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# 'WE WANT TO BE HEARD!'

**Councillors are making their views known to An Bord Pleanala after learning of plans to fill Ballinclare quarry with over 6 million tonnes of inert waste. Councillors have felt excluded from the process and are now seeking an oral hearing to make their voices heard.**

The trust between councillors and the Council's executives has been 'fractured', according to Independent Councillor John Snell.

Cllr Snell was speaking at a Special Meeting of Wicklow County Council last Monday, which was held in response to plans by Kilsaran Concrete Unlimited to create the largest landfill in the country by backfilling Ballinclare Quarry in

Kilbride with inert waste. Councillors feel aggrieved over not being informed by Council officials of the plans until 'the eleventh hour', when it came before them on the agenda of the previous week's meeting.

Meanwhile An Bord Pleanala has now approved plans by Kilsaran to extract 3 million tonnes of sand and gravel at a Kildare quarry in Kilcullen, a short distance from Aga

Khan stud farms. In this case Kildare County Council was given the power to make a decision and it refused planning permission in 2019. Kilsaran then lodged an appeal with ABP, and ABP has now granted permission. This was despite objections from Aga Khan, the Irish Thoroughbred Breeders' Association, TDs, councillors and local residents.

At the special meeting



The Tinahely Ladies football team were celebrating last week after being winning the 2021 Leinster Intermediate Football Championship. Pictured are Laura, Ann, and Sarah Hogan celebrating the win. See page 11 for more. Pic: Michael Kelly

# EPS

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last week, Councillors unanimously supported a proposal which objects to the Ballinclare quarry plans and seeks an oral hearing to examine what councillors are describing as "considerable flaws and inaccuracies in the planning application".

The proposal was drafted by councillors from the Arklow and Wicklow Municipal Districts.

The councillors' resolution objects to the development on the grounds of: "Lack of consultation with Arklow and Wicklow Municipal District representatives; Lack of consultation with WCC Climate and Biodiversity SPC; Lack of consultation with local land and property owners; The excessive nature of the scale of the proposed development in a rural area; Negative impact on the environment; Negative impact on watercourse (in particular Potters River and

Brittas Bay); Impact on local residents and wildlife from noise pollution; Negative impact on surrounding residents' quality of life; Negative impact on mental and physical health of the local community; Health and safety concerns in particular road safety; Negative impact on biodiversity; Concerns in relation to future environmental and traffic management monitoring and enforcement; Concerns in relation to the potential negative impact and devaluation of local properties; Concerns in relation to the absence of any consideration towards provision of a local Community Fund such as the one that's in place at a nearby landfill site; Concerns in relation to the inadequacy of the surrounding road network and width of the local road to facilitate the amount of Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs) pro-

posed; Negative impact on surrounding tourism attractions; Concerns in

relation to the close proximity of a local school to the proposed landfill

access routes."

Cllr Irene Winters  
Continued on page 3...

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# Wicklow Library staff respond to the call - as vaccination centre volunteers

Wicklow County Council's library staff have answered the call and are working as volunteers in the Greystones COVID-19 vaccination centre.

Volunteering is first and foremost about giving back to your community and the volunteers assisting in the Greystones COVID-19 vaccination centre are testament to that.

Dressed in their distinctive Wicklow volunteer Hi-Viz jackets and with a friendly face, 18 of Wicklow County Council's library staff are assisting the HSE staff to keep the system rolling along in an efficient manner.

The entire team of volunteers who attend the vaccination centre every day are putting their collective shoulders to the wheel, to make sure that the citizens of Wicklow are protected from this potentially deadly virus.

Nobody is safe until everyone is safe and the library staff are delighted to play their part in this huge effort. The work is very challenging but equally rewarding, they say.

With the re-opening of the library service, the 18 library staff are continuing with their volunteering and their colleagues in the library branches are covering their duties to facilitate this.

service, to the undertaking of numerous civic improvements to facilitate outdoor activity.

Mr Frank Curran, Chief Executive, Wicklow County Council, added his thanks to the library staff for volunteering at the vaccination centre and to all the Council staff for their adaptability and ingenuity since the start of the pandemic as well as for helping to keep the community of Wicklow safe in these challenging times.

Cathaoirleach of Wicklow County Council, Cllr Shay Cullen, paid tribute to the Council's library staff for putting the needs of the community first and added that he was extremely proud to acknowledge the role that the Council has played since the start of the pandemic: from the setting up of the Community Call Helpline



Caitriona Kelly from Greystones Library and Magda McAuliffe from Ballywaltrim Library working as volunteers in the Greystones vaccination centre



## Thinking of Martin on his Birthday

Our thoughts are with the family and friends of Martin Gibson-O'Gara this week as he would have been celebrating his 11th birthday on July 3rd. Martin sadly passed away in May.

Martin, from Newcastle, was the son of Sarah and Marty Gibson O'Gara and was born with severe brain damage. Martin touched the lives of all he met, lighting up the days for everyone around him with his heartwarming smile.

Martin spent much of his life in Our Lady's Children's Hospital Crumlin (OLCHC), however Sarah and Marty made the choice to nurse Martin at their home in Newcastle, an around the clock commitment which was only possible with the help of night nurses.

In this way they managed to keep Martin in the comfort of his own bed and out of hospital for as much time as possible. This was also the aim of their family and friends, and the wider community, and the many successful fundraising events for Martin over the years are testament to this. Martin's family are grateful to the nurses who helped to look after him, the staff at OLCHC, and LauraLynn Children's Hospice for being a lifeline of support.

A major fundraising event in 2012 provided a specially adapted car which allowed Sarah and Marty more independence when it came to transportation. A couple of years after that, with the help of more fundraising, they were able to adapt their home so they could better care for Martin's needs and improve his quality of life.

It was understood that Martin's life expectancy was very short and his family treasured every precious moment they had with him, filling his life with as much happiness as possible. Martin passed away peacefully in his mother's loving arms on Wednesday 19th May.

## Wicklow online Lotto player scoops €331,563

One lucky online player in Co. Wicklow won €331,563 in the Saturday 19th June Lotto draw. The ticket holder matched five numbers and the bonus which meant they were just one number away from winning the €3,253,367 jackpot on offer in Saturday night's draw. The lucky winner selected their own numbers on an Advance Play ticket online at [www.lottery.ie](http://www.lottery.ie) on Saturday 29th May.

The National Lottery confirmed that a notification to the user's online account and a separate email was sent to the lucky Wicklow ticket holder encouraging them to get in touch to begin the process of claiming their prize. It was the second big win in Co. Wicklow in the space of two days after another player in Rathdrum Village scooped a €96,928 prize after narrowly missing out on Friday night's EuroMillions jackpot worth over €29 million.

## Wicklow Mountains National Park

Glendalough Community Excavations will return 4th-13th August 2021 after an enforced absence last year due to Covid. If you have an interest in archaeology and Glendalough it is a fantastic experience. "We regret we cannot offer places to those under 18 this year but we hope to welcome younger participants again next year. Adult places (subject to availability) are available from fixed blocks of one or two days to facilitate Covid protocols. No prior knowledge of excavation is required and for information and details of application please email [glendaloughheritageforum@gmail.com](mailto:glendaloughheritageforum@gmail.com)."

## Swarming warning

The Ashford and District Beekeepers' Association have a number of beekeepers who will assist the public if they spot a swarm of bees whilst out and about in the Wicklow area. Swarming time is usually from May into July. The Ashford Beekeepers Association says "Many of the public are unsure as to how to deal with a swarm or who to report to. It can be a daunting sight!

"Our beekeepers are on hand to collect the swarm, so do check out our website [wicklowbees.com/Swarms.php](http://wicklowbees.com/Swarms.php) where you will find a beekeeper nearest you."

## Car parking

Many of the tourist attractions, beaches and scenic walks throughout the County have provision of parking nearby. There are carpark facilities available at Brittas Bay, Magheramore, Glendalough, Luggala and Laragh together with many carparks throughout the towns and surrounding areas. All users of amenities are asked to be conscious of parking facilities available and requested not to park on roads that may cause an obstruction or safety issue to other pedestrians, local residents and road users. Please be mindful of access requirements for Emergency Services in all locations.

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# Magheramore land sold for €700,000

**Wicklow County Council was unable to secure the land for sale adjacent to Magheramore beach last week.**

The site was put up for sale in an online auction last week. The land, which extends to 21 acres, was listed with a guide price of €210,000 and eventually sold for €700,000 when bidding opened on Friday, 25th June.

The land serves as the access route to Magheramore Beach and elected representatives called on Wicklow County Council to purchase the land over fears that access to the beach would be restricted. It was hoped that if the Council purchased the land it could be developed into a car park.

Fine Gael TD Simon Harris has expressed his disappointment over the Magheramore land sale and has called for an audit of the parking facilities at Wicklow's most popular visitor attractions.

Minister Harris said: "I am disappointed to learn that Wicklow County Council was unable to secure the land for sale adjacent to Magheramore beach. In fairness the council did respond to the public demand to acquire the site, however the 20 acres for sale sold for three times the

initial asking price at auction."

Minister Harris highlighted the need for a wider audit of carparking facilities at Wicklow's most popular visitor locations.

"A major issue for Wicklow residents has become congestion and bad parking at our most popular visitor spots. This is posing a danger to residents where emergency services such as fire engines and ambulances cannot in the event of an emergency pass badly parked abandoned cars. Although this has been an issue in previous years, the impact of the lockdown and the consequent growth in visitor numbers has brought this to crisis point in many areas.

"There is a project team at present drafting a Wicklow Visitor Masterplan and this will ultimately develop proposals to address this problem. However, there are a number of short term measures that need to be put in place at our beaches and scenic locations in the Wicklow uplands.

"I have written to the CEO of Wicklow asking for an audit of all the most

congested visitor spots with a view to putting temporary parking in place to relieve the pressure on local communities", Minister Harris concluded."

Sinn Féin TD John Brady has expressed extreme disappointment at the news. He further stated that it's essential now that any attempts by the new owners to restrict continued public access to Magheramore beach be strongly opposed.

Speaking after the unsuccessful attempt by Wicklow County Council to acquire the Magheramore site, Deputy Brady said "Magheramore Beach is one of the best beaches in Ireland and concerns have been expressed that continued access to the beach could be jeopardised with the sale of the 21-acre site serves as the route to Magheramore Beach. Unfortunately, the 21-acre site was sold privately today for a reported €700,000, more than three times the asking price. I want to thank the Council for attempting to purchase the site, however they were unfortunately outbid.

"It is critically important now that the council enforce the public right of way that exists through this site which provides access

to Magheramore beach. This is a well-established right of way which has been enjoyed by generations of people."

"There have been continuous concerns about the right of way. In 2003 when the site was previously in the process of being sold Mr Brian Doyle, the former director of services in the planning section of Wicklow County council said that the council considered there was a "public right of access" to Magheramore beach, "regardless of who owns it" and the council would enforce that right. It's imperative now that the council is again prepared to enforce that right, if needed."

Deputy Brady concluded "It is critical in the time ahead to ensure that the public right of way that exists is strengthened, this can be done through the County Development Plan which is currently up for review and I urge people to make submissions to the council on this issue. Along with many concerned people I will also be keeping a watchful eye on any future planning applications that come forward to try to develop this beautiful area."



*Joe Codyre has been elected as president of Bray Lions Club for the coming year. He was presented with the Chain of Office by outgoing president Danny Bohan, who has served for the past two years and who guided the club through the Pandemic. On behalf of all Bray Lions, Joe presented Danny with an inscribed vase to mark his outstanding work as Club President. Tributes were paid to Danny during a virtual final meeting of the club for the current Lions year. Joe Codyre has been a member of Bray Lions Club since 1994 and previously served as President in 2002/5. He is also a past District Competitions Officer. Joe welcomed Peter Doyle, who continues as club treasurer and Tresi O'Brien who succeeds Karl O'Broin as club secretary.*

## Traffic chaos at Wicklow beauty spots

**The recent good weather has resulted in major traffic issues at a number of Co. Wicklow beaches and other popular tourist spots around the county.**

At the June meeting of Wicklow's Joint Policing Committee (JPC), Cllr Shay Cullen noted that at Magheramore the previous weekend there had been a major overflow of cars.

"Magheramore car park can take 200 cars, this last weekend there were about another 300 cars abandoned on the road," he said. "There is a safety issue in these spots. An approach needs to be taken by the Council and the Gardai."

Superintendent Denis Ferry said "I'd like to think there is good co-operation between ourselves and the council in getting the message out there. The weather plays a big part. There are car parks that are full by 10am. We are working closely with other agencies to manage traffic, it has been working very well but it's something we have to keep working at and learning lessons from."

Too many cars parking illegally in the vicinity of Clogga Beach has also been an issue of concern and the amount of cars made it difficult for emergency services to access the area, forcing them to take motorcycles instead of cars.

On the afternoon of Sunday 13th June, Garai had to close a section of the Rathdrum to Laragh road for several hours as congestion at Clara Vale caused 3km tailbacks.

Gardai are reminding people flocking to Brittas Bay and Magheramore to not to park in a manner that obstructs traffic, emergency services, or the local farmers who are currently harvesting in the area.

Following the recent traffic chaos, Gardai released a statement saying: "We're appealing to the public to park legally in designated car parks and spaces when visiting beaches, beauty spots and other public amenities. The good weather has seen an increase in dangerous illegal parking at these locations across the country in recent weeks. An Garda Siochana wants people to enjoy the summer but do so safely.

"Parking illegally can lead to unnecessary risk and

dangers such as pedestrians being forced to walk along dangerous roads. It can also prevent emergency services from gaining access to these amenities a seaside locations which could lead to the loss of life.

"We encourage the public to plan their journeys and think safety first when parking your vehicle. The outcome of parking illegally could be far more serious than a FCPN or vehicle towing and puts others and your own life at risk. An Garda Siochana reminds and encourages the public to social distance and follow public health guidelines when attending these locations this Summer."

Social Democrats TD Jennifer Whitmore has called for a coastal Local Link route to facilitate access to beaches for people coming from the South and North of Wicklow.

Deputy Whitmore said "It's understandable that everyone wants to go out to enjoy the good weather especially after a year of lockdowns and restrictions, but our beaches in Wicklow are not prepared to cater to the huge number of people flocking to our coasts on the weekends. It's leading to huge traffic congestions, roads turning into car parks and even emergency services getting stuck in traffic. This is completely unsustainable.

"While I have called for increased traffic management to be put in place I do believe we need to look at a medium to long term solution to manage the increase in popularity of these beaches. I have written to the NTA with a proposal to put in place a summer time Local Link route up and down the coast to cater to south and north Wicklow residents who want to visit these beaches.

"This would be particularly useful for residents in Arklow wanting to travel to Brittas Bay or people from Bray and Greystones coming south. It would remove much of the traffic when public transport is in place, and would work well alongside Garda traffic management measures restricting traffic to the area during busy weekends. A lot more of this kind of thinking outside the box is important so that we can manage our outdoor summer in a sustainable way but it will also benefit the local environment which can be better managed with less car parks encroaching on our green spaces," concluded Deputy Whitmore.

## 'WE WANT TO BE HEARD!'

*Continued from page 1...*

requested that the Council also write to the Minister for Local Government to express "how we as elected members have been sidelined in this, despite the fact there was obviously consultation between the developer and the officials. It needs to be set in legislation that elected members need to be informed of any strategic plan or development of this scale and magnitude. We should write to the minister to outline this flaw in the system and to have it changed, not just for our local authority, but for all local authorities in the county."

Cllr Tom Fortune asked that a delegation from the Council be sent to meet with representatives from the Department, and this proposal was seconded by Cllr Anne Ferris and agreed to.

"Whatever rules and regulations the Department have in place always seem to exclude the councillors and put us on the bottom rung of the ladder," said Cllr Fortune. "As an elected councillor I don't accept that, it is not acceptable anymore and we need to try to

do something about it."

Cllr Snell said that the councillors felt 'hurt' and 'let down' by the council's executives and the lack of engagement on a project of such magnitude.

"At the end of the day, we're the bridge between our constituents and the officials in Wicklow County Council and we've been really let down on this project, really let down. It was very disappointing that the Cathaoirleach had to sit there last week, not knowing any more than any of the rest of us. And really, that has hurt us, it shouldn't happen. It is something you would have put down to Wicklow in the bad old days. I want to put this down as a one-off. To keep us in the dark on something that's going to fundamentally impact not just on two Municipal districts but on the whole county, is unforgivable."

Chief Executive Frank Curran explained that "there is a procedure with strategic infrastructure developments which we followed in this case."

The Council received notifica-

tion about the submission after it was lodged in April.

He said "We then prepared a report based on the advice of the professional and technical staff in the planning and environment department, we couldn't bring that to the May meeting so that went to the June meeting and that was the opportunity for members to review and come up with their proposals. That goes on as an addendum to the report that goes to An Bord Pleanála. That's the process set out in legislation, in the future we will endeavor to inform members of what is coming down the tracks, but we have to comply with legislation."

Director of Services Breege Kilkenny added "It seems that the main issue for the councillors is that they were unaware of this. As the Chief Executive pointed out, there's legislation in place, but going forward there's nothing to stop us, once we become informed of a Strategic Housing Development or structure, of informally letting the councillors know."





Junior Musicals students Erynn O'Reilly, Noah Hobson, and Abigail Adeva on the set of Disney's *Disenchanted* in Enniskerry.

## Junior Musicals students appearing in *Disenchanted*

Three students from the Junior Musicals Theatre School in Bray will be appearing in the upcoming *Disenchanted* film, having been part of the filming which took place recently in Enniskerry.

Erynn O'Reilly (10) from Bray, Noah Hobson (11) from Greystones, and Abigail Adeva (11) from Bray had an 'experience of a lifetime', according to their teacher and agent Hannah Masterson.

The students played parts in what will surely be one of the movie's largest and most spectacular scenes.

They were three of only 14 children in the scene, along with 75 dancers, extras, and actors Amy Adams and Maya Rudolph.

"It was an experience of a lifetime and they all cried on the last night at wrap," said Hannah. "There is also a chance they'll get back out again in July so fingers crossed for that!"

Filming recently took place in the village from 14th-17th June, and more will take place in July.

On completion of a very busy and full on week in Enniskerry, the director Adam Shankman said on Instagram "it was one of the hardest and most extraordinary weeks of filming I have ever done". The similar scene from the first film *Enchanted* was shot in Central Park in New York.

# 'Safe Routes to School' Projects to progress in Wicklow

Three Co. Wicklow schools have been selected for inclusion in the first round of the Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Programme to support walking and cycling infrastructure for primary and post-primary schools.

The scheme was announced in March of this year, with 932 schools (representing almost one in four schools in the state) expressing interest. The schools selected were assessed against a range of criteria including school type, location and the school's commitment to sustainable travel.

The Safe Routes to School programme aims to create safer walking and cycling routes within communities, alleviate congestion at the school gates and increase the number of students who walk or cycle to school by providing walking and cycling facilities.

The improvements to the school commute range from an upgraded footpath or new cycle lane to a complete reworking of the road outside a school's

entrance. Cycle and scooter parking will be provided to most schools that are part of the programme.

Precise details of the works to be undertaken in and around the individual schools will be determined after a detailed assessment has been carried out by the relevant local authority. The process of engagement between the schools, NTA and the local authorities is already under way.

Green Party Councillor Lourda Scott said: "I am delighted to see such a huge level of interest locally in this scheme and that St Kevin's NS Greystones was chosen in this first round of funding. As a parent of three primary school kids myself and from talking to other parents I know that people real-

ly want to be able to leave their car behind on the school commute. However to do this they need safe routes travelling to and from school and to have a secure place to leave their bike or scooter when they get there. I contacted all schools in the District when this funding was announced and I want to highlight that all Schools that applied this year will be facilitated in the future. They will not be required to reapply as they will come into the programme on a rolling basis. I look forward to seeing the positive changes this funding will bring to our school children in the future."

Minister for Transport Eamon Ryan TD said: "Walking, scooting and cycling to school fosters independence, and is a healthy

way for our young people to get around as well as helping us all to cut emissions and air pollution. We want to ensure they can do this in a safe way, through providing additional facilities in and close to schools. This is the first phase of the Safe Routes to School Programme which I look forward to expanding in the years ahead."

The programme is funded by the Department of Transport through the National Transport Authority (NTA) and is supported by the Department of Education. An Taisce's Green-Schools is co-ordinating the programme, while funding will be made available to local authorities which will play a key part in delivering the infrastructure along access routes and at the school gate.

## 'Public lighting should not proceed in Bray's People's Park'

Bray Sinn Féin councillors Grace McManus and Dermot 'Daisy' O'Brien have expressed their disappointment that provision of public lighting will proceed in the People's Park, despite many concerns raised by residents.

The issue was debated at the Bray Municipal District meeting, with the district engineer stating the plans would proceed as planned.

Cllr Mc Manus said "The story of the lights in People's Park has been ongoing for the past number of months. When the idea was originally proposed, it didn't seem like a bad idea, however quite quickly it became apparent that there were legitimate concerns about Bat wildlife, the natural beauty of the park at night, money

wastage due to street lighting already in existence, and anti-social behaviour. Councillors and council officials have been back and forth to try and work all of these issues out. It appeared that everybody was on the same page, that this process of engagement was ongoing, however now a tender has gone out to carry out these works, meaning they will proceed as is. This has been met with fierce opposition from local residents.

I met with some of these residents recent-

ly and we had a very productive exchange of views. They have clear and valid concerns, and they have made them well known. I cannot understand why we are proceeding with this project in spite of this.

I've yet to hear a counter rationale for this project, other than that the money will be lost if we do not go ahead. It does raise the question: what is the purpose of good community engagement, debate, and exploration of ideas if plans are going to be progressed regardless?

At this stage I do believe there is enough evidence that this idea does not serve the community and it should be halted."

## Greystones girl to represent Wicklow in Miss Ireland competition

Rebecca Johnston from Greystones will represent Wicklow this year in the Miss Ireland final at the stunning Killua Castle on September 5th. Rebecca is 23 and studied Entrepreneurship and Management. She now works as a professional technical recruiter.

Established in 1947, Miss Ireland has been the launch pad for many eminent, successful, and inspiring women in Ireland. In recent years the Miss Ireland Franchise has raised over €250,000 for various charities including Laura Lynn, Temple Street, Alzheimer's Ireland, Pieta House, The Cari Foundation and this year are proud to partner with Variety Ireland, an Irish charity helping sick, disadvantaged and children with special needs since 1951.

The 18th Century Killua Castle in County Westmeath is the venue for Miss Ireland 2021, which will have a rainbow theme. The privately owned castle dates back to 1740 and has been lovingly restored to its former glory. This year the

final of Miss Ireland will be an outdoor show against the backdrop of the castle on September 5th.

Current Miss World Toni-Ann Singh has been invited to jet in from Jamaica for the show which will feature a dramatic light display and an eclectic mix of music and entertainment as the 30 finalists descend an outdoor stone staircase to the castle gardens.

"Rainbows remind us of possibilities, opportunities and hope which is why we chose this theme to announce our finalists this year" said Brendan Marc Scully, Director of Miss Ireland "We are delighted to be able to bring back Miss Ireland with a kaleidoscope of colour after such dark times. The live event in September will also be

live streamed and all preparations are and will continue to be fully compliant with Government COVID19 health and safety guidelines for entertainment production.

The winner of Miss Ireland 2021 will receive a lucrative agency contract and a host of prizes including jewellery, gowns, a professional photo shoot, beauty and hair products and then go on to represent her country and take part in the 70th Miss World festival which will take place in the stunning Caribbean Island of Puerto Rico in December this year.

Virtual heats have been running all over the country to find contestants from each county with beauty, poise and personality to take part in the forthcoming Miss Ireland 2021 competition.



Rebecca Johnston

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# Excitement at the prospect of developing BIFE as a 'FET Campus of the Future'

Minister Simon Harris last week in his capacity as Minister for Further and Higher Education met with the Kildare/Wicklow Education and Training Board to discuss the redevelopment of the Bray Institute for Further Education (BIFE) as a Further Education and Training Campus of the future.

Minister Harris said: "I was delighted to see the KWETB outline its ambition to redevelop BIFE as a model Further Education and Training campus of the future.

"I am anxious to see that North Wicklow has a modern and all-encompassing Further Education College and Training Centre. My own Department and Solas are at present developing the concept of the type of accommodation which will house FET colleges of the future.

"The future FET campus will not only house the type of Further and Higher Education provided by BIFE at the moment but also a wide range of training and apprenticeship programmes with extensive progression of routes to Institutes of Technology, Universities, Training and employment.

BIFE with its central location and good connections to public transport is an ideal location

for a modern 21st Century FET campus and my Department shares the KWETB's ambition to realise such a vision in the heart of Bray.

"This will require a radically different and expanded complex from the old St Thomas' school buildings BIFE is presently housed in.

"At present the National Development Plan is being drafted and the KWETB have already identified BIFE as a future innovation, technological and skills hub supporting enterprise and responding to skills needs in the wider region.

"My Department is proposing that the next national development plan will prioritise new 21st Century FET campuses and it is a priority for me that an exemplar FET College of the Future will be located in North Wicklow.

"I share the KWETB's vision and I look forward to working with the ETB, BIFE and Solas to

advance this project further," Minister Harris concluded.

The Principal Mr. Ray Tedders said he welcomes the commitment of the Minister and KWETB to invest in a modern 21st century college of the future. "BIFE is anxious to see this investment commence so that the learners of this region will have access to modern facilities across the wide range of exciting, creative programmes at BIFE," he said.

Gabriel Allen, Deputy Principal of BIFE said "This new development will be great for Wicklow. It ties in with BIFE's vision for the future, with

Further & Higher Education and Training available on one campus, with all stakeholders working together to ensure that BIFE becomes an educational centre of excellence for the learners of Wicklow."

Cllr Tom Fortune, speaking with the *Wicklow Times*, said as a

member of the BIFE board and in his role of vice chair of the KWETB that he is excited about the prospect of the development of BIFE as a FET Campus of the Future.

"The board of BIFE and the KWETB have worked very hard with Minister Harris to make this day happen," he said. "This will be great for north Wicklow, in fact the whole county of Wicklow. KWETB are putting a plan together as part of an overall National Development Plan. There is a lot of work to be done over the next couple of months, this is a priority for the KWETB"

Cllr Fortune was part of a delegation that met with Minister Harris last week. "It was a very constructive meeting", said Cllr Fortune, and he thanked Minister Harris for his foresight and drive to help the KWETB make this happen. "This was a great news day for Wicklow."



Alison Ryder, Irene Sweeney, Donal Murphy, Cathaoirleach of Arklow Miriam Murphy, Claire Lawless, Cllr Peir Leonard, and Brian Carty at the launch of 'Visit Arklow' in St. Mary's Park

## New tourism brand for Arklow as 'Visit Arklow' is launched

Arklow Town Team officially launched 'Visit Arklow', a new tourism brand for the Arklow district, on Monday 21st June.

The holiday atmosphere was palpable with branded bunting billowing throughout St. Mary's Park on Main Street, where Cathaoirleach of Arklow Municipal District Council, Cllr Miriam Murphy, officiated during the launch.

The new Visit Arklow brand aims to support the reinvigoration of the town as a tourism destination and to promote Arklow as a base for touring the wider district. In years gone by Arklow enjoyed the status as a popular seaside spot for visitors, however this had dwindled over the years. The new brand will see Arklow positioned as a welcoming seaside destination, where visitors can base themselves to enjoy a holiday filled with outdoor experiences on their doorstep, within the wider district.

The project has involved researching trends and developing themes that will appeal to visitors. Allison Ryder of Arklow town Team explains these: "The first theme is 'Made by the Sea' and this represents the deep maritime connection to Arklow and its people, while saying that, as a visitor, great memories can be Made by the Sea, while holidaying in the Arklow area. With a focus on the wider district, the

second theme highlights Arklow as 'Gateway to the Glens' and aims to show visitors that they can base themselves in Arklow while still exploring the district from harbour to headwater right up to the Glenmalur Valley".

In 2020, Arklow Town Team secured LEADER funding, through County Wicklow Partnership, for a new VisitArklow.ie website and a small team went about gathering detailed content for inclusion on the website. Claire Lawless, District Administrator of Arklow Municipal District Council says, "All local tourism and hospitality businesses have a free business listing and promotion of the website will be supported by new Social Media channels which will help bring visitors onto the website to help with planning their holiday in the district. We are delighted to see the launch of the new Visit Arklow brand just in time to capture some of the Summer 2021 staycation market".

Launching the Visit Arklow brand during a small social distant outdoor gathering of local business and community representatives Cllr. Murphy said "It is great to put Arklow back on the tourism map and I would like to thank County Wicklow Partnership who have been a great support during this project. The foundation has now been laid for Arklow to once again become popular a holiday destination."

## 'CAP deal fails environment again'

Birdwatch Ireland has said that Ireland must listen to the science and increase environmental ambition in the national CAP Strategic Plan.

The organisation, headquartered in Kilcoole, says that negotiators on the CAP deal that is being agreed in Brussels are not listening to the science on environmental degradation

Oonagh Duggan, Head of Advocacy said "It is now up to Charlie McConalogue, Minister for Agriculture to use all levers, flexibilities and national exchequer funding to ensure that the Ireland's CAP Strategic Plan goes beyond what's been agreed in this deal and to ramp up environmental ambition. We are running out of time to address loss of habitat for birds and pollinators, poor water quality and rising greenhouse gas emissions. We know farmers want to do much more for nature and they must be supported to do so."

Details of the CAP deal show significant weakening of the proposals put by the European Commission to agriculture ministers to make farming greener. Examples include the weakening of environmental conditions of the basic payment including 'space for nature' on farmland and protection for peatlands. Member states will also be allowed to delay full implementation of the important new ecoschemes in Pillar one.

BirdWatch Ireland believes a key opportunity has been missed to address the biodiversity and climate emergencies associated with agriculture and the EU Green Deal is "now lacking all credibility".

A recent assessment published by BirdWatch Ireland and the RSPB in Northern Ireland shows that between 1998-2020 there's been a 45% increase in the number of farmland bird species added to the Red List of birds of highest conservation concern in Ireland. With no evidence of recovery of species that have been suffering long term declines (e.g. Curlew,

Corncrake), now even recently common and widespread bird species like the Kestrel are showing sharp declines indicating degradation of habitats in the wider countryside. "An environmentally ambitious CAP is critical as a policy to reverse these declines which are a result of previous agriculture policies and to restore nature," said Birdwatch Ireland.

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Finian and Claire McEvoy at the opening of the Samuel Hayes Bridge which links the Jubilee and Avonmore walks in Rathdrum.

# Samuel Hayes Bridge opened in Rathdrum

A new pedestrian bridge to link the Jubilee Walk and the Avonmore Way trail over the Avonmore River was officially opened in the Rathdrum area on Wednesday last (June 16th).

The new suspension bridge is designed to have the look and feel of a walking trail footbridge that is light and transparent.

Wicklow County Council, in conjunction with Coillte and the National Parks and Wildlife Service collaborated on the project.

Performing the official opening, Cllr Pat Kennedy, Cathaoirleach of Wicklow County Council, said: "The goal of the project was to create a bridge that was practical but also mindful of the natural beauty that surrounds it.

This bridge has delivered on the brief. This opening today represents a great day for Rathdrum and I hope this bridge will continue to serve the people of Rathdrum and the County for many years ahead".

Acknowledging this significant investment in the project, Cllr Pat Kennedy, paid tribute to the Minister for Rural & Community Development, Heather Humphreys TD, and her officials.

Funding was secured from the Department of Rural and Community Development under the Outdoor Recreation

Infrastructure Scheme to the amount of €392,000.

The bridge is named after Samuel Hayes (1743-1795) who was a Member of Parliament, barrister, amateur architect, antiquarian, planter and kinsman of Charles Stewart Parnell. Mr Hayes designed and built Avondale House and estate in 1777.

Speaking at the opening, the Chief Executive of Wicklow County, Mr Frank Curran, commented: "By investing in the construction of the Samuel Hayes Bridge, the long-term viability of walking

routes in the area is secured, and thus allows for further economic benefit to the area by way of tourism". He paid tribute to the contractors Kenny Civils and Plant Ltd., Laurencetown, Co. Galway, along with their sub-contractors, Thompsons of Carlow for delivering this uniquely designed amenity.

Wicklow County Council would like to thank Coillte and National Parks & Wildlife Services for their contribution and support on producing this amazing and aesthetically pleasing project.

## Vaccines now being administered at Kilanerin

The first vaccines started to be administered at the Kilanerin Community Centre from last week. The new centre is based just 15mins drive from Arklow and serves both south Wicklow and north Wexford.

With 12 vaccination booths the centre has the capacity to offer over 1000 vaccinations a day. Speaking before the centre's opening, Minister for Health Stephen Donnelly said: "I'm delighted the Kilanerin centre is now ready to open its doors and start serving the people of south Wicklow. Immense work has been done at the Community Centre to get it ready in time to start offering its first vaccines this week. I know there has been a huge demand for the vaccine in the area so the news it is now ready to go is definitely good news for the area. Nationally, the vaccine rollout is charging ahead despite the issues we have had with supplies. We are now at over 3.25 million doses administered with close to 60 per cent of all adults having received one dose and almost 30 per cent fully vaccinated. Last week we saw over 330,000 doses administered across the country which has been driven in part by one of the highest vaccine demands in Europe. The support for the vaccine rollout has been really encouraging to see and thanks to the fantastic work of the HSE we are managing to get the vaccines into peoples' arms as soon as we are getting them. We are heading in the right direction but we just need to continue to hold firm and follow the public guidelines to make sure we continue to make progress."



In one of his last acts as Cathaoirleach, Cllr Pat Kennedy officially opens the Samuel Hayes bridge linking the jubilee and Avonmore walks in Rathdrum, with Michael Nicholson, Tom Byrne, Brian Dunne, Deborah Meghan, CEO of Wicklow County Council Frank Curran, Wesley Atkinson and Anne Fitzpatrick.

## St. Kevin's Way trail gets upgrade

The upgraded and re-routed St Kevin's Way trail has been officially opened. It is hoped that the upgraded trail will bring new tourists to the area along with enhancing the walk for locals.

Wicklow County Council carried out the work in conjunction with Coillte and the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS), with assistance from the St Kevin's Way Management committee.

Cathaoirleach of Wicklow County Council, Cllr Pat Kennedy, remarked: "Up until this point this trail has had minimal investment, thanks to funding under the Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme this scheme has been elevated to an amazing standard".

Speaking at the opening, the Chief Executive of Wicklow County Council, Mr Frank Curran, commented: "In Wicklow we are blessed to have so many areas of outstanding scenic beauty on our doorstep, the upgrade at St Kevin's Way will enhance the area for both locals and tourists".

Minister of State for Housing, Local Government and Heritage, Mr Malcolm Noonan TD, in a statement welcomed the development of the long-distance walking route, St. Kevin's Way, stating that "the NPWS of my Department have worked in conjunction with Wicklow County Council to deliver an upgrade and reroute of the St Kevin's Way, a long-distance walking route in County Wicklow".

He offered special thanks to a member of his own NPWS staff, Anne Fitzpatrick, Ranger, who worked hard to manage and deliver the Wicklow Mountains National Park project to the highest of standards.

Minister Noonan continued: "A large section of the walk traverses Wicklow Mountains National

Park, and through their hard work, members of the NPWS and Wicklow County Council have taken a substantial section of this walk away from the public road, installed a footbridge, built a new section of trail and replaced several hundred meters of boardwalk. As restrictions begin to ease, I am delighted that these works will provide safer access to all of us as we walk and hike the beautiful routes in our National Park throughout the summer months".

Funding was secured from the Department of Community & Rural Development under the Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme to the amount of €160,000.

Acknowledging this significant investment in the project, Cllr Kennedy paid tribute to the Minister for Community & Rural Development, Heather Humphreys TD, and her officials for their continued investment in the Garden County.



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# 'Donnelly must ensure full access to HSE dental services in West Wicklow'

Sinn Féin TD John Brady has called on the Minister for Health Stephen Donnelly to take immediate measures to ensure that people in West Wicklow have full access to HSE dental services.

Deputy Brady made the call following a decision by the HSE to curtail dental services in Kildare and West Wicklow and limit services to emergency care only for children and adults.

Questioning the Taoiseach in a Dail debate on Wednesday 16th June, Deputy Mary Lou McDonald said "Last week, the Irish Dental Association informed its members that the HSE dental services in Kildare and West Wicklow have been forced to confine the provision of dental care to emergency care only for children and adults. This decision has nothing to do with the cyber attack, it is about the historic under-resourcing of dental care in the public system."

Deputy Brady said "The decision by the

HSE in Kildare/West Wicklow to only offer emergency dentistry and not routine procedures is having a serious impact on many people who are now going to be left waiting to be seen for routine treatments and appointments.

"It is the first time the HSE have had to impose such restrictions anywhere in Ireland and means that all routine and elective treatments, including school dental checks as well as other dental appointments for both children and adults, have now ceased indefinitely.

"The HSE dental services are overrun, this is due to the fact that they don't have enough public service dentists to start with, to make matters worse part of the public service dentists, who

mainly work with children and special needs patients, are now being deployed to vaccination centres.

"There is also a huge issue with the serious decline in dentists participating in the Dental Treatment Services Scheme (DTSS), this has added to the pressure within the HSE dental services.

"The Minister for Health Stephen Donnelly must take immediate action to address this serious situation. He needs to end the gross underfunding of the HSE dental services and provide solutions to the Dental Treatment Services Scheme (DTSS). As the Minister with responsibility he must ensure that people can access dental services they need."

# 48 of Ombudsman for Children's Office complaints came from Wicklow in 2020

Increase in contacts from children last year due to concerns over education disruption during pandemic

The Ombudsman for Children's Office (OCO) received 48 or 4% of its complaints from Co. Wicklow in 2020, its Annual Report has revealed.

2020 Childhood Paused reveals that the OCO received 1,187 complaints about services provided to children in 2020.

The Ombudsman for Children, Dr. Niall Muldoon said "We do not know where every single one of our complaints comes from - some complaints relate to more than one area, or there can be more than one child involved. However, we know for sure that 48 complaints came from Co. Wicklow. While this is not very surprising, based on population spread, it shows that we still have to work hard to let people in Co. Wicklow know that we are here."

In 2020, 6% of the complaints made to the OCO came directly from children, this is an increase from 3% in 2019. This increase can largely be attributed to those who contacted us in relation to education issues and is an indication of the level of upset among students. 100% of the children who contacted the OCO mentioned the impact of the pandemic on their mental health of children.

Once again, the main area of the public service people complained about in 2020 was education - making up 46% of complaints. In 2019, 49% of complaints were about education.

New issues that came up in 2020 included:

- Remote learning and the digital divide

- Lack of clarity about State examinations
- Mental impact on young people
- Calculated grades
- Children in high risk households who feared bringing Covid-19 home
- Impact on children with special educational needs

The Ombudsman for Children, Dr. Niall Muldoon, said there can be no return to "normal" for children after the pandemic.

"2020 was a devastating year for children. We heard heart-breaking stories of children with additional needs regressing and about the turmoil the uncertainty caused. Children were grappling with the digital divide and they worried about parents who had lost their jobs as the pandemic wreaked havoc on the economy. We know that this impacted children in Co. Wicklow and all over the country." Dr. Muldoon encouraged children, parents or those working with children in Co. Wicklow to contact the OCO.

"The OCO offers a free, impartial service to anybody who thinks a child has been treated unfairly by a public body or Government funded organisation. We offer advice, help to resolve the issue as soon as possible and if necessary we will carry out an investigation. Visit [www.oco.ie](http://www.oco.ie) for information on how to contact the office or make a complaint."



Valciline, Fiona Ninaber, Sorcha Quinlivan, and Eilish Byrne at the Bray Rowing Club Open Day on Sunday 13th June. Pic: Joe McQuillan

# Progress on opening of Greystones school

Social Democrats TD Jennifer Whitmore welcomes progress on the reopening of the Greystones Community National School which is on track to open its doors at the start of the upcoming school year.

Speaking at a meeting arranged between Wicklow TDs and the Department of Education last Wednesday, Deputy Whitmore said, "I really welcome progress to date on the opening of the new empty school building to students of GCNS in time for the new school year, however it will be tight.

"The Department have confirmed that they have some fire testing and calibration work to do next week with an expectation that they are on track to opening the building for the next school year all going well. "However, at the meeting I outlined the tight timeframe for the school community to get everything ready in time for the next school year including putting in place furniture etc..."

"Delays have been experienced due to the global shortage in building materials and problems arising from Brexit but the Department have reassured TDs that they are doing their best to make sure building

materials are sourced as quickly as possible and are prioritised for school building projects in Greystones and across the country.

"I also welcome the progress that continues on the Coláiste Chraobh Abhann site in Kilcoole, as well as modular building expected to cater to Greystones Community College, development which are also on track. The Department has said that at the end of next week the picture will be even clearer and that written correspondence will be provided to all affected school communities" concludes Whitmore.



COMHAIRLE CONTAE CHILL MHANTÁIN WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL

## COMPULSORY PURCHASE ORDER NO 7 OF 2021

6 ASHLEIGH, ASHFORD, CO WICKLOW

Wicklow County Council (hereinafter referred to as "the Housing Authority") in exercise of the powers conferred upon them by Section 76 of the Housing Act 1966, and the Third Schedule thereto (as amended by the Planning and Development Act 2000) have made an order entitled as above which is about to be submitted to An Bord Pleanála for confirmation. If confirmed, the order will authorise the Housing Authority to acquire compulsorily the land described in the Schedule for the purposes of the Housing Act, 1966.

A copy of the order and of the map referred to in it may be seen at all reasonable hours at:

Housing Section, County Buildings, Wicklow

Owners, lessees and occupiers of the land described in the Schedule will receive individual written notice.

The Housing Act 1966, as amended, provides that An Bord cannot confirm the order in respect of the land if an objection is made in respect of the acquisition by an owner, lessee or occupier of the land, and not withdrawn, until it has held an oral hearing into the objection and until it has considered the objection and the report of the person who held the oral hearing.

### SCHEDULE

Land other than land consisting of a house or houses unfit for human habitation and not capable of being rendered fit for human habitation at reasonable expense.

Number on map deposited at the offices of the housing authority	Quantity, description and situation of the land	Owners or reputed owners	Lessees or reputed lessees	Occupiers (except tenants for a month or a less period than a month)
21/06/63/100 Wicklow County Council - Compulsory Purchase Order No 7 of 2021.	Dwelling house and land of 557 m <sup>2</sup> .	Anne Fitzgibbon, Friars Way, Violet Hill, Church Road, Killiney, Co Dublin.	None (vacant house).	None (vacant house).

Dated this 21st day of May 2021.

Joe Lane, Director Services.



New Cathaoirleach of Wicklow County Council Shay Cullen, in the Council chamber with his son Oisín, mother Mary, wife Rhona and daughter Laoise

# Cullen is elected Cathaoirleach

Councillors elected Fine Gael councillor Shay Cullen as County Wicklow's new Cathaoirleach at last week's Council AGM. Cllr Cullen takes over from Fianna Fail councillor Pat Kennedy. Arklow Fianna Fail councillor Tommy Annesley was elected Leas Cathaoirleach.

Cllr Cullen, a resident of Newtownmountkennedy, grew up in Roundwood and was elected to Wicklow County Council as a first-time candidate in 2014. He attended De La Salle secondary school in Wicklow Town and has been an employee at Glen Fuels for over 20 years. Issues he has been outspoken on during his time on the council have included maximizing Wicklow's tourism potential and the need to support local businesses. He played an integral part in the development of the Vartry Trails, 20km of loop walks around the Vartry Reservoir.

Cllr Cullen was nominated for Cathaoirleach by Cllr Irene Winters (FG), and the nomination was seconded by Cllr Pat Fitzgerald (FF).

Nominating Cllr Cullen, Cllr Winters said "the past seven years are a testament to his passion to see his area improve. He has shown an extraordinary work ethic to bring about positive changes. His tenacity is a family trait. He has worked with many community groups to help progress and develop projects for the area."



New Cathaoirleach of Wicklow County Council, Shay Cullen

Independent councillor Mags Crean was also nominated for Cathaoirleach. She was nominated by Cllr Tom Fortune (Ind), and Cllr Mary Kavanagh (Ind) seconded the nomination. A vote was taken and the result was 20 to 10 in favour of Cllr Cullen.

Taking the Cathaoirleach's seat, Cllr Cullen thanked councillors for their votes and said "it's an absolute honour and a privilege". He thanked his wife Rhona, and children Oisín and Laoise, for their support and his mother Mary for "all she has done for me over the years. This is her day as well as mine."

He went on to pay tribute to the outgoing Cathaoirleach: "It has been a pleasure to assist Cllr Pat Kennedy over the last 12 months, but he didn't need much assistance. His work ethic and organisational skills made him a wonderful chairman. Since Pat was elected in 2014 he has worked tirelessly throughout the Arklow Municipal District and County Wicklow. He has transformed his native Rathdrum area, it shows what hard work and funding can do. Pat, you are held in very high esteem by the public, staff, and management of WCC. Thank you for everything you've done."

Setting out his stall for the year ahead, Cllr Cullen said, "As our country starts to open up again, I will be asking the management to focus their attention on all available funding streams. I want to secure as much funding as possible, right

Cllr Cullen went on to say "We're coming through a pandemic that changed Ireland, changed the world and how we live, and thankfully with the vaccination programme we can look forward to a return to some normality as soon as possible. I would like to thank the councillors and management of Wicklow County Council for the work they've been doing over the last 18 months, to assist people through this pandemic."

"Looking forward, I would like to see cross-party co-operation on dealing with the concerns and challenges we face. As Cathaoirleach, I will be open, fair, respectful to all members, and will always be available when called upon."

"It is my intention to get back to physical meetings as soon as possible, and I will liaise with the management in the coming days to put the appropriate measures in place for a return to the council chamber as soon as possible."

around Wicklow so that every village and town will see the benefit. "Our tourism sector is set to recover this year through the tourism task force and the priorities are to attract domestic visitors to Wicklow for the many activities and attractions we have across the county. We are engaged in developing master plans for the National Park and visitor centre in Glendalough, Clermont Campus, and Blessington, all of which will improve our tourism offering across the county. "I would like to see an exciting new project get under way - the Blueway Project which will enhance and develop the coastline from Bray to Arklow and support the coastal recreational offering. "I would like to drive forward town centre renewal in conjunction with Town Teams and plan for the development of key sites aimed at attracting investment in our towns. "Climate change is such an important part of our future and I would like to continue to work towards achieving 50% energy efficient business by 2030 and try to secure climate action funding. I want to see the upgrading of all public lighting throughout our county as

soon as possible. "Roads and road safety must be paramount for County Wicklow. I would like to see continued improvements on regional, rural and local roads and our roads department to continue to access as much funding as possible to make this happen."

"I would like to prioritise housing and continued investment in this area. We currently have 4,500 families on our housing list, the focus has to be to reduce this figure. We hope to have 150 social houses completed by the end of 2021, and a further 130 completed by June 2022. The Housing department will also be putting a big effort into getting vacant houses back into circulation as soon as possible. "In conclusion, there's a lot of work to be done in our county and I'm well aware of that. I believe Wicklow is a wonderful county with lots to offer and I look forward to working with all members over the next twelve months to achieve all that we can set out together. But this is a team effort. And I need the support from everybody, and I'll make it as easy as possible, and as joyful as possible."

around Wicklow so that every village and town will see the benefit. "Our tourism sector is set to recover this year through the tourism task force and the priorities are to attract domestic visitors to Wicklow for the many activities and attractions we have across the county. We are engaged in developing master plans for the National Park and visitor centre in Glendalough, Clermont Campus, and Blessington, all of which will improve our tourism offering across the county. "I would like to see an exciting new project get under way - the Blueway Project which will enhance and develop the coastline from Bray to Arklow and support the coastal recreational offering. "I would like to drive forward town centre renewal in conjunction with Town Teams and plan for the development of key sites aimed at attracting investment in our towns. "Climate change is such an important part of our future and I would like to continue to work towards achieving 50% energy efficient business by 2030 and try to secure climate action funding. I want to see the upgrading of all public lighting throughout our county as

soon as possible. "Roads and road safety must be paramount for County Wicklow. I would like to see continued improvements on regional, rural and local roads and our roads department to continue to access as much funding as possible to make this happen."

## 'Is chair of Wicklow County Council a closed shop?'

At the Wicklow County Council AGM, Cllr. Mags Crean (Ind) congratulated Councillor Shay Cullen on his successful nomination for chair of Wicklow County Council for the coming year. However, Crean is calling for a more inclusive and democratic approach to sharing leadership positions at local council level.

Cllr Crean said "I contested the chair position at the AGM to make an important stand; that non Fianna Fail and non Fine Gael councillors deserve to be represented in leadership positions at a county level. Since elected, I have observed Fianna Fail (FF) and Fine Gael (FG) voting together to control key civic leadership positions annually despite fifty per cent of elected public representatives being non Fianna Fail and non Fine Gael councillors."

She further explained "Chair and vice chair positions should be shared more fairly and not dominated by Government parties annually. I welcomed support from Cllr. Tom Fortune and Cllr. Mary Kavanagh who proposed and seconded me. I also thanked others that supported me on the day but it was unfortunate that smaller parties like Labour and Social Democrats voted to support the Fine Gael nomination despite my attempt to provide an independent alternative."

## Kennedy reflects on difficult and challenging year

Councillors last week paid tribute to outgoing Cathaoirleach Pat Kennedy for steering the Council through the difficult and challenging year of the Covid pandemic.

Handing over the Cathaoirleach chain, Cllr Kennedy said "It has been a year like no other. A year of worry, a year of change, a year of solitude, and a year of difficulty. It has been a difficult year for all residents of our county, old and young, big and small. We are by nature social creatures, and over the last year we found ourselves being tested to our absolute limits. But we have persevered, a light is now on the horizon through the strength and the will of the residents within the county and outside, we have sailed through a storm and the clouds are passing, it was not easy, it was without doubt a challenge. But we all met that challenge, we all accepted the changing world that we found ourselves in. We as a council had to adapt to our ways."

"We had to adjust to online meetings and virtual discussions and learn to represent those who elected us in new ways. I believe that it is when we are most challenged that we are often at our best."

Looking back on the Council's achievements over the past year, Cllr Kennedy noted the many completed housing units, the 1,050 housing allocations, and the large scale housing schemes that have been completed.

"The building programme continues with construction under way in Arklow Wicklow, Bray and Newtown with numerous other sites due to commence before the end of 2021," he said.

"The housing and Disability Steering Group are currently



Outgoing Cathaoirleach Pat Kennedy

preparing a new strategic plan for housing people with disabilities, which I very much support.

"I want to thank all the staff for preparing the draft County Development Plan, it is the most important document in the county. And while it is a challenge for all of us moving forward, I want to acknowledge the work, the time and commitment given to it so far from all the elected members."

"A key pillar of the County Development Plan is climate action and environment. In this area, we are making great strides with the adoption of the climate adaptation strategy, and we had Wicklow's

first decarbonisation zone in Arklow."

Cllr Kennedy also highlighted the rollout of infrastructure throughout the county in the form of new footpaths and lighting, libraries and primary health centres, new road realignment schemes and upgrades, and also the new Council chamber and customer care hub at County Buildings.

He concluded by saying, "Over the last year I have seen our communities come together to support each other in ways I have never seen before. As Cathaoirleach, I got to engage with community groups around the county in ways I never had before, and I can say with certainty that they are the unsung heroes of County Wicklow. They too have adapted in the past year with many community projects, big and small, continuing at pace."

"It has been the fastest year of my life. Last year was a year of worry, we now look forward to a year of hope. Hope is a powerful thing. It inspires us to do the impossible, and helps to carry on during difficult times."

I urge you as a council to carry on doing the work that you do, serving the people of this county. I tried to be a Cathaoirleach for and with the people of County Wicklow, I tried to be fair to all members in this chamber. Ever since I was first elected to this chamber, I always maintained this seat, that I hold, is not my seat, it is the people's seat, I'm just keeping it warm. Well, the Cathaoirleach seat is no different and it is now time for the members to choose a new Cathaoirleach for the coming year as I've kept it warm long enough."

# EPA survey highlights need for everyone to do a simple radon test in their homes

A survey exploring Irish attitudes towards radiation found that 28 per cent of people are concerned about radiation. In Ireland, radon accounts for more than half of our radiation exposure. However, while awareness of radon gas is high, two out of three people said that they are unlikely to test their home, believing their homes to be unaffected by radon.

Commenting on the survey, Stephanie Long, EPA Senior Scientist said, "Many people don't know that radon is the largest contributor to radiation dose in Ireland. If there is a high radon level in your home, it is exposing you and your family to unnecessary radiation. While radon levels in certain parts of the country are higher than others the gas can be found in homes of all types and ages throughout the country. Yet, despite the risks there continues to be a reluctance amongst householders to protect their health by testing their homes for radon."

Reducing radon levels in homes and other buildings is simple and inexpensive and immediately reduces the risk of developing lung cancer. For moderate levels of radon, improving indoor ventilation may reduce the level by up to half. For higher levels, a fan assisted sump can be installed which can reduce radon levels by over 90 per cent. The sump can be installed in

one day by a contractor with little disruption to the home.

Clinical psychologist Dr Clare Kambamettu is a homeowner who found high levels of radon in her home, which she acted on and remediated. Clare had a radon sump installed in her Galway home which addressed the high radon levels. Clare commented:

"We were worried when our test showed high levels of radon in our home. We soon found out that the solution was surprisingly easy. Most of the work was done quickly from the outside of our home with very little disruption. And the best part was that once the work was done, the risk was gone too, as our radon levels were reduced so much."

For more information on radon and to find a list of registered radon testing and remediation services, visit [www.radon.ie](http://www.radon.ie) or freephone 1 800 300 600.

Radon is a radioactive gas formed in the ground from the radioactive decay of uranium which

is present in all rocks and soils. It has no smell, colour or taste and can only be detected using radon detectors. Outdoors, radon quickly dilutes to harmless levels, but when it enters an enclosed space - such as a house or other building - it can accumulate to unacceptably high levels. Radon is a carcinogen and is linked to some 300 lung cancer cases each year in Ireland, making it a serious public health hazard.

About a third of Ireland is classified as a high radon area by the EPA. However, the EPA recommends that homeowners in all areas test their homes for radon. You can check if you are living in a high radon area on the EPA's interactive radon risk map. Ireland has relatively high indoor radon levels, with an average indoor level of 77 becquerels per cubic metre (Bq/m<sup>3</sup>), compared to the worldwide average of 39 Bq/m<sup>3</sup>.

We are constantly exposed to a variety of natural and artificial

sources of radiation. Natural sources account for 86% of all our radiation exposure. In Ireland, most of the radiation we are exposed to comes from radon gas. Artificial sources make up the other 14% and come mainly from the beneficial use of radiation in medicine.

Radiation doses from other man-made or artificial sources such as the nuclear power plants, the Chernobyl accident, occupational exposure account for less than 1 per cent of our total exposure.

You can find a list of EPA registered radon measurement services and details about how to test and fix your home on [www.radon.ie](http://www.radon.ie). The test costs about €50 and is all done by post using one of the services registered with the EPA.

Two small detectors are sent to your home. One is placed in the bedroom and one in the living room, the rooms most occupied by the family. After three months they are returned to the service provider for analysis.



Cathaoirleach of Greystones Municipal District Derek Mitchell recently welcomed the skipper and engineer of The Fastnet Pelican to Greystones Harbour. They have been surveying cable routes to shore for the Codling Windfarm for the last six weeks. This information will form the basis of the licence application for the windfarm. The crew of six have been staying locally. Cllr Mitchell said "We need to urgently save carbon and a windfarm 14km out to sea is a good way of doing that. The turbines will be visible from Greystones and we need to get trade and jobs from it. I am also asking for an Interpretive Centre and other items to provide a sense of connection to this large windfarm."

## Local pharmacies signing up to vaccine rollout

Minister for Health Stephen Donnelly said: "It's fantastic to see Wicklow's pharmacies signing up to the rollout of Covid-19 vaccines".

Speaking last week, Minister Donnelly said "I know they have been chomping at the bit to get involved and now we are able to make it happen

"The pharmacies along with the GPs and the vaccine centers are helping us to get the vaccine out and into peoples' arms pretty much as soon as we are getting them.

"Next week we are expected to hit 3.5 million vaccines being administered which is a phenomenal achievement considering the supply issues we've had. With the pharmacies now on board, it gives our target of fully vaccinating 70 percent of adults by the end of July a major boost."

The HSE has a dedicated webpage showing pharmacies participating in the rollout of the Covid-19 vaccine. See [www2.hse.ie/Apps/Services/PharmaciesServiceList.aspx](http://www2.hse.ie/Apps/Services/PharmaciesServiceList.aspx)

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Bray Rowing Club members Emma Coulson, Barbara Molloy, Rob Doyle, and Linda Doolin at the recent Bray Rowing Club open day.

## Build works for new broadband underway in Kilcoole

National Broadband Ireland (NBI), the company rolling out the new high-speed fibre broadband network under the Government's National Broadband Plan (NBP) announced last week that build works in Kilcoole are now well underway.

In Kilcoole, over 2,800 premises have been surveyed to date with network designs completed to deliver the new Fibre to the Home (FTTH) network in the area. NBI crews have started initial works for the build in townlands across Wicklow including Kilquade, Ballynerrin, Stilebawn, Ballygannon, Kilmullin, Windgate, Trudder, Timmore, Newtown Mt. Kennedy, and Ballinastoe. These 'make ready' works pave the way for the next stage of deploying fibre on poles/ducts, and include the erection of poles, unblocking of ducts, and the insertion of subduct into existing ducts, for the fibre to be installed.

In Wicklow, there are 15,350 premises in the Intervention Area (IA), which includes homes, farms, commercial businesses and schools. This equates to 23% of all premises in the county. Under the National Broadband Plan, Wicklow will see an investment of €59M in the new high speed fibre network. This will enable e-learning, remote monitoring of livestock or equipment, e-health initiatives, better energy efficiency in the home, and more remote working.

NBI chief executive Peter Hendrick said the company was satisfied with the progress being made: "Our teams on the ground have made substantial progress since we first commenced with surveying and design works last year. As the country re-opens and restrictions are lifted, we are confident that this will further assist us as we continue to deliver the new high speed broadband network under the National Broadband Plan. We are acutely aware that people want access to high-speed broadband and our goal is to deliver that as quickly as possible."

He continued: "There are 227 deployment areas across Ireland, covering 96% of Ireland's land mass. We are currently working closely with retail service providers, and other stakeholders, to connect the first homes in Wicklow before the end of 2021. Minimum speeds of 500Mb will be available."

"Our mission is to end the digital divide across the country. Digital connectivity is critical to many of our activities right now, and this new Fibre-to-the-Home network, will be a key enabler for the sustainability of local businesses and communities."

In advance of the Fibre-to-the-Home roll out, the NBP provides for the delivery of BCPs nationwide. 178 of these sites are now 'live' and have both internal and external broadband access. These facilities - which include sports clubs, community centres and tourist sites - will provide free public access to high-speed internet in the rollout area.

These will pave the way for rural communities to receive the benefits of broadband, from mobile working, e-learning and mobile banking, to digital tourism. You can view BCPs at /bcp-map/.

Locations of Broadband Connection Points in Kilcoole, Co. Wicklow will include Wicklow County Campus, Knockree Youth Hostel, Brockagh Resource Centre, Ballinacor GAA Club, Wicklow GAA Centre of Excellence. Primary schools in the Intervention Area are also being connected for educational access as part of the NBP.

Last week, Green Party TD Deputy Steven Matthews met with the Project Manager of NBI to discuss and encourage a faster rollout of this service.

Deputy Matthews said "The progress in Kilcoole is very positive news for residents in the surrounding areas and is just another step in the full rollout for the county in due course. The importance of having a high speed, reliable fibre network has always been known, particularly in areas that rely on slow, expensive, and unreliable connections which is a particular concern in rural locations. I have been contacted by a huge number of families in this situation throughout lockdown who have found working/ studying and home learning extremely difficult due to the lack of broadband speed. Without the proper infrastructure in place, there is little that can be done, so I hope it will offer some comfort to people to see that concrete progress is being made."

I also raised the issue of poor, localised issues with broadband in urban centres that many of us have faced, particularly with multiple people working from home, and I am conscious that this will also need to be reviewed going forward.

"I would encourage all residents waiting for the fibre rollout to check the NBI website to ensure that their Eircode is listed in the intervention area. I have been made aware of a small number of anomalies whereby through human error a house or group of houses was left out of the plan. In each instance we have been able to fix the problem, so it is very important that you check that your house/business is included in the rollout map to avoid any further delays down the line."

"The benefits that this will have to communities in Wicklow are immeasurable. One of many will be the potential increase of remote working, long after the pandemic restrictions are lifted. Offering people the opportunity to either work from home or work in digital hubs close to their homes has been a longstanding policy of the Green Party and these flexible work options can work but only if the broadband infrastructure at a national level is there to sustain it. I look forward to continuing to work with NBI as they continue their rollout across Wicklow and if there is anyone who has any questions with regard to the rollout, I would be more than happy to assist them," concluded Deputy Matthews.

NBI's website [www.nbi.ie](http://www.nbi.ie) has a search tool to enable the public to check whether their premises is within the rollout area, and to show indicative dates for areas being surveyed. There is also a facility to register for updates. NBI's contact centre can be reached at 0818 624 624 (lo-call) or [contactus@nbi.ie](mailto:contactus@nbi.ie).

# Minister asked to re-open Avoca Train Station

Jennifer Whitmore TD has asked Minister for Transport Eamon Ryan if he will consider the re-opening of closed train stations around the country including Avoca train station.

Deputy Whitmore, in a Dail debate on Ireland's rail network on 17th June, said the move would increase access to public transport and decrease car dependency.

"As the Rosslare to Dublin train goes through this station, it does not make any sense at all that it is not open," she said.

Responding, Minister Ryan said the matter is the responsibility of the National Transport Authority (NTA): "The operation, maintenance and renewal of the rail network and stations on the network including Avoca Station, is a matter for Iarnród Éireann in the first instance in consultation with the National Transport Authority (NTA)."

Minister Ryan responded, "It is important that we take a multi-modal approach to transport planning and the provision and integration of public transport services and infrastructure. That approach is evident in the statutory transport strategy for the wider greater Dublin area, which includes south Wicklow and which the National Transport Authority is required to prepare under the Dublin Transport Authority Act 2008."

"Issues such as this would usefully inform its review as it looks to develop a revised twenty year framework for transport infrastructure and services across the region."

Deputy Whitmore also

asked the Minister about what efforts he's making to expand access to rail services in South Wicklow. She said, "There's been a considerable population increase in Co. Wicklow but it has not been matched by our public transport infrastructure. Many people have to commute long journeys on heavily congested roads when they would much prefer to have rail services available to them."

Minister Ryan responded, "It is important that we take a multi-modal approach to transport planning and the provision and integration of public transport services and infrastructure. That approach is evident in the statutory transport strategy for the wider greater Dublin area, which includes south Wicklow and which the National Transport Authority is required to prepare under the Dublin Transport Authority Act 2008."

"The current strategy sets out a range of proposed interventions required across all modes and progress is under way on a number of those interventions. These include the DART+, which will provide enhanced capacity as far as Greystones but could provide associated benefits as far south as Wicklow, and the N11 bus priority project, which will seek to enhance bus priority along this route and enhance the attractiveness of the bus as an option for south Wicklow commuters."

"Specifically looking at rail, aspects of the Wicklow rail line are challenging and potentially susceptible to coastal erosion. That is why my Department, through the NTA, is funding a programme of works over the coming years to protect the existing railway line from coastal flooding and coastal erosion and improve the reliability and availability of the existing rail services across County Wicklow. In addition to the above, there are two reviews under way which are of relevance to potential further improvements to rail in the county. The first is the ongoing review of the transport strategy for the greater Dublin area, which is under way with a draft strategy to be published by the NTA later in the year for public consultation. The second is a strategic rail review, which my Department is leading and which will look at inter-urban and inter-regional rail and will be of relevance to south Wicklow, given the intercity services that operate on the line."

Deputy Whitmore replied, "What I am hearing is that there are a lot more plans for south County Wicklow. People have been hearing about plans for south County Wicklow for years and what we need is a commitment to extend the DART to Wicklow town and to look at extending it to Arklow. The infrastructure is there. The rail line is there and we need to build on it. It takes years to put in these plans and people are suffering now. People have long commutes and are being forced further and further away from their workplaces and families. They need access to public transport services, and our environment needs that as well."

## Community almost five months without safe drinking water

The Do Not Consume Notice for customers supplied by Barndarrig Public Water Supply remains in place, Irish Water announced last week. The notice has been in place for almost five months, having been issued on 9th February.

Following consultation with the Health Service Executive (HSE), the notice was issued to protect 213 customers following elevated levels of nitrite in the water supply.

The water is not safe for consumption or the preparation of foods, but is safe for hygiene, washing of utensils and use in washing machines and dishwashers. It is especially important that mains drinking water is not given to bottle-fed infants. Impacted customers have been directly notified.

Irish Water stated: "Irish Water is aware of the impacts the Do Not Consume Notice is having on the community of Barndarrig and would like to reassure impacted customers that Irish Water's drinking water compliance and operational experts are working hard to lift the notice as quickly and as safely as possible. Irish Water is

installing new monitoring equipment at the water treatment plant to help us to safeguard the water supply for Barndarrig.

"This monitoring equipment will measure levels of nitrite in the water on an ongoing basis for a number of weeks, the results of which will determine if the restriction notice can be lifted, in consultation with the HSE, or if additional treatment and capital investment at the plant is necessary. We are committed to continuing to share updates on progress as we have them with all members of the community and their elected representatives."

An alternative water supply continues to be in place to support impacted customers and 5L bottles of water are available at the car park opposite Barndarrig church.

Bottled water is available for delivery to customers who are registered as vulnerable on this

supply. Vulnerable customers who haven't registered with Irish Water or those who have concerns about leaving their homes during the current pandemic should contact our customer care team, open 24/7, on 1850 278 278.

Boiling the water will not reduce nitrite levels and is therefore not a suitable measure to make the water safe to consume.

Peter Thornton, Regional Operations Lead with Irish Water, said "Irish Water acknowledges the impact of this notice on the local community in Barndarrig and we would like to reassure impacted customers that our drinking water compliance and operational experts are working to resolve this issue as quickly and as safely as possible. We would ask customers who have concerns to contact our customer care team on 1850 278 278. The water is safe to use for handwashing and personal hygiene and all customers on this water supply scheme should continue to follow public health advice on handwashing at this time."

# 'Parents of children deemed to be at high risk from Covid-19 need assurances'

Green Party TD, Steven Matthews has written to both Minister Donnelly and the HSE to request a clear outline of the plan to deal with children and young teenagers, not currently eligible for the Covid-19 vaccine, who suffer from conditions that could potentially make them highly vulnerable to the disease.

Speaking after meeting with the family of one such teenager, Deputy Matthews said: "This has been an extraordinarily challenging period for all of us but in particular for anyone with underlying conditions and their families. Thankfully, and huge credit must go to the HSE for this, the vast majority of those over the age of 16 with underlying conditions are either fully vaccinated or are very soon to be. As the vaccine rollout continues at pace, some consideration must now turn to those under the age of 16 who for various reasons are potentially vulnerable to Covid-19.



Steven Matthews TD

"I have spoken with a number of very concerned families whose children have ranged in age up to 15 years old and they are understandably worried for their wellbeing if they were to be exposed to Covid-19. I absolutely accept that generally speaking, children are much less likely to have serious

symptoms and are generally at less risk than adults, but this is not necessarily the case when a child/ young teenager has an existing underlying condition.

"I claim no medical expertise in this area and I understand that we are reliant on the advice of NPHET, NIAC and the European Medicines Agency at an EU level but in my letters to both Minister Donnelly and the HSE, I have simply

asked for some assurances for the families impacted and to ask if there is a plan to deal with vulnerable children whose families are very eager for them to be inoculated from Covid-19.

"It is my understanding that a number of our EU neighbours already have plans in place with regards to a rollout of the vaccine for under 16s. While we may not yet be in a position to do that, and I understand the focus needs to be on completing the current plan, at the very least I hope that clear assurances can be provided to the families of children and teenagers in vulnerable categories in order to ease some of their concerns.

"I will continue to offer any support that I can to these families and if there is anyone who wants to speak to me on the matter, I would ask them to get in touch and I would be more than happy to help in any way I can," concluded Deputy Matthews.

# Harris welcomes record number of Erasmus+ applications

Minister for Further and Higher Education, Innovation, Research and Science Simon Harris has welcomed news that a record number of people have applied to take part in the Erasmus+ Programme over the next two years.

The 2021-2027 Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps programme was launched at a virtual event where it was also confirmed the programme would be extended to include adult education.

Welcoming the announcement, Minister Harris said: "This is a record breaking year for Erasmus+ with more people than ever applying for the programme. This is despite the uncertainty of the pandemic and Brexit.

"And this year, for the first time adult learners will be able to travel for periods of learning. This is a really exciting development in expanding this important programme.

"It's wonderful that for the first time adult learners and early childhood organisations will be able to apply for Erasmus+, which further strengthens a more inclusive approach in education.

"Erasmus+ has opportunities for so many different kinds of people. It is for everyone and I am so pleased the doors are being opened for more to access it."

Up to 7,000 people have applied for Erasmus+, compared to 5,100 who applied in February 2020.

The Léargas and Higher Education Authority launch today also heard the Erasmus+ Programme has now been expanded to include adult learners and early childhood organisations for the first time, and that the period of travel for participants can vary from as little as a week to as long as a year.

Over 85,000 learners, staff, young people and volunteers are on track to benefit from improved funding under the new programme over the next six years, with EU funding of €42 million available this year alone.

The money will be used to support study visits, traineeships, volunteering and inter-institutional collaboration between schools, further education centres, adult education, youth and higher education institutions.



# Tinahely are Leinster Champions

The Tinahely Ladies football team were celebrating last week after winning the 2020 Leinster Intermediate Football Championship. Tinahely beat Old Leighlin from Carlow 1-10 to 0-8. The game was played in Baltinglass in rainy conditions.

The victory was made even sweeter by the fact that Tinahely lost in the final in 2019.

Tinahely fought their way back from a losing position at half-time (0-2 to 0-5) to turn the game around and seal the win.

It was a hard-fought encounter which saw Tinahely start strongly, with Sarah Byrne and Ciara Byrne scoring the game's first two points before Old Leighlin leveled the score.

The second half saw Tinahely establish a three-point lead, however Old Leighlin clawed this back to just one point going into the water break.

Lucy Mulhall was introduced at half time and made a significant impact on the game, driving Tinahely forward at pace.

Tinahely took control of the game after that and scored five of the last six points of the game, ultimately winning by a five-point margin. The player of the match award went to Laura Hogan, but it was a great team performance all round.

Scorers: Laura Hogan 7pts; Lucy Mulhall 1-1; Sarah Byrne 0-1; Ciara Byrne 0-1.



Emily Hadden and Sarah Byrne celebrate Tinahely's win



COMHAIRLE CONTAE CHILL MHANTÁIN  
WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL

## COMPULSORY PURCHASE ORDER NO 8 OF 2021

8 SYCAMORE DRIVE, NEWTOWNMOUNTKENNEDY, CO WICKLOW

Wicklow County Council (hereinafter referred to as "the Housing Authority") in exercise of the powers conferred upon them by Section 76 of the Housing Act 1966, and the Third Schedule thereto (as amended by the Planning and Development Act 2000) have made an order entitled as above which is about to be submitted to An Bord Pleanála for confirmation. If confirmed, the order will authorise the Housing Authority to acquire compulsorily the land described in the Schedule for the purposes of the Housing Act, 1966.

A copy of the order and of the map referred to in it may be seen at all reasonable hours at:

**Housing Section, County Buildings, Wicklow**

Owners, lessees and occupiers of the land described in the Schedule will receive individual written notice.

The Housing Act 1966, as amended, provides that An Bord cannot confirm the order in respect of the land if an objection is made in respect of the acquisition by an owner, lessee or occupier of the land, and not withdrawn, until it has held an oral hearing into the objection and until it has considered the objection and the report of the person who held the oral hearing.

### SCHEDULE

Land other than land consisting of a house or houses unfit for human habitation and not capable of being rendered fit for human habitation at reasonable expense.

Number on map deposited at the offices of the housing authority	Quantity, description and situation of the land	Owners or reputed owners	Lessees or reputed lessees	Occupiers (except tenants for a month or a less period than a month)
21/06/64/100 Wicklow County Council - Compulsory Purchase Order No 8 of 2021.	Dwelling house and land of 190 m <sup>2</sup> .	Mario and Christine Testa, 8 Sycamore Drive, Newtownmountkennedy.	None (vacant house).	None (vacant house).

Dated this 21st day of May 2021.

Joe Lane, Director Services.

# Public urged to help family carers in crisis

Family Carers Ireland is thanking everyone who has supported their national 'Paws for a Cause' fundraising walk/run and awareness campaign, which has raised over €25,000 to date.

With an overall target of €50,000, the charity is urging anyone who hasn't yet done so, to walk in solidarity with family carers and register for 'Paws for a Cause' or donate what you can on [www.familycarers.ie](http://www.familycarers.ie).

"We are so appreciative of the support we're getting from people all across the country who have completed 24km in 7 days to highlight the 24/7 nature of family caring. We're mid-way through our fundraising campaign and we're making one final push to reach our

target. You are helping us to provide a vital lifeline to the forgotten frontline of this pandemic and shine a light on their remarkable contribution to our society. Every penny raised goes directly to support family carers in crisis and we are appealing to everyone to donate whatever they can to Paws for a Cause", said Catherine Cox, Head of Communications and Policy, Family Carers Ireland.

"The last year has been incredibly difficult for all but, in particular for family

carers who have played a very significant role in suppressing the coronavirus. When services shut down, family carers stepped up keeping their loved ones safe at home and out of hospital. The blanket withdrawal of supports such as homecare, respite, personal assistance hours and residential care, behavioural and physical therapies during lockdown forced many to care alone, around the clock and without the support of extended family or friends."

The funds raised will go

directly to Family Carers Ireland's National Crisis Fund, which supports families most affected by Covid-19, by providing emergency respite, counselling, emotional support and one-to-one well-being reviews, as well as the purchase of practical support items including hoists, wheelchairs and in some particularly difficult cases, putting food on tables and oil in heating tanks.

To donate to Family Carers Ireland and register for 'Paws for a Cause' simply head to [familycarers.ie](http://familycarers.ie).

## Ryan Tubridy pays visit to Carrig Eden

Broadcaster Ryan Tubridy visited the Carrig Eden Centre in Greystones recently for their annual BBQ.

Carrig Eden is home to men who have completed the rehabilitation programme at Tiglin in Ashford. A lot of the residents there now are currently in work.

Tiglin Chairperson Aubrey McCarthy told Wicklow Times that Mr Tubridy is a long-time supporter of Tiglin and has previously visited the centre in Ashford, but had not visited Carrig Eden before.

Speaking on the day, Mr Tubridy talked about how life is a lottery.

"Not everyone gets the same chance starting out in life," he said. "If you're born in one place your chances might be enhanced, if you're born in another place the lottery numbers aren't good. A lot of people are lost to injustice, and get stuck in a cruel and unjust rut. The only way out of that rut is kindness and decency, and that's what Tiglin is."

He said it was now up to the residents of Carrig Eden, who had been through the Tiglin programme, to 'lead by example'.

"To the other people fighting their demons, you can say 'I've fought them and I've won and you can too'."



Conor Brown makes a presentation to Ryan Tubridy during his visit.

Tiglin says that their mission is "To provide individuals with an effective and comprehensive solution to life-controlling addiction problems in order to become productive members of society. Tiglin, operating under a Christian ethos, endeavors to help people become mentally sound, emotionally balanced, socially adjusted, physically

well, and spiritually alive. "Tiglin strives to help the whole person, not just the substance abuse. Our approach is to teach a whole new way of living by addressing family relationships, work attitudes, self image, peer pressure, addiction and its causes, community relationships as well as a variety of other life skills."



River, Phil, Wilde, and Ann Thompson with Ryan Tubridy at Carrig Eden in Greystones



Lorna Kelly (Luggala Estate Executive Administrator), Maurice Brady (DWMRT Team Leader) with Search Dog Layla, Terry Byrne (DWMRT Chairperson), Michael Keegan (Luggala Estate Farm Manager), Philip McRory (DWMRT Team Member and Dog Handler) with Search Dog Grace.

## Dublin Wicklow Mountain Rescue Team develop Search Dog Team

Dublin Wicklow Mountain Rescue Team (DWMRT) now has a dedicated search dog team comprised of four qualified search dogs and two in training.

The team is further divided into air scenting and ground scenting dogs. Ground scenting dogs will follow the trail of a specific person whereas air scenting dogs will look for any people present in a given area.

These dogs and their handlers have a huge impact in searching for missing people in the upland areas.

DWMRT is a volunteer-run charity that provides 24/7, on-call emergency response services in upland areas in Dublin and Wicklow.

In 2020, the Roundwood based organisation had a record year with 117 callouts, representing 2,516 operational hours of search and rescue operations. A rise in interest in walking among the general public during Covid-19 has meant the service has never been busier. The team's main fundraising events were also impacted due to Covid.

Maurice Brady, DWMRT Team Leader, says that he has been delighted with the public support for the team, citing a recent bucket collection on Luggala Estate where responsible walkers contributed €500 to the appeal.

DWMRT currently conducts some of its training exercises on Luggala Estate. Last month Maurice's German Shepherd, Layla, qualified as a Level 3, Live Victim Man Trailing search dog during an assessment that took place on the estate.

Luggala is a private, working estate that provides responsible walking groups with access to walks on the grounds of the 1,800-hectare estate through a booking system.

Maurice Brady, DWMRT Team Leader thanked Luggala for their partnership and support for the team.

"We are very grateful to be allowed to train on the estate and we thank Luggala for arranging a collection on our behalf. Our volunteers provide 24/7 on-call assistance to the public with minimal state support. At a time when demand for our services is growing, now more than ever we sincerely appreciate the generosity of all the walkers who donated money to the Luggala DWMRT collection."

Lorna Kelly, Luggala Estate's Executive Administrator, added, "We were delighted to welcome the DWMRT team onto the estate last month to run their training exercises. Having seen the teams in action, we have such huge admiration for the services they provide and so we are delighted to lend our support to their fundraising efforts."

## Charity warns of worse to come for delta variant in Kenya

The Delta variant has arrived in Kericho county, Kenya with devastating impact. Lives will be lost.

Brighter Communities Worldwide is an Irish Charity, NGO, based in Middleton County Cork, who have been working in rural Kenya since 2002, have been a part of the COVID-19 emergency preparedness and response team in Kericho County since the beginning of the pandemic, leveraging their network of volunteers to rapidly scale its response. They are appealing to the public in Wicklow to help them with the task of supplying enough PPE for those in need and to help

women and children from going hungry and help their suffering.

They urgently need very basic resources to stop the spread - soap, water, gloves, masks - without vaccinations these are their only line of defence.

Kericho county in Kenya has a population of over 901,000 people. Today, their lives are in danger as COVID-19 sweeps across the county and over 90% of positive cases have the Delta variant.

Maria Kidney Director of Brighter Communities Worldwide said: "There are 14 counties within Kenya that are in lockdown now for 30 days, and with less than 1% of people vaccinated here - the delta variant is rampant. The hospitals are full with patients, some having to close because of lack of resources - this isn't good enough. We can't keep the health care workers safe here. We are urgently appealing for PPE, masks, gloves, soap and water and we need them today. We are on the verge of it here, unless we act and act fast"

Brighter Communities Worldwide are asking the public to support their appeal - every donation NO MATTER WHAT SIZE will make a difference - in Kenya, a box of 50 surgical masks cost 5 euro and a box of 50 pairs of gloves costs 12 euro. They urgently need - masks, gloves, soap and water - in vast quantities to protect the health care workers and keep their communities safe.

To make a donation please visit their Emergency Appeal page, where they hope to raise €10,000: [www.justgiving.com/campaign/KenyaCOVID19Emergency](http://www.justgiving.com/campaign/KenyaCOVID19Emergency)



# BUSINESS SUPPORTS

As the economy starts to re-open and recover as the Covid-19 restrictions are lifting, many businesses will find they may need a little helping hand to get back on their feet. It's important for businesses to familiarise themselves with the supports that are available and how to avail of them.

Wicklow's Local Enterprise Office says it "provides a range of financial supports which are designed to assist with the establishment and/or growth of small scale businesses employing up to ten people. These financial supports are designed to provide a flexible suite of supports to LEO clients and potential clients."

The range of Financial Supports are:

Priming Grants - for start-up businesses trading for less than 18 months

Business Expansion Grants - for businesses trading more than 18 months

Feasibility Study Grants - aim is to help with costs researching your proposed business idea to see if it is viable.

Technical Assistance for Micro Exporters - to enable clients to explore &

develop new export market opportunities

Trading Online Vouchers - for businesses that have a limited online trading presence

Please note that terms and conditions apply and that grants are only available to businesses deemed eligible by Local Enterprise Office Wicklow

"In addition to LEO Wicklow, other agencies that we co-operate with

also provide funding: Microfinance Ireland Funding (Loans) and Agile Innovation Fund."

There have been several significant announcements regarding Budget 2022 about supports for businesses including:

\*The Covid-19 Restrictions Support Scheme (CRSS)- businesses forced to close due to Covid-19 restrictions will be able to claim up to €5,000 week from Revenue if they are forced to close due to level three or higher restrictions. Effective immediately and will run to March 2021.

\*Debt warehousing pro-

visions for SMEs will be extended for a period of a year with no interest.

\*Vat Reduction for hospitality and tourism- 13.5% to 9%.

\*Commercial rates holiday extended into next year

\*Extension of the Employment Wage Subsidy scheme through 2021

\*Self-employed allowed to earn up to €480 a month on top of their PUP

\*€30m fund administered through the Ireland Strategic Investment Fund

There were also several taxation changes announced

## Expanded Small Business Assistance Scheme now open for applications

*Closing date for this scheme is 21st July 2021*

Phase 2 of the Small Business Assistance Scheme has been expanded to include those that had previously been ineligible. Businesses working from non-rateable premises are now eligible to apply and if they meet the other eligibility criteria will receive a grant of €4,000.

Businesses with a turnover between €20,000 and €49,999 are also now eligible to apply if they meet the other eligibility criteria

and will receive a grant of €1,000.

If you have received Phase 1 of SBASC you can apply for Phase 2 if you continue to meet the

eligibility requirements.

Businesses with a turnover between €20,000 and €49,999 are also now eligible to apply if they meet the

other eligibility criteria and will receive a grant of €1,000.

SBASC gives grants to businesses who are not eligible for the Government's COVID Restrictions Support Scheme (CRSS), the Fáilte Ireland Business Continuity grant or other direct sectoral grant schemes. This scheme aims to help businesses with their fixed costs, for example, rent, utility bills, security.

If you have received Phase 1 of SBASC you can apply for Phase 2 if you continue to meet the eligibility requirements.

### Criteria/details of Phase 2 of SBASC:

- The scheme is available for businesses that do not qualify for CRSS, MEBAS, Fáilte Ireland Schemes or other sector schemes designed to assist with fixed costs
- The scheme is available to companies, self-employed, sole traders or partnerships;
- The business is not owned and operated by a public body;
- The business is not eligible or availed of CRSS, Fáilte Ireland Business Continuity Scheme, MEBAS or other sectoral schemes. The details of these schemes are set out on the application form and FAQs.
- The business operates from a building, including working from home, or similar fixed physical structure such as a yard or a street trading pitch for which rates are payable or in a co-working hub or a rented fixed desk. This does not include businesses carried on from motor vehi-

cles, such as PSVs or construction trades;

• The business must have a current eTax Clearance Certificate from the Revenue Commissioners.

### Business Turnover criteria:

The projected average weekly turnover of the business over the claim period 1st April to 30th June 2021 is estimated to be no more than 25% of the: Average weekly turnover of the business in 2019; or the projected average weekly turnover of the business in 2020, for businesses that commenced after 1st November 2019, and the financial statements as of end of 2019 should be uploaded with the application; The business intends to resume trading in full once Government COVID-19 restrictions are eased.

### Proposed Term & Level of Payments

- The scheme will aid eligible businesses that meet the scheme criteria for the trading period beginning the 1st April to 30th of June 2021.
- All eligible applications with a minimum turnover of €50,000 will receive a payment of €4,000.
- All eligible applications with a minimum turnover of €20,000 and less than €49,999 will receive a payment of €1,000.
- Payments will be dispersed in the same format as rates refunds via bank transfer.
- The Scheme will close to new applicants on 21st July 2021.
- The scheme will be run on a first-come-first-served basis.

## Available business supports

### Re-opening Business

Outdoor tables and chairs licensing under Section 254, to support social distancing for business to re-open, is extended to the end of the year and valid Section 254 licenses will need to be applied for to cover this extended period.

### Outdoor Dining

Applications for funding under the Outdoor Seating and Accessories for Tourism and Hospitality Business Scheme opened on the 12th April and will remain open until 30th September, 2021. Funding up to €4,000 or 75% of costs is available to eligible applicants. Fáilte Ireland in partnership with local authorities across the country is working to assist town centre hospitality businesses to increase their outdoor seating capacity while providing a safe environment for shoppers and diners. The key aim of the scheme is to provide support to individual hospitality and tourism businesses towards the cost of equipment to provide additional outdoor seating and facilitate individual businesses to increase their outdoor dining capacity for the summer of 2021. Please note that applicants who wish to place seating and/or furniture on public property must have a Section 254 license in place; applicants who wish to place seating and/or furniture on private property must have satisfied all necessary planning requirements. More information can be found on [www.wicklow.ie/Living/ConsultationHub](http://www.wicklow.ie/Living/ConsultationHub)

## Local Enterprise Office

The LEO is the first stop shop for business supports and offers a range of supports to business impacted by COVID-19 including training, mentoring, answering customs queries and access to funding. For more information on these supports please see: [www.localenterprise.ie/Wicklow/Financial-Supports/COVID-19/](http://www.localenterprise.ie/Wicklow/Financial-Supports/COVID-19/) and [www.localenterprise.ie/response/](http://www.localenterprise.ie/response/).

Please call 0404 30800 or email: [enterprise@leo.wicklowcoco.ie](mailto:enterprise@leo.wicklowcoco.ie) to start the conversation.

Wicklow County Council would like to thank members of the public in advance for their patience and understanding. The safety of our employees and members of the public remains our priority. Measures will be kept under review in accordance with Government announcements. Further information in relation to all Wicklow County Council Services are available on the Council's website: [www.wicklow.ie](http://www.wicklow.ie)



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## Oral history project sheds light on experiences of people under probation supervision

The experiences of people confined to institutions such as prisons, mother and baby homes, Magdalene laundries and industrial schools, have received significant attention in recent years. However, the historical experiences of people under probation supervision in the community have been largely forgotten.

The Histories of Probation project, led by Dr Louise Kennefick (Maynooth University) and Dr Deirdre Healy (University College Dublin) aims to uncover and document people's experiences of probation supervision.

The researchers would like to hear from anyone placed under probation supervision by the courts in the 1960s or 1970s, whether this was a probation order, community service order, suspended sentence or temporary release.

Dr Kennefick explains why this project is so important: "We believe that this project will provide a better understanding of the history of the Probation Service, which may help to improve policy and practice in the future. We would like to know what it was like to be under supervision during the 1960s and 1970s, whether those experiences were helpful, unhelpful or irrelevant to people's lives."

ethos. Probation officers also spoke about a lack of state-funded rehabilitation services, which impacted on their ability to help clients build better lives or move away from crime. To compensate, many innovated by introducing new programmes or drew on existing services in the community, including those provided by religious orders and voluntary lay organisations such as the Legion of Mary.

During the 1960s and 1970s, the Probation Service was a small and largely voluntary service but has since evolved into a nationwide, professionalised organisation with a social work ethos.

Today, probation officers play a crucial role throughout the criminal justice process; for example, providing pre-sentence reports to courts, supervising offenders in the community, and work-

ing with prisoners in custody and after release. In 2019, the Probation Service received 337 referrals from courts in the Wicklow region. CSO statistics show that 27% of Wicklow residents placed under supervision in 2016 were reconvicted within one year of completing a supervision order. "However, these figures cannot tell us whether probation supervision helped people to stop offending or how it impacted on their lives," Dr Kennefick said.

Those who would like to participate in the study, or learn more, are invited to contact Dr Louise Kennefick by email at [louise.kennefick@mu.ie](mailto:louise.kennefick@mu.ie), or by post at New House, Department of Law, Maynooth University, Maynooth, Co. Kildare. Due to Covid restrictions, interviews will be conducted by phone, Zoom, or Skype.

## Wicklow farmer interviewed on 'Vanishing Ireland' podcast

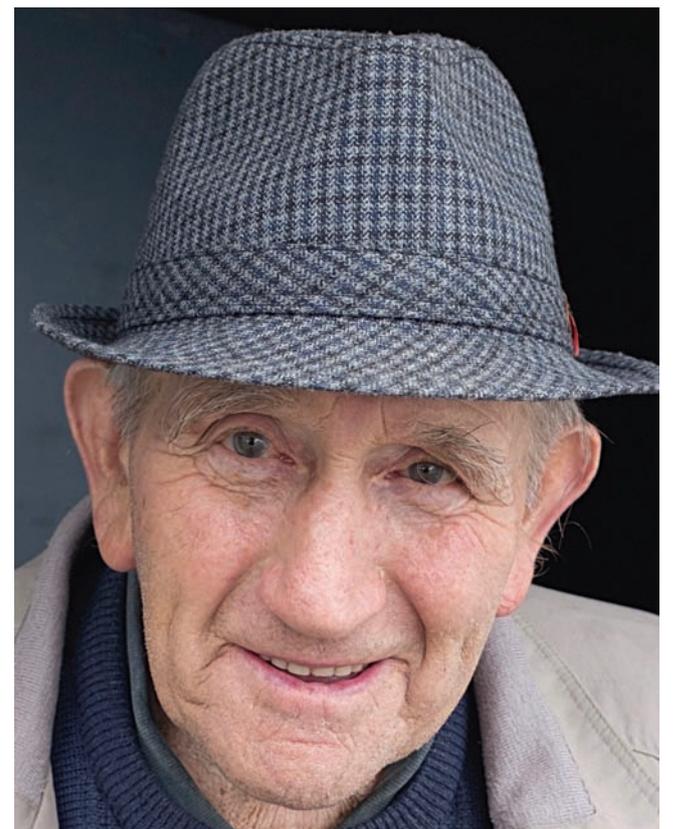
84-year-old farmer Myles Clarke from Valleymount was recently interviewed for the Vanishing Ireland podcast series.

After a nationwide call out, spear-headed by former RTE newscaster Anne Doyle, the Vanishing Ireland podcast series made its debut on Friday 18th June on Spotify, Google and all podcast channels. The series features 16 profile interviews with elders of Irish society by historian Turtle Bunbury, who co-founded the acclaimed Vanishing Ireland project twenty years ago. The second podcast to air was with Myles Clarke, an 84-year old mountain farmer from Valleymount, who grew up in a world without electricity. Myles's interview was released on Friday, the 25th of June, at 3pm.

Vanishing Ireland with Turtle Bunbury is a podcast series of interviews with Ireland's over 70's, celebrating their life stories, challenges, courage, kindness and humour. The series documents the, very often, extraordinary lives of our older population in a way that celebrates the past while informing younger generations in shaping the future. The 2021 series will highlight the wealth of humour, resilience and wisdom from Ireland's elders. Created in audio format, Turtle discusses life and its learnings with people across Ireland, saving and celebrating their voices for future generations.

Speaking about the Vanishing Ireland Series, Bunbury says: "Introducing the voices of Vanishing Ireland to the podcast generation has been an entirely new departure for our elders but has been deeply exciting and very much in keeping with our aims. I feel very honoured to have had this time

bringing to life the world that our grandparents knew in a manner that appeals to a 21st century audience. Vanishing Ireland supported by SuperValu hopes to inspire children and grandchildren to listen to the stories of their own parents and grandparents, as well as older friends and neighbours, creating a record of memories for future generations.



Myles Clarke



## Book clubs resume under gazebos at Bray and Ballywaltrim libraries

Wicklow County Council Library Service has purchased a number of pop-up gazebos which will provide a sheltered and identifiable space for some socially distanced story time and book club events outside during the coming weeks.

Ballywaltrim Library Book Club was renewed outdoors on Wednesday, 9th June. The day had dawned overcast and showery but by midday the sun had emerged much to library staff's relief.

Librarians Deirdre Flannery and David Forde hosted the event which will take place on a monthly basis outdoors this summer.

The book chosen for discussion was "The Tattooist of Auschwitz" by Heather Morris. The book tells the story of how Slovakian Jew Lale Sokolov, who was imprisoned at Auschwitz in 1942, fell in love with a girl he was tattooing at the concentration camp.

New members are always welcome and should contact Ballywaltrim library at [ballywaltrimlibrary@wicklowcoco.ie](mailto:ballywaltrimlibrary@wicklowcoco.ie) or Tel: 01-2723205 for further information.

Ballywaltrim Library has also launched their Summer Stars programme and so far have had successful and fun outdoor story time sessions. These will continue for the summer months at 10.30 am on Tuesday mornings and Thursday afternoons at 3.30 pm under the gazebo in the library garden.

Both Bray and Ballywaltrim libraries are lucky to have attractive landscaped garden spaces, ideally suited to outdoor events where socially distant seating can be provided.

Bray Library hosted their first in-person Read the Rainbow book-club session on Tuesday, 8th June, in the garden under a gazebo to the front of the library, following five months of Zoom meetings. The group discussed "Fair Play", by Tove Jansson - a clear favourite - and the beautiful Mary Oliver poem "The Gardens", as suggested by book-club member Rosamund.

For enquires about membership, please email [braylib@wicklowcoco.ie](mailto:braylib@wicklowcoco.ie) or phone the library at 01-2826200.

## Flower Farmers of Ireland report growing interest in Irish-grown flowers

A growing number of "flower farmers" are cultivating their passion for beautiful fresh flowers and growing their own flowers and foliage on Irish soil.

Over 95% of cut flowers sold in Ireland are imported from abroad, involving significant air miles. However, more and more consumers are now seeking out home-grown alternatives, according to Chairperson of the Flower Farmers of Ireland group, Britta Baranowsky of the Flower Field in Tinahely.



Chairperson of the Flower Farmers of Ireland group, Britta Baranowsky

The group currently has almost 60 members spread across Ireland. They share their knowledge and expertise with each other through online forums.

From July 5th-11th, the organisation is running Irish Flower week, an annual celebration of the wealth and variety of Irish cut flowers, plants and foliage.

"Our aim is to shine a spotlight on Irish flowers, to showcase the passion and skill of our members and the beauty of their produce. We hope to raise awareness of the increased availability of Irish home-grown flowers and educate consumers on when Irish flowers are in season. We want to encourage the public to support local by buying more Irish flowers".

She encouraged consumers to check the Flowers Farmers of Ireland website to see profiles of the members that are now growing and selling fresh flowers and foliage from Irish soil. Most Members also have active social media accounts where they share updates on the highs and lows of growing fresh flowers in the Irish climate.

Britta said the Covid pandemic has encouraged many consumers to re-assess their buying habits, particularly when it comes to sustainability and environmental issues.

"For example, our Members report a growing interest in buying from sources that are growing pollinator-friendly plants, given the need to support our vulnerable bee-populations. We are also seeing increased online sales channels developing, with the courier network able to deliver fresh flowers nationwide".

Britta said that the group's Members tend to be creative individuals, with a keen eye for design and a passion for sustainability in everything they do. "They also tend to be resilient individuals with a good work ethic, as growing fresh flowers is labour intensive and subject to many and varied challenges - particularly the weather".

# 'Government voting against Just Transition very disappointing'

Social Democrats TD Jennifer Whitmore has called out against the government for voting against just transition amendments during the Dáil debate on the new Climate Action Bill the week before last.

The Spokesperson for Climate Action and biodiversity has said "It is very disappointing that on many different occasions the Government including Green Party TDs voted down my just transition amendments and those of other TDs.

"Just transition is about bringing everyone along with us on our journey to a zero-carbon economy, most of all those who are vulnerable to the effects of climate change and the effects of our transition to a greener economy. Those on low income or specific sectors are already affected by changes being brought in by climate action policies and they need to be part of the conversation.

"For that reason, I met with farmers from Wicklow recently where we discussed these issues and the need for greater involvement of all sectors. A just transition applies to them too but this has been largely lost on the Greens.

"The most important thing to remember is that while we have the targets in place what is equally important is how we meet those targets. My just transition amendments would've given the government a direction on a fair and just approach to meeting our climate action targets.

"My role now is to hold the government to account and make sure the implementation is done properly and fairly and I will continue to pursue this in my work in the Dáil."

Speaking previously about the Climate Action Bill, Deputy Whitmore said the Minister for Climate Action's refusal to insert just transition definition and principles in the Climate Action Bill is 'disappointing and flawed'.

"Each of my amendments seek to strengthen the Bill including stronger decarbonisation targets, the inclusion of a

just transition definition and principles to ensure that no community is left behind as we transition to a zero-carbon economy.

"It was very disappointing that the Minister repeatedly stated that he would not be accepting any opposition amendments and believes the existing reference to just transition in the Bill is sufficient. This is certainly not the case. Defining what a just transition means for people in this country will be crucial to the success of our ability to transition to a zero-carbon economy. It will require the inclusion of every community in the process, ensuring they are not disadvantaged as a result and that the benefits of climate mitigation and preparedness is shared across the board.

"For Wicklow this will mean supporting farmers to incorporate sustainable and environmentally friendly farming practices and supporting them as guardians of our heritage.

It will mean people on low incomes, living in rural areas, marginalised groups and community as well as those with disabilities will have to be continually consulted, supported and included in the transitional process which no doubt will bring a lot of changes and upheaval as a result of the pace of climate change and the need to respond urgently.

"Arklow has been chosen as Wicklow's first Decarbonisation Zone and will be a real test of how a just transition can successfully be applied. However, as we roll out decarbonisation zones across our county and the country, it will require strong legislation and Government accountability if it is to be successful. I intend to reintroduce just transition definition and principles into the Bill at Fourth Stage in the Dáil soon and would urge the Minister who has in the past advocated for just transition, to accept my amendment."

## Wicklow consumers recycle 1,255 tonnes of electrical waste in 2020

A surge in lockdown spring cleaning saw 1,255 tonnes of electrical waste collected in Wicklow by the country's largest recycling scheme in 2020, despite Covid and travel restrictions.



WEEE Ireland CEO Leo Donovan

8.8kg of e-waste was recycled per person in the county last year - narrowly falling short of the 2019 collection rate of 8.9kg, and the 2020 national average of 10.9kg per person.

However, WEEE Ireland has warned that the rise in reusing and repairing of electrical goods must be counted towards Ireland's recycling targets if we are serious about developing a circular economy.

WEEE Ireland was one of the best performing recycling schemes in Europe in 2020, with 38,724 tonnes of waste electrical items collected in total - including 120,000 fridges and 200,000 TVs and mon-

itors recovered.

The equivalent of over 46 million used AA portable batteries were also prevented from ending up in landfill, its annual report revealed.

WEEE Ireland accounts for over two thirds of all national waste electrical and electronics collection activity on behalf of 1,189 producer members.

The scheme achieved the biggest monthly takeback volume in its 16-year history in July when the first lockdown was lifted with a record 3,763 tonnes of electrical waste collected for recycling countrywide.

However, with electrical consumption rising on a yearly basis, its CEO has called on legislators to recognise the role that unreported activities such as repair are increasingly playing alongside recycling in the circular economy.

"In Wicklow, and across Ireland, we are consuming more electrical goods than ever - with the annual tonnage on the market rising from 15kg a head in 2016 to 21kg a head last year," said WEEE Ireland CEO Leo Donovan.

"This rise makes meeting the annual EU WEEE Directive target even harder, despite achieving record recycling levels, as it equates to the percentage of goods sold.

"WEEE Ireland has been a huge educator in the areas of reuse and repair, alongside the electrical producers, partnering with new initiatives like Repair My Stuff.ie and My Waste.ie.

"It is time to realistically measure the amount of goods that are kept in circulation, rather than basing targets solely on end-of-life recycling, and also legislate for longer-life technologies such as photovoltaic panels and EV batteries.

"We have to recognise that significant volumes of WEEE are not being handed over to the schemes but going to export, metal scrap and other flows."



At the Bray Rowing Club open day were Emer Cassidy, Wanda Scarff, Cathy Keane and Emilie Jost. Pic: Joe McQuillan

## Innovative mitigation measures introduced to reduce Barn Owl deaths on roads

The habitat of the Barn Owl often being close to major roads, means that there are inevitably road fatalities. Barn Owls are one of the most susceptible birds to vehicle collisions.

Research carried out by BirdWatch Ireland and Transport Infrastructure Ireland has shed light on the extent of Barn Owl deaths which occur on Irish roads and for the first time an insight on the behaviour of Barn Owls in relation to roads, particularly how they use roadside verges for foraging and how this can increase the risk of collision.

The findings of this research has now been applied to the design of new mitigation measures which will be incorporated during the early planning phases of national road schemes, with the aim of reducing the effects of road networks on Barn Owl populations.

Road infrastructure is essential to our everyday lives, but it can come at a cost for biodiversity. Vehicle collision is the main cause of death for a diverse range of wildlife and can contribute to population declines and increase the risk of extinction for vulnerable species.

Mitigation strategies to reduce collisions and impacts on wildlife are standard in the planning and design of all new road developments in Ireland. Since the mid noughties, all new constructed motorways were fitted with a range of structures to prevent road deaths of mammals, including fencing to restrict animal access to the road, underpasses to allow for safe crossing and an overpass green bridge for bats.

Although the potential impacts of new road developments and the inevitable mortality of Barn Owls were recognised by road authorities and developers, there were no measures in place to reduce the risk of collision. This was partly due to the inherent difficulties in designing and imple-

menting road mitigation strategies for birds, but an additional obstacle had been a limited understanding of the response and behaviour of Barn Owls to major roads, and how this influences their risk of collision.

This has now changed, with the publication of new research led by BirdWatch Ireland and commissioned by Transport Infrastructure Ireland which answers many of the previously unknown questions, such as the extent of mortality of Barn Owls on Irish roads, the factors which influence their risk of vehicle collision, and importantly how Barn Owl behave in relation to roads and how they exploit roadside verges for foraging.

A road casualty survey on the M8 Motorway and the Tralee Bypass estimated a mortality rate of 51 and 60 Barn Owls per 100 km per year on these routes. This information is necessary to understand the scale of the problem and the requirement for effective mitigation solutions. This study, published by Transport Infrastructure Ireland also identifies the specific characteristics of roads where risk of collision for Barn Owls is greatest, and with the use of specialised GPS transmitters, uncovered how Barn Owls use and exploit roadside verges.

John Lusby, of BirdWatch Ireland, who led the research, explained, "We saw that individual birds which were fitted with GPS transmitters routinely hunted along the verges of major roads. Barn Owls are attracted to hunt these long, linear habitats, which are also suitable for their small mammal prey. However, this can be a high-risk foraging habitat due to the proximity to the road, and we observed that the places that

Barn Owls were most frequently killed on roads were those which were close to suitable foraging conditions."

The findings of this research have been used to develop new measures which are aimed at reducing the risk of Barn Owl mortality on Irish roads. Transport Infrastructure Ireland and BirdWatch Ireland devised the 'Survey and Mitigation Standards for Barn Owls', now published by Transport Infrastructure Ireland. These standards include survey requirements for Barn Owls to ensure that direct disturbance effects to breeding sites can be identified and avoided during the construction of new road projects. The more challenging mitigation to design has been measures to reduce the risk of vehicle collision for Barn Owls. These measures, which will be considered in the planning of new road projects, aim to discourage Barn Owls from flying or foraging in close proximity to major roads and to divert the flight height of birds above the height of vehicles. Where the width of the verge allows, suitable foraging conditions will be provided, behind natural screening to protect the birds while foraging. These measures will be targeted to the sections of road where they are most required and based on proximity to known Barn Owl nest sites.

Dr Vincent O'Malley, Head of Environment of Transport Infrastructure Ireland, commented, "We are delighted to support innovative research such as this because it provides the scientific evidence for the development of appropriate mitigation measures for the protection of Barn Owls which interact with the national road network. As many of these new measures have not been implemented previously, it will be important to regularly monitor these measures to ensure their effectiveness."



Stephen Mooney's 'Exhausted Bumblebee' photo, taken in his garden in Bray, was named the winner of the Irish Wildlife Trust's Photo of the Month competition.

# Survey explores feasibility for Wicklow Town Arts Centre

Wicklow Town Team recently commissioned a feasibility study to explore the idea of developing a Youth & Community Arts Centre in the town. The study was conducted by Wicklow-based arts development agency Arts Leaders Associates, who designed a survey to gather the ideas, insights and ambitions of Wicklow residents and arts/community groups.

"A Youth and Community Arts Centre in Wicklow Town would be an invaluable local asset to the hundreds of talented young people, who are involved in dance, theatre and music groups in the town. There's a vast array of dedicated creative space

like this would offer a much-needed performance platform right here in Wicklow Town," said Dave Shannon, Chairman of Wicklow Town Team

Wicklow Town Team described the survey as "a unique opportunity to help develop and shape the future of the arts and cultural landscape of Wicklow Town, as the responses from this survey will directly inform the findings of this report."

on other exciting projects for the town. If you are interested in getting involved in the group, please email wicklow-townteam@gmail.com.

This project is funded through the LEADER Rural Development Fund 2014 - 2020, County Wicklow Partnership and Wicklow County Council.

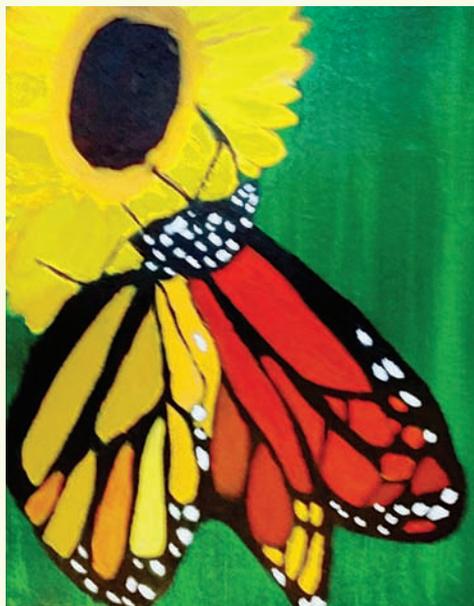


Members of FYI Dance Group from Wicklow Town - one of the groups that would benefit from a new Community Arts Centre in the town.

## Coming up at Signal Arts Centre...

### *Divergence: An Exhibition by Papillon Art Group*

Monday 30th August to Sunday 12th September



Papillon Art Group is an eclectic group of artists from a wide range of artistic backgrounds and practices. They meet in the Signal Arts Centre on Saturday mornings, and work on their own projects and subjects of interest.

The group was originally founded by artist and tutor Gill Mac, who sadly passed-away in 2019. Being a socially close-knit team, the artists decided to continue painting together at Signal and to invite other artists to give occasional workshops in different disciplines.

'Divergence' represents the group's transformation from having a much-missed friend and tutor to individual learning and exploration within the framework of a supportive and motivative team.

The exhibition is colourful and vibrant, depicting various subjects, such as animals, nature, landscapes, still life and maritime.

Papillon Art Group are: Aisling McMorrow, David Swail, Catherine Finn, Catherine Russell, Ciara Nolan, Mark Diggan, Declan Vaughan, Gerry Parle, Jennifer Moran, and Audrey McCoy.

## *Into Nature:*

### *An Exhibition by Kaisa Ypya*

Monday 13th September to Sunday 26th September

Kaisa Ypya has always been fascinated by the way light and shadows change our perception of what we see and how we view the outdoors and nature.

The paintings in this exhibition have become a collection of snapshots of moments the artist has spent out in the wilderness, captured by her camera, and her attempt to translate the images into watercolour paintings.

Our shared longing to return to a more connected life and the feeling that we have become so far-removed from nature is now more obvious than it has been ever before. Ypya's paintings are a method of escaping that feeling of being trapped in the routines of a man-made world.

This is Kaisa Ypya's first solo exhibition. She has a background in art facilitation and has studied fine arts in her native Finland. She is the owner of the Secret Garden Art Studio in Greystones which will begin offering art classes for both adults and children in the near future. Having lived in South Africa and England, Kaisa Ypya settled in Ireland fourteen short years ago.



## Mermaid's Artist in Residence: Laura Kelly

Mermaid Arts Centre has been delighted to have Laura Kelly in residence in their gallery space over the last couple of months.

Laura Kelly has been using her gallery residency to make large scale constructed drawings.

She views drawing as an experimental act that can animate a space. Her aim is to create an engagement with drawing as a physical event rather than just as a carrier of images.

Her work moves between the 2 and 3-dimensional. During the residency, she will use assemblages of materials that evoke imaginary landscapes combining both abstract and representational imagery.

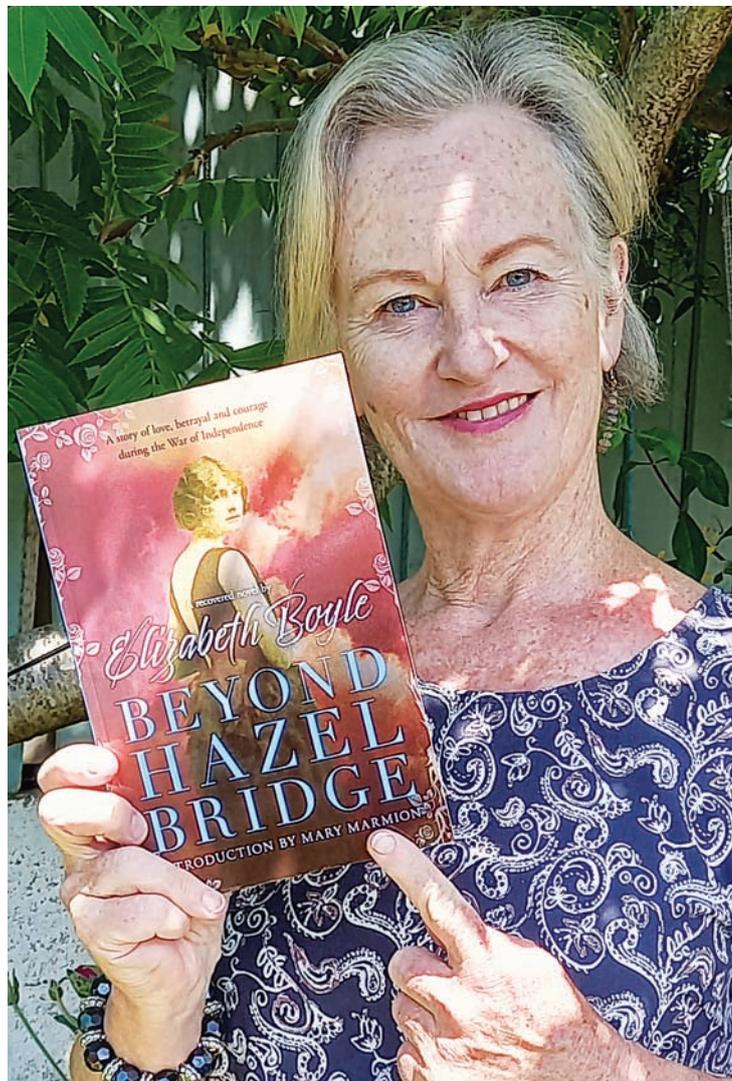
She has been reconfiguring elements from the pictorial landscape tradition including vignettes, panoramas, interrupted horizon lines and variations in scale.

Laura Kelly will be exhibiting in Mermaid in early 2022.



# Wicklow writer publishes lost manuscript

Elizabeth Boyle was born in Leitrim in 1905. She lived through the War of Independence and the Civil War often telling how she danced with the charismatic Michael Collins. As a young woman she wrote a semi-autobiographical novel and later she added a preamble as a mature woman returning to reflect on the place of her youth. She tried to have her writing published but it never happened.



Mary Marmion, grandniece of Elizabeth Boyle.

are warned against liaisons with "the other side" with harrowing consequences.

Now Sally and her family are under suspicion by the British Forces and the IRA both quick to take retribution against civilians who don't heed warnings.

Sally becomes politicised and is drawn in different directions from her brothers. They are forced to choose between loyalty to their families and their country and their hearts.

Her love for Peter matures as the young couple struggle to find their place in a country on the brink of Civil War and the divisions in families and friends which run deep post Truce, amid deep divisions over the Treaty.

Drawing on Military Service Pension applications and statements and newspaper reports of the time Mary Marmion's introduction sets the narrative in the historical context of the time after which Ireland would never be the same. Beyond Hazel Bridge is a book of its time as we commemorate a painful period of our history.

Beyond Hazel Bridge is available from The Bridge Book Shop in Wicklow Town and from [www.amazon.de](http://www.amazon.de) and signed copies from [mpmarmion2020@gmail.com](mailto:mpmarmion2020@gmail.com)

Now, one hundred years later, Elizabeth's grandniece and former Wicklow Times journalist, Mary Marmion (OSullivan) has brought the dream to reality by self-publishing the manuscript.

Mary has painstakingly reconstructed the novel titled Beyond Hazel Bridge and it is a feast for the senses. It is a first-hand account of the life of a young girl and her community in rural Ireland in the nineteen twenties which pulls the reader into the subterfuge and drama of the times while seeking comfort in the nature around her.

This was the time of Black and Tans and Flying Columns. The War of Independence rages, on a stage of reprisals. Old friends and neighbours have become wary of each

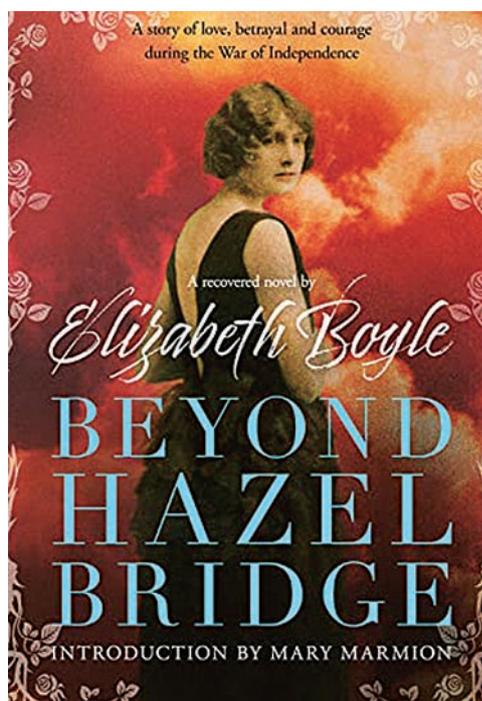
other, doubting allegiances and fearing that whispers will lead to violent retribution.

In the rural midlands the Glynn family is drawn deeper into uncertainty and subterfuge.

Sally, our heroine, is secretly in love with Peter, a young Protestant childhood friend who fought alongside her brothers in the Easter Rising. But the sands have shifted since then and Peter has joined the British Army.

Fiery Tom is reluctantly studying for the priesthood at his mother's insistence and Michael has turned his back on politics, his vocation and his careers plans to manage the family farm for his aging parents.

Sally's relationship with Peter places her in danger as young women



At the launch of Heritage Week 2021 in the meadow at the Irish Museum of Modern Art, with a 'shelter tent' and other items from a traditional Traveller camp is three-year old Davie Collins holding the name of Thomas Collins, his great-great-great grandfather. Photo: Mark Stedman

## Share in the joy of Wicklow's heritage

Heritage Council invites communities across County Wicklow to participate in National Heritage Week 2021

Open the door to heritage is the message from the Heritage Council as it launched National Heritage Week 2021 last week. Culture and heritage groups, as well as communities, families and individuals in County Wicklow are invited to get involved and celebrate and share heritage.

Organised by the Heritage Council, National Heritage Week will run from Saturday, 14th - Sunday, 22nd August, and has become one of Ireland's largest cultural events.

The launch was attended by Minister of State for Heritage and Electoral Reform, Malcolm Noonan, TD. He said: "My department and I are pleased to support this year's National Heritage Week, which focuses on encouraging the inclusion of as many people as possible in exploring, sharing and enjoying Ireland's diverse heritage."

"I especially welcome the heritage newcomers approach taken this year, which is an invitation to those who are new to heritage to get involved. During lockdowns many of us have had more time to explore our local or personal heritage. National Heritage Week may be the perfect opportunity to showcase what you have discovered, or to dig deeper and find out more. Whatever aspect of heritage is chosen, I wish the very best to all those taking part and look forward to seeing the end results in August."

The Chairman of the Heritage Council, Michael Parsons, said: "I strongly encourage all project organisers to think meaningfully on how they might include new members of their communities in their projects, and explore aspects of heritage that may have been overlooked in the past."

Chief Executive of the Heritage Council, Virginia Teehan added: "National Heritage Week continues to be an important moment for community engagement, wellbeing and social cohesion. Heritage Week offers the perfect opportunity to showcase a personal heritage project that can be part of the bigger heritage landscape and

shared with the wider national community."

National Heritage Week 2021 will follow the same format as last year, where local heritage groups and organisers, families and communities are invited to develop projects which can be showcased on line. In-person events will be limited and will be required to adhere to public health advice. There is no subject-specific theme for National Heritage Week 2021; instead, the focus is on getting as many people to enjoy heritage as possible.

Project organisers are being asked to consider the following:

. Heritage newcomers: A general invitation to individuals, families and communities who have never engaged in National Heritage Week to work on a heritage project.

. Heritage sharing: An invitation to existing National Heritage Week organisers to connect with a group / individuals in the community who may not feel included in local heritage; or an opportunity to explore an aspect of local heritage that is seldom considered / celebrated.

. Heritage for all ages: This is an invitation to National Heritage Week organisers to include different age groups in heritage projects.

Projects should be completed in time for National Heritage Week (14th-22nd August 2021) when they will be showcased on [www.heritageweek.ie](http://www.heritageweek.ie). Accepted formats for showcasing vary from online talks or exhibitions, to a video, podcast, slideshow presentation or blog, to media coverage, a dedicated website or moderated social media account, or by means of small, in-person events, which comply with official public health advice. A suite of resources to support project development will be available on [HeritageWeek.ie](http://HeritageWeek.ie) as well as a series of webinars which will run in June, presented by the Heritage Council. For more information, visit [www.heritageweek.ie](http://www.heritageweek.ie).

In County Wicklow, National Heritage Week is co-ordinated and supported by local authority heritage officer, Deirdre Burns.

# 'Government should encourage applications for small business assistance scheme in Wicklow'

Speaking last Wednesday John Brady TD said that the Government and Local Authorities should be seeking out small businesses in County Wicklow and encouraging them to apply to the Small Business Assistance Scheme for COVID (SBASC) before it closes next month as data provided to him shows that only 115 grants have been applied for in County Wicklow to date.

Phase 2 of the Small Business Assistance Scheme has been expanded to include those that had previously been ineligible. Businesses working from non-rateable premises are now eligible to apply and if they meet the other eligibility criteria will receive a grant of €4,000. The closing date for the scheme is 21st July. The scheme will be run on a first-come-first-served basis.

If you have received Phase 1 of SBASC you can apply for Phase 2 if you continue to meet the eligibility requirements.

Criteria/details of Phase 2 of SBASC:

- The scheme is available for businesses that do not qualify for CRSS, MEBAS, Fáilte Ireland Schemes or other sector schemes designed to assist with fixed costs
- The scheme is available to companies, self-employed, sole traders or partnerships;

- The business is not owned and operated by a public body;
- The business is not eligible or availed of CRSS, Fáilte Ireland Business Continuity Scheme, MEBAS or other sectoral schemes. The details of these schemes are set out on the application form and FAQs.
- The business operates from a building, including working from home, or similar fixed physical structure for which rates are payable or in a co-working hub or a rented fixed desk.
- The business must have a current eTax Clearance Certificate from the Revenue Commissioners.

The projected average weekly turnover of the business over the claim period 1st April to 30th June 2021 is estimated to be no more than 25% of the: Average weekly turnover of the business in 2019; or the projected

average weekly turnover of the business in 2020, for businesses that commenced after 1st November 2019, and the financial statements as of end of 2019 should be uploaded with the application; The business intends to resume trading in full once Government COVID-19 restrictions are eased.

Deputy Brady said "The Small Business Assistance Scheme for COVID (SBASC) was established to provide much needed funding to many businesses who had been excluded from other Government schemes such as the Covid Restrictions Support Scheme (CRSS), the Music and Entertainment Business Assistance Scheme (MEBAS), the Fáilte Ireland Business Continuity grant, and other direct sectoral grant schemes.

"The SBASC scheme provided grants of €4,000 to businesses working from non-rateable premises and €1,000 to businesses with a turnover between €20,000 and €49,999. While it was a small scheme, it was much needed and appreciated by small businesses.

"However, data provided to Sinn Féin by the Department of Enterprise, Trade, and Employment has revealed that only 3,079 grant applications have been made to date across the whole of the

state. Indeed, to date, just over €12 million in grants have been applied for despite the scheme being due to close in less than a month.

"The situation is mirrored in County Wicklow where only 115 businesses have applied for grants worth a value of €460,000.00.

"The Department has relayed that not all applications will be approved, so in all likelihood the number of applications which turn into approved grants in County Wicklow will be less than 115, unless the Government and Local Authorities step in now.

"With such a low level of applications it is clear that the Tánaiste and Minister for Enterprise, Trade, and Employment, the Government, and Local Authorities, need to seek out and encourage applications from small businesses for the SBASC scheme.

"Given the closing date for the scheme is 21 July, the Government must work to ensure as many small businesses as possible know about the scheme and submit grant applications. If there are any small businesses in County Wicklow who are looking for additional details about the SBASC scheme, please do not hesitate to get in touch and both I and my offices will do all we can to help."



Odile, Jano, and Albert Evans with Anne Jennings at the recent launch of Caféin in Coolgreany. :

## Extension of Apprenticeship Incentivisation Scheme for Wicklow employers

Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science Simon Harris TD, has today announced a further extension of the Apprenticeship Incentivisation Scheme (AIS) until the end of December 2021.

Minister Harris said: "The Apprenticeship Incentivisation Scheme provides financial support for employers who register apprentices to a national apprenticeship programmes. So far 47 Wicklow employers have been approved for the scheme".

Employers who are approved by SOLAS to employ apprentices are eligible for a €3,000 payment for each new apprentice registered. €2,000 per apprentice is paid to eligible employers following the registration of apprentices with a further €1,000 is payable in Year 2 for each apprentice retained on their apprenticeship.

Minister Harris continued: "During an incredibly challenging year with Covid-19 and the impact it has had on our society, the apprenticeship system has remained resilient. Since the launch of the Incentivisation Scheme, €5.7 million has been paid to over 1,500 employers throughout the country supporting almost 3,000 new apprentice jobs, with many more in the pipeline. In County Wicklow we already have 47 employers approved for the scheme. I have ambitious targets for apprenticeships in Ireland and I want to ensure employers are supported in taking on new apprentices.

Under the Action Plan for Apprenticeship 2021-2025 it is intended to ensure that all employers of apprentices will be financially supported either through the direct payment of training allowances to craft apprentices during periods of off-the-job training or through an annual base grant per apprentice for employers of all other apprentices. This will be implemented in early 2022. For now, we will continue to support employers through this scheme and I would encourage everyone to help us spread the word and get the message out there. Apprenticeship is good for businesses and good for learners."

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# Wicklow householders recycled 216,000 batteries in 2020

Householders in Wicklow recycled 30,000 more batteries through retailers last year than in 2019, new figures show.

Data from WEEE Ireland reveals that environmentally-conscious consumers in the Wicklow brought 215,720 used batteries - 5.4 tonnes - back to supermarkets, hardware and electronic stores in 2020.

That was a rise of 30,480 on the 185,240

prevented from ending up in general waste bins the year before.

Nationally, a massive 7.8 million batteries were recycled through all retailers last year - up 134,120 on 2019 as more people used their grocery shop to do their bit for the planet.

Six million of those ended up in supermarkets, over half of which WEEE Ireland collected from Aldi stores, which led the charge on 3.2 million, double that of German counterpart Lidl (1.6 million).

The e-waste recycling scheme also picked up 850,000 used batteries from Tesco, 224,000 from SuperValu and over 97,000 from while Dunnes Stores outlets.

When figures from all retailers and civic amenity sites were added, the equivalent of



Leo Donovan, CEO of WEEE Ireland

21 million AA batteries were recycled by householders in 2020, an average of four for everyone in Ireland.

Despite the encouraging data, for every 10 AA batteries sold on the market, only four are returned for recycling, with 20% in a recent survey admitting to dumping used batteries in general waste bins.

"Now is a perfect opportunity for people to stop for a moment to think about how they

can make a difference," said Leo Donovan, CEO of WEEE Ireland.

"Recycling batteries is as easy as taking them to your nearest supermarket or recycling centre and plays a huge part in helping protect the environment.

"Rolling lockdowns saw people use more home grooming devices such as electric shavers, games con-

soles, remote controls, kids' toys, power tools and fitness equipment - resulting in more batteries being used and many of these ended up

in drawers. "For the millions of batteries not recycled properly, we lose precious elements and important resources that

could be used again in manufacturing. The hazardous material they release also has an impact on human health and our environment."

## 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. Thank You.

J.M.

## CLASSIFIEDS

### Mark 4:26-34 GOSPEL

Jesus said to the crowd: 'This is what the kingdom of God is like. A man throws seed on the land. Night and day, while he sleeps, when he is awake, the seed is sprouting and growing; how he does not know. Of its own accord the land produces first the shoot, then the ear, then the full grain in the ear. And when the crop is ready, he loses no time: he starts to reap because the harvest has come.' He also said, 'What can we say the kingdom of God is like? What parable can we find for it? It is like a mustard seed which at the time of its sowing in the soil is the smallest of all the seeds on earth; yet once it is sown it grows into the biggest shrub of them all and puts out big branches so that the birds of the air can shelter in its shade.' Using many parables like these, he spoke the word to them, so far as they were capable of understanding it. He would not speak to them except in parables, but he explained everything to his disciples when they were alone.

#### Reflection

If we are intent on doing what is right, caring for our brothers and sisters in their need, even in the detailed actions of our daily lives, God will be building His Kingdom in our world. Every good action, every gift of kindness, will be a building block in God's design. We must never underestimate the value of even our smallest actions when we undertake them in Faith and do them in love.

C.J.

## PLANNING

### WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL

Eoin and Niamh Longwill seek permission for demolition of existing shed and construction of a new 3 bedroom detached dwelling with rear dormer, in side garden of existing house, new driveway entrance on western boundary, associated landscaping, drainage and site works at 136 Ardmore Park, Bray, Co. Wicklow. The planning application may be inspected or purchased at a fee not exceeding the reasonable cost of making a copy at the offices of Wicklow County Council, County Buildings, Wicklow during its public opening hours and a submission or observation in relation to the application may be made to the authority in writing on payment of the prescribed fee within the period of 5 weeks beginning on the date of receipt by the authority of the application.

### WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL

Planning permission is sought for revisions to existing 2018 Grant of Planning Permission 18/1005 (Decision date 21-08-2019) which proposed the demolition of an existing single storey house, and construction in its place of two single storey houses, each with a new vehicular access, and each complete with siteworks, landscaping, boundary wall treatment, and associated infrastructural works. The changes proposed in this new application include revisions to the plan layouts of both houses, revisions to the elevations as granted, the introduction of continuous clear-storey windows and large roof overhangs, the introduction of a new garden shed, three ornamental garden pools, garden courtyard walls, and a revised fire-pit. The surface water retention tank, too, is now divided into two smaller tanks, one located in the front garden area, and one in the back garden area. The applicants are Neil and Grainne Murphy, and the address is Meadow Court, New Road, Greystones, Co Wicklow, Eircode A63 ER83. This planning application may be inspected or purchased at a fee not exceeding the reasonable cost of making a copy, at the offices of Wicklow County Council, County Buildings, Wicklow, during its public opening hours, and a submission or observation in relation to the application may be made to the planning authority in writing on payment of the prescribed fee of €20, within the period of 5 weeks beginning on the date of receipt by the authority of the application.

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## RECRUITMENT



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Kildare and Wicklow Education and Training Board invites applications for the following permanent posts:

### GRADE VI SENIOR STAFF OFFICER

Initial location: Naas, Co. Kildare to be filled by competition confined to the Education and Training Sector Candidate Pool.

### CONTRACTED TRAINING OFFICER (GRADE VII)

Initial location: Wicklow Town, Co. Wicklow to be filled by open competition.

Closing date for above posts: 12 noon on 2nd July 2021.

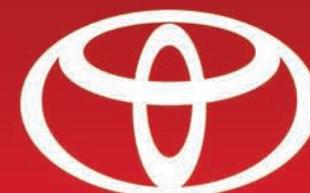
Full details are available on [www.kwetb.ie](http://www.kwetb.ie) and click on 'vacancies'.

Dr Deirdre Keyes, Chief Executive.

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