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Tuesday 24th November 2020 First Floor, The Boulevard, Quinsborough Road, Bray. A98 R6D7. Tel: 01 - 2869111 E-mail: wicklowed@localtimes.ie www.wicklowtimes.net

COVID OUTBREAK IN LOCAL HOSPITAL

22 PATIENTS SUFFERING WITH COVID-19 WITH MANY OTHERS SELF-ISOLATING

St Columcille's Hospital, Loughlinstown, which is the 'first stop' hospital for County Wicklow is battling a significant outbreak of coronavirus with 22 patients so far having tested positive for the virus and a number of staff also self-isolating awaiting test results.

"There are currently 22 patients with Covid-19 which stemmed from an outbreak within the hospital," a spokeswoman said.

"A patient who was asymptomatic on a ward in the hospital developed symptoms and was subsequently tested for Covid-19," she said.

"The surveillance process was immediately implemented by the infection control and microbiology teams and all patients and staff

deemed as close contacts were subsequently tested."

It is understood some staff in the hospital had expressed concerns over the initial management of the outbreak, and the potential transmission between different wards.

"A number of staff who have had close contact with the patients have been swabbed for Covid and are currently self-isolating as outlined by the Covid-19 safety and contact tracing

protocols.

"The Hospital Covid Outbreak Committee, which is led and informed by our consultant microbiologist, the hospitals infection prevention and control team, hospital consultants, HSE occupational health and HSE public health department have met on a daily basis since the outbreak and progress has been made to stabilise the situation," the spokeswoman said.



Pictured is the Holyhead Santa who appeared to the children of Greystones via a video link at the online ceremony to switch on the Greystones Christmas lights on Saturday 21st November.



Look For Local and support businesses in your area

Thousands of Irish businesses have transformed how they provide goods and services due to Covid-19. Many are now open for business over the phone or online and are providing collection and delivery services — making it easier and safer for you to support them.

In the run up to Christmas, it's more important than ever to buy locally — and by doing so you'll be supporting local jobs and communities.

So, let's all #LookForLocal

The hospital's injury unit, medical assessment unit, and outpatient services remain open and have not been affected by the outbreak, the spokeswoman said.

"Visiting to hospitals is not permitted, except for compassionate grounds, and they are also asking people not to attend a hospital or any health care facility if they have any symptoms suggestive of Covid-19 infection.

The statement concluded by saying "The hospital would like to acknowledge the work and support of all staff at this time."

Local TD John Brady who himself and family are recovering from Covid said the situation in St Columcille's is "very worrying."

"As a person who experienced this virus and saw how it affected

my family and how it put my father-in law in intensive care I know how dangerous it is.

"Hospitals are supposed to be operating on very strict criteria and utilising all protective PPE gear. How was the virus allowed into the hospital in the first place and then to spread so rapidly and rampantly through the hospital? St Columcille's provides step down beds for other hospitals and as such has many elderly vulnerable patients, many of them from County Wicklow. It also has many Bray staff, medical, administrative and cleaning working there. This outbreak is bound to have knock on consequences for County Wicklow. Let's just hope and pray that there are no deaths arising from this."

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Yazmin and Jemima Forde from Greystones have started an initiative which they've called 'Sending Love', where they have created lots of colourful artwork and positive messages to brighten up the dayroom of their grandmother's nursing home. They're hoping that the initiative will catch on and that others will do the same.



Christmas Cards on sale - RNLI Newtown & Greystones Fundraising Branch

Christmas cards from the Newtown & Greystones RNLI Fundraising Branch are now on sale from Nature's Gold in Greystones and the Village Stores in Killinacraig.

If these shops aren't within your 5km or you'd prefer to simply donate online, there is also a just giving page at www.justgiving.com/fundraising/greystones-newtownmountkennedylifesaversfund. Also La Touche Wines, Greystones are holding a Christmas raffle, in aid of the Wicklow Lifeboat and Greystones Cancer Support. Tickets are €10 each, with lots of wine related prizes.

Arklow Cancer Support Ecumenical Service

This year Arklow Cancer Support are hosting their Annual Ecumenical service at Sts Mary's & Peter's Church on December 2nd at 8pm. Due to the covid restrictions it is limited to those who are participating in the event. This is a very special night for the cancer patients and families. You are all welcome to join in from the comfort of your own home on the parish webcam (www.arklowparish.ie/webcam/).

Laragh Christmas Tree Lights

The main outdoor event to switch on the Laragh Christmas lights can not go ahead due to public health advice and the safety of the community. This year the community has not been able to hold any fundraising events so they are asking for any sup-

port to help them keep improving their lights. There is a go fund page if anybody is in a position to donate for lighting improvements. Follow the [gofundme.com](https://www.gofundme.com) link on their Facebook page to donate at www.facebook.com/laragh.christmaslights.

"We are very lucky to have had amazing support from all our local businesses since we started putting up our lights however this year we will not be asking for support from them in what has been a very challenging time for all businesses. Instead we ask you all to shop local in these coming months."

Santa is Coming!

Given the state of affairs and the possibility that all Santa events and outings may not go ahead with the restrictions this year, Danny Devitt has decided to put on a Santa suit (gloves and mask under beard so covid friendly) and deliver a small gift to each child in the Glendalough, Laragh and Annamoe village. Should you like to have a socially distant door visit from him we ask that you wrap a small gift for your child, clearly label the name of your child and put your house number or eircode on it. Collection of gifts will be organised closer to the time. The Santa visit will take place roughly between 5pm and 7pm on several days in December (the dates to be confirmed depending on numbers.) If you're interested could you please contact Danny Devitt via facebook, or email dannydevittmunster78@gmail.com or jenn.ck@gmail.com.

As this is free of charge there will be a bucket collection for Ronald McDonald house and Crumlin children's hospital to spread some joy to the families and their sick children so all donations appreciated.

Delgany Thursday Club Christmas lunch cancelled

Delgany Thursday Club's Christmas Lunch which was scheduled to take place on Thursday 3rd December, has been cancelled. "We regret that due to Covid restrictions it will not be possible to hold our Christmas Lunch this year," the club stated. "We hope everyone stays safe and well."

Classics by Candlelight

Classics by Candlelight with the Harte family will take place on Monday 30th November at 7pm. This concert will be in aid of Purple House Cancer Support. The concert can be viewed online at churchservices.tv/christchurchbray. Donations can be made to Purple House at bit.ly/ccbclassics

Calling all dashers, dancers and prancers - Aware's Christmas 5K to raise vital funds for mental health

The 15th annual Aware Christmas 5K was launched last week, urging people all over Ireland to come together 'virtually' and take on a 5K challenge in support of mental health. Aware has seen a dramatic increase in demand for its services since March, highlighting the impact of Covid-19 on the nation's wellbeing.

The Aware Christmas 5K will raise vital funds to ensure the organisation can continue to deliver its free support, education and information services nationwide.

Taking place from Friday 11th - Sunday 13th December, participants can walk, run or jog the 5K distance close to home. Corporate organisations are also encouraged to get involved, with the event providing a fun way to bring the team together this Christmas, while supporting an important cause. Online registration is available now at www.awarechristmas5K.com at a cost of €25 per person. Each participant will receive a custom medal that doubles as a Christmas tree decoration and treat from sponsor Cadbury. Stephen Butterly,

Head of Fundraising at Aware commented: "We are delighted to extend the Aware Christmas 5K nationwide this year and hope to see participants from communities and organisations all over the country get involved. Covid-19 has affected all aspects of our lives. At Aware, we continue to see significant demand for our support services, to include a 60% increase in calls to our Support Line. People with pre-existing mental health conditions like depression may be more vulnerable but we are also seeing many people developing mental health difficulties for the first time. Our fundraising income has been affected this year and so we need the public's support

to ensure we can be there for everyone who needs us. We are asking as many people as possible to join us in the Aware Christmas 5K in support of mental health. Every single euro counts and every single participant will make a difference."

Aware services include Support & Self Care Groups nationwide and a Support Line and Support Mail service, both of which operate 365 days a year. Aware also delivers a range of wellbeing programmes designed to empower adults and senior cycle students with the knowledge and skills to build resilience and protect their mental health. For more information visit www.aware.ie.



Devin Toner and his family (wife Mary and son Max age 3) in their garden helping launch the Aware Christmas 5K

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250 NEW JOBS FOR ARKLOW

Green energy developer SSE Renewables and Irish-owned data centre owner and operator, Echelon Data Centres have announced an agreement to develop a joint 220kV substation at the Avoca River Business Park, Arklow. The new infrastructure will facilitate the development of Ireland's first large-scale offshore wind farm, off the coast of Co. Wicklow with an export capacity of 520MW, and Echelon's 100MW Arklow data centre.

The joint initiative marks the first time in Ireland that an offshore wind farm and a data centre have agreed to develop grid infrastructure. The substation development is expected to require an investment of around €50m to deliver. Upon completion, the proposed offshore wind farm and data centre will both directly connect to the Irish national grid via the new shared substation.

The landmark deal is an innovative step forward for the renewable energy and data centre sectors. Sharing grid infrastructure and locating data centres closer to renewable sources of generation such as offshore wind delivers on a key decarbonisation goal set out in Ireland's Climate Action Plan to facilitate regionally-located data centres and minimise grid reinforcements. It also helps deliver a Climate Action Plan target of installing 1GW of offshore wind by 2025.

The development agreement will support the delivery of 250 new jobs for Arklow. This includes the creation of up to 80 new jobs during the construction of the substation. Upon completion of both the technology and renewable energy projects, the data centre will support 90 full-time operational roles while a further 80 full-time jobs will be created locally to support the day-to-day operation of the offshore wind farm.

Fianna Fail Senator Pat Casey said: "This deal is another landmark for Arklow, for Irish wind power generation and for the Irish economy as a whole. Our immediate and pressing challenge is to meet the renewable energy goals set out in the Irish Climate Action Plan 2019, and this partnership between Echelon Data Centres and SSE Renewables showcases the future. It's a future in which data centre facilities provide a constant demand for renewable power such as offshore wind and work with renewable energy providers to facilitate the development of the necessary infrastructure. The joint Echelon/SSE Renewables initiative also represents a big step forward on the journey to sustainably powered data centres."

"I have been assisting Echelon in the development of the Arklow data centre since the very beginning and I am delighted to see their enthusiasm, entrepreneurship and energy pay dividends. This initiative makes Arklow's position in the County Development plan all the more important and I will continue to work with my colleagues in the Council to secure this step change in the economic development of Wicklow."

Minister Stephen Donnelly said: "I recently met with SSE to discuss their exciting plans for Arklow. Creating sustainable green energy jobs in Wicklow is exactly what we need to be promoting. There are a few hurdles to get over before this project becomes a reality but it is a really positive sign for the future. The work both these companies are doing will bring a massive boost to the town of Arklow and the really great thing about them is they will be here to stay."

An Taoiseach Micheál Martin TD said, "This announcement is a welcome boost for Arklow; it not only

provides new job opportunities, it also places Arklow at the heart of the green tech sector. This collaboration between renewable energy and tech will ensure that key decarbonisation targets contained in the Climate Action Plan are met and is a model which could be rolled out in other communities across the country.

"I would like to pay tribute to SSE Renewables and Echelon - having identified an opportunity to share infrastructure to promote sustainability, they worked collaboratively to ensure their vision became a reality."

Barry Kilcline, Director of Developments at SSE Renewables said: "This is a major innovation for the integration of renewables and data centres into Ireland's national grid. Through this landmark agreement with Echelon Data Centres we will develop new shared grid infrastructure at Arklow that will facilitate the development of the next phase of the 520MW Arklow Bank Wind Park, which we're on track to deliver to help meet the Government's 2025 target of 1GW of offshore wind, and to enable the connection of Echelon's planned data centre for South Wicklow."

"The announcement is also great news for County Wicklow as it supports 250 new jobs for Arklow, including 80 new roles during the construction of the substation and 170 full-time, locally-based operational jobs on completion of both the wind farm and data centre developments."

Niall Molloy, CEO of Echelon Data Centres said "We're delighted to be working with SSE Renewables on such a significant initiative - one which enables Ireland's first large-scale offshore windfarm, contributing greatly to the country's targets of delivering 1GW of offshore renewable energy by 2025 and 5GW by 2030, and facilitating the creation of 250 jobs locally."

"It is also a model for the future, where data centre facilities are located close to the source of renewable energy, providing a constant demand for the power and working with renewable energy providers to facilitate the development of the necessary infrastructure. The initiative represents meaningful progress on the road to cleanly and sustainably powered data centres."

The 220kV substation would be developed and constructed on behalf of both developers by SSE Renewables. The development of the substation for joint use will be subject to SSE Renewables securing planning permission via a future planning application.

SSE Renewables is actively developing Phase 2 of Arklow Bank Wind Park which will be located in a lease area situated six to 13km off Co. Wicklow coastline, to the east of Arklow. The offshore wind farm has the potential to reduce Ireland's annual carbon emissions by around 1%.

The foreshore lease covers an area approximately 27km long and 2.5km wide. The proposed Arklow Bank Wind Park Phase 2 comprises up to 76 offshore wind turbines and when completed will generate enough renewable energy to power almost 450,000 homes annually and offset over half a million tonnes of carbon emissions each year.



Members of Arklow Emergency Services marking the World Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims.



Child & Family Support Network Meitheal



From time to time families with children need some additional support. If you don't know where to look for this support you can contact your local Child & Family Support Network Coordinator. We can help you find the services you need or set up a Meitheal meeting for your family.

Please contact:

Snr Coordinator Natalie Cox Ph: 0870918882

North Wicklow Coordinator Sinead Roarke Ph: 0861445761

South Wicklow Coordinator Sinead Roche Ph: 0877644220

TÚSLA

An Ghníomhaireacht um
Leanaí agus an Teaghlach
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Katie Kirwin and her mum Olivia, who is living with MS, at the launch of the MS Readathon which is going virtual this year. Launched by Roald Dahl 33 years ago, MS Ireland's READaTHON is at risk due to COVID-19 and its effects on fundraising activities in 2020, but the charity are hoping with their new interactive website, www.msreadathon.ie. Families and schools around the country can still sign up and save Ireland's oldest fundraising event during this difficult year. With MS Ireland expecting a decrease of fundraised income of over €1 million this year, the charity and the thousands of people they support around the country are depending on their flagship event more than ever to continue to provide the same level of service next year. While the MS READaTHON is set to be different to previous years, the concept hasn't changed. Students read whatever they like, as much as they can for 4 weeks from Nov 1st - 30th Nov.

90% of adults were interested in the result and 77% hoped Joe Biden would win

The 2020 US Presidential Election, one of the most contentious in history, had 90% of Irish adults interested in the result and 77% hoped Joe Biden would win.

iReach has surveyed adults in Ireland on their interest in the US election and their predictions on the winner and future President. The nationwide survey ran between 5th of November and 12th of November and received over 1,000 responses from adults on a nationally representative basis by Age, Gender and Region.

The majority (66%) thought that the winner of the election would have an impact on Ireland. 77% had hoped that Joe Biden would win the election and only 10% were hoping Donald Trump would win. 17% of adults aged 18-24 were hoping Donald Trump would win the election and 14% of males hoped Trump would win. 90% of all adults were interested in the outcome of the 2020 US Presidential Election.

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'Dismantling Trump's anti-politics legacy is Biden's bidding'

As an Irish-American, as a woman, a mother and a Social Democrat, I am thrilled that Biden won the US elections and that the first woman and person of colour is set to take the vice-president seat. I think we can all take a collective sigh of relief that we won't have to face a four-year long slog of relentless negative and anti-political sentiment coming from Trump. Although I'm under no illusion he'll be going away any time soon. Still, it's nice to see him lose!

By Cllr Jodie Neary

We can't be fooled into think it's all over. The hard work has only just begun and it'll take all of Biden's time and presidential might to dismantle Trump's legacy of white nationalism, racial inequality and anti-political sentiment. I'm worried that it will take all of the next four years just to bring America back to the status-quo which is itself ambitious, but which is still so far behind.

And what about the defunct public healthcare system Trump managed to ravage in an obsessive attempt to undo what Obama did? Or the spiralling racial inequality and increase in white nationalism which have secured fresh breeding ground under Trump? Biden politics will need a grassroots swell of movement to dismantle systemic racism in the country and to tear down platforms that have fostered racism and hatred. And for Biden, building a post-COVID economy will be his main focus and one which I hope addresses rising income inequality in the country, something which always stood out to me as a kid growing up in California.

Trump was (and still is until January) an

insidious infection in politics not just nationally but on a global scale. He single-handedly regressed our collective fight against climate change, possibly by a decade. I'm hoping Biden can undo this setback, but it'll take a doubling of effort to get where we need to be on this most pressing issue.

Biden will have to re-establish crucial ties severed by Trump and rebuild international cooperation not just on climate change issues but human rights and rising global inequality. No doubt Ireland will benefit from Biden's Irish roots, but it's vital that we use this opportunity to dismantle messages of racism, hatred and intolerance that are thriving in our own country, and which have been reinforced by Trump's racist rhetoric.

I wish the Biden administration all the best in tackling such a toxic legacy, but we need to do everything we can here in Ireland too so that we can collectively move on from this dark time in history - never to repeat it again.

Jodie Neary is the SocDems Councillor representing Greystones, Delgany, Kilcoole and Newcastle.



Cllr Jodie Neary

'President Trump was the better option'

Having been actively involved in politics since secondary school and university in Boston and then here in Greystones, I followed the US Election 2020 very closely. Those of us in Ireland today will forever remember this year's election, with two very different candidates and two very different party agendas in a closely contested race.

By Kathleen Kelleher

This year, as in 2016, I felt that President Donald Trump was the better option. Why consider President Trump the better option in 2020? Let's look at his record. In four years, President Trump enacted the largest tax cuts and reforms in American history, set and broke record highs on the US stock exchange, withdrew from international partnerships which were killing US jobs, negotiated a new trade arrangement with Canada and Mexico, pushed back at Communist China, reached low unemployment rates for African-American, Hispanic and Asian-Americans, expanded school choice for Hispanic students, permanently funded Historically Black Colleges.

He improved healthcare, enacted criminal justice reform, installed pragmatic immigration policies and stopped caravans of illegal immigrants, and fought drug abuse with new measures. President Trump's work ethic was unsurpassed and he worked tirelessly for all American citizens. He did this while sustaining overwhelmingly negative mainstream media coverage, which began even before he took office. He never received any credit for his many positive initiatives. This negative distortion affected how people perceived Donald Trump.

Former Vice President Joe Biden, on the other hand had almost 50 years as a public representative to solve US problems and

eight of those years as Vice President. Why so many problems now if he was so good at his job then?

During the 2020 election campaign, former Vice President Joe Biden stayed mostly in his basement and very often refused to answer questions about his future policies.

This year's US election vote has not yet been certified. Sufficiently serious queries have been raised to warrant further investigation into ballot validation and ballot counting. Irrespective of party or candidate, it is essential that Americans have confidence in their election process.

If certified as President, Joe Biden will most likely not be able to serve his full term. Kamala Harris, who is much further left-leaning, will then succeed him. She will not pull the Democratic Party to the centre. The Democratic Party of today is not the much-loved Democratic Party of the Kennedys during my youth in Boston. It is now a very far left party.

The strength of the United States is its Constitution and adherence to its provisions. It is in all our interests that the Constitution and the rule of law are followed to ensure that the United States remains a well-respected liberal democracy both at home and abroad.

Kathleen Kelleher is a former Fianna Fail councillor for Greystones Town Council and Wicklow County Council



Kathleen Kelleher



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Wicklow RNLI Operations Manager retires

Des Davitt, Operations Manager at Wicklow lifeboat Station since 2004, has retired after 27 years volunteering with the RNLI.

Des joined the RNLI Wicklow committee in 1993, becoming vice chairman in 1995 and taking charge of all fundraising for the branch with support from the Ladies Guild.

Des was chairman of the appeal committee who raised funds for the provision of a new inshore lifeboat and an extension to the boathouse to house the new lifeboat in 1996.

The appeal was so successful that the target figure was reached with 6 months still to run. In all £64,000 was raised by Des and the Committee, which covered the cost of the D Class lifeboat Inbhear Deas and the extension to the boat house.

In 2001, he was awarded the bronze badge for his services to fundraising. Three years later, he took over the new position of lifeboat operations

manager - formerly honorary secretary - from the retiring Kevin Desmond. Fundraising then became separate from Operations.

In 2016 Des was awarded inscribed binoculars in recognition of his long service to the RNLI. As lifeboat operations manager, Des was responsible for all operational activities at the station and over the years has seen the arrival of a 'state of the art' Shannon Class lifeboat and the retirement of the last Tyne class boat in the RNLI Fleet. Over the last year Des has ensured Wicklow Lifeboat Station remained operational at all times during the Covid-19 restrictions.

Wicklow RNLI Press Officer, Tommy Dover said: "We would like to thank Des for his commitment to Wicklow Lifeboat Station over the past 27 years and we wish him all the best on his retirement. Unfortunately, due to the present Covid-19 restrictions we were unable to give Des a proper send off, but the crew hope to meet up for a farewell pint with him in the not too distant post Covid future."

Greystones District is 'the goose plucked by the rest of County Wicklow'

Greystones Municipal District is not getting fair share of funding from the County Council given that it pays the highest Local Property Tax in Co. Wicklow, according to Cathaoirleach of Greystones Municipal District Cllr Derek Mitchell (FG).

Cllr Mitchell said "Greystones District, including Kilcoole and Newcastle, gets €172 per person a year to run the area whereas Bray, a similar urban area, gets €242 and thus has three times the staff. West Wicklow gets €331 each and Arklow and Wicklow Districts about €280. That's why services are poor in Greystones. The money spent in the area was always small and has not increased in line with the population.

"The growth also increases the spend with roads being dug up frequently. When I complain about this, Councillor Patsy

Glennon (FF) from West Wicklow says 'Greystones streets are paved with gold!' Other local Councillors in Greystones supported the demand for more money but we have not got it changed.

"This is doubly annoying as the Local Property Tax paid in Greystones is the highest in Wicklow as the house prices are nearly double those in some other areas.

"Council officials sent a list of projects to justify an increase in LPT (which was rejected). Analysing this showed hardly any capital money was spent here either. Greystones and



Cllr Derek Mitchell

Wicklow Districts (including Newtown) are building much more houses than other areas. Development levies are paid for each new house and are supposed to fund infrastructure, mostly roads and paths, to sup-

port this growth. However the West, with no new houses, is allocated 10 times more levies than Greystones! Wicklow with the same growth is allocated 30 times more capital expenditure.

"Large amounts are being spent on the Clermont education facility in Rathnew, which should be paid by the Department of Education as it's not a core service for councils. Also huge amounts of money are to be spent upgrading Wicklow, Arklow and Bray harbours. Greystones needs a fairer share of the money to cope with all the growth."

Council gets €8.6m in commercial rates rebate

Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage Darragh O'Brien TD and Minister of State with responsibility for Planning and Local Government Peter Burke TD have written to the Chief Executive of Wicklow County Council to reiterate the Government's support for local government.

The Ministers sent the joint letter as the second tranche of commercial rates rebates were issued to local authorities across the country. Wicklow County Council has so far received €8,641,208 with further payments to issue.

As part of the July Stimulus programme a €600m commercial rates waiver was announced for businesses impacted by COVID-19. This covered 100% of commercial rates from the end of March to the end of September. As part of Budget 2021 a further €300m commercial rates waiver was announced to cover rates to the end of the year.

Commenting Minister O'Brien said, "The €900m commercial rates waiver will mean that the local government sector won't be at a loss or having to make 'either' 'or' decisions when it comes to providing vital services for people.

"We are very aware that commercial rates are the backbone of local authority income which means that services such as playgrounds, sports facilities and library services can keep operating. We want to ensure that local authorities continue their important work and Government have not been and will not be found wanting in respect to support for the sector.

"We will continue to work with our colleague Michael McGrath TD, Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform, to support local authorities meet costs and income losses that have arisen as a direct consequence of the pandemic. I would like to take this opportunity to commend all our local authorities for the exceptional leadership they have shown through their response to the Covid-19 pandemic. Minister Peter Burke added, "The COVID-19 pandemic has

impacted on every facet of life and the response of local government to date has been phenomenal. Whether through the Community Call Fora or adapting their library services so people could continue to enjoy them, local authorities have adapted swiftly and innovatively to the situation.

"As local authorities begin to engage in their 2021 budgetary process they do so in the knowledge that Government has supported them with a commitment of just under one billion euro in commercial rates rebates. As Minister with special responsibility for local government I will continue to advocate for and work on behalf of local authorities across the country to ensure they can continue to provide key services at the heart of our communities," he concluded.

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Foreshore licence granted for Arklow wastewater treatment plant

A foreshore licence has been granted for the development of the Arklow Wastewater Treatment Plant, it was announced last week. The decision was made by the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage, Darragh O'Brien TD.

The new wastewater treatment plant will result in significant improvements to water quality in Arklow by ending the discharge of raw sewage directly into the Avoca River, safeguarding the environment and facilitating social and economic development.

Plans are at an advanced stage and the necessary planning permissions, lands and licences have been secured. The procurement of the construction contract is concluding and, subject to Ministerial consent, construction work is expected to begin in the second half of 2021.

The project will provide wastewater treatment through the development of a new, state of the art wastewater treatment plant at the Old Wallboard Factory, North Quay, Ferrybank in Arklow. The project will also include the construction of two interceptor sewers (along the North and South Quay) to bring untreated wastewater to the new treatment plant, and a marine outfall

pipe to safely discharge the treated effluent into the Irish Sea.

Michael Tinsley, Portfolio Delivery Manager with Irish Water, said "We welcome the decision by the Minister to grant the licence and allow us to progress with the development of the Arklow Wastewater Treatment Plant project. Eliminating the discharge of untreated wastewater into the River Avoca continues to be a key priority for Irish Water and this project is critical in ending this current practice and safeguarding the wastewater system in Arklow for the future."

"The new wastewater treatment plant will have significant benefits for both residents and businesses as well as tourists that visit the area as it will improve the water quality in the River Avoca and enable future economic growth. We will continue to working closely with the local community and will issue further updates as we progress with this vital project".

Social Democrats TD Jennifer Whitmore has welcomed Minister for Housing's granting of a foreshore licence for the development of the Arklow Wastewater Treatment Plant.

Deputy Whitmore said "this is very welcome news after having campaigned for this development for some time and is something that will hugely benefit homes and businesses in Arklow. This development will include a state of the art, wastewater treatment plant at the Old Wallboard Factory and the construction of two interceptor sewers (along the North and South Quay) to bring untreated wastewater to the new treatment plant, and a marine outfall pipe to safely discharge the treated effluent into the Irish Sea.

"The latest news is confirmation of movement in the right direction and towards significant improvements in water quality in Arklow. Raw sewage seeping into the Avoca River has caused significant environmental

damage and legacy issues for the area that need urgent addressing.

"I'm delighted that plans are at an advanced stage and the necessary planning permissions, lands and licences have been secured. I'm also delighted to hear that the procurement of the construction contract is concluding and, subject to Ministerial consent, construction work is expected to begin in the second half of 2021.

"For a long time I have been calling for these works to be carried out with minimal delays and am glad to see development forthcoming. Residents in the area have been waiting decades for a solution to this ongoing problem of water pollution and the project has been met with setbacks due to COVID. With so much uncertainty in recent years about this project, I'm glad that this news will bring some further clarity to residents in Arklow and that we can continue to monitor its development at each stage" concluded Deputy Whitmore.



Arklow's new wastewater treatment plant will result in significant improvements to water quality in Arklow by ending the discharge of raw sewage directly into the Avoca River

Taylor takes action over Bray Boxing Club eviction

Boxing coach Peter Taylor has taken proceedings against Wicklow County Council to prevent it evicting him from the premises used by Bray Boxing Club. This follows the Council's posting of an eviction notice outside the premises at Bray Harbour earlier this month.

Taylor is seeking a High Court injunction as he claims that the Council, which owns the premises, is trying to wrongfully remove him and the boxing club, of which he is a director, from the facility at Bray Harbour.

The Boxing Club's equipment remains inside the premises, however earlier this month the Council posted an eviction notice outside, giving Taylor and the Club ten days to vacate.

Wicklow County Council allegedly changed the locks on the premises after the shooting incident in June 2018 when three people, including Peter Taylor himself, were shot and one person, Mr Bobby Messet, died.

Since then the facility has not been used by Bray Boxing Club, though it has been Taylor's intention to return to the property and operate the club as before.

Taylor maintains that the locks were changed without prior warning. It is understood that members of Bray Boxing Club have had to make alternative training arrangements since they have been unable to access the building at Bray Harbour. Taylor is suing the Council and these proceedings will come before the High Court soon.

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Rialtas na hÉireann
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Chris Tierney from Rathwood, Coolkenno, and his wife Lorraine Carpenter from Old Leighlin Carlow, at their wedding recently at the Woodside, Dolmen Hotel, in Carlow.

'Playgrounds across Greystones District to get a suite of repairs'

Social Democrats Councillor for the Greystones Municipal District Jodie Neary has welcomed works to be carried out by the Council on three playgrounds in the district. Some works have already commenced with more due in the coming weeks.

Cllr Neary, who set up various Parent Clean Up Groups at playgrounds in Kilcoole and Greystones says "I'm delighted that children and parents in the district are to benefit from much needed repairs of these very popular amenities. Ongoing maintenance means we can continue to enjoy them for years to come".

Speaking on the news, Cllr Neary says, "the Parent Clean Up Groups have been a great way to interact with the Council and it has enabled me to work directly with them on issues around broken equipment, resurfacing needs and any anti-social behaviour going on that is impacting on the amenities. I want to commend the ongoing work the Council have been doing to maintain these much-loved playgrounds especially in light of recent anti-social behaviour. After engaging with the Council on a number of occasions, I'm delighted to announce that the following repairs will take place in the coming weeks:

South Beach Playground, Greystones

"I recently did a walkaround with the Council to go over the specific needs of Greystones South Beach including replacing the two diggers in the sandpit



Cllr Jodie Neary at the Little Tern Playground in Kilcoole

which are too heavy to use. On my suggestion and that of parents in the Clean Up Group, the Council are going to put in new fencing around the sandpit to prevent the movement of sand across the playground. This frequently gets into equipment or onto the path making it harder for children in wheelchairs to get by. We reiterated the importance of maintaining full wheelchair accessibility when the new fencing goes up and I'm confident this will be done. The carousel, bridge and zipliners will be repaired as well while I am having ongoing discussions about removing sand debris from the surface and the potential for resurfacing in key areas."

Little Tern Park Playground, Kilcoole

"The Council have informed me that works are due to replace the swings at the playground which have been removed for quite some time. Additional seating will also be put in place and the carousel will be fixed which keeps sticking. All other sections of the playground that have been vandalised will be repaired. Since setting up a Parent Clean Up Group for the Little Tern Playground, I have been able to feedback concerns to the Council about ongoing anti-social behaviour and the lack of bins in the area as a result. I look forward to continuing to work with parents as part of the Clean Up group and in other capacities so that our local amenities can be preserved for years to come."

Charlesland Playground

"Works are ongoing at this small local playground. The existing swings are at the end of their lifecycle however, and while they will be put back up on a temporary basis, a more long-term solution is being looked into. Resurfacing has been carried out in patches where it was worn down by use and which will hopefully last a number of more years.

"The issue with a lot of the equipment in these playgrounds is that they are specialised or have been sourced by different companies making it difficult to source parts. They're also extremely popular playgrounds and get their fair share of usage out of them. The Council have confirmed to me that contact has been re-established with the main supplier and ongoing maintenance of equipment will be carried out in future.

"Again, I welcome the latest repairs and would encourage parents to join the Parent Clean Up Groups at various playgrounds to make sure that our much-loved amenities continue to be cared for and any concerns communicated," concluded Cllr Neary.

'Wicklow hotels key to safer Christmas reopening'

Local hoteliers are calling on the Government to allow people to travel outside their county and to permit indoor dining in hotels, including for non-residents, as part of its reduced restrictions for reopening society safely this December.

Mr Gerard O'Brien, Chair of the Irish Hotels Federation (IHF) Wicklow branch says these measures will ensure hotels in Wicklow and across the country can reopen in a safe and sustainable manner, while helping to provide safe, controlled environments for people during the festive season this year. "It is clear that Christmas will be very different this year. Nonetheless there is still an expectation that people will be able to travel to family outside their county, and hotels can be an important part of the infrastructure in facilitating this safely. We are urging the Government to recognise the important role hotels can play as part of the solution for a safer Christmas.

"Public health is our number one priority. Hotels provide very safe, highly-controlled, spacious environments with extensive measures in place to minimise the risk from Covid-19. The sector's proven track record is borne out by statistics from the HPSC, which show that hotels have been associated with very few clusters (0.14%) since March."

Mr O'Brien added: "Furthermore, by allowing indoor dining, including for non-residents, the Government can provide a safer option this year. The controlled environment of hotels can help to minimise the number and extent of social gatherings in home settings, thereby significantly reducing the risk this Christmas."

The IHF is also asking for at least seven days' notice of the revised restrictions for December so hotels can plan effectively.

"There are five key weeks of trading available to hotels when they reopen at the start of December so it is vital that hotels can operate as fully as possible while obviously staying within the restrictions. This trading period can act as a life buoy in terms of sustaining the early few months of the year. With two weeks of preparatory time remaining, and the necessity for reasonable lead-in times after such a long closure period, realistic advance notice is crucial."

"Before entering Level-5 restrictions, hotel revenues were already

down by over 80% nationally. As a result of the current restrictions, revenues have collapsed even further and there is a real sense within the sector that hotels are being disproportionately affected despite our commitment and proven track record in safeguarding public health," he said.

Since March, hotels and guesthouses, along with the wider tourism industry, have been decimated by the impact of Covid-19 Government restrictions. Prior to the pandemic, tourism and hospitality supported the livelihoods of some 270,000 people nationally, including 13,900 jobs in Wicklow where it generated 135 million in revenues annually for the local economy.

Mr O'Brien concluded: "Hotels here in Wicklow and in every county have shown that they can operate safely during this pandemic. All we are asking is for the opportunity to do so again and in a manner that will help make Christmas memorable for our guests, our teams and their families after such a difficult year for everyone."

'Disasterous policy lead to 3,000 businesses shutting permanently'

Aontú Leader TD Peadar Toibín stated that, Minister for Enterprise and formerly Taoiseach Leo Varadkar told him that up to August "3,236 businesses have gone bust in the State largely due to Covid. But some of the Brexit changes are probably having an effect on those businesses".

The local representative for Aontu in Wicklow, Ciaran Hogan, spoke out against the government policy that has "decimated the business environment across the country". He said "We have lost so many businesses, and a disproportionate number of those are small family businesses, and local retailers. People are losing their livelihoods and traditions that have lasted generations. When we emerge from lockdown we'll see the devastation proper and realise what we've lost."

Ciaran argues against the continued strategy of national lockdown: "This strategy will never work, and cause so much strife and hardship for everyone. Communities have been ripped apart and loneliness is part of everyone's day now. There won't be local amenities and suppliers after lockdown, local business will be gone, only the large multi-

nationals will survive.

"We need to seriously ramp up our track and trace system, employ many more contact tracers, and have systems in place to immediately tackle clusters as they pop up. We need to test every single person coming into the country and have the isolated until a confirmed result shows they are not carrying the virus back into the country. Allowing the rest of the country to get back to some bit of normalcy and economic life.

Peadar Toibin said the figure of 3236 was even an underestimation, and we won't know the true scale of the loss, as most businesses going under this year will only be known during the tax year 2021. "We still have another challenge ahead of us as Brexit takes affect on January 1st even more businesses might not be able to handle the challenges.



Ciaran Hogan

"Wicklow has been one of the lowest reporting counties for positive virus numbers consistently, and yet we're being disproportionately hit by the same restrictions as Dublin, Donegal, and Limerick which were hubs for outbreaks. Most of the more rural counties have done well to keep numbers down. With the right strategy they could be completely cleared and allowed to return to normal.

Ciaran continued "I was completely shocked when I learned that there has never been an impact study commissioned on the effects of lockdown, not on business nor social life.

"The Government has no idea how any of this affects day to day life of the Irish people. This point is made further clear when Peadar Toibin proposed a bill that would reduce wages for ministers and TDs by 25% while level 4 or 5 lockdown is in effect. Naturally this wasn't a popular bill by self-serving representatives who are completely disconnected from the situation experienced by everyone in less secure jobs.

"The currently lockdown is disproportionate and unfair on the Wicklow community and people must start speaking up against it. We want reasonable and effective solutions, and total national lockdown is not that."

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Kilcoole's Darraghville House is put on the market

Period property Darraghville House in Kilcoole went on the market over the weekend, with an asking price of €675,000. The three-floor period property dating back to the 1780s, sits on a one-acre site.

"Darraghville House" is a large detached country house built by John Darragh, a former Lord Mayor of Dublin. This unique and exceptional period property comprises a detached seven-bedroom house extending to circa 345sqm/3,714 sqft over three levels. The agent for the sale is Fenelon Properties.

The property has most recently served a religious

residence of the Holy Faith Sisters and has been maintained in fine condition. The property still contains a lot of its original period features including original sash windows, decorative plasterwork, high ceilings and period fireplaces. The property boasts a rear garden and a separate formal walled in garden. Both are well preserved and contain manicured lawns, flower beds

and mature fruit trees. There is a generous enclosed yard to the northern side of the property that contains a range of outbuildings.

Darraghville House/The Convent is a protected structure and is listed in the Record of Protected Structures for Wicklow County Council. The record reads 'Late 18th Century country House with five bay, two storey

façade over a basement with painted, rendered walls, Venetian Window overround-headed door-case with sidelights, parapet hiding a hipped roof'.

Accommodation briefly comprises of impressive hallway laid with sandstone tiles, complimented by panelled pilasters, a Chapel to the left of the hallway, drawing room with high ceilings and original stone fire place, a sitting room and two offices at ground floor level. Descending through the property toilet and shower accommodation is provided via a later addition to the original structure however, still period in nature. The basement level boasts a large country style kitchen, a large dining room with original pantry, stores and coal bunkers. Upstairs, there is a reception room, sitting room currently used as a meditation room, seven bedrooms and a family bathroom. Many original fireplaces as well as ornate ceiling cornicing can be found on this floor.



Darraghville House, Kilcoole

Dog park committee 'deeply concerned' at state of park

The Campaign for Greystones Dog Park Committee is deeply concerned at the current state of Greystones Dog Park. Chairperson Bernadette Stokes said: "We greatly appreciate having a large site, now we need to ensure that it is right."

The Committee acknowledges that drainage work is to be completed, which they say is desperately needed. The Campaign for Greystones Dog Park has written to the developers to express specific concerns. The current layout is likely

to cause injuries, the committee says. Bernadette stated: "The field needs to be flat, and clear of small rocks to prevent expensive and painful injuries. The last thing we want to see are claims for negligence, and then the park is forced to shut. The

gradient concerns were highlighted repeatedly during the development stage."

The Campaign for Greystones Dog Park believes that the dog parks in Dun Laoghaire Rathdown Council are a perfect template - essentially a large enclosed field with flat regular grass. To do this double gates will need to be added to ensure that regular grass can be cut.

Furthermore, it was always believed by the committee that there would be a separate small dog section that would be a third of the site. The current small dog section is "microscopic", the committee says. They also believe that the signage is incomplete. Currently there is no mention of banned breeds or children being allowed in the park.

"Decisive changes are now needed to ensure a safe and fit for purpose facility," Bernadette Stokes added.

"We want to work with the developers. We have a golden opportunity to ensure that this facility is an amazing place for many years to come."



'We are failing to meet a commitment under the water framework directive'

An EPA report on water quality which highlights raw sewage outflows in 35 locations across Ireland was raised in the Dáil last week with the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage by Green Party TD Steven Matthews.

The report notes that both Arklow and Avoca are areas which continue to release untreated waste water raw sewage into the environment as of the end of 2019.

Deputy Matthews asked the Minister of State for Heritage and Electoral Reform Malcolm Noonan to outline the level of investment required to allow Irish Water to get these 35 towns to meet tertiary treatment or adequate treatment standards and the estimated timeframe to construct or upgrade at these locations.

Speaking in the Dáil last week, Deputy Matthews described it as "a long-running an extremely worrying situation that we see every year when the EPA produces its report. We see similar annual reports on water quality from the EPA and we are all aware of the degradation of aquatic ecosystems, the loss of biodiversity and the overall decrease in water quality scores. We are failing to meet a commitment under the water framework directive to achieve good status for our water bodies."

"The main impacts on our water system are from diffuse agricultural run-off and point source waste water treatment plants. It is well researched and well reported. There are also issues with combined sewer overflows in the urban networks and unauthorised tapings into urban surface water drainage networks. Forestry practice in many locations is contributing to acidification of water. The presence of excessive organic matter is creating trihalomethanes in our drinking water supplies. There are also cases of excessive nitrates in our water."

"I have followed the water services investment programmes over the years and no Government has ever shown sufficient attention or committed to providing adequate investment to maintain and improve the water network to the levels required. We have been careless with our precious, finite and life-supporting resource."

"This Government needs to be the one to halt the decline and address the infrastructural deficit to provide clean and reliable drinking water supplies. Last week's report shows that the treatment process is substandard in many places."

"The EPA report also covers areas where Irish Water has made improvements, which is to be welcomed. In Wicklow, Irish Water recently carried out a major upgrade to the Victorian Vartry water supply at Roundwood, which is vital to Dublin and north Wicklow supplies. I understand that the construction of the Arklow waste water treatment plant is soon to commence following the granting of the foreshore licence."

Responding, Minister Noonan said "The discharging of untreated sewage directly to the environment is clearly not a tenable situation and is one that I earnestly wish see addressed as soon as possible. When Irish Water was established in 2014, it inherited a system in need of very significant improvement. The company has set about this task but was possibly overly ambitious in some of its plans. However, the company has halted the discharge of raw sewage from the equivalent of 100,000 people in 15 towns across Ireland, removing half of all the raw sewage discharged. Over half of the remaining discharge will end with the completion of the Cork lower harbour project and the construction of the Arklow waste water treatment plant. The company expects to start work in 2021 on 12 further areas where raw sewage is being discharged, with the work in the majority of the remaining areas due to start in 2022 and 2023. A new treatment plant for Avoca is being designed at present, with a planned construction start date of 2023 and a completion date of 2024. The current estimated cost is 8.5 million."

"The provision of a sewage treatment plant for Arklow has a long and complex planning history going back as far as 1988. It is one of the largest areas left without a treatment plant, with a population equivalent of 36,000 people. A site has now been secured and planning permission has been granted. I understand a contractor has been selected and construction is due to start in 2021. Irish Water has informed the Department that the construction will take three years."

Whitmore calls on Donnelly to intervene and prevent spiralling costs of National Children's Hospital

Social Democrats TD Jennifer Whitmore has called on the Minister for Health Stephen Donnelly to intervene and prevent spiralling costs in association with the National Children's Hospital project.

Deputy Whitmore was raising the issue in the Dáil with Tánaiste Leo Varadkar on foot of reports that costs are rising and delays area affecting the building of the new children's hospital.

Party Spokesperson for Children Deputy Whitmore says "I campaigned strongly alongside families with sick children and with the Connolly for Kids group against the location of the new children's hospital at St. James' site in Dublin. I particularly appealed at the time for a review of

the site to the newly appointed Minister for Health, Simon Harris, on the basis that the Children's Hospital will be Wicklow's sole paediatric Accident and Emergency. I was very concerned about the ability of urgently ill children from Wicklow to be able to quickly access emergency medical care if they had to travel into the city centre to hospital.

"It is incredibly frustrating to see that many of the concerns I raised at the time are coming to fruition. These concerns

were relayed to the Tánaiste and the former Minister for Health but to no avail.

"It is now clear that this project is a runaway train. I asked the Tánaiste if he believes it's now time for the Minister for Health to intervene to prevent spiralling costs and to ensure the programme is delivered as was intended.

"He indicated the responsibility lies with the current Minister for Health Stephen Donnelly and that he is actively involved in the project however and that the pre-

vious Minister for Health Simon Harris set up the board under his tenure.

"I believe it is time that effective intervention is carried out to ensure the project is properly managed so that that the long-awaited for and much-needed facility is finally built. I have called on the Minister for Health Stephen Donnelly to intervene at this stage of development and give assurances to families that everything will be done to deliver on this programme," concluded Deputy Whitmore.

Bray native selected to represent Ireland at Basement 2020 final

Ireland has a new team of student innovators in the international spotlight, as UCD Graduates Ben Ralph (from Bray) and Tadhg Crowley (from Clonakilty, County Cork) with their project DemRes have been selected as one of 38 finalist teams in the global Red Bull Basement program for 2020. Red Bull Basement invites tech innovators and student entrepreneurs to 'innovate on campus today and disrupt the world tomorrow' by realising creative ideas to drive future change.



Pictured is Ben Ralph, one half of DemRes, selected to represent Ireland at the 2020 Red Bull Basement Global Final with their sustainable energy solution.

Worldwide, more than 3,800 student teams from all areas of study applied for the 2020 program by submitting a video explaining their idea. In Ireland, a public vote narrowed the field to five top ideas from students from colleges and universities countrywide. A panel of judges was then tasked with choosing the best idea to represent the nation.

DemRes is a sustainable energy solution based on the problem that while technologies such as wind and solar are the key facilitators of the clean energy transition, they suffer with intermittency and a lack of grid scale storage. Making the most of these renewables while they are available is therefore crucial. DemRes aims to make a positive impact towards global climate action by enabling consumers to intelligently schedule their electricity demand over the course of the day via an app, thus reducing electricity consumption and cost and in turn, carbon footprint.

Ben commented on the idea: "With DemRes, we have developed a platform to enable electricity consumers, like us, to reduce their carbon footprint and energy costs. Although people are aware of global warming and eager to change their energy consumption behaviors, we all live busy lives which makes this tricky. DemRes solves this problem by intelligently scheduling household electrical appliances to power up autonomously during times of peak renewables generation, thus reducing our reliance on carbon intensive energy sources such as coal and natural gas all while we carry on with our everyday lives."

The finalist teams across the globe will now have an opportunity to refine their ideas in a Development phase, with access to resources including mentorship programs and a global network of innovators. Besides the young innovators and student entrepreneurs from 36 countries, two wildcard teams are also participating from HONOR and NTT, the Global Partners of Red Bull Basement. Information on all the finalist teams and their next generation ideas can be found at the program website.

The culmination of the students' participation will come in December, when Ben and Tadhg will join the other finalist teams in the Red Bull Basement Global Workshop. In this virtual experience, they'll forge business relationships and networking connections with access to some of the world's most visionary thought leaders. And they'll pitch their ideas for social change and disruptive technology to the experts.



Institute of Technology Carlow is to host a new virtual open day on Thursday 26th November from 10am- 3pm via www.itcarlowvirtualopenday.ie. This month's virtual open day will have a number of new features. Guidance counsellors will be invited to participate in a Zoom session with the president of IT Carlow, Dr. Patricia Mulcahy, where she talk about new developments and opportunities at the institute.

The virtual open day will also feature a student room where, in a peer-to-peer session, IT Carlow students will chat to potential students about their courses and college life.

Harris receives update on Delgany traffic management

Minister Simon Harris TD has contacted Greystones Municipal District Council about the hazard posed by construction traffic along Chapel Road in Delgany.

Minister Harris said "Many residents sent me photos of construction trucks unable to safely pass one another and mount the footpaths in Delgany. This is particularly hazardous for the school children attending St. Laurence's school.

"The Community Garda have been making regular patrols of the area over the past few days. The Greystones Gardai have also been liaising with the Greystones Municipal District Council to find a solution to the ongoing problem".

The Greystones Municipal District Council have advised Minister Harris: "Wicklow County Council are currently advancing proposals to undertake road upgrades along Chapel Road. These potential upgrades aim to provide a considerably improved facility for all road users (including motorists, cyclists and pedestrians) along the busy stretch from Convent Road and connecting into the most recently completed section at SeaGreen/Lidl and the Junction at the R761. The Council previously carried out safety upgrades of Chapel Road to provide 130m of widened carriageway and footpath to St. Laurence's school. There is currently a lot of construction traffic to development sites at this location, with a high volume of HCV's travelling in both directions along a narrow road. The District Engineer is currently engaging with local developers to agree and implement a one way temporary traffic management system for the HCV deliveries to and from the sites".

Minister Harris added: "I welcome this development and hope the council and developers agree a one way temporary traffic management system for the HCV deliveries to and from construction sites in the near future".

'Lucena mental health services will continue in Wicklow'

Minister for Health Stephen Donnelly has confirmed Lucena Clinic Services in Wicklow will continue to operate and be funded by the HSE.

The Minister said there was no danger of the Clinic, which is the Adolescent Mental Health service of St. John of Gods Community Services, being withdrawn.

St John of God Community Services' notice of withdrawal from provision of publicly funded mental health and disability services in the CHO 6 and CHO 7 areas has raised concerns the service would be impacted.

However, Minister Donnelly

insisted protecting and improving mental health services was a major priority for the Government.

He said: "Mental health services are a key priority for me and this Government.

"Budget 2021 saw an additional €50 million allocated to Mental Health Services, bringing the total 2021 mental health budget to €1,076 billion, the largest mental health budget on record.

"We are fully aware of how

important it is to ensure continuity of supports and services for people with disabilities and mental health issues, and their families.

"At the moment an HSE-St John of God working group is considering whether a resolution to the funding issues, which mostly concern disability services, can be reached.

"HSE Mental Health Services have confirmed to me that funding is not an issue for Lucena Services and the HSE will continue to fund Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) provision in Wicklow."



Newtownmountkennedy resident Erika Egan has signed up to The Crisp Packet Recycling Scheme

Newtown coffee shop collects crisp packets and raises funds for local school

The people of Newtown are being encouraged to recycle their crisp packets, saving them from landfill and also raising funds for the Newtownmountkennedy Primary School at the same time.

Local resident Erika Egan has signed up to The Crisp Packet Recycling Scheme offered in Ireland by TerraCycle. This has enabled Erika to set up a public drop off location at The Coffee Place and at the school where local people can drop off their empty crisp packets to be sent in for recycling.

None of this waste can be included in local kerb-side recycling collections so traditionally has ended up in landfill or has been incinerated.

Erika, who set up and manages the public drop-off location in Newtownmountkennedy explains: "I was looking for a way to reduce the amount of waste packaging my family produces, and I found these great free programmes run by TerraCycle to recycle a whole host of waste which the local council recycling collections can't accept. Anyone can sign up and collect waste at home for recycling. I decided to go one step further by setting up a public access drop off location at the Coffee Place nearby

the school, where the local community can all drop off their crisp packets."

The collected waste Erika sends into TerraCycle is then recycled by shredding, cleaning and turning into a pellet format which can then be used by manufacturers to create new generic plastic products such as outdoor furniture, lumber and construction applications slowing the need to extract new resources from the planet.

As well as benefitting the environment, this programme also helps raise funds for the local primary school. For each unit of waste collected, Erika receives TerraCycle points that can be redeemed as a monetary donation.

Erika concluded: "So far the Newtownmountkennedy community have helped us to send in 60 kilos of crisp packets to TerraCycle for recycling, raising 120 for the Primary School. This initiative is a great way to help both the environment and the local school. So, we encourage everyone in County Wicklow to drop off their crisp packet for recycling to one of our two public drop off locations in the Coffee Place and the Primary School and to help us spread awareness locally by telling their friends, families and colleagues."

Fundraising campaign started for Glen of Imaal Mountain Rescue

A GoFundMe campaign has been organised for the Glen of Imaal Mountain Rescue Team, with the goal of raising €10,000.

At the time of going to press over €7,000 had been raised. The campaign has been organised by Mark Casciani and Ronan Mullen. They say "The Glen of Imaal Red Cross Mountain Rescue Team provides a 100% voluntary, 24-hour 365-day search and rescue service for the Wicklow & Dublin upland areas. The team also provides assistance to other neighbouring Mountain Rescue services as required."

"The service is provided free of charge to all those in need of assistance in the mountains and is run 100% by volunteers. Team members give their time freely so that people can enjoy the outdoors, knowing that there is a highly trained rescue service available if needed."

"While the team receives a small government grant aid, the majority of its operating expenses are met by public donations and fundraising events."

"2020 has been an extraordinary year for many reasons. Covid 19 has meant that there has been a significant upsurge in people enjoying the outdoors with a corresponding demand for the team's services by people lost, injured or suffering medical emergencies in the Wicklow & Dublin mountains."

"Paradoxically, Covid 19 restrictions on organised events have meant that the team has been unable to run its usual fundraisers. In addition - individuals, walking and climbing clubs and organisations have also been

restricted from running events on their behalf. 2020 has been the first year in recent times when income from donations has not met the operational expenses of the team."

"This year Glen of Imaal Mountain Rescue will have voluntarily responded to in excess of 100 emergencies in the Wicklow and Dublin Mountains. It costs approximately €60K per year to run the team, with main expenses incurred for: Vehicle maintenance and fuel. Medical equipment, consumables and pain relieving medicines. Ropes, stretchers and technical equipment. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for volunteer rescuers. Training courses and recertification expenses. Rescue Base heating &

lighting.

"Your support will mean that Mountain Rescue volunteers can continue to respond in a professional manner to those in need of assistance in the Wicklow & Dublin mountains."

"Please help by donating whatever you can and letting your family, friends and co-workers know about our campaign by sharing on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram WhatsApp or good old fashioned email - share, share, share!"

"The volunteer rescuers and those who have been assisted by the team are so very grateful - thank you so much for your support."

See www.gofundme.com/f/glen-of-imaal-mountain-rescue-team

Wicklow Town Christmas lights switch-on event to go virtual

Owing to government restrictions in relation to the Covid-19 pandemic, there will not be the traditional gathering of thousands of children for the switching on of the lights in Wicklow Town on Saturday 28th November.

Wicklow Town & District Chamber and Wicklow Municipal District are determined to 'pull out all the stops' to spread some festive cheer with a 'bigger and better' Christmas lights display and will be asking the children of Wicklow Town & District for their help in doing so.

A new website has been created and will be launched on Wednesday 18th of November where all the children in Wicklow can help Santa power up his sleigh so that he can come to Wicklow and turn on the Christmas Lights.

Wicklow Town & District Chamber President, Rosie Cooney said: "This year, with so many challenges already during the year and a very different Christmas on the cards, it is so important to show that Wicklow's community spirit is alive and well. The Chamber will be pulling out all the stops to provide a bigger and better display than ever to provide some festive cheer during the Covid-19 pandemic."

Cathaoirleach of Wicklow Municipal District Cllr John Snell added that the turning on of the lights this year will again create a happy and festive welcome to our town encouraging people to 'Shop local & Support Wicklow'.

The switching on of the Christmas Lights in Wicklow Town will be a must-see virtual event for all the family on Saturday November 28th. There will be a 'Christmas Cookies bake along' for children from The Little Baker, Christmas Story Time with Fireside Bard, and some Christmas music with Ciaran Olohan. To join the fun, log onto www.wicklowtown.ie/christmaslights

Also adding to the Christmas experience in Wicklow Town, Wicklow Christmas Markets will bring people a re-imagined socially managed Christmas market experi-

ence to Wicklow town for the third year in a row. It will be located in the magical and historical Abbey grounds in Wicklow Town and will take place on the weekend of Dec 4th-6th, the weekend of Dec 11th-13th and the weekend of Dec 18th-20th.

Children will delight at the Alpaca experience, always a hit, and will love the fun fair, while Mum and Dad can enjoy wandering

through the craft market filled with decorations, artisans and plenty of great gifts to get all your Christmas shopping done in one place. There's live entertainment, beverages and delicious food and even a fire show to wow and excite. Don't forget their magical Santa Express.

Local shops and hospitality providers will also be open for those weekends so the advice of the Chamber is to take this opportunity to join in the fun of the Christmas Market and to use this opportunity to Shop Locally in Wicklow Town this Christmas.



Campaign to have vacant Bray Courthouse handed over for community use takes a step forward

The campaign to bring the old Courthouse on the Boghall Road in Bray into public ownership has taken a big step forward with the passing of a Sinn Féin Motion at a recent Bray Municipal District meeting. The motion called for the closed courthouse to be handed over for community use and for Wicklow County Council to engage with the Courts Service and the Minister for Justice to progress the issue.

Speaking about the progress of the campaign John Brady TD said "The former courthouse which is situated on the Boghall Road closed in 2006, when court sittings and services were relocated to alternative accommodation leased by the Courts Service in Bray town centre. Since that time the former courthouse has remained vacant."

"In September Bray Sinn Féin launched a campaign to have the old courthouse handed over for community use. Since then we have been overwhelmed with messages from community organisations, clubs and groups who are currently without space or are completely overcrowded."

"As part of the campaign my party colleagues Cllr Dermot O'Brien and Cllr Grace McManus tabled a motion calling on the council to support handing over of the building for community use. It also called on the council to correspond with the Courts Service and the Department of Justice to progress the issue. The motion received unanimous support."

"I believe there is huge support across the community for this campaign and I think that it's important that the public can have their say, so we have also launched an online

petition for people to sign and leave a comment. The petition can be signed here <http://chn9.it/nTL7fp8dNy> and I urge as many people as possible to sign and share the petition."

Deputy Brady went on to say "The old courthouse is surplus to the requirements of the Courts Service we need to ensure that it is put to use serving the community. I have been in contact with the Minister and the Courts Service and I will ensure that the pressure is kept on them to let the community use a building that has lay vacant for the last 16 years."

Cllr McManus said "It has been equally heartening and disheartening to hear from so many groups and clubs since we started this campaign. It's heartening to get a reminder of just how many people in Bray give their time and energy to groups, clubs and teams, all with a purpose of serving the community, but it is disheartening to hear the barriers they face in terms of not being resourced properly to reach their potential. We know that the courthouse space, if handed over for community use, would change that for many. There is no doubt in my mind either that this building would be transformed by the community.

The good news is that momentum is really building on this campaign, and this motion is another boost of energy in the right direction. I am looking forward to working with all key stakeholders to make sure we progress on this positivity."

Cllr Dermot O'Brien commented "There is a huge opportunity here to build a very real collaboration around taking this state asset and doing something with it at a community level that is responsive, dynamic and sustainable. With the collective energy and expertise of all the stakeholders we could really end up with something that we can be proud of."

Minister Harris recently contacted the Court Service regarding the old Courthouse and they responded to him advising: "The Courts Service has no plans for this building at present and it is considered to be surplus to our requirements. In circumstances where a property is surplus to our requirements the Courts Service, in the first instance, offers the property to the local authority or the OPW for alternative public use. In the specific case of the former courthouse on Boghall Road the Courts Service would be willing to explore transferring ownership of the building to

Wicklow County Council so that it can be made available for alternative public/community use".

Cllr Aoife Flynn Kennedy stated: "Over the last year I've had the opportunity to meet with many groups in the town who are meeting the needs of the community but struggling to find a place to call home and meet our communities needs. Groups like St. Teresas Boxing Club Bray & Wicklow Alzheimer's Society need to be able to support both the young and older members of our community in these challenging times. Bringing the Old Court House into community use can help to meet this need."

Bray West Fine Gael councillor Melanie Corrigan added "As more people continue to work from home, the need for a Community Hub has become more evident. We can all see the benefits both to the environment through less travel, as well as achieving a good work life balance, but working from your home is not always possible. We need to support people to maintain their employment or start their own enterprise. This is where a Community Hub can really provide the key. A place where people can work, accessing a good internet service and peer support."



Pictured are Cllr Pat Fitzgerald and Cathaoirleach of Arklow Municipal District, Cllr Sylvester Bourke, promoting the free parking initiative. To support the Arklow Shop Local Campaign, Free Christmas Parking is available in the town from 16th November until 3rd January 2021. This year the scheme has been extended to on street parking also. The traffic wardens will be monitoring the traffic as normal and enforcing all other aspects of the parking bye laws in relation to illegal parking. Councillor Pat Fitzgerald has welcomed the unanimous decision of the members of Arklow Municipal District to agree that there should be no parking charges in pay parking areas from the 16th November to the 3rd January 2021.

He stated that we live in difficult times and he hopes that the decision will help those coming into the town for whatever reason. Illegal parking will continue to be monitored and all day parking on the main street is not encouraged.

Tusla - supporting children and families

Do you and your child need some extra support? There are a range of services which are part of the Child and Family Support Networks in County Wicklow that can help you.

The coordinator has links with many community, voluntary and statutory services in your area and can help guide you to the one that is right for your family. Some of the agencies who are part of the Network are: Family Resource Centres, Springboard, Child and Family Project, HSE, Schools, Educational Welfare Officers, Mental Health Services, Youth Services and more. You can get in touch with your coordinator who can direct you to a range of supports such as counselling services, family support, or parenting programmes.

You can also contact the Tusla Child and Family Support Network Coordinator in your area if you would like the support of a Meitheal. If you feel that your child has additional needs or is facing challenges that are difficult to overcome, Meitheal may be able to help you. Meitheal brings together people and services who want to support a child or parent so that he or she can make the changes to their life that they want and need.

Find your past through your local library

Did you ever want to find out more about your family history or simply want to know what life was like in the past in your village or town?

Well, wonder no more. Wicklow County Council Library Service is delighted to be able to offer its members free access to Findmypast.ie, a family history website giving members access to billions of Irish and World records.

Digitised census returns, Parish and Civil records can tell us all so much about our family's past, helping us trace our ancestors' names, ages, where they were living, their parents' names, their occupations and much, much more. The subscription also includes access to historic national and local newspapers.

Cathaoirleach of Wicklow County Council, Cllr Pat Kennedy, said: "This is such an exciting development for our libraries and for the community. Wicklow County Council Library Service is committed to helping the people of Wicklow discover, celebrate and connect with their heritage and this initiative is a real tangible example of this commitment."

"What makes this archive so useful is the fact that it is completely searchable. You don't have to sit through hours of microfilm to find your information. You can simply type in any name, event or place and if it got

a mention in the paper it will let you know. This is really helpful for searching obituaries, advertisements or notices."

Local Studies librarian, Gerlanda Maniglia, commented: "Whether you are interested in piecing together your family history, a general interest in your local history, or if you simply want to get a better understanding of your heritage, Findmypast.ie is a great place to start. For details of how to get online, contact your local library in county Wicklow, either by email or telephone and they will be delighted to provide you with a username and password".

Sugarloaf Lions Club's Christmas Appeal

Announcement of appeal for 200 hampers to support local families in need this Christmas

Every Christmas since 1968 Sugarloaf Lions Club has collected food and money in the run up to Christmas and distributed the proceeds to local families in need in the Greystones, Delgany, Kilcoole, Newtownmountkennedy, Newcastle and Kilmacanogue areas.

Local Lions standing in the doorways of supermarkets at Christmastime beside shopping trolleys laden with festive fare is a sight that most people in the community are well familiar with.

Unfortunately, this year just like many other of our cherished Christmas traditions, Covid-19 means Lions members cannot reach out to the community in this way.

"We need a new way of gathering support as the needs we try to meet are not only still there but have significantly increased as the economic cost of this awful virus reaches ever more homes and families.

"Our Christmas Appeal which runs from now until shortly before Christmas is to raise the necessary funds to provide the equivalent of 200 hampers / vouchers / fuel for those in need in our community and to help them share in at least some of the joys of Christmas."

"We are distributing appeal leaflets to households throughout the area and you can support our appeal by making a donation through www.ifundraise.ie/slcfoodappeal or via the website www.sugarloaflions.ie.

"Local pharmacies to whom we are deeply grateful, have also agreed to host donation buckets and these can be found at; Fiona Roche Pharmacy, Blacklion; Dodds Pharmacy, Greystones Medical Centre; Adrian Dunne Pharmacy, Newtownmountkennedy; McGleenans Pharmacy, Greystones; Sam McCauleys, Greystones, Kilcoole Pharmacy."



Sarah Rabitte and Aisling Brady at IT Carlow after their conferring from the Faculty of Lifelong Learning with the BA in Applied Early Childhood Education and Care. Pic: Mary Browne

IT Carlow to offer 600 free or subsidised higher education places

Institute of Technology Carlow is to offer 600 free or subsidised higher education places to help people get back to work and upskill.

The announcement follows last month's declaration by Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science Simon Harris TD of more than €30 million in free and subsidised higher education places under the Jobs Stimulus package to help get people back to work, upskill workers and build economic confidence while continuing to manage the impact of COVID-19.

The 600 places announced by IT Carlow are for courses commencing in December and January and include postgraduate places in tourism marketing and BIM and construction project management, as well as 16 short, modular courses. The modular courses are available in a wide range of skills areas, such as web design, leadership and change management, biopharmaceutical operations, construction project management and CAD and 3D modelling. Modular courses are short and focused, and will be offered in a flexible manner, allowing people to gain important skills without taking a considerable period away from the labour market.

Each module will also be standalone so that participants can gain skills and put them into practice immediately in the workplace, but are also accredited in such a way as to provide building blocks to a full qualification should the student so wish.

Those interested in applying for a course must register by December 2020. Details on the courses, and how

to apply, are available at www.itcarlow.ie. IT Carlow is also offering a number of Springboard+ funded programmes in areas such as data protection, entrepreneurship, and Computing. Places on Springboard+ courses are fully funded for job seekers while employed participants pay just 10% of the programme cost. A number of self-financing short certificate programmes are also available in areas such as digital marketing, disability studies, family support, python programming and legal practice and procedures, amongst others. Applications are online via www.itcarlow.ie

To showcase and discuss the courses available, the Faculty of Lifelong Learning at Institute of Technology Carlow will organise a number of online information sessions, from Tue 1 December to Thursday 3 December from 7-8pm. Attendees are requested to register online for the sessions. Dr Joseph Collins, Head of Faculty Lifelong Learning at Institute of Technology Carlow, commented, "Investing in your skillset is one of the shrewdest investments that you can make in your career. Upskilling and reskilling is about building on existing qualifications and experience and it gives all of us an opportunity to change careers or move to another level in our current careers. Our information sessions give potential applicants a unique opportunity to engage with our staff and to learn more about our broad suite of programmes and courses."

Wicklow woman moves to top of accounting exam charts

A Co. Wicklow woman who worked in the travel business until recession hit in 2010, has enhanced her career by obtaining one of the top accounting exam marks in the country. Stephanie Carey, from Enniskerry, who now lives in Kilcoole with her husband Declan and three children, completed the Accounting Technicians Ireland Diploma online with flying colours.

The qualification is recognised as the fastest pathway to a fulfilling and rewarding career in the profession. Stephanie spent six years in the travel business up to 2010. She took a four-year career break to spend time with her children before returning to work in 2014.

Stephanie first worked part-time with Wicklow County Council, and then with Kilmacanogue-based VBT IT Solutions, as an administration assistant, before moving to the accounts department.

"I quickly realised this was an area I thoroughly enjoyed and had a natural flair for," said Stephanie.

"My boss, the managing director, Dave Kerr, asked if I would be interested in studying for the Accounting Technicians Ireland Diploma so I could advance my career within the company.

"With three children, I was hesitant, and it had been 14 years since I had studied.

"But when I discovered I could complete the Accounting Technicians Ireland Diploma online, I realised it would be ideal.

"I have now become assistant financial controller at VBT thanks to my Diploma. I love the responsibility and new challenges. It's great to put into practice all the things I have learned. The decision to study for the Accounting Technicians Ireland Diploma was the best career choice I ever made.

"The course was so well structured and gave me a comprehensive knowledge of accounting. During lockdown, I was working from home, schooling three children and studying for my Diploma. At times, it was very stressful, but I always had the support of tutors to help me prepare for exams.

"I would really recommend it to

anyone, especially mature learners like myself, if they are thinking of returning to education to advance or change their careers. It has given me confidence. After having children, I didn't think I could go back to study and succeed, but with the help of the Diploma I couldn't be happier. There is also the option to progress your studies further and become a fully qualified accountant."

Enrolment for the next academic year, starting in January, is now open, and as well as online, it is also available at Tallaght Training Centre, Dublin. Accounting Technicians Ireland provides a nationally and internationally recognised accounting qualification and graduates are employed in industry, commerce, private practice and the public sector.

The highly-regarded professional qualification can be obtained in as little as two years. Study can be full-time, part-time and online. Accounting Technicians Ireland Diploma courses are open to school and college leavers, mature students and people working in business, industry or small practice but who, as yet, have no formal training.

The qualification opens a world of employment opportunities to graduates across a broad range of accounting and finance roles and enables students further progress to senior financial management posts. Holders of the Diploma are highly-regarded qualified professionals working at all levels of finance throughout the private and public sector, industry and commerce, and in accountancy practices.

The two-year Diploma for Accounting Technicians programme can also be the first step to a full qualification in accountancy. Many ATI graduates



Stephanie Carey

progress on to other professional bodies in order to further enhance their careers as fully-qualified accountants.

"There is continuing strong demand for accounting and financial skills in industry, practice and the public sector, with many employers supporting their staff by meeting programme fees," says Gillian Doherty, Chief Operations Officer at Accounting Technicians Ireland.

"We work closely with employers to ensure the Diploma qualification prepares our graduates to succeed in the workplace. Through our flexible online programme, and partnership with

colleges and training providers across the island, our students are able to gain a professional qualification whilst working remotely, where required, and living in their local area.

"Graduates go on to join a supportive members' network of Accounting Technician professionals who occupy the full spectrum of accountancy and finance roles. Through Membership of ATI, graduates benefit from regular training and career support, ensuring the continued relevance of the Accounting Technician qualification to the wider professional environment."

Schools in Wicklow are reminded to enter the ActionTalks competition

Students in Wicklow are reminded to submit their entries to ActionTalks, a national speech writing competition organised by ActionAid. The competition, which opened for entries on 14th October, is aimed at secondary school students aged 14 to 17. ActionAid has already had a lot of interest from students across the country and hopes for more entrants from Wicklow before Friday 15th January 2021.

Finalists from around the country will be invited to deliver their speech to a panel of esteemed judges at a Zoom event on 24th February 2021. This year the prize is a €500 voucher for the winner and a €500 voucher for their teacher.

Wicklow student Helen Ryan, a past-pupil from St Mary's College Arklow, was joint winner in the first year of the competition in 2015.

ActionAid provides long term support to the poorest and most marginalised women and children in developing countries, so they can overcome the obstacles holding them back. Its Women's Rights Programme, fund-

ed by Irish Aid, works to eliminate violence against women and girls through innovative community-led approaches.

Now in its seventh year, this year the competition will focus on how the coronavirus pandemic has impacted on women's rights and how we can create a more equal world post-pandemic. ActionAid is asking students to write a speech on one of three topics.

The choice of topics for the 2021 competition are: The coronavirus pandemic is an opportunity to imagine a more equal and sustainable world, but we must act now; With a shocking increase in violence against

women and girls, the coronavirus pandemic has shown us that the struggle for gender equality is far from over; The coronavirus pandemic has reminded us of the importance of global solidarity and international aid.

Siobhán McGee, CEO of ActionAid Ireland said: "Each year we get great feedback from participants to say that the competition led them to research and learn about new issues. This year young people entering the competition will have themselves dealt with a very challenging year due to the coronavirus pandemic. We hope that this competition will offer young people a chance to reflect on this experience while also considering what it would be like to live through a pandemic under different circumstances, and also think about what kind of future they would like in a post-pandemic world."

To enter, students can ask their teacher for details or visit <https://actionaid.ie/speech-writing-competition/> for more information

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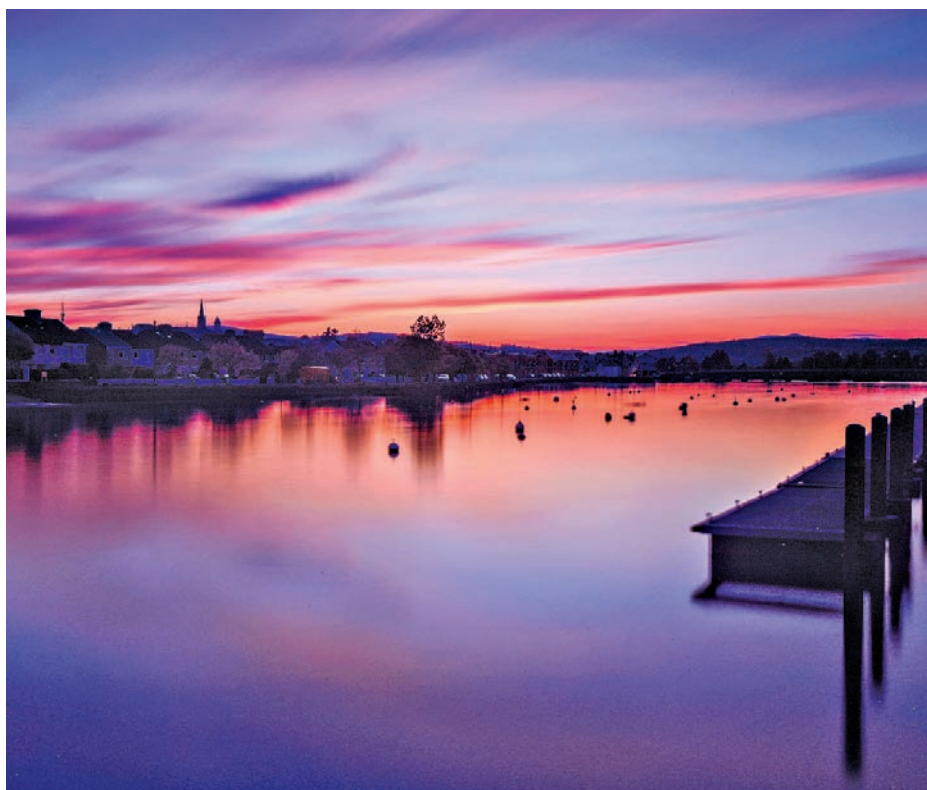
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Sunset skies over Arklow town. Photo by Des Carey Photography

'Theatre will find a way to continue'

Fair City actor and Wicklow resident Pat Nolan writes about experience this year working in the arts in these Covid times.

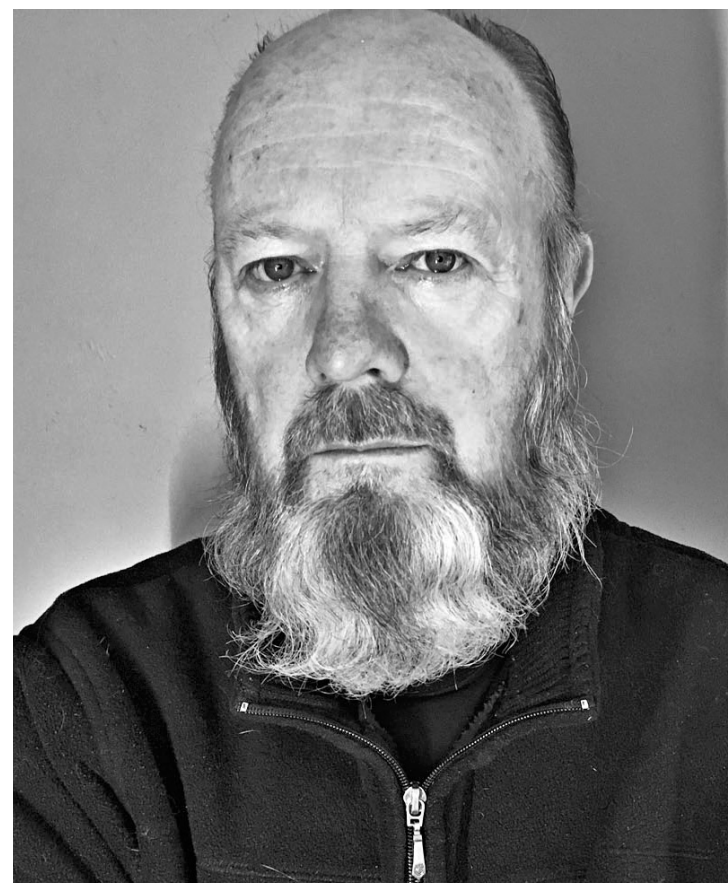
2020 was looking good and it had only just started. On New Year's Eve we kissed 2019 goodbye and let it out the back door. My new diary was not a collection of blank pages - there was actual work with dates to match. And with open arms we embraced 2020. We texted and facebooked our family and friends and wished them the happiest of new years.

Workwise, January was slow, which is good, it gave me a chance to 'recharge the batteries' after Christmas. Near the end of the month there was a lot of publicity things to be done for the oncoming Fair City story climax, each day there was something planned. The Today Show in Cork, Ray D'Arcy's radio show, then the six o'clock show for Virgin, a bit of teaching, then a Fair City cover for the RTE Guide. Living the dream!

I also had rehearsals for two shows, 'Take Off Your Cornflakes', which was written by Rose Henderson and myself. And a brand-new piece called 'Letting Go' by young Arklow writer Kathy Ann Murphy. The play dealt with the story of Marie Fleming and her battle for justice. I was to play Marie's partner, Tom.

In February we took 'Cornflakes' out on the road, with shows in Drogheda, Wexford, Delvin, The Pavillion in Dun Laoghaire, Cavan, Kilkenny, Ennis, Listowel, Nenagh, Tallaght, Waterford, all venues selling tickets like hot cakes. Also in there was the launch of our play, 'Take Off Your Cornflakes', which had just been published. Phew!

The following week it was up to Castleblaney for some adjudication work, a bus man's holiday. And then on the 12th March it all stopped. We were in lockdown. We still had dates for fulfill for 'Cornflakes' and the tour of 'Letting Go' was booked. Not anymore. We were locked down.



Pat Nolan

At first you take it easy and try to get a routine going. Listen to the birdsong. Walk the dog (a lot!). Try and reach on all those things I'd been putting off for ages, like reading some of the backlog of books and films in my collection. I'm a collector (read: hoarder).

Then I got a call from a writer friend, Tara Maria Lovett asking if I'd be interested in performing her one man play 'The One Tree' on Zoom as part of an initiative by The New Theatre in Dublin. I filmed it in my son's room and the other son shot it. Homemade movies. It was well reviewed and may have an afterlife.

I'd always wanted to write, I enjoyed it. So when an opportunity came up in the guise of The Reboot Festival, I was only too happy to take part and see if I could write something about this idea I had for a play set in a 'Men's Shed'. The rules said it could only a maximum

of two characters, no set, no props. So I wrote a play called 'Waiting for the Man'. We researched it with a visit to the Avoca Men's Shed, with my co-star Steve Gunn and director Sean Roper Nolan.

There would be three plays on a night in The International Bar in Dublin, they would be streamed and the performances would have a live audience of 10 people. The festival consisted of a total of 18 brand-new plays, and it was a great success. It was still nice to get in front of a live audience. I was reminded of a piece written by Nicholas Berger called 'Assembly in the time of the virus', one of the many quotes that caught my eye was: 'our need for each other is fundamental and it is this very need that the theatre brilliantly capitalises on'.

We are social animals. Zoom is great, and it helps, but there is a dimension that is lost. And whether we know it or not, we miss it. Our brains are working so

hard to try and 'read' the other person's body language, something we take for granted when we are face to face. Sure there are recordings of plays and it's great to see them but...is it real? As the song says, we need to be in 'the room where it happens'.

Musicians/performers are all in the same boat. All their work has dried up and there is only so many 'home concerts' you can do. As we get towards Christmas, we are reminded of last year and how it stands in stark contrast to this year for everyone.

When will it get back to 'normal'? Who knows. But theatre has been around a long time and it will find a way to continue for an even longer time. The urge to create is an ethereal flame for performers. That need, as Eckhart says, 'to leave a stain on the silence' is too great for the artist. From the cave dwellers and their cave drawings to the present day, we are storytellers. The show will go on!

Lucky Friday the 13th for Dunlavin writer

While Friday 13th may prove unlucky for some, it certainly didn't for Robert Barrett from Dunlavin. The West Wicklow man scooped 1st place in the 2020 RTE PJ O'Connor Radio Drama Awards for his play, 'Nothing Ever Happens Around Here.'

RTE's annual PJ O'Connor Radio Drama Awards have celebrated the best in new Irish writing for well over 30 years. It is Robert's second time to win the prestigious award, as he also won 1st place in 2017 for his play, 'K.L.O. For The Doggy.'

The prize was awarded by a panel of international judges from around Europe, including Soila Valkama of the Finnish Broadcasting Authority and Ilinca Stihi of the Romanian Radio Broadcasting corporation. Jesper Bergman of the Danish Broadcasting Corporation said that "this year's shortlist has proved once again to a jury of non-Irish radio drama specialists that Ireland is

indeed fertile soil for new writing".

The winning play, a comedy, focuses on a day in the life of Courtland Alexander, a butcher in a small Irish town. Courtland is tipped into an existential crisis which plays out through his working day as he interacts with an ensemble cast of characters including a three-legged dog and a brother and sister team of undertakers.

Robert has been writing for many years, concentrating on plays, short stories and flash fiction. He manages to fit his writing around work and family life in West Wicklow.

The Dunlavin man has been shortlisted twice for the Fish Flash Fiction Award and once for the Colm Toibin Short Story Award. An active member of the local community, he was honoured with the opportunity to open the 2019 Dunlavin Festival of Arts.

He is a co-editor of Splonk, Ireland's foremost online magazine for flash fiction www.splonk.ie



Robert Barrett from Dunlavin

Kings on the Roof

A collection of short stories by Shane Harrison

Shane Harrison's latest collection of short stories, *Kings on the Roof*, is now available on Amazon. Published by Forty Foot Press, it features eleven new stories. It's been seven years since Shane's last book, *The Testimony of Virginia McCabe*. *Kings on the Roof* is his third short story collection.



Shane Harrison

The setting of these stories goes from Dublin through Ireland to strange Latin cities and an old Gold Rush town in the Rocky Mountains.

"I've lived in Bray for almost forty years and the town and county have featured in many of my stories," says Shane. "This isn't always stated, but readers might spot familiar landscapes and streetscapes hidden in the words. I think most Wicklow folk will recognise the fierce rivalry in the story, *The Duel*, and also recognise the setting in the Avoca Valley. Though it's not what everyone would call hurling!"

Shane Harrison was

born in Dublin and educated at Drimnagh Castle CBS. He is a graduate of the National College of Art and Design and Dublin City University where he received a BA in English Literature, History and Philosophy.

He has published three short story collections: *Blues Before Dawn* (Poolbeg, 1992), *The Benefits of Tobacco* (Forty Foot Press, 2007), and *Kings on the Roof* (Forty Foot Press, 2020); and a Western novel: *The Testimony of Virginia McCabe* (Forty Foot, 2013).

He has worked as a telephone installer, art teacher and graphic designer, including a spell with

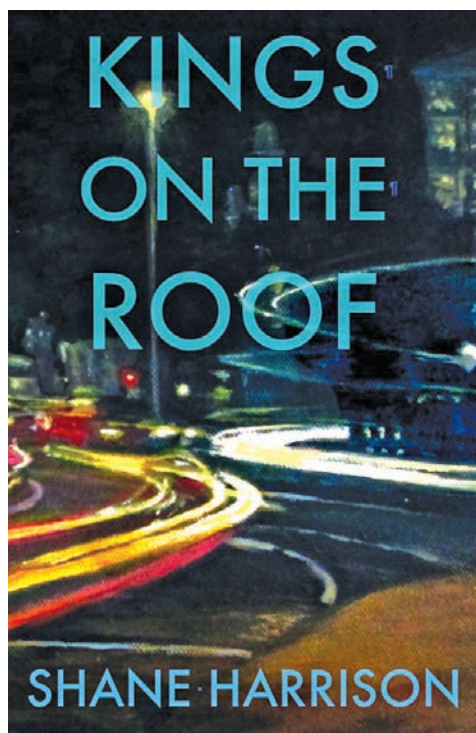
Radio Telefis Eireann. He has also worked in journalism, contributing to various publications including *Hot Press*, *Dublin Opinion*, *The Wicklow Times*, and *Public Sector Times*.

Shane has worked with Wicklow Library Service since the turn of the century, in Wicklow Town, Bray and Greystones Libraries, as well as providing the library service to nursing homes throughout the county. He will retire at

the end of November.

"There's no better job for a writer, or a reader, than working in a library," says Shane. "I'll miss the people I've met on both sides of the counter, but now I've retired I'm looking forward to seeing more of Wicklow and the world, and writing about it."

Shane's *'Kings On The Roof'* is available from *Amazon.com*, in paperback for €11.25, and on e-book for €4.40.

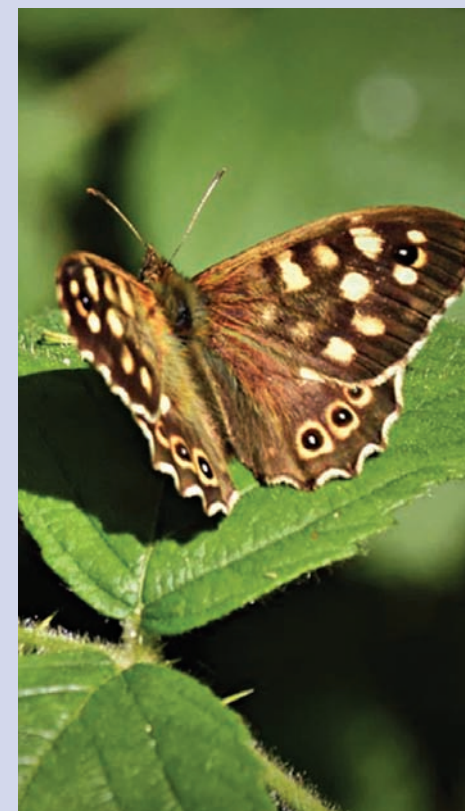


Heritage Council celebrates 25th anniversary

Heritage is at the heart of Irish communities and shapes our identity, not just as a nation, but also as a society. That's according to chief executive of the Heritage Council, Virginia Teehan, speaking as the Heritage Council marks its 25th anniversary.

Established in 1995 as a result of the Heritage Bill that was introduced by then Minister for Arts, Culture and the Gaeltacht, Michael D Higgins, it promotes interest, education, knowledge, and pride in our heritage. It reaches into communities across the country by working with groups such as public authorities, educational bodies, youth groups, and many other organisations. In doing this, it promotes a knowledge and appreciation of built, natural and cultural heritage, such as monuments, archaeological objects, architectural heritage, flora and fauna, heritage gardens, wildlife habitats, seascapes, wrecks, geology, traditional skills and past times, to name but a few areas.

The Heritage Council also provides policy advice for Government on heritage issues such as sustainability, landscape management, high nature value farming, forestry, and climate change. Paying tribute to President Michael D Higgins for his role in establishing the Heritage Council, Ms Teehan said: "He had the vision of bringing our heritage into our homes, our hearts and our communities. Our heritage is precious. It is invaluable to the country's economic wellbeing, but also to the wellbeing of every Irish resident. Heritage plays a huge part in our tourism sector, and in turn in our economy. While we have always appreciated how important it is to our individual, physical, mental, and social wellbeing, this has never been more obvious than during the current pandemic, when the restrictions brought a new focus on the hidden heritage in our local areas."



Bray Camera Club's 2021 Photography Exhibition

Monday, 1st February - Sunday, 14th February 2021

To launch their 30th anniversary year, Bray Camera Club has announced an exhibition of photographs in the Signal Arts Centre next February.

"Welcoming all comers since our foundation in 1972, the club has provided the local community with a forum for photographic exploration and development. During the Covid-19 pandemic, we have remained stalwart in our drive to celebrate and share our passion for photography, with a busy schedule of online activities and social interaction."

"The club provides a forum for its members (an eclectic mix of amateurs, competition winners and

professionals) wherein to learn from and support one another in improving our photographic skills and creativity in the use of every type of photographic gadget from the basic pin-hole to top-of-the-range digital cameras. We engage in all photographic genres including abstract, street, wildlife, landscape, macro and studio photography. Consequently, when the Club presents its work to the public, a wide variety of photographic styles is guaranteed."

"This exhibition, which will also be hosted on the Signal Arts Centre web site, will be sure to appeal to anyone with a curious eye, an interest in photography or with a view to joining the club for the simple pleasure of taking and sharing photographs."

Matters of Great Indifference - Rural Living in small doses

Jim O'Brien's new book, *Matters of Great Indifference*, is a collection of short pieces that make for ideal reading while waiting for the kettle to boil or when sitting in the car waiting for the children to come out of school.

The property correspondent and columnist with the *Farming Independent* has just published a compilation of his popular weekly columns. Thanks to his job Jim is uniquely placed to keep a finger on the pulse of rural Ireland. He travels the country, week in and week out, walking land, meeting farmers, chatting to rural auctioneers and tasting the delights to be found in local coffee shops.

"Inspiration for the columns comes from what I see around me and what I encounter on my travels," he says, "anything from a badly hung gate, to a word from a neighbour, a line from a book, the smell of a tractor engine, the bark of a dog or the hum of a milking machine can spark a train of thought that eventually hammers

itself into about 800 words."

The collection covers a huge range of issues from broadband to Brexit, from politics to place-names, from climate change to the Covid. Jim is also not afraid to delve into the personal and comes into his own when writing about the joys, delights and sorrows experienced at the various milestones that mark a life.

The pieces in *Matters of Great Indifference* are presented in chronological order, changing topic every two pages. The book can be something of a rollercoaster, going from the closure of the local shop to a hair-raising trip to Moscow, followed by an eye-opening account of the highs and lows of door-to-door canvassing. All-in-all, a great read.



Jim O'Brien

Matters of Great Indifference is available from www.jimbrien.ie and on Amazon, in paperback or as an eBook



Dacia announces a 0% deal that's 100% real for 211

Dacia have a strong association with Wicklow. When they were introduced first into Ireland, the Glenview hotel and the beautiful Glen of the Downs countryside, was used to show off these great value for money vehicles.

By Martin McCarthy

Many wondered how well they would do, but with the enviable reliability record and low cost of ownership, the answer was - stunning well! In less than three years they were one of the top selling brands in Ireland's - often capturing 3 % of the market. Somehow, they have resisted the temptation to climb up the cost ladder and even today they are an unbeatable proposition for many Wicklow motorists. Dacia Supremo Paddy Magee is a died in the wool, Wicklow GAA man - immersed in west Wicklow and Blessington in particular. But in The Wicklow Times, we do not let that influence us. What we are influenced by is the great offers Dacia

are dangling in front of our readers. Customers can avail of a 0% Deal that's 100% Real on the range-topping Duster Prestige family-sized SUV for 211: 0% APR; 3 Months' Deferred Payments.

From €23,995, the Duster Prestige giving customers the full Duster experience with wow-worthy tech and complete comfort, and comes equipped with Multiview parking camera with sensors, keyless entry, climate control, Bluetooth connectivity, 17" diamond-cut alloy wheels, and a range of stylish finishes.

This offer is available through Dacia Bank on Dacia Duster Prestige models ordered and registered by

31st January 2021. The Dacia Sandero was the best-selling car in its class last month and for 211, New Sandero starts at €11,640 and Sandero Stepway Alternative dCi customers can take: €500 Cashback +; 4.9% APR +; 3 Months' Deferred Payments. On the Dacia Logan MCV and Logan MCV Stepway, Dacia is offering: 4.9% APR +; 3 Months' Deferred Payments.

These offers are available through Dacia Bank on orders up to 31st December 2020 for registration in January 2021 at Dacia's network of 29 dealerships around Ireland.

Why buy old when you can buy new? Dacia's Virtual Showroom is now open between 10am and 8pm, Monday to Sunday, visit www.dacia.ie/virtual-showroom.



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Do you have Ireland's most Christmassy home?

Annual competition has raised over €20,000 for charities in the last four years

Energia has launched its annual 'Ireland's Most Christmassy Home' competition and is looking for applicants from Wicklow. Now in its fifth year. Households to submit images of their homes decorated for Christmas to potentially be crowned 'Ireland's Most Christmassy Home'.

Full details on how to enter are available at www.energia.ie/imch-entries. To celebrate five years of the competition the winner's prize money will be doubled! This year 1st place will receive €6,000 for their chosen charity, 2nd place will receive €4,000 and 3rd place will receive €2,000. All winners will be decided by a public vote. Previous winners have donated to charities including Arklow RNLI,

Adare Alzheimers and Wexford Homecare Hospice.

This year entrants from Wicklow have longer than ever to apply, with applications open from November 20th and closing midnight, Sunday December 6th. All you need to do is snap a photo of your outdoor Christmas decorations and light displays and submit it online. The Energia elves will review all entries and announce the shortlist on

Monday December 14th. Online voting will then open and the public will have until Sunday December 20th to select a winner, who will be announced on Monday December 21st.

Geoff Codd Head of Marketing and Retail Development, Energia commented; "We are delighted to launch Ireland's Most Christmassy Home annual competition for 2020. This year more than ever

we need to spread some festive cheer at home and empower kindness. The competition has grown in popularity and is now a firm fixture in household calendars all over Ireland. The Energia team is looking forward to seeing what households have planned this year and playing a part in raising vital funds for charities across Ireland who need our support in these difficult times".



WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL
1, Leone Crinnion, seek planning permission for construction of a 2-bedroomed single storey dwelling on my site, having an existing road entrance onto the Quill Road, with a site area of 0.11 hectares, and for connection to public services adjacent to and on the site, and for all associated site works, on site in the townland of Kilmacanogue South, Quill Road, Kilmacanogue. The planning application may be inspected, or purchased at a fee not exceeding the reasonable cost of making a copy, at the offices of the planning authority during its public opening hours. A submission or observation in relation to the application may be made in writing to the planning authority on payment of the prescribed fee, €20, within the period of 5 weeks beginning on the date of receipt by the authority of the application, and such submissions or observations will be considered by the planning authority in making a decision on the application. The planning authority may grant permission subject to or without conditions, or may refuse to grant permission.

WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL
We Yellow Lane Business Park Ltd are applying for Planning Permission for the following: Demolition of existing 498m² commercial unit and removal of existing temporary car wash. Construction of 32 housing units that shall consist of 8 one bed apartments and 8 two bed duplex apartments identified as Blocks 1, 2 and 16 three bedroom houses identified as block 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7 with connection to existing services at Yellow Lane, Knockenrahan lower, Arklow 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 the planning authority during its public opening hours. A submission or observation in relation to the application may be made in writing to the planning authority on payment of the prescribed fee, €20, within the period of 5 weeks beginning on the date of receipt by the authority of the application, and such submissions or observations will be considered by the planning authority in making a decision on the application. The planning authority may grant permission subject to or without conditions, or may refuse to grant permission.

Prayer for a special request

Oh! Dear Mother of God. Our Lady of Conception Aparecida! Oh! Saint Rita of Cassia and Saint Jude worker of miracles and helper of impossible causes pray for me. Saint Expedite, Saint of urgent causes. Saint Edwige the Saint of the needy, you know how desperate I feel, please ask Jesus to help me (mention request) May the Sacred Heart of Jesus be adored and glorified for ever. Pray 1 Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be..... Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.
Pray for 3 days. Publish on the 3rd day. See what will happen on the 4th day.
S.J.

Gospel: Matthew 6:7-15

Jesus said to his disciples: 'In your prayers do not babble as the pagans do, for they think that by using many words they will make themselves heard. Do not be like them; your Father knows what you need before you ask him. So, you should pray like this: 'Our Father in heaven, may your name be held holy, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we have forgiven those who are in debt to us. And do not put us to the test but save us from the evil one. Yes, if you forgive others their failings, your heavenly Father will forgive you yours; but if you do not forgive others your Father will not forgive your failings either.'

C.J.

THE MIRACULOUS PRAYER

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



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Applications by cover letter and CV to the Manager at the address or email above before 5pm, Thursday 03/12/2020

RECRUITMENT



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WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL

Applications are invited from suitably qualified persons to form a panel from which future temporary/permanent positions may be filled.

• GENERAL SERVICES SUPERVISOR – ARKLOW & WICKLOW HARBOUR

REF: 37/2020 Salary €756.84 to €902.91 gross per week

**CLOSING DATE FOR RECEIPT OF COMPLETED
APPLICATION FORMS IS 12 NOON ON
THURSDAY 10TH DECEMBER 2020 SHARP.**

• PERMANENT CLERICAL OFFICER

REF: 38/2020 Salary €24,602 to €40,589 gross per annum (includes 1st LSI)

• PERMANENT ASSISTANT STAFF OFFICER

REF: 36/2020 Salary €28,753 to €46,465 gross per annum (includes 1st LSI)

**CLOSING DATE FOR RECEIPT OF COMPLETED
APPLICATION FORMS IS 12 NOON ON
THURSDAY 17TH DECEMBER 2020 SHARP.**

Application Forms and further details may be obtained from Enterprise & Corporate Services at 0404 20159 or by emailing recruitment@wicklowcoco.ie and on the Wicklow County Council website www.wicklow.ie

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

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Lorraine Gallagher,
Director of Services,
Enterprise & Corporate Services,
Wicklow County Council,
County Buildings, Wicklow

Phone: 0404 20159 Fax: 0404 20112
Email: recruitment@wicklowcoco.ie



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Health Service Executive

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HSE Dublin South East - based in Clonskeagh (covers from Baggot Street to Leopardstown)
HSE Wicklow (covers from Bray to Carnew)

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Nursing Office at phone number **0404 63043** if interested in **Wicklow**
Nursing Office at phone number **01 2365228/229** if interested in **Dun Laoghaire Area**
Nursing Office at phone number **01 2680317** if interested in **Clonskeagh and surrounding area**

Interviews will take place in early December 2020

CLASSIFIED ADS & PLANNING / APPOINTMENTS

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