteers to tackle issues affecting their local area. This competition provides an opportunity to view the coast and our waterways that Clean Coasts programme works to protect from a completely different perspective and see

the beauty captured therein.

Last year, Clean Coasts celebrated the 10th year of the competition and received over 1,000 entries where the 50 best shots were shortlisted for the final exhibition that was held on 23rd October 2019, in Printworks, Morrison Hotel, Dublin. Martina Gardiner, with her 'Malin Head Storm', was the overall winner for 2019 with Pat Carey and his image 'The Bull Wall', Clontarf Co., Dublin taking home the title of Photograph of the Decade.

Visit Clean Coasts to find out more about the competition and how to enter.



Malin Head Storm, by Martina Gardiner, Winner of 2019 Love Your Coast competition

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Martin Darcy serving up some homemade organic burgers at the recently re-opened Glenmalur Lodge.

Shop local in Wicklow Town

A new campaign to encourage people to 'Shop Local - Support Wicklow' has been launched to boost business in the town.

Behind the campaign is a re-opening committee consisting of members of Wicklow Town & District Chamber of Commerce, Wicklow Town Team and Wicklow Municipal District.

The group will identify and implement initiatives under a promotional campaign entitled 'Shop Local - Support Wicklow', which will help local businesses as they start to re-open throughout the District.

It is essential to the local economy that the town's Main Street and local businesses survive and prosper, and people are being asked to continue to give their much-valued support as we return to something approaching normality.

A list of local businesses is available on the Wicklow Town Website www.wicklowtown.ie and the Wicklow Town and District Chamber website

www.wicklowchamber.ie.

The Shop Local - Support Wicklow campaign is being funded by Wicklow Municipal District and provides for temporary public signage, a leaflet drop to 5,000 households, Shop Local stickers, temporary ground markings, banners and a short promotional video.

Local businesses are currently creating a safe environment for both customers and employees and as we emerge from this crisis consumers are being asked to support Wicklow and to invest in their town, shop local first, shop online locally and use Wicklow Town Vouchers as gifts.

As part of the consultation process Wicklow Town and District Chamber is asking businesses to submit suggestions, tips, supports and links that will assist kick-start the local economy. Please send suggestions to

info@wicklowchamber.ie

Wicklow Municipal District is available to provide temporary ground markings to facilitate queuing outside premises in order to encourage social distancing. If required please e-mail wicklowmd@wicklowco.ie.

In addition, to help local businesses expedite the required consent for use of public spaces for seating and tables, and social distancing measures, the Council has introduced a fast-track licence application procedure. All fees will be waived for a period of three months, application forms can be downloaded from Wicklow.ie and submitted online with a site location map attached to plan-dev@wicklowcoco.ie.

Cllr John Snell, Cathaoirleach of Wicklow Municipal District, said he was delighted to be asso-

ciated with this united approach to support the businesses in the District and appealed to the community to Shop Local - Support Wicklow.

Dave Shannon, Chairman Wicklow Town Team, said "It is important now more than ever to shop local, support our businesses and continue to enjoy all that Wicklow has to offer".

Rosie Cooney, President Wicklow Town & District Chamber of Commerce, added: "I wish to thank you for shopping locally during the last 12 weeks in particular. Thank you for supporting our local shops, pharmacies, supermarkets, financial services and all of the service businesses that remained open during the most restricted period of the recent lockdown and I now appeal to you again for your continued support in these challenging times".

New RTÉ series 'Open for Business'

As Ireland re-opens for business RTÉ has announced a new six-part business series to help Irish businesses and consumers on their journey as they try to navigate their way in this new and constantly shifting Covid-19 world.

Open for Business is a brand-new studio-based series for RTÉ One and will be broadcast from Tuesday, 21st of July at 7pm. Presented by journalists & broadcasters Richard Curran & Ella McSweeney, the series will be packed with a mix of fresh, useful information and advice to guide businesses, employers and employees - as well as consumers - trying to operate in this new normal. It is part of RTÉ's BoostMyBusiness, which will see content across RTÉ helping Irish businesses bounce back. RTÉ will be supporting and promoting small and medium enterprises, around the country, as they deal with the challenges and the opportunities that lie ahead. It will highlight how powerful community support can be to local life, and to the greater economy.

Businesses have never had to deal with a crisis like Covid-19 before. It has been described by the business community as a mini economic Ice Age, with 85% of businesses closing or scaling back at the height of lockdown. Right now, representative associations have expressed concern that up to 9000 small and local businesses could close their doors due to Covid-19 impacts. For consumers meanwhile, it's a whole new world - all the things we take for granted from our shopping, travel, social, leisure experience has been turned upside down. Open for Business will share the stories of businesses at the coalface - their difficulties, frustrations, innovation and adaptability, through case studies & interviews from around the country, studio guests and international segments.

Each week, it will provide clear, up-to-date and trusted information on the range of Government and other supports available - and the truth about how easy or difficult these are to access. Speaking at the announcement of the show, presenter Richard Curran said: "Businesses up and down the country have been shaken to their core by this pandemic. It is vital that we all learn about what is happening in the world of business, whether it is the company you work for, or firms whose goods and services you rely upon. With this show, we will bring stories of how businesses are responding; analysis of what is going on and pointers to what lies ahead."

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Audi's Electric E-Tron Suv shows the way

The Audi E-Tron was first unveiled to The Wicklow Times at the Dun Laoghaire College of Art & Design, in the Autumn of last year. Little did we know then what was coming down the tracks and that it would be months before we could get the E-Tron out on Wicklow roads.



The launch venue was chosen because the vehicle is a major design exercise for Audi - an adaptation of the Q5 but with a totally different drivetrain with separate electric motors driving the front and back wheels.

The DLIAD is now established as a top-notch design school and the E-Tron is in the same vein, with a particularly stylish, innovative and striking interior. Big screens

make navigation through Menu simple and straightforward while a normal push button radio control knob bows to common sense.

My test route was from Audi South Dublin in Sandford, down the N11 as far as Newcastle. Parking up, there is then a delightful 10km walk down to the coast, then crossing the train tracks and walking south alongside the beach. This

By Martin McCarthy

charming route passes two railway stops dating for the 1860s. Another country road takes you inland again to complete the loop back to Newcastle.

The E-Tron 55 is priced at €99,810 before grants and other incentives, but comes with a very high performance, 95 kWh LG battery pack made in Poland. This has a range of up to 350 km and lightening acceleration to get to 100km/h in 5.7 seconds. There is a lower powered E-Tron 50 priced at €76,990 which still gives a 330km range with 308bhp, using the Samsung battery pack. All E-Trons are four-wheel drive, Quattro.

Living with an electric

car is easy - if you use it mainly for medium range drives which allow recharging at home every night. As the Etron is an SUV and tall, there is still plenty of boot space even with the larger battery pack of the 55. The boot space is flat and adaptable while the folding back seats makes it very flexible in a variety of configurations. As the batteries are stored low, they do not intrude and allow for a tow bar, if needed. The E-Tron is selling very well across Europe, most notably in Norway, where it is 25% of all EV sales, so far this year. Electric motoring is not for everyone - but Audi's Brussels built entrant will attract a portion of those who have fallen out of love with the internal combustion engine.



Steffen Petersen and Eugene O'Brien of Aughrim GAA club at training in the local community field as the club prepares to return to competitive football.

Powerscourt Hotel Resort & Spa named on prestigious 'top 10' list

Powerscourt Hotel Resort & Spa has been named on the prestigious 'top 10' list of resort hotels in the UK and Ireland, in the annual reader survey of the hugely popular US travel magazine, Travel + Leisure.

In all, an incredible eight luxury Irish hotels made it onto the 'top 10' list - with Ashford Castle, Ballyfin Demesne, Sheen Falls Lodge, the K Club, Ballynahinch Castle Hotel, Dromoland Castle and Adare Manor also featuring.

Every year, Travel + Leisure asks its almost 5 million readers to weigh in on their favourite hotels, cities,

travel providers and more, in its annual World's Best Awards. The magazine has unveiled the results of its 2020 survey, including its list of the top resort hotels in the UK and Ireland. To view the results, click here.

Welcoming the news, Niall Gibbons, CEO of Tourism Ireland, said: "I am delighted to see eight of our fantastic resort hotels appear in the prestigious Travel + Leisure readers' survey. I would like to congratulate all eight properties - it is truly another well-deserved accolade. Our industry has been one of the hardest hit by COVID-19, so this accolade is extremely welcome, as we look to the future and plan for the recovery of overseas tourism."

PLANNING • PLANNING • PLANNING

WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL

Alphaplan Design (Tel: 086 2461269, Email: eugene@alphaplandesign.com) Seeks planning permission for a dwelling, waste water treatment system to EPA standards, new entrance and associated works at Aghowle Upper, Ashford, Co. Wicklow for N. Lumsden. The planning application may be inspected, or purchased at a fee not exceeding the reasonable cost of making a copy, at the offices of the planning authority during its public opening hours and a submission or observation in relation to the application may be made to the authority in writing on payment of the prescribed fee within the period of 5 weeks beginning on the date of receipt by the authority of the application.

WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL

Planning permission is sought for construction of new bungalow dwelling on site at Birch Grove, Kilfin, Laragh, Co Wicklow, Eircode A98C1P3, for Rob and Talita Dagg. The application includes the provision of a gateway, driveway, soakaways, well, and domestic biofiltration sewage treatment unit. The planning application may be inspected or purchased at a fee not exceeding the reasonable cost of making a copy at the offices of Wicklow County Council, County Buildings, Wicklow, during its public opening hours, and a submission or observation in relation to the application may be made to the authority in writing on payment of the prescribed fee within the period of 5 weeks beginning on the date of receipt by the authority of the application.

WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL

Fiona & Caoimhe Minogue seeks permission for demolition of existing 28.5m² extension to rear of existing 67/9m² house and construction of new 56.5m² ground floor extension to rear and 70.2m² first floor extension over raised ridge height and dormer roof profile to rear of existing house at 29 Avondale Park, Bray, Co. Wicklow. The planning application may be inspected or purchased at a fee not exceeding the reasonable cost of making a copy at the offices of Wicklow County Council, County 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.

Gospel: Matthew 19:16-22

There was a man who came to Jesus and asked, 'Master, what good deed must I do to possess eternal life?' Jesus said to him 'Why do you ask me about what is good? There is one alone who is good. But if you wish to enter into life keep the commandments. He said 'Which?' 'These' Jesus replied 'you must not kill. You must not commit adultery. You must not bring false witness. Honour your father and mother and you must love your neighbour as yourself'. The young man said to him 'I have kept all these. What more do I need to do?' Jesus said, 'if you wish to be perfect, go and sell what you own and give the money to the poor and you will have treasure in heaven, then come, follow me'. But when the young man heard these words, he went away sad, for he was a man of great wealth. C.J.

Mary Lou to join Wicklow Sinn Féin representatives for online public meeting

Sinn Féin President and leader of the opposition Mary Lou McDonald will join Wicklow Sinn Féin public representatives John Brady TD and Councillors Dermot O'Brien and Grace McManus for an online public meeting on Thursday 16th July at 7pm.

Speaking ahead of the online public meeting Wicklow Sinn Féin TD John Brady said "The ongoing public health emergency has meant that public gatherings continue to be restricted, so we've had to be innovative in how we engage with the public. I'm delighted that Mary Lou will join us for our online meeting that will be streamed live on my Facebook page. The meeting will be an opportunity to discuss the many issues that arose in the recent election and the formation of the new government. It will be a live Q&A so it's a great opportunity for people to have their questions answered by the Sinn Féin leadership, it also gives us an opportunity to discuss what's next for Wicklow."

Cllr Grace McManus said "This public meeting is a great opportunity to hear the perspectives of one of the most fierce, warm and formidable women in politics, and it will be a privilege to represent our constituents' views to Mary Lou on the night."

Cllr Dermot O'Brien concluded "It's fantastic to see the leader of our party and indeed the leader of the opposition making time for the people Co. Wicklow and in particular to talk about the key issues for them right now and as they think about the future."

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