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Tuesday 20th July 2021 First Floor, The Boulevard, Quinsborough Road, Bray. A98 R6D7. Tel: 01 - 2869111 E-mail: wicklowed@localtimes.ie www.wicklowtimes.net

SURE-FIRE OPENING

The long ordeal of the new Greystones Community National School (GCNS) building finally came to a successful resolution last week with the announcement that the school had passed the 'fire test'.

The Department of Education has confirmed they had completed their own tests and the school had passed all of the tests conducted. All four tests carried out on the different types of steel columns used in the building have passed the 60min limit needed to obtain a Fire Certificate, meaning that the school can now open in September.

Officials from the Department say they will complete the

handover of the school in the week commencing July 26th.

Builders WBS handed control of the new building over to the Department last month, however occupancy of the school still hinged on its passing of the fire tests.

GCNS pupils have not been allowed to occupy the new building, which was completed over a year ago, due to a dispute between Western Building

Systems (WBS) and the Department of Education regarding fire safety issues. Up to this point, the students have been receiving their education in prefabs on the grounds of Greystones Rugby Club.

Minister Simon Harris expressed his delight, saying, "I have received confirmation from the Department of Education that the laboratory fire tests carried out in respect of the Greystones Community



Kate and Ava Harmon celebrate Knockananna winning the U-16 Camogie Championship, beating Kiltegan in Auhgrim. Pic: Michael Kelly

National School building have finally passed the necessary safety threshold.

"The delays in opening Greystones Community National School have been an ordeal for staff, students, families and the wider Greystones Community and today is an enormous relief that the pupils will be in their new school building in August 2021.

"I would like to pay tribute to all the board, staff and parents association for all their work over the past difficult year. In very frustrating circumstances they worked well with public representatives in a joint campaign to ensure the Department of Education resolved the matter as speedily as possible."

Minister Harris added "I will continue to support Greystones CNS to ensure the new school building is ready and

ship shape for the new school year.

"There is now greater scope to facilitate Greystones Community College's expansion in autumn 2021 and I will be working with the school community at GCC to ensure that their permanent buildings are delivered as speedily as possible."

Minister for Health Stephen Donnelly said: "It's fantastic news the school is now deemed safe to open after what has been an incredibly stressful year for everyone involved.

"I know nothing has yet been done about making a move from the rugby club to the new building because the staff was waiting to get the green light.

"Now that has happened it is full steam ahead and the pupils can look forward to using their state-of-the-art school in September.

"I would like to

acknowledge the work Minister Foley and on a local level Cllr Gerry

Walsh have done in getting this long-running issue resolved.

"It has been a nightmare twelve months for
Continued on page 3

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Mick Ridgard, Dubs Halliady, Larry Durand, and Marc O'Neill at the charity motorcycle run from Arklow to Bray in aid of suicide awareness. Pic: Joe McQuillan

Bray in the running for 'The Best Place to Live'

As the search for the 'Best Place to Live in Ireland' 2021 continues apace, it's emerged that Bray has received 30 nominations, one of the highest in the country.

While Wicklow has received 54 nominations in total - the fourth highest in the country - the county which has received the most nominations is Monaghan with 136. Ninety-seven of the Monaghan nominations are for the village of Glaslough which is situated in the north of the county and is home of the luxury hotel Castle Leslie.

Dublin is in second place with 126 nominations. The most nominated place in the capital is the suburb of Malahide, with 36 entries but other locations to receive multiple nominations in Dublin include Dún Laoghaire (12), Blackrock (9) and Skerries (7).

Killarney in Co Kerry has received 22 nominations while other places with several nominations include: Carlingford Co Louth (9); Clonakilty in Co Cork (7); Tullamore, Co Offaly (7);

Clonbur (13) and Portumna (11) in Co Galway; Donegal's Inishowen peninsula (6); and Dungarvan (9) and Tramore (7) in Co Waterford.

There have been almost 750 entries so far for the 32-county competition which is organised by the Irish Times. Ten counties - Armagh, Carlow, Derry, Fermanagh, Leitrim, Longford, Meath, Roscommon, Tyrone and Westmeath - have fewer than five nominations. There has been just one each from Roscommon (for Lough Key) and Longford (for Lanesboro).

The Irish Times launched its search for the Best Place to Live in Ireland last month and invited people from all over the island to nominate their favourites.

Each nominated location will be judged on specific criteria, including community spirit, local ser-

vices and amenities, diversity, transport links, vibrancy of the local economy, cost of living, safety and of course the unique X factor.

During the summer, the nominated places will be researched and put before a panel of judges, who will choose an eventual winner in September.

Westport emerged as the overall winner when the competition was held for the first time in 2012.

To be in with a chance to claim the title for your homeplace, all you have to do is to write a short submission of 300 words explaining what makes it so special. Full details are available at www.irish-times.com/bestplace

But you'll have to move quickly as the closing date for this year's competition, which is supported by Randox Health, is July 25th.

King of Greystones Triathlon

The King of Greystones Triathlon will take place on 25th July. Registration for the event is now closed. However donations are most welcome in aid of Gavin Glynn Foundation (see kingofgreystones.com). To facilitate the event, the following roads will be closed from 7 am to 11 am: Park Lane, Portland Road to St. Vincent Road, St. Vincent Road to Old Mill Road.

Heritage Week 2021

Now is the time to get ready for Heritage Week 2021. Wicklow County Council welcomes projects for this year's event. Local groups and organisers can develop projects that can be showcased online. In-person events will be limited. Have you or your group an idea for Heritage Week? Details and information from Heritage Officer, Deirdre Burns, dburns@wicklowcoco.ie.

'Keep Well' Campaign

Remember to look after your mental health and wellbeing. Find out what is available in your local community by visiting www.wicklow.ie/wellbeing for tips and resources on how to stay connected, mind your mood, or switch off and take part in activities either indoor or outdoor. Recipes and tips on eating well can be found there also.

Members of the public can contact our offices via the following numbers/email addresses:

Outdoor Dining

Applications for funding under the Outdoor Seating and Accessories for Tourism and Hospitality

Business Scheme will remain open until 30th September. 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

Toilet facilities at Wicklow harbour

Temporary toilet facilities have been provided by Wicklow Municipal District in Wicklow Harbour in order to support a safer outdoor summer. The new toilets units will facilitate outdoor activities and leisure in the Harbour area for the summer months. The toilets will be open from 10am to 5.30pm daily.

Cllr Gail Dunne, Cathaoirleach of Wicklow Municipal District, welcomed the additional facility and said it is important now more than ever that public health guidelines be complied with when using the facility.

Estates and Sustainable Development Awards

Wicklow County Council has launched its annual Tidy Towns, Estates and Sustainable Development awards which are now open for entries until the end of March. The awards aim to recognize the work that community groups undertake to protect local environments and build a more sustainable future for our communities. The Sustainable Development Awards are open to any group although some categories are specific to schools or businesses.

The annual awards have this year been linked to delivering on the Sustainable Development Goals. Most of the work undertaken in our communities helps us to achieve one or more of the goals.

Entries are welcome from any group in the county for the Sustainable Development Awards while the Main Street competition is specifically for Tidy Towns groups and the Estates competition is specifically for residents associations. The three application forms are attached.

For further information please contact the Environmental Awareness Office by email eao@wicklowcoco.ie. All entries must be submitted by the 30th of July.

Hazardous waste collection

Wicklow County Council is providing a series of three household hazardous waste collections with support from the Department of Environment, Climate and Communications. The first collection will take place in Greystones on the 24th of July with further collections in Rampere, Baltinglass on the 7th of August and in Wicklow Town on the 14th of August.

Much of what we throw in our bins is actually hazardous waste. Please do not throw away any of the following wastes and safely store them until the next hazardous waste collection; paints & solvents; fertilisers; pesticides & poisons; waste medicines; adhesives, inks and resins; caustic soda and waste oils; drain cleaners; cleaning agents & detergents; photographic chemicals; oven cleaners; shoe polishes.

Collections days & locations: July 24th, Park and Ride Car Park Greystones, 10:00 - 13:00; 7th August, Rampere Recycling Centre, Baltinglass, 10:00 - 13:00; 14th August, The Murrough Recycling Centre, Wicklow Town, 10:00 - 13:00.

Please note, these collections are for householders only. The collection is carried out by a private contractor on behalf of Wicklow county council under hazardous waste licensing legislation. It is not always possible to predict the amount of hazardous waste materials which will be delivered to the collections, as materials must be kept separately, stored and sealed in protective containers in the truck and because they are hazardous, there is a limit to the space available for each type of item. Materials may not be left at the locations outside of the collection times. Fines for littering will be issued.



Lucia and Honor Redmond at the launch of Aughrim artist Eoin O'Connor's new collection 'Mux', at his studio in Gorey

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MAGHERAMORE LAND BOUGHT BY OAKMOUNT

Property development company Oakmount has been revealed as the buyer of the strip of land overlooking Magheramore beach, which was recently sold in an online auction for €700,000. Oakmount is the developer behind the shopping centre development in Bray Town Centre.

The land, which is 21 acres in size, was sold on 25th June in the BidX1 auction. Wicklow County Council participated in the auction but its bid was unsuccessful. The land was eventually sold for more than three times the asking price, as bidding opened at €210,000.

Speaking last week, Independent councillor Joe Behan said "Questions need to be asked about the failure of Wicklow County Council to secure ownership of and permanent access to Magheramore Beach at an online auction in June.

"News has emerged, via a national newspaper, that the developer of the Florentine Centre in Bray, Oakmount, successfully bid for the 21 acre beachfront site noted as one of the most beautiful in the country.

"As usual Councillors have to rely on the media for the detail of the involvement of the Council in the auction process. The Irish Times front page on 16th July indicates that Wicklow County Council was one of the unsuccessful underbidders.

"It seems incredible to me that the Council allowed the site to slip out of its hands when it could have bought it and provided public access



'Questions need to be asked' - said Cllr Joe Behan

and parking at this magnificent location.

"The site is popular with film and TV companies because of its natural beauty and it would have been a highly valuable public asset for that reason alone. I call on the Council Chief Executive to explain the rationale for entering the online auction and then allowing the site to be sold to another party.

"I also call on the Council to confirm that it will do everything possi-

ble to guarantee public access to the beach even though it threw away the perfect chance to secure it for ever more."

The 21-acre strip of land serves as the route to Magheramore Beach, and news of the sale of the land gave rise to fears that public access to the beach could be jeopardised.

Following the sale of the land, John Brady TD said it was now "critically important" that the council enforce the public right of way to the beach that exists through this site.

"This is a well-established right of way which has been enjoyed by generations of people," he said.

"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."



Liadan Roughan in action during the Leinster Rugby Summer Camp at Greystones Rugby Club. Photo: Sportsfile

Wicklow has largest year-on-year decline in rents, according to RTB Index

In Q1 2021, eight counties had standardised average rents above €1,000 per month: Cork, Dublin, Galway, Kildare, Limerick, Louth, Meath, and Wicklow. Year-on-year, the fastest-growing rent in the first quarter of 2021, by county, was seen in County Kilkenny (12.3%), and the county with the largest year-on-year decline in rents was Wicklow (-0.1%).

The Residential Tenancies Board (RTB) has published the quarterly Rent Index for the January to March period (Q1) of 2021. The annual national standardised average rent stood at €1,320 in the Quarter. This is an increase of €33 in comparison to Q4 2020.

The county with the highest standardised average rent in Q1 2021 was Dublin (€1,820 per month) and the county with the lowest monthly rents was Leitrim (€596 per month). At Local Electoral Area (LEA) level, the highest standardised average rent was in Stillorgan, County Dublin (€2,378 per month), and the lowest was Lifford - Stranorlar, Co. Donegal

(€566 per month).

There was annual growth recorded across 25 out of 26 counties in Q1 2021, with 17 counties recording annual growth of more than 5% in the first Quarter of 2021. Year-on-year price inflation stood at 7% outside Dublin.

The standardised average rent for houses stood at €1,304 per month, which is an increase of 2.6% on the previous quarter and a rise of 7.0% year-on-year. The standardised average rent for apartments stood at €1,351 per month this quarter, which is an increase of 2.2% on Q4 2020 and 2.2% year-on-year. For both houses and apartments, yearly growth was strongest

Outside the Greater Dublin Area (GDA), while the lowest growth rate for both property types was seen in the GDA.

Padraig McGoldrick, Interim Director of the RTB, commented on the latest Rent Index findings:

"The Covid-19 pandemic continued to impact the economy and the rental sector in the first quarter of 2021. Q1 2021 was a period in which the Irish economy experienced a strict lockdown stemming from the spread of Covid-19, which impacted unemployment and had a knock-on effect on the rental sector.

The Q1 2021 Rent Index shows that there were fewer tenancies registered with the RTB, a reduction that may be linked to public health restrictions. It also showed that inflation is rising, which is especially evident outside of Dublin and in house rental prices - both representing a 7% annual increase. This may be the start of a potential

trend of people moving outside of urban centres as a result of Covid-19, which we will continue to monitor.

Covid-19 has also brought about further legislative change for the rental sector in relation to rent reviews, rent arrears and deposits. For those most vulnerable and financially impacted by Covid-19 and in rent arrears, protections remain in place until 12th January 2022 if you qualify. There are also new measures being introduced where rents in RPZs can now only go up, if necessary, in line with general inflation as recorded in the Harmonised Index of Consumer Prices (HICP).

The RTB Rent Index, which is compiled in conjunction with the Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI), is the authoritative report on the Irish rental market. It is based on actual rents paid on 15,532 private tenancies registered with the RTB in the quarter.

SURE-FIRE OPENING

Continued from page 1

the parents, staff, and pupils but it is at last over.

The Minister added: "It's also brilliant news for the Greystones Community College who can move into the prefabs at the rugby club."

Jennifer Whitmore TD said "This is really positive news. It's been a long time coming after the school community worked tirelessly for so long to get to where

they are now. I know the children are very excited after hearing the news that they will finally get the keys to their new school. The children will have the summer now to prepare themselves for new desks, new classrooms in their brand new school. Parents, teachers, staff and the Board of Management have worked so hard to get here, I know they are equally excited about this new start. I want to wish them all the best in their new school jour-

ney and I look forward to visiting them all in their new school when it's open.

"However, lessons do need to be learned from what happened. There's been a considerable expense to the State having children in portacabins for such a long time, but also there are many questions regarding oversight of the project. I will be raising these issues with the Department in future."



Minister Simon Harris outside Greystones Community National School



Charlotte taking part in the charity motorcycle run from Arklow to Bray in aid of suicide awareness.

Blessington Regeneration Survey

Baltinglass Municipal District recently created an online survey as part of the preparation of an application under the Rural Regeneration Development Fund (RRDF).

The application will seek funding for three main areas, centred on Blessington: Regenerating Blessington; Making Blessington eGreenway ready; Enhancing the E-Greenway links and tourism product at Russborough House & Parklands.

The proposed development would help to stimulate further growth in economic activities in the wider Blessington area taking into account the significant investment secured for Blessington E-Greenway.

The closing date for submission on the survey was Sunday 18th July.

Cathaoirleach of Baltinglass Municipal District, Cllr Avril Cronin, welcomed the survey and said "This will support an application for significant investment in West Wicklow and help to ensure that Blessington is well placed to maximise on the opportunities presented by the Greenway."

"The Blessington Regeneration project is one of three applications being made by Wicklow County Council under the latest call for applications for RRDF. The applications go through a competitive process, with no guarantee of funding, however Mr Frank Curran, Chief Executive, stated: "We are hoping to secure Rural Regeneration Development Funding to advance this strategic project, which is not only important to Blessington but also to the wider West Wicklow area."

The application for funding will be submitted by 30th July, with an announcement on successful applications expected in the last quarter of 2021.

New report highlights Wicklow County Council for good practice in public rights of way management

A new case study paper published by Office of the Planning Regulator (OPR) has researched and analysed how local authorities manage and record the issue of Public Rights of Ways (PROWs) in their respective counties. The report identifies Wicklow County Council as a local authority which has implemented good practice in terms of recording and managing PROWs in the county.

The paper entitled 'Public Rights of Way and the Local Development Plan: A Survey Report on the Operation of Section 10(2)(o) of the Planning Act,' details investigative research and analysis of current practices regarding PROWs, publishes findings of a survey of local authority development plans and outlines good practice in the area.

The report cites the Wicklow County Development Plan 2016-2022 as recognising the value PROWs can play in rural development generally and coastal tourism specifically. The report outlines how the Wicklow County Development Plan refers to seven PROWs and, given its coastal location, many of these provide access to seashore amenities.

Planning Regulator, Niall Cussen said "Ireland, like many other places around the world, has seen unprecedented increased demand on access to the outdoors since the Covid-19 pandemic. Public rights of way are an essential part of the amenity and recreational facilities available to the public which help people enjoy physical attributes of local communities, whether they provide access to rivers, seashore, lakes, uplands or other amenities and the planning process has a specific role to play in protecting key strategic rights of way."

On foot: The importance of walking and amenity access in



PROW which includes the access from the Beach Road, Greystones to the coastline in Rathdown Lower and Rathdown Upper.

the current pandemic, we undertook a preliminary review of the issue to analyse local authorities' implementation of their obligations regarding PROWs. We also felt it was a good opportunity to highlight emerging and ongoing good practice to promote a more consistent approach.

Wicklow County Council

have recognised the value and importance of clearly identifying PROWs in their development plan. Consequently, this will mean that the public are better informed about what and how these amenities in Wicklow can be accessed and enjoyed."

Good practice guide and recommendations in this case

study report will help local authorities in their obligations regarding PROWs when preparing their development plans.

Among the report's key findings are:

- All development plans refer to the issue of PROWs
- 91% of plans identify policy objectives for the protection/preservation of PROWs;
- However, only 31% of plans have an inventory of PROWs including their recording on maps;
- 63% of plans, including some plans that have an existing inventory and maps of PROWs, state objectives to identify PROWs during the lifetime of plan; and
- 29% plans had no inventory or map of PROWs nor an objective to identify any PROWs during lifetime of plan.

The planning process has recognised the importance of rights of way for many years. Since 2010, planning legislation obliges local authorities to include information for the public in their statutory development plans, including lists and maps on the extent of PROWs existing in their areas.

This is the first in a series of OPR Case Study Papers. They are issued to promote shared learning and highlight best practice accordance with the OPR's statutory remit to engage in education, training and research activities.

Independent cllrs want internal working group for advancing 'community wealth building'

Independent councillors on Wicklow County Council have put forward a proposal to establish an internal working group 'committed to advancing community wealth building', beginning with an increased priority on the inclusion of green and social clauses in procurement criteria for services and goods.

The proposal was put forward by councillors Mags Crean, Peir Leonard, Joe Behan, Tom Fortune, Mary Kavanagh and Rory O'Connor.

In response, the Council executive said that "the Government agrees on a phased introduction of sustainable green and social criteria, targeting priority services. The Local Government Management Agency (LGMA) is advising on how best to incorporate sustainable public procurement into policies and practices, and Wicklow County Council must be guided by them."

"The Office of Government Procurement (OGP) has commenced updating of frameworks, which as a local authority Wicklow County Council look to first when procuring in line with green procurement practices. Wicklow is rolling out a draw down from the office supplies framework including green criteria in the award criteria. All local authorities are to be advised what sustainable standards are incorporated into

the public procurement and how they are to be measured and recorded."

Councillors were told that the Council's procurement officer undertook the green procurement training course in advance of the roll out of the national guidance.

"Given the national guidance provided to the local authorities, it is not considered necessary or advisable for a separate working group to be established," the council executive said.

Responding, Cllr Crean said the setting up of an internal working group would be better than it falling to one member of staff: "To have a working group it becomes part of everyone's thinking, not just for one person to lead on. So I still wish for a working group to be considered."

Supporting this proposal, Sinn Féin councillor Dermot 'Daisy' O'Brien said "I think that community wealth building could be the game changer that helps us to navigate out of the impacts of COVID and



Cllr Mags Crean

also help us to manage future impacts - climate or otherwise. I think there is so much scope to community wealth building and procurement is a core part, as well as the fair working conditions and practices."

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Councillors fail to back proposal objecting to Shared Equity Loan Scheme

A proposal put forward by Sinn Fein councillors requesting that Wicklow County Council object to the proposed Shared Equity Loan Scheme was defeated 21 to 9 in a vote.

The proposal from Councillors Grace McManus and Dermot 'Daisy' O'Brien asked that the council 'writes to the Minister for Housing outlining our objection to the proposed Shared Equity Loan Scheme contained within the Minister's Affordable Housing Legislation, due to concerns raised by ESRI (Economic and Social Research Institute) and others about the potential negative impacts of the scheme'.

The main objective of the Scheme is to provide a number of options to people who cannot enter into the housing market. The scheme would provide equity support to householders seeking to purchase homes in the private market but who are unable to secure a full mortgage.

The Government's proposed new housing legislation will include a plan to cap the price of affordable housing, and in Wicklow the cap is to be set at €400,000.

Opposing Sinn Fein's motion, Cllr Edward Timmins said the scheme is "an attempt to help people who can't afford to buy their first home. There is a cohort in society that has been left behind and has not been helped and this shared equity scheme is an

attempt, at one level, to help them acquire their own homes. It is not going to be the silver bullet to solve the problem but it is an attempt to help these people who I feel have been left behind."

Also opposing the motion, Cllr Drek Mitchell said "the scheme will not solve everyone's problem but it will get people on the housing ladder who cannot get on it at the moment. That is important for society."

Chair of the Housing SPC, Cllr John Snell, said "I appreciate the sentiments behind the motion but unfortunately, I can't support it, as I think that we need diversity of opportunities for people out there."

Outlining the reasoning behind the proposal, Cllr



Cllr Grace McManus

McManus said "I appreciate the colleagues' perspectives but I disagree. I am in the age cohort that the shared equity scheme is targeted to help, and speaking to others of my age, there is no way that the definition of 'affordable' contained in the scheme is reachable for any of us. I'm concerned with the impact it will have on house prices in the dense areas of the county. The Central Bank, the ERSI, the Housing Agency all warned the Government this will drive up the house prices in dense areas. I think we have an obligation as a county with a lot of areas of high density to warn the Government against it.

"I'm not against schemes that work for people who are first-time

buyers, but I don't think this scheme will work for the people we are trying to help in the county. There is confusion about what the definition of affordable is, it is anything up to €400,000 in Wicklow. Anything over €280,000 upwards for the vast majority of people in Wicklow is not affordable. My fear is that if a couple is able to afford €350,000, and the developers know that the State is stepping in, they will know to charge a further 20%. What we will see is that the people who were maybe on the margins of being able to afford a house can afford a nicer house, but it does not help those not able to get on the ladder in the first place."

Supporting the proposal, Labour councillor Anne Ferris said "I think that Councillor McManus makes a compelling argument. There will be a people in county Wicklow who can't afford to buy homes in their own towns or villages. The developers are out there to make money. They are not out there to help the people who need housing. They are not a charitable organisation, they are out there to make a profit. For people who may be able to buy at that stage, it could drive them out of the market."



Cllr Dermot 'Daisy' O'Brien

Boil Water Notice lifted on Carlow North Regional Public Water Supply

Irish Water, working in partnership with Carlow County Council last week notified customers on the Carlow North Regional, Tullow and Carlow Town supplies that following the completion of remedial measures and the receipt of satisfactory monitoring results, the boil water notice which has been in place is now lifted with immediate effect.

Following consultation with the Health Service Executive, Irish Water and Carlow County Council issued a boil water notice on the Carlow North Regional PWS and Tullow PWS and Carlow Town PWS on the 8th July 2021. The lifting of the notice was also done in consultation with the HSE.

The Boil Water Notice (BWN) was issued to a pollution incident in the River Slaney. The drinking water quality entering the Rathvilly and Tullow Water Treatment Plants was affected and

a Boil Water Notice was put in place until the issue was rectified. The population affected by the Boil Water Notice was approximately 35,278.

All consumers on the Carlow North Regional PWS, Tullow PWS and Carlow Town PWS can now resume normal use of the water supply for drinking, food preparation and brushing teeth.

In Co. Wicklow, Ballyconnell and Liscolman were impacted by the Boil Water Notice.

Irish Water and the Carlow

County Council - Health Service Executive Water Local Liaison Group will continue to meet and review ongoing process control, monitoring and testing of the drinking water supply.

The Irish Water Customer Contact Centre (1800 278 278) is available to answer customer queries in relation to the lifting of this notice. Further information is available on our website at www.water.ie.

Irish Water stated, "Irish Water and Carlow County Council acknowledge the patience, cooperation and assistance of the general public during the period of the boil water notice and greatly regrets any inconvenience caused to householders and the business community."



Niamh, John, Con and Amy Roche celebrate Knockananna winning the U-16 Camogie Championship, beating Kiltegan in Aughrim.



COMHAIRLE CONTAE CHILL MHANTÁIN
WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL

SECTION 10 OF THE ROAD TRAFFIC ACT, 2004 SPECIAL SPEED LIMIT AT ROAD WORKS M11/N11 (SOUTHBOUND CARRIAGEWAY) ROAD WORKS SPEED LIMIT ORDER NO. 1 OF 2021

By Road Works Speed Limit Order No. 2 of 2020, 60 km/h per hour shall be the Road Works Speed Limit for mechanically propelled vehicles on the roads northbound and southbound to continue to apply until the 30th July 2021.

Road works on the M11/N11 between junction 7 and 8 (Bray South to Kilmacanogue) are ongoing.

Notice is hereby given that in exercise of the powers vested under Section 10 of the Road Traffic Act, 2004, and in the interest of road safety, the following shall be the Roadwork's speed limits for mechanically propelled vehicles on the roads specified from 31st July 2021 until 30th July 2022 or such earlier date as may be determined by Wicklow County Council.

First Schedule

50 kilometres per hour shall be the Road Works Speed Limit for mechanically propelled vehicles on the roads as specified hereto.

The M11/N11 southbound Parallel Service Road (Kilmacanogue) from a point 762 metres north of the centre point of the M11/N11 Kilmacanogue Over Bridge at Junction 8 to a point 58 metres north of the centre point of the Bohilla Roundabout (R755).

Second Schedule

60 kilometres per hour shall be the Road Works Speed Limit for mechanically propelled vehicles on the roads as specified hereto.

The M11/N11 southbound carriageway from a point 168 metres south of the centre point of the M11/N11 Bray South Over Bridge at Junction 7 to a point 22 metres south of the centre point of the M11/N11 Kilmacanogue Over Bridge at Junction 8.

The M11/N11 southbound off-ramp at Junction 7 (Bray South) from its junction with the M11/N11 southbound carriageway to a point 112 metres south west of the centre point of the Killarney Roundabout (R768).

The M11/N11 southbound Parallel Service Road (Kilmacanogue) from a point 52 metres south west of the centre point of the Killarney Roundabout (R768) to a point 808 metres north of the centre point of the M11/N11 Kilmacanogue Over Bridge at Junction 8.

The M11/N11 southbound Parallel Service Road (Kilmacanogue) from a point 808 metres north of the centre point of the M11/N11 Kilmacanogue Over Bridge at Junction 8 to a point 762 metres north of the centre point of the M11/N11 Kilmacanogue Over Bridge at Junction 8.

Transportation, Water & Emergency Services,
Wicklow County Council,
County Building, Wicklow.

Application to include Glendalough on Ireland's World Heritage Tentative List

Glendalough Valley is one of seven sites around Ireland that's to be included on Ireland's World Heritage Tentative List 2020-2030.

In line with UNESCO advice that World Heritage Tentative Lists be reviewed at least every ten years, the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage launched a call for applications in January 2019 to update Ireland's Tentative List of World Heritage Properties. The closing date for receipt of applications was 30th June 2021.

Applications have also been made for: The Cultural Landscape of the Burren Uplands, County Clare; Inisceiltra (Inis Cealtra/Inishceiltra/Holy Island), County Clare; The Chq Building and George's Dock (Formerly Custom House Docks), Dublin City; Trans-Atlantic Cable Ensemble: Valentia, County Kerry-Heart's Content, Newfoundland and Labrador, Canada; Royal Sites of Ireland, Counties Kildare, Westmeath, Tipperary, Roscommon and Meath; The Passage Tomb Landscape of County Sligo.

In response to a Parliamentary Question, Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage Malcolm Noonan stated "An initial screening of the applications received has determined that the Chq Building and George's Dock application does not meet the basic requirements to progress to

assessment by the independent Expert Advisory Group (EAG) established by me to evaluate the Tentative List applications.

"Over the coming weeks, the Expert Advisory Group (EAG) will evaluate the remaining six applications based on the ability of each of those applications to demonstrate Outstanding Universal Value, integrity and/or authenticity, long-term protection and management frameworks, and evidence of local stakeholder support. It is intended that the EAG will complete its evaluation and make recommendations as to which properties should be considered for inclusion on a new Tentative List by early September.

"Any EAG recommendations will then be appraised by the National Monuments Service of my Department in terms of their readiness and suitability to form a new Tentative List for Ireland. Subject to my approval, it is envisaged that this new Tentative List, which will replace the existing Tentative List, will be submitted to the UNESCO World Heritage Centre early in 2022."

The Expert Advisory Group is comprised of four experts in the heritage sector; Dr Carol Westrik, Chairperson and World Heritage Expert; Dr Alison Sheridan,

International Archaeological Expert; Prof Elizabeth Fitzpatrick, Irish Archaeological Expert; and Ms Jane Jackson, Industrial Architectural Expert.

Minister Noonan continued, "in order for a property to proceed to nomination for full World Heritage status, it must first be on the Tentative List for at least one year. Eventual nomination to full World Heritage Status, which will be led by my Department in partnership with relevant Local Authorities and stakeholders, will include the preparation of detailed nomination documentation and conservation and management plans. This stage of the process, including further public consultation, is expected to take a number of years to finalise, and local support and engagement will be critical to any subsequent and successful nomination.

"It is envisaged that the Tentative List process will be reopened for review within the next five years to allow my Department further assess other sites that may be proposed that may demonstrate Outstanding Universal Value. This may include properties on the current Tentative List for which applications were not submitted under the current application process."

Works progressing to upgrade Bray sewer network

Irish Water is working in partnership with Wicklow County Council to improve the sewer network in Bray. The delivery of this wastewater project will support future growth and development in the area, Irish Water says.

Works to construct almost 0.4km of new and replacement sewer will begin in early 2022 and is expected to be completed in late 2022. Similar wastewater improvement works have already been completed on Old Connaught Road, Dublin Road and new School Road.

Consultations have been on-going with landowners, however, Irish Water was unable to acquire all of the required wayleaves and lands on a voluntary basis and has submitted an application for a Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) to An Bord Pleanála.

The CPO, which is essential for the delivery of this project and pursuant to the provisions of the Water Services Act, 2007 (as amended), is needed to allow Irish Water to formally obtain the necessary lands and wayleaves required for this project. The public notice for the CPO will

also be published in local newspapers.

The timeline for the commencement of works is subject to the CPO statutory approvals, however, it is expected that the construction will start in 2022 and information events for businesses, residents and elected repre-

sentatives will be held prior to the commencement of works.

Commenting on the project, Padraig Hanley, Irish Water said, "A sewer network that is fit for purpose is essential in order to support business and social development in the community. These works will support existing and future residential and commercial development while also improving the overall performance of the sewer network."

Irish Water will provide further updates as the pro-

ject progresses.

Irish Water stated, "We continue to work at this time, with our local authority partners, contractors and others to safeguard the health and well-being of staff and the public and to ensure the continuity of drinking water and wastewater services."

"Irish Water's customer care helpline is open 24/7 and customers can call us on 1800 278 278. Customers can also contact us on Twitter @IWCare with any queries."



€40,000 of cannabis seized in Bray, one man arrested

Gardaí have arrested a man and seized €40,000 of suspected cannabis herb, following a search in the Bray area on Saturday 10th July.

Gardaí from the Divisional Drugs Unit at Bray Garda station carried out the search at approximately 3.20pm as part of Operation Tara.

This search resulted in a seizure of cannabis estimated to be worth €40,000 along with other drug paraphernalia.

The drugs seized will now be sent for further analysis. A man, aged in his 30s, was arrested in connection with the search and he was taken to Bray Garda Station where he is currently detained under Section 2 of the Criminal Justice Act 1996. Investigations are ongoing.

Gardaí stated, "The goal of Operation Tara is to protect communities from the scourge of illegal drugs in line with An Garda Síochána's mission of Keeping People Safe. The focus of Operation Tara is to disrupt, dismantle and prosecute drug trafficking networks, at all levels - international, national, local - involved in the importation, distribution, cultivation, production, local sale and supply of controlled drugs."

"Under Operation Tara, individuals and groups involved in the drug trade will be the target of enforcement activity based on intelligence and the latest crime trends."

"Throughout An Garda Síochána's response to the COVID-19 pandemic Garda Commissioner Drew Harris highlighted that resources assigned to specialist units, including drugs units, were not affected by emergency measures. During 2020 An Garda Síochána has resourced Divisional Drugs Units in all Garda Divisions in preparation for Operation Tara. As of 31st May 2021, 321 members are full time assigned to Divisional Drug Units across every Garda Division."

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Aine, Tommy, and Tara McDonald celebrate Knockananna winning the U-16 Camogie Championship, beating Kiltegan in Aughrim.

Public transport back to 75% capacity

Public Transport goes to 75% capacity this week. Welcoming the news, Minister Simon Harris said "I have had an increasing number of queries from commuters experiencing difficulty getting public transport as more people return to the office or avail of the opportunities to travel further afield.

"Bus Eireann have confirmed to me that they have been experiencing capacity issues in recent weeks. From Monday July 19th, public transport capacity is scheduled to increase to 75% which will provide additional capacity on each service along the Wicklow/Dublin corridor.

"Bus Eireann have confirmed they will be implementing these changes, and this should alleviate some of the pressure at peak times," Minister Harris concluded.

Record level of companies participating in workforce upskilling

1,290 Wicklow based employees and 525 Wicklow based companies participated in upskilling programmes in 2020

Skillnet Ireland has launched its 2020 annual report, reporting an 18% increase in supports to Irish businesses across 2020 and an investment of €51 million in upskilling programmes for companies across the economy.

In a challenging year for businesses and the workforce, 81,895 people participated in upskilling programmes through Skillnet Ireland - a 17% increase on the previous year. The business support agency also reported an increase in the number of companies engaging with the organisation in 2020, up 18% on the previous year, at 21,695. 94% of the companies Skillnet Ireland supported in 2020 are SMEs.

Commenting on the publication, Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science Simon Harris TD said "Talent is at the heart of our national competitiveness. It has been instrumental in helping businesses navigate a challenging year and will be especially important in preparing businesses for future challenges such as climate change and digital transformation. In 2020, Skillnet Ireland played a critical role in providing for the needs of our workforce, supporting over 81,000 workers through its Skillnet business networks. The government is committed to continuing this progress and ensuring that we have the right skills to recover and to thrive, and to meet the ever-changing talent needs of our economy."

Skillnet Ireland delivered 9,110 different programmes spanning industry and professional certified

courses, management development programmes, specialised upskilling, new industry and academia collaborations, and many innovation and research-based projects in 2020.

Launching the annual report, Brendan McGinty, Chairperson, Skillnet Ireland said: "As we take stock of an unprecedented year, it has been heartening to see the fundamental role skills and talent has played in helping Irish businesses to survive and grow. I am proud to say that through our deep industry roots and our agility, Skillnet Ireland supported a record number of companies and individuals to navigate the most testing circumstance seen for many years. We also set out an ambitious path for the future of our organisation with our 2021-2025 Statement of Strategy which will see us increase the number of businesses we support to 30,000 annually, boost innovation and prepare the Irish workforce for long term success."

Paul Healy, Chief Executive, Skillnet Ireland, said: "2020 was a year where we blended challenge with ambition. Together with our industry partners, Skillnet Ireland responded swiftly to deliver impact when it was needed most for the business community. We supported over 21,000 companies as they remodelled their businesses, embraced digitalisation, adapted to new ways of working, and navigated a myriad of new challenges. It was particularly pleasing to see the commitment of so many businesses to Skillnet Ireland despite the financial constraints they experienced, with a total contribution of €17.9 million towards the cost of our upskilling programmes in 2020 coming from employers."

'Clarity needed on Covid restrictions in maternity hospitals'

Social Democrats TD Jennifer Whitmore spoke out in a Dail debate last week regarding the current Covid restrictions in place in maternity hospitals. She said that women are "facing miscarriages alone" and urged that the matter be resolved before the Dail's summer recess

Deputy Whitmore pointed to an interview given by Minister for Health Stephen Donnelly on Newstalk on 21st June, in which he stated "very firmly and categorically" that by the end of that day there would be uniformity in how Covid restrictions were applied across maternity hospitals.

He said women would be able to have their partners with them during full labour, from being induced right the way through.

"He was very clear when he said 'full labour'," said Deputy Whitmore. "Unfortunately, that is not the case."

Deputy Whitmore complained that it's currently the case that women must be 3cm or 4cm dilated before their partners are allowed into the room. This means that women need to undergo an internal vaginal exam to ascertain exactly what dilation she is at.

"Many women do not want to have that exam," said Deputy Whitmore. "It is uncomfortable. If a woman has been abused, she certainly would not want that exam to happen and it is her right not to have that exam. At the moment, however, the only way she can have support with her is for that exam to happen and that is just not right."

Deputy Whitmore continued, "The Minister also said in the interview that within a number of weeks - so by now - emergency cases would also be catered for. That would mean women would not be going through miscarriages alone. That has not happened. Women are going through caesarean sections and do not have the support of their partners after the procedure. IVF treatment is happening where women cannot have their support partners with them. I seek some clarity on the comments made by the Minister and on exactly what is hap-



Jennifer Whitmore TD

pening across maternity hospitals."

Minister Donnelly was not present for the debate, so the questions were fielded by Minister of State for Health, Frankie Feighan.

"I completely understand the difficulties posed by the restrictions in our maternity services for expectant mums, partners and families over the course of this pandemic," said Minister Feighan.

"Regrettably, restrictions implemented in our maternity hospitals have impacted access for partners, and I fully appreciate the anxiety and concern that has caused.

"It is important, however, we bear in mind that restrictions were put in place to protect the women, babies and staff in our maternity hospitals. We are now seeing some of those restrictions being relaxed, and national guidance was issued to maternity services covering attendance while a woman is in the labour ward, daily visits by partners, 20-week anomaly scans and visits by parents to the neonatal intensive care unit. This guidance also covered visits where there might be communication that is

particularly significant.

"The HSE has advised that all 19 maternity hospitals are fully complying with this guidance since 21 June. In addition, building on the guidance around planned attendances, the HSE has advised that updated guidance was issued to maternity services on 24 June. This relates to unplanned attendances such as emergency presentations, attendance at early pregnancy assessment units and visits by women considered to have higher-risk pregnancies.

"With regard to this updated guidance, the HSE has advised it engaged last week with the six hospital groups to seek confirmation of compliance across the 19 maternity services. The response received this week indicates 18 of the 19 units are fully compliant with partners being allowed at early assessment units, 12 of the 19 are fully compliant with high-risk pregnancy visits and 15 of the 19 are fully compliant with emergency presentation visits.

"The HSE has advised it is engaging with the individual services to set out a plan to provide access for partners in line with the guidance. My Department has asked for a detailed report on the matter to include timelines for its implementation."

Deputy Whitmore responded that "The Minister of State's response contradicts what the Chief Medical Officer, the HSE and the Minister himself said - that there were no health and safety reasons these restrictions should be in place. We need to stop treating women like children. In a week where we are debating the vaccine certificate, it is beyond belief that when a woman is vaccinated, and when her partner is vaccinated, she would still have to go through an emergency or a miscarriage on her own. That is unacceptable."

Invasive species in National Park 'not a significant issue'

The invasive species *Rhododendron ponticum*, also called common rhododendron or pontic rhododendron, is currently present throughout Wicklow Mountains National Park.

Minister of State at the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage Malcom Noonan, said that the control of this invasive species is "difficult, costly, and labour intensive".

However, he also maintained that the problem "is not considered to be a significant issue" in Wicklow Mountains National Park.

Green Party TD Steven Matthews recently questioned the Minister on whether there are plans to implement a rhododen-

dron management plan for Wicklow National Park.

Responding, Minister Noonan stated, "My Department continues to invest heavily in and is committed to tackling the spread of invasive species across our network of National Parks, most particularly Rhododendron ponticum, the control of which is difficult, costly, and labour intensive. My Department carries out an annual targeted programme of works to manage the spread of the

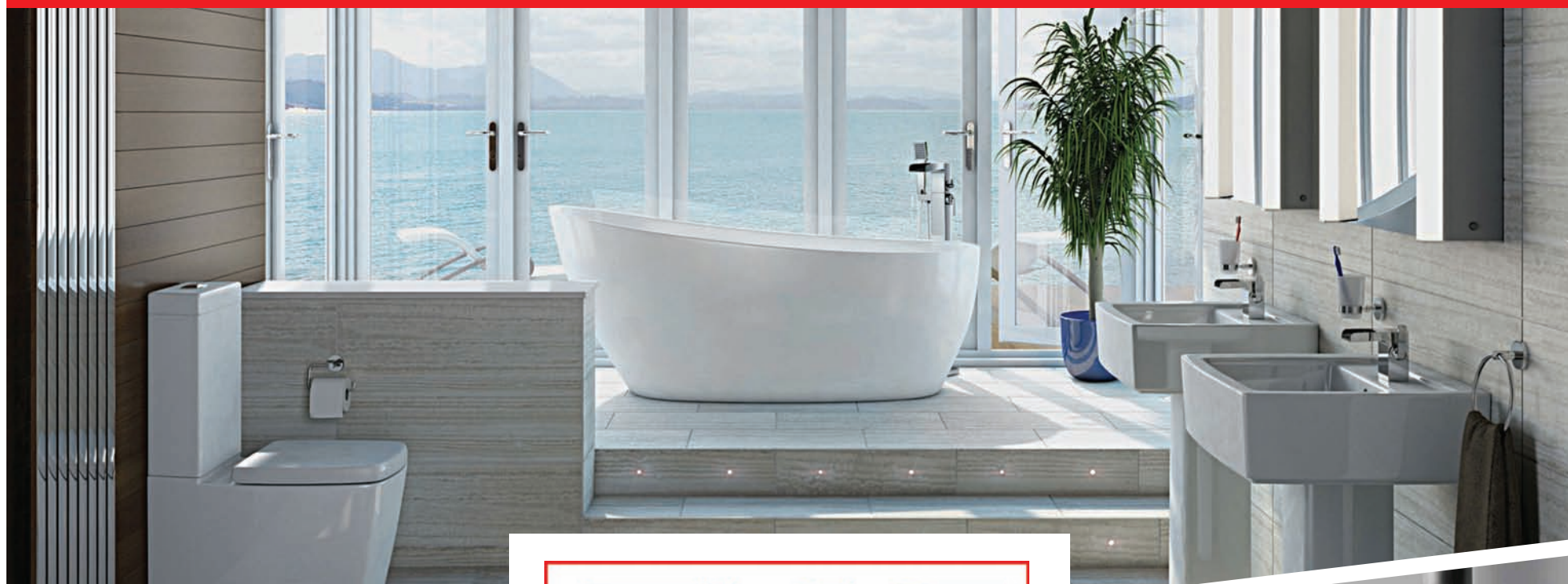
invasive species Rhododendron ponticum. The multi-faceted programme includes, monitoring, surveillance, clearance, investigation, review, volunteer and contractor work groups and programmes.

"The extent of the problem varies from area to area within the parks. With particular reference to Wicklow Mountains National Park, Rhododendron is not considered to be a significant issue and is managed on an ongoing basis as part of routine operations. While Rhododendron is only present within the confines of this National Park at a low level, it is nevertheless, actively managed,

and €60,000 has been provided to Wicklow Mountains National Park in 2021 to tackle invasive species. Over the years the park in addition to work by our own staff, has engaged volunteers to assist with clearance work.

"As Rhododendron is not considered to be a significant issue within Wicklow Mountains National Park, the Deputy may be referring to instances of Rhododendron in areas outside of the national park such as in the vicinity of Lough Bray. Management of invasive species on private lands is the responsibility of individual landowners."

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Tidy Towns 2021

Iconic competition makes a comeback following COVID-19 disruption

Tidy Towns groups across Co. Wicklow are hard at work for this year's Tidy Towns competition. The iconic competition was cancelled in 2020 - for the first time in over 60 years - due to the COVID-19 Pandemic. But special arrangements have now been put in place to ensure the return of the competition this year, with the overall winners due to be announced before the end of the year.

The 2021 SuperValu Tidy Towns competition will take place in the same format as previous years, albeit with a specific emphasis on electronic entry and remote adjudication of each town's entry.

Groups should continue to adhere to public health guidelines as they have done so remarkably well since the onset of the Pandemic.

The health and safety of volunteers continues to be paramount.

It is acknowledged that volunteers have not been

able to deliver on all of the plans that they may have had for their towns, and the competition adjudicators will be mindful of this fact when assessing entries.

At the same time, many groups have still been very active and the standard of competition is expected to be high again this year amongst the almost 1,000 Tidy Towns groups around the country.

Above all, staging the competition this year is a recognition of the extraordinary contribution volun-

teers continued to make to their communities, even during the Pandemic itself.

For this reason, Minister Humphreys has introduced a new award category aimed at groups that have continued to serve and look after their communities despite the difficulties posed by COVID-19.

The Minister has also introduced a special prize for young people, which was committed to under Our Rural Future - the Government's ambitious new strategy for

Rural Ireland.

Minister Humphreys announced a €1 million fund in December to further support the Tidy Towns Groups across the country.

The Minister confirmed that over 800 Tidy Towns Groups have now been awarded grants of up to €1,000 under this Fund.

Minister Humphreys recently formally launched the 2021 SuperValu Tidy Towns Competition in Glaslough, County Monaghan - the 2019 winners of the competition.



Minister for Rural and Community Development, Heather Humphreys, at the launch of the 2021 Tidy Towns competition, with Eoghan Jones, Regional Manager, SuperValu

Speaking in Glaslough, Minister Humphreys said:

"Missing out on the competition last year was very disappointing for everyone associated with Tidy Towns. That's why I am delighted to announce that this iconic competition is back.

"I am sure the thousands of volunteers around the country are relieved that we have finally reached the point where we can launch the 2021 SuperValu Tidy Towns competition and are excit-

ed for the months ahead.

"While the last year has been so challenging for everyone, I know that so many Tidy Towns volunteers the length and breadth of the country have continued to look after their communities.

"Many groups have been unable to deliver on the projects they had planned due to COVID-19.

"That will not impact in any shape or form on this year's competition and I am encouraging each and

every one of the 987 registered groups across the country to enter once again."

Also speaking about the launch, Ian Allen, Managing Director of SuperValu said: "This year marks 30 years of SuperValu's continuous support for and sponsorship of the national Tidy Towns competition.

"As one of the longest-running community and sustainability initiatives in Ireland, Tidy Towns is an incredibly important pro-

gramme that all of us at SuperValu are immensely proud to be a part of.

"At its heart, Tidy Towns is the public expression of the work countless individuals undertake to make our communities better places in which to work and live.

"Following a year like no other, this year's competition is about recognising work of volunteers who have continued in every way possible and collectively help to lift the mood of the nation."

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Tidy Towns 2021

The Minister continued: "Tidy Towns is not just a competition. It demonstrates everything good about our people - volunteerism, positivity, working together, community spirit, protecting our environment, that sense of pride in looking after the place you call home."

"This is a really special day. I want to pay tribute to the huge role played by Tidy Towns groups in inspiring vibrant communities and generating a spirit of volunteerism in towns and villages across the country - qualities that are at the core of Our Rural Future."

"I am also pleased to include a special award this year for young people involved in Tidy Towns which is a specific recommendation contained in the Government's strategy for Rural Ireland. I would also encourage local groups to continue their great efforts at promoting and enhancing biodiversity in our local towns."

"Tidy Towns volunteers are rightly proud of their locality - their efforts make towns and villages the length and breadth of the country better places to live and to visit. For years, Tidy Towns volunteers have shown great resilience and determination - even more so over the past year as

our communities came together in the face of adversity."

"In recognition of this, we have also introduced a special award to recognise the contribution that Tidy Towns groups have made to their communities in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, including as part of the COVID-19 Community call."

"As we look ahead to an outdoor summer and staycations, we want our local towns and villages right across the country to be attractive, welcoming places. The trojan work carried out by our local Tidy Towns volunteers will be central to achieving that. My message is clear - Tidy Towns is back this year and it is bigger, better and more important than ever."

Minister Humphreys concluded: "I value the role my Department plays in this competition. I want to also commend the competition sponsor, SuperValu, for their continuing support and enthusiasm in raising awareness of the competition. Now in their 30th year of sponsorship, through their nationwide network of retailers, SuperValu have helped the competition to become the best known sustainable and environmental initiative in Ireland."

About the competition...

The national SuperValu Tidy Towns competition is an annual contest organised by the Department of Rural and Community Development.

The competition involves participating areas being rated on all aspects of their local environment and prizes awarded to the best under many different categories. The overall winner is "Ireland's Tidiest Town", which is announced at a national ceremony in September each year.

The Tidy Towns website states that "The national Tidy Towns initiative was launched in 1958 by Bord Fáilte (now Fáilte Ireland). It was originally part of 'Tostal', a nationwide festival celebrating all things Irish."

"A step-up from the original National Spring Clean Campaign, which ran between 1953 and 1957, Tidy Towns rapidly developed its own identity and has gone on to become Ireland's most well known and popular local environmental initiative."

"The primary focus of Tidy Towns was to encourage communities to

improve their local environment and make their area a better place to live, work and visit. The competition aspect was an important element in developing friendly rivalry that would help boost standards across the board. The winner of the first competition held in 1958 was Glenties, Co. Donegal. However, the emphasis was always on participating rather than winning as the very act of taking part brought benefits to the community."

"As a result of this focus on long-term results rather than quick returns, Tidy Towns was seen as a unique and far-sighted initiative."

Co. Wicklow has had two winners of the national competition - Kiltegan in 1973 and Aughrim in 2007.



Members of Bray Tidy Towns cleaning up the Albert Walk last year

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INDEPENDENT Cllr Tom Fortune

Massive Thanks to all involved in Our Tidy Towns

#TheVoiceOfReason

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Wicklow musician Hozier with his new stamp

Wicklow musician Hozier celebrated on new stamp

Wicklow musician Hozier (Andrew Hozier Byrne) is being celebrated on a new Irish stamp from An Post released last week.

Hozier joins Christy Moore, Lisa Hannigan and Sinead O'Connor on the new set of stamps. Ireland is renowned worldwide for its songwriting and performing traditions and the new An Post stamps honour four of the many Irish artists who have graced stages at the famous Glastonbury Music and Arts Festival.

Designed by Dublin-based Shaughn McGrath Creative, the colourful large format stamps are available in a booklet of four national stamps (€4.40), at anpost.com/artists and all post offices, while stocks last.

A donation will be made for every stamp booklet sold to the Irish Music Industry Covid-19 Emergency Relief Fund, created to assist Irish music creators experiencing financial need.

To mark the launch of the new stamps, music fans across Ireland and the world were invited to a virtual 'festival' of unique performances by the featured singer songwriters in Dublin's GPO last Thursday at anpost.com/festival. The virtual gig can also be viewed for the next four weeks.

In addition to outstanding performances by Lisa

Hannigan, Hozier and Christy Moore, Spoken Word artist Natalya O'Flaherty performs '3 Babies', written by Sinead O'Connor, in the 40 minute show, produced by Fuel.

Speaking during his performance in the GPO courtyard, Hozier said "To be on an Irish stamp is such an honour and in such incredible company too." Asked by presenter MayKay how he coped with the Covid-19 Lockdowns he said: "By re-connecting with the sense of local community, people around me, walking, swimming in the sea, applying a sense of gratefulness to what I could engage with and what I could achieve, and I hope to take a lot of that with me."

The new stamps are among the largest format stamps ever issued by An Post. "Big stamps for big names, quite fitting for these giants of the Singer Songwriter world", a spokesperson said. "We expect strong interest in them from fans of the artists and of music in general, all over the world. We hope they will help spread a little joy at home and abroad."

The new stamps and a special First Day Cover envelope are available at all post offices and online at anpost.com/artists. Hozier was born in Bray and attended Delgany National School and St Gerard's before studying music in Trinity College. He began writing songs at the age of 15. He now lives in Newcastle.

Minister commends work of 'Bray For Love' group

Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth Roderic O'Gorman said that he wishes to commend the Bray For Love group for the work it is carrying out, and would like to meet with the group.

Minister O'Gorman was responding to a Parliamentary Question from Green Party TD Steven Matthews, who requested that the Minister meet with the group.

"I wish to commend Bray for Love on the work they are carrying out, and I would be delighted to meet with them," Minister O'Gorman stated.

The Minister also spoke about the Interim Report of the Anti-Racism Committee, which was published in April.

"The Anti-Racism Committee is an independent Committee established by Government in 2020 to draw up a National Action Plan Against Racism (NAPAR) for Ireland.

"This is in line with the commitment contained

within the Programme for Government to publish a new NAPAR. The work of the Committee will help to strengthen the Government's approach to combating individual and institutional racism and will build on the anti-racism actions included in the Migrant Integration Strategy (MIS) and the National Traveller and Roma Inclusion Strategy (NTRIS).

"The Committee is coming to the end of its Public Consultation (21st April to 14th July 2021), and later this year the Committee will recommend its NAPAR campaign to me."

Bray For Love was formed last year as a campaign by SPEAK for Racial Justice - a group of local people who value the strength of their diverse community. They state: "We have come together with a common goal - to stamp out racism and hate in our local area, to keep our community inclusive, to foster mutual respect and be a space where each person who makes our town their home or visits our county, feels welcome no matter their nationality, ethnicity, religious or cultural background."

Summer Songs - Inland & By The Sea

Wicklow County Council presents Summer Songs - Inland & By The Sea, a series of live music events taking place throughout the summer.

There will be five days of music at five different outdoor venues across County Wicklow, featuring amazing bands who are from, living in, or with strong connections to Wicklow. Artists include Hothouse Flowers, Kíla, Pillow Queens, Wyvern Lingo, Mary Coughlan, plus many more

County Wicklow Arts Officer, Jenny Sherwin, said the gigs will be intimate with crowds of between 200 to 500 only at each event where restrictions allow - but there will be no compromise on production values. She added: "It's a rare opportunity to catch these musicians in boutique crowds where the audience's view will be up close and personal in these unique settings."

Wicklow County Council is proud to bring live music and performances by these local musicians back to the community for the first time since the industry was shut down due to the pandemic. There is lots to choose from and something for everyone with traditional Irish, classical, opera, rock and contemporary gigs all on sale.

There will be strict event control for the

safest experience for our artists and patrons. Should any event be cancelled for any reason due to COVID-19, a full refund will apply.

The full schedule is:

7th August - Burnaby Park, Greystones

Kíla

Glimpse

Scullion

Perfect Friction

8th August - Burnaby Park, Greystones

Sonamus

Mobile Music Machine

Into the Deep Dark

Woods

14th August - People's Park, Darlge Road, Bray

Wyvern Lingo

Cathy Davey

The Booka Club

21st August - Brockagh Resource Centre, Laragh

Hothouse Flowers

Mobile Music Machine

Leslie Dowdall & Mark

Caplice

5th September - North Beach, Arklow

Pillow Queens

Mary Coughlan

Leslie Dowdall & Feel

the Pinch

A concert in Wicklow Town will be announced during the summer.



Mary Coughlan will play in Arklow in September

Tickets are available to buy on summersongswicklow.eventbrite.ie in pods of six people and not on an individual basis. Each pod costs €120, with one exception in Greystones on August 8th for families where a pod of six people is €60. Due to current guidelines in place for the presentation of programmes in pods no greater than six people, it is not possible to purchase individual tickets at this time.

People are being

advised to book now to avoid disappointment as capacity is limited.

Summer Songs - Inland & By The Sea is funded by The Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media as part of their Local Live Performance Programming. This scheme is to support the commercial live performance sector to assist producers, promoters, venues and musicians who have been severely impacted by the pandemic restrictions.



Local Bray band Wyvern Lingo will be playing a gig at the People's Park in Bray in August as part of 'Summer Songs - Inland & By the Sea'. Photo by Miguel Ruiz

No holidays for over a year for the majority of people in Leinster

It has been well over a year since most of the people living in Ireland have taken a holiday. According to new research commissioned by Europcar Mobility Group Ireland, 70% of Leinster people have not taken a break since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The research shows that 29% of those in Leinster took a staycation in Ireland last year, but the length of stay was relatively short with the majority (59%) taking between two and three days.

Despite the possible return of international travel later in the year as the vaccine rollout progresses, most people are still choosing to holiday at home in 2021. The majority of people in Leinster (52%) are planning to staycation in Ireland this year in line with the easing of Covid-19 restrictions.

The research revealed that the West Coast (46%) is the most popular staycation spot in Ireland, followed by the South Coast (21%), the East Coast (14%) and the Midlands (13%). The West Coast is the overwhelming favourite staycation spot for Generation Z (18-24), with seven in ten choosing to holiday here and it

is also the top choice for 29% of people living in Leinster.

Of those who took a staycation over the past year, 42% spent less than €500 on their trip. In contrast, 45% of those taking a staycation in 2021 are planning to spend up to €1,000 with just under a quarter (23%) planning to spend more than that, which is evidence of potential growth in consumer confidence as the economy reopens.

Over half (55%) of those aged 55+ plan on spending between €500-€1,000 on their next staycation, while seven in ten of those aged 18-24 will spend €500 or less. 69% of Generation Z (18-24) believe that staycations are cheaper than foreign holidays.

The research also indicates that the pandemic has influenced how people in the country plan to travel this summer, with the majority (62%) of the public opting against

using public transport. This suggests that more Irish people will be using a car for their holiday and with one in ten saying their current car is unsuitable for taking on a staycation, many will be considering renting a car.

To facilitate consumers travelling for staycations and to support the Irish tourism industry, just under a third (30%) of those surveyed believe that car rental and car sharing for staycations should be part of any Government hospitality support scheme.

Covid-19 has also changed attitudes to holidaying in Ireland, with 46% of the general public saying they have a greater appreciation of Ireland as a holiday destination. This rises to over three quarters (77%) amongst Generation Z (18-24), with more than a third (37%) having visited a place in Ireland that they had not been to before the pandemic.

Commenting on the research, Colm Brady, Managing Director Europcar Mobility Group Ireland, said, "Ireland has been offering wonderful experiences to overseas tourists for decades and now we get to rediscover our own country and all the remarkable places it has to offer. For those who don't own a car or indeed if their car isn't suitable to take on a trip, car renting and car sharing offer a flexible and affordable solution. Europcar and GoCar are the leading providers of mobility solutions in the Irish market, offering car rental and car sharing solutions nationwide. Our research shows that for many people it has been a long time since they last got to take a break. We hope that as many people as possible get the chance to take a holiday this year with the added comfort and reliability of a modern vehicle to get them there."

Rentokil warns public about dangers of summer insects

Rentokil is warning the public to be vigilant regarding summer-time pest insects, namely ants, flies and wasps, and to be aware of the negative impacts posed by them, as the current period is when they are most active.

As lockdown restrictions are lifted, weather improves, and people begin to spend more time outside socialising there is a greater need for awareness of the increased activity of these pest insects.

In particular, the company is encouraging outdoor diners to be aware of the presence of summer insects, as they will likely be attracted to their food. Wasps and flies pose the greatest potential inconvenience for outdoor diners due to their ability to sting and the threat they pose in the spread of bacteria, respectively.

Flies are most active during the summer period, as this is when they breed. Flies pose the threat of spreading bacteria such as E-coli and campylobacter to humans when they come into contact with food.

To discourage the presence of flies on their premises, Rentokil would encourage people to take steps including: Fix leaky taps and blocked drains where water can gather; keep food covered; keep bins, sinks and food areas clean; fit fly screens to windows; keep win-

dows and doors shut at night and consider installing a fly killer unit.

Ants are another common summertime pest. While they do not pose the same health threats as flies, they can become a nuisance. If ants find a food source on a premises, they can lay down pheromones to attract others, which can rapidly turn a small infestation into a large one. If you notice an ant infestation on your premises you should ensure to track down where they are coming in and seal off the entry point, clear up any sticky residues on worktops, and cover up any foodstuffs which could also be a food source for ants.

The warm summer months are when the wasp population is at its highest, as the favourable conditions enable the insects to thrive and multiply. Wasp stings are a painful experience and can also be extremely dangerous to people allergic to the poison in stings. Steps which people can take to prevent the presence of wasps on their premises include: Keep windows and doors shut; ensure outside bins

have tightly fitting lids so wasps are not attracted to the contents; and check for the presence of nests. If you do spot a nest, make sure to keep children and pets away from the area.

Richard Faulkner, Advanced Technical Field Consultant with Rentokil said: "Wasps, flies and ants are all at their most active during the summer months, and they all pose different types of threats or nuisances to members of the public. These insects can become an issue for home and business owners in the form of infestations. We would also encourage outdoor diners to be mindful of their presence, as these insects will likely be attracted to their food. There are a number of steps which property owners can take to curb the presence of these pests, but if in doubt, we would encourage anyone to seek the services of a professional pest control provider."

Rentokil expects that in the long-term pest insect populations will continue to grow due in part to the effects of climate change. Milder weather conditions for greater periods of time throughout the year are enabling pest insects to thrive and multiply to a greater degree.



Eimear O'Sullivan, Roisin Byrne, Ava Harmon, Zoe Katus, and Kayla Tighe celebrate Knockananna winning the U-16 Camogie Championship, beating Kiltegan in Aghrim.

Wicklow folk urged to join the team undertaking the 100km Challenge for GOAL this August!

Humanitarian aid agency, GOAL, is appealing to young and old all over Wicklow to join its 100km in August challenge to raise much needed funds to support its work with vulnerable communities all over the world.

GOAL is inviting people to run, walk, cycle or swim 100km over the month - and to have lots of fun at the same time!

While it is a tough challenge, it is a novel way for supporters to make a huge difference helping GOAL respond to humanitarian crises in 14 countries around the world.

The beauty about the challenge is that it can be done at your own pace - and with family and friends in their local areas, or while they are away on staycation.

GOAL Director of Fundraising, Eamon Sharkey, said: "This is a time of the year when people all over Ireland are taking advantage of the

long days and getting outdoors. After the tough time with Covid-19 and lockdown it is great to see communities enjoying the beautiful amenities all around them. We are appealing to people of all ages to enjoy the great outdoors whilst supporting GOAL's work at the same time."

"Last year GOAL supported more than 14.3 million people in Africa, Latin America and the Middle East in the areas of nutrition, health, livelihoods and emergency response. Our teams have also rolled out Covid-19 awareness programmes in all our countries. We cannot do this vital work without the support of the people of Ireland."

GOAL has created a Facebook group of people taking on this challenge. Those who sign up get a special 100km Challenge T-Shirt.

You can join the group today. Take on the challenge and become part of a team making a real difference!

See www.goalglobal.org/100km-in-august/



GOAL's Fundraising and Events Officer, Helena O'Mahony, getting into training for the 100km August Challenge



Wiktor, Pavel, and Barbara Opoczka, with Michael Sinica, after the charity motorcycle run from Arklow to Bray in aid of suicide awareness. Pic: Joe McQuillan

People with Dementia and family carers urged to participate in new teamup for dementia research service

A new dementia research service created and managed by The Alzheimer Society of Ireland (ASI) in collaboration with the Dementia Research Network Ireland (DRNI) called TeamUp For Dementia Research, has been launched and will help people living with dementia and their families find and take part in dementia-related research projects across Ireland.

This project is part-funded by the Donate for Dementia fundraising and awareness week. With less than 0.5% of people with dementia currently participating in research in Ireland, this service aims to increase participation and connect people with opportunities to take part in research in a safe way that puts the people who use the services and the public first. Studies in the area of dementia could include topics such as prevention, diagnosis, treatment, care, and cure.

Research is essential to help understand what causes dementia, develop effective treatments, improve care, create new interventions and even one day find a cure. The ASI is fully aware that people living with dementia and their families can benefit from participating in research; many people find it a rewarding experience and enjoy having their voice heard and contributing.

The goals of the service are to:

- Make research more accessible to people living with dementia and their families;
- Improve dementia research in Ireland;
- Ensure more people living with dementia and their families have their voices heard in research.

The launch of this new service comes alongside recent news of the aduhelm drug which The ASI has stated as being hopeful

and cautiously optimistic about. There is also news that The Health Research Board (HRB) has funded a Dementia Clinical Trials Network (€1,000,000) to strengthen and increase the number of clinical trials available for people living with dementia in Ireland by 2026.

The Alzheimer Society of Ireland's Interim Policy and Research Manager, Dr Laura O'Philbin said:

"Research is essential to help understand what causes dementia, develop effective treatments, improve care, create new interventions and even one day find a cure. In Ireland there is currently no streamlined and inclusive way for people with dementia and their families to learn about and express their interest in taking part in Dementia Research. The ASI is delighted to play its part in supporting dementia research by developing this fantastic new service. We want everyone in our communities to have the option of taking part if they wish."

Dementia Research Network Ireland Chair and Consultant Physician in Geriatric and Stroke Medicine, Prof Sean Kennelly said: "Irish people are incredibly altruistic when it comes to dementia-related research and really go above and beyond with their time and energy. The opportunity to participate in research is an important holistic part of living well with dementia. It's important for clinicians and researchers to provide opportunities for people to take part in research and TeamUp For Dementia Research creates this link. With Ireland's rapidly ageing demographic, an increased focus on dementia-related research is needed to firstly address the rising prevalence of dementia and secondly to ensure that people diagnosed with dementia and their families can live as well as possible. Ireland is not accepting the 'status quo' of no treatment or no cure for dementia. We are changing the narrative".

Current Family Carer, Alison McCarthy (Limerick) said: "I have signed up for The Alzheimer Society of Ireland's TeamUp for Dementia Research because I believe in the power of research. For me research is more than just finding answers; research brings hope and understanding to people living with dementia and their families. When I took part in my own research, it



Chair of The ASI Cavan Branch, Carole Beattie

helped me come to terms with our new way of life and understand my mom more and how she may be feeling. It's for these reasons I think others should be involved in this new initiative."

Chair of The ASI Cavan Branch, Carole Beattie (Cavan) said: "I have signed up for TeamUp for Dementia Research because I believe it gives hope to so many people. I cared for my husband, who was my soulmate, for eight years at home until he died in 2012. He was only 62 when he started on his journey with Alzheimer's and he had just retired having run his own successful business for years and we were looking forward to travelling the world together and doing all the things we couldn't do while he was working. I felt robbed of our future together. Shortly after he passed away, I also cared for my 93-year-old mother who also had dementia at home until she passed away six weeks before her 100th birthday.

"I wanted to take part in research because as Chair of Cavan Branch I ran a monthly Support Group for 10 years and I regularly heard very poignant stories from family carers who have lost their loved ones and how they, having received the diagnosis, were so upset by the fact that nothing new had appeared on the market for years to at least give them some hope for the future. The worst part of a dementia diagnosis is that it evokes hopelessness. Now, with more research projects on the way, at least there is some hope."



Alison McCarthy, family carer

Public urged to 'Park Smart' when visiting coastal and scenic locations

Gardaí are advising motorists to secure their vehicles when parking in unattended carparks in coastal and scenic locations, as millions of euro worth of property are stolen from cars each year.

The average value of property stolen is approximately €660, with cash making up an average of €330 per incident. Cash, car accessories, jewellery, electronics, and tools are the items most targeted in these incidents.

The summer months see an increase in vehicle break-ins at locations associated with outdoor activities; such as hill walking, hiking, beaches etc. Around 60% of these incidents happen between April and September. While these thefts can occur at any time the majority occur on weekends between 2pm and 7pm.

Sergeant Ber Leetch, Crime Prevention Officer, said, "Whilst

overall theft from car incidents have reduced in the last 12 months, we anticipate the relaxation of Covid-19 restrictions will see increased opportunities for criminals to take advantage of us as we holiday here in Ireland this summer.

If you are travelling with your car to coastal and scenic areas this summer, plan your journey before you go. Check online if the location has a website or app with safety tips for visitors.

Leave the expensive property at home if not required. Choose well serviced and well lit car parks where possible. Avoid carparks with signs of public disorder or criminal damage, such as broken glass. Park

legally, do not obstruct vehicles or entrances.

When you are leaving your car in remote locations, take your keys with you. It goes without saying that things like handbags, jackets, wallets, laptops, and shopping should never be left on view in the vehicle. A good idea is to leave an empty glove box open, showing would be criminals that there is nothing for them to steal.

As you leave double check that your doors and windows are locked. Don't be tempted to leave the windows slightly open.

If you are the victim of a crime or if you see any suspicious activity call 999 or 112 and report it."

'Families in Wicklow have waited too long'

Early Childhood Ireland published its Budget 2022 submission last week with a call for government to meet the commitment in the national early years strategy, First 5, to at least double investment by 2028.

In Budget 2022, the government must begin to meet this target by increasing funding and announce the plan to achieve it over the following six years.

Early Childhood Ireland supports 3,800 childcare members nationwide, including 140 in Wicklow, who - in turn - support over 120,000 children and their families across Ireland.

Commenting, Frances Byrne, Director of Policy with Early Childhood Ireland, said: "We are calling on the Government to take real and immediate action to increase public investment in childcare. The Government has committed to reforming and investing in childcare, yet in Budget 2021, despite significant investment in other essential services, childcare funding was not increased. We are still without a plan or proposal for adequate funding our sector. Families in Wicklow are poorly served and have waited too long.

"Ireland has consistently remained at the bottom of the class when it comes to investment in childcare. According to the OECD, we invest the least amount in early years of any developed country as a percentage of GDP.

"This lack of investment costs us all. Parents pay the highest childcare fees from take-home pay in the European Union. Providers operate precariously in a highly complex funding model which benefits no-one. Average pay and conditions of employment in the sector remain poor, leading to serious challenges in staff recruitment and retention. All of this impacts on the quality of childcare which our youngest citizens deserve as a fundamental public good."

Ms. Byrne said the Government's recognition and support of the childcare sector as an essential public service in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic must be continued to ensure the sustainability of childcare services.

"COVID-19, while highlighting early years and school-age care as essential, also exposed a sector facing major sustainability challenges. Historical state underinvestment, complex funding streams and dependence on high parental fees have created an operating model so fragile that it warranted a sector specific version of the Employment Wage Subsidy Scheme in order to remain viable. The scheme currently supports 80% of salaries in childcare settings, more than in any other sector.

"What's more, the security created by the scheme has enabled childcare providers to invest in measures that have improved quality, ensuring better experiences for children during this terrible global crisis. The Government has committed to a new, fit-for-purpose model. We are calling on them to retain these essential supports until such a model can be properly implemented."

Virtual Women's Mini Marathon announces collaboration with Ciaróg Eile

The Vhi Virtual Women's Mini Marathon is delighted to announce an exciting new national collaboration with Ciaróg Eile - #PowerOfMe Power Up.

Ciaróg Eile consists of Paula Mongey and her son Teddy, who started to paint stones during lockdown in 2020, and leave them in public places around the country, including in Wicklow, for people to find to make them feel happy.

To celebrate this year's event, Vhi Virtual Women's Mini Marathon is joining forces with Ciaróg Eile, to design themed stones, which will be placed in every county in the country for people to find, including Wicklow. The stones will feature a #PowerOfMe message, which is the theme of this year's race.

Anyone who finds a #PowerOfMe stone is asked to take a selfie with the stone wherever they find it and share it to the Vhi Women's Mini Marathon and Ciaróg Eile Facebook or Instagram pages. The first person in each county to share their selfie with the stone will win a Just Eat voucher.

In addition, the event is inviting women all over the country and their friends and families to Power Up, by sharing the positivity and designing their own #PowerOfMe themed stones, with the best designs also winning Just Eat vouchers.



Teddy Duggan and Paula Mongey of Ciaróg Eile

Paula Mongey of Ciaróg Eile said: "We're so happy to be painting stones for the Vhi Virtual Women's Mini Marathon this year, to help to spread their 'Power Of Me' message to everyone around the country. One thing we have learned from the past year is that we all have an inherent power and resilience, not only to keep ourselves going but to empower others along the way. Kindness is a superpower, no matter how small the gesture and we hope that whoever finds our stones will continue to spread the 'Power

Of Me' message."

David O'Leary, General Manager of the Women's Mini Marathon added: "We love Ciaróg Eile, and what it stands for. It's all about putting a smile on everyone's face and sharing fun and positivity, and it's a perfect fit with the Vhi Women's Mini Marathon. We're looking forward to working with Paula and Teddy to bring Ciaróg Eile stones to every county in Ireland over the coming weeks, and we encourage everyone to be on the lookout for our #PowerOfMe stones!"

The 2021 Vhi Virtual Women's Mini Marathon, now in its 39th year, will take place on Sunday September 19th with the help of the brand-new Official Event App that has been developed to support those looking to walk, jog and run the 10km route anywhere in the country.

Ciaróg Eile began in April 2020 as a small stone painting project in Teddy and Paula's Garden. They were looking for a way to connect to others as we all lived in isolation. They began leaving painted stones in their neighbourhood for people to find to brighten up their day. Teddys stone project went on to capture the nations attention by winning the RTE/Creative Ireland 'This is Art' national art competition. The team have recently delivered stone painting workshops to children around the country and Temple Street Childrens hospital as part of South County Dublin/Creative Ireland 'Cruinniú na nÓg' day of creativity for children. The Ciaróg Eile project is about sharing simple accessible art with everyone.

Enter today at www.vhiwomensmini-marathon.ie



Sean O'Callaghan and Katelyn Parsons with Flora O'Mahony, Senior Conservation Architect, OPW, and Claire Breen, Archaeologist, National Monuments Service, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage

From ringforts to round towers, public asked to protect our past amidst rise in damage to heritage sites

Recent evidence of graffiti and anti-social behaviour at several of Ireland's most significant national monuments

The Office of Public Works (OPW) and the National Monuments Service (in the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage) have launched a new campaign entitled Protect Our Past, highlighting the need for visitors to Ireland's heritage sites and monuments to be mindful of their actions over the summer.

The campaign, launched by Minister for Heritage and Electoral Reform, Malcolm Noonan TD, and Minister of State with responsibility for Office of Public Works, Patrick O'Donovan, TD, is reminding people of the importance of protecting our country's unique archaeological and architectural heritage sites, many of which are extremely vulnerable.

There are over 145,000 recorded archaeological monuments around the country in private and public ownership, with latest research suggesting evidence of human activity in Ireland well over 10,000 years ago. Examples of archaeological monument types in Ireland include megalithic tombs, stone circles, standing stones, rock art, ecclesiastical enclosures, churches, graveyards, ringforts, souterrains, crannógs and castles.

The campaign information is available on www.gov.ie/opw/. As people enjoy a summer exploring Ireland, the two Departments are encouraging people to visit the many varied heritage sites that Ireland boasts but to be especially mindful of how fragile, vulnerable, and irreplaceable our heritage sites can be. Recent evidence of graffiti and anti-social behaviour at several of Ireland's most significant monuments - some of which are ancient burial sites - has illustrated the need for more respectful behaviour.

Some archaeological sites are suffering damage that threatens the preservation of archaeological remains. Small fires and ground disturbance, for example, which may be carried out with no ill intention, can destroy or seriously damage these monuments.

The Irish countryside is unique in Europe in the number of ancient monuments that survive from past ages. This campaign aims to increase understanding and appreciation of these monuments so we can all play our part in protecting them for the next generation.

Minister of State for Heritage and Electoral Reform, Malcolm Noonan TD, at the

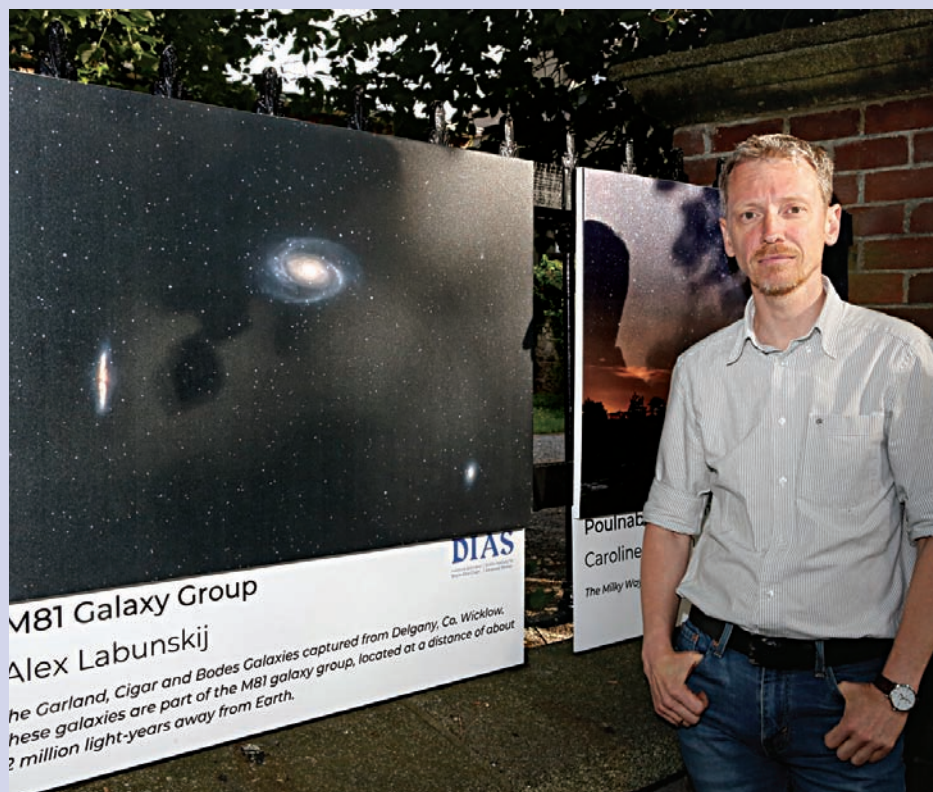
Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage commented: "Ireland has over 145,000 recorded archaeological sites and monuments spread across every town, parish and townland, meaning we are never far from a special place that provides us with a tangible link to our ancestors and our past. The rate of survival of Ireland's archaeological and architectural heritage is unique and something to be proud of. We all have a role to play in ensuring its survival for present and future generations. I encourage everyone visiting a heritage site or monument this summer to be mindful of how their actions might impact these sites or monuments."

Minister of State with responsibility for Office of Public Works, Patrick O'Donovan, TD, said: "Our heritage defines our sense of identity; it tells us about who we are and where we came from and is a critical resource for education and learning. It includes evidence of the environment in which those societies lived - from the everyday to the very special. Heritage also plays a vital role in contributing to our tourism sector, especially in rural areas, so we need to come together to ensure we protect it."

Our archaeological monuments are a source of pride and provide a sense of place,

belonging and collective identity to communities across the country. These sites can inspire us with a profound sense of joy and wonder and make a contribution to enhancing well-being. Collectively we can work together to ensure that they are preserved for future generations to enjoy - just as we do today. Please take a moment to think about your actions when you next visit one of our precious archaeological sites.





Pictured at the launch of the outdoor exhibition was Alex Labunskij with his image M81 Galaxy Group'. His two selected photos, along with 21 others, will feature in the outdoor exhibition at the Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies for the month of July.

Wicklow photographers' images feature in outdoor astronomy exhibition

Images taken by two Wicklow photographers, Alex Labunskij from Greystones and Enda Kelly from Wicklow town, are part of a new outdoor exhibition featuring astronomy photographs that will hang at the Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies (DIAS) at 10 Burlington Road, Dublin for the month of July.

The original exhibition features 23 images that have been selected from the entries to DIAS's 'Reach for the Stars' astrophotography competition, which took place earlier this year.

Two of Alex's entries were chosen for the exhibition, including his shot 'M81 Galaxy Group' which features The Garland, Cigar and Bodes Galaxies. These galaxies are part of the M81 galaxy group, located at a distance of about 12 million light-years away from Earth. Enda's chosen image 'High-Res Lunar Mosaic' features the Moon, captured from Ashford, Co. Wicklow.

The exhibition is free for anyone to attend, and can be viewed on the railings outside the DIAS building.

Commenting on the exhibition, CEO and Registrar of DIAS, Dr. Eucharía Meehan, said: "Launching this exhibition is the final phase of our Reach for the Stars astrophotography competition, which ran for the first time this year. We are delighted to be able to showcase some of the fantastic images that were submitted and share the talent and creativity of the photographers with the public."

As an Institute that carries out research in astronomy and astrophysics, these images resonate greatly with us here and we appreciate the time and patience that went into capturing them. We hope people stop by to enjoy them, and appreciate their complexity."

The exhibition is an open event that will run outside the DIAS building at 10 Burlington Road, Dublin, D04 C932. It will be in place for the month of July and is free to attend.

DIAS's 'Reach for the Stars' competition was run in partnership with The Irish Times and is sponsored by Alice PR & Events. The Irish Astronomical Society are initiative supporters.



Pictured at the launch of the outdoor exhibition was Enda Kelly with his image 'High-Res Lunar Mosaic'.

Making Music with Sonamus: the Wicklow Teaching Residency

Making Music with Sonamus: the Wicklow Teaching Residency, a pilot teaching residency presented by Music Network and Wicklow County Council Arts Office, concluded on 9th June with a large-scale informal performance at Poulaphouca House and Falls.

Sixteen County Wicklow residents aged 55 and over participated in the Residency, reigniting their love of playing music under the guidance of renowned Wicklow quartet Sonamus. Participants both individual and group tuition on piano, guitar, cello and whistle. Tuition was entirely free of charge and instruments were provided as needed for the duration of the project.

Watch the short film at youtu.be/P3hSacRe5BM or the subtitled version at youtu.be/iEXO2ZG76M. Benefitting from the combined musical backgrounds of Sonamus members Eamon Sweeney (guitar), Rachel Factor (harp), Annette Cleary (cello) and Tim Doyle (whistles), the Wicklow Teaching Residency offered participants the opportunity to experience and learn an array of musical styles and techniques. Individual and group lessons took place online between January and April and the residency concluded with three outdoor ensemble sessions in May and June where participants and Sonamus relished the opportunity to play music together in-person for the first time.

Making Music with Sonamus: the Wicklow Teaching Residency was presented by Music Network and Wicklow County Council Arts Office. Music Network is funded by the Arts Council of Ireland. This initiative was also funded by Creative Ireland and the Government's Resilience and Recovery Plan 2020-2021.

Summer at Mermaid

Artistic Director at Mermaid Arts Centre, Julie Kelleher, has said that the venue is "working to bring you more events indoors, outdoors and online in the weeks and months ahead."

Ms Kelleher said, "We had the great joy of presenting a series of tiny-capacity outdoor concerts by two very special musicians last weekend, at Atlanta House Nursing Home, and at Raheen-a-cluig."

"We have a very special show coming to Bray Seaford, just after the August Weekend, that we're dying to tell you all about, so stay tuned for more on that."

On 2nd July, Mermaid re-opened its gallery. Created by Joan Davis, an artist who is surely a great treasure of Wicklow, this exhibition is Gallery As Garden, and as you might expect from an artist who has dedicated a lifetime of practice to the body, it

demands that the viewer be fully present in experiencing it. This show runs until July 31st, and will be followed a new exhibition from Joe Wilson, inspired by the Glencree valley.

"Our box office team will be installed daily from 11am to 4pm to welcome you, and we are all so excited to have visitors back in the building once more."

"Through July and August, we have artists working in our auditorium and multi-purpose room, busily developing new thoughts, words, ideas, that we hope we will be able to share with you in time. And the Mermaid team continue to work on finalising our autumn programme, in the hope that when we can be together again, we can offer you as many intimate and soul-feeding artistic experiences as possible, both here at Mermaid and at locations around the county! For up to date info on what's on, you can check out our website and social media channels."

The Way We Art: An exhibition by Bray Artists' Circle

Signal Arts Centre, Monday 19th July to Sunday 1st August

Bray Artists' Circle has been providing opportunities for local artists to develop their artistic talent since 2003. The members range from artists who have been painting for many years, to others who have taken it up more recently as a hobby.

A cross-section of styles and media preferences from oils to watercolour, acrylics to pastels is displayed within the group. While there is no formal teaching, more experienced artists are willing to give advice as members work on their own subject preferences in a relaxed atmosphere.

Workshops led by professional artists are organised annually. Trips to art galleries such as the National Gallery have also been organised for members. Some members have also travelled to France, Spain and Italy for painting workshops.

The group meet throughout the year on Monday evenings for two hours in St. Cronan's B.N.S., Bray. At present there are approximately 25 members many of which have successfully sold their work in a variety of exhibitions. The past twelve months have been particularly challenging as the Covid 19 pandemic has prevented them from meeting, but they look forward to a time when

they can once again get together.

This exhibition includes a selection of work in oils, watercolour, acrylic and pastel by members, all of whom have their very individual styles.



Atlantic Coast by Susie Deitrich

Whale Theatre champions 'disPLAYced' artists in spectacular re-opening programme

The Whale Theatre in Greystones has announced its ambitious re-opening programme featuring a stellar line-up of highly acclaimed performers and productions, encompassing everything from music and comedy, to live theatre and spoken word.



Eleanor McEvoy

Coming back with a flourish, the theatre's re-opening weekend kicks off on Thursday 19 August with performances from renowned Irish musicians Lisa Hannigan, Emma Langford and The 4 of Us. The contemporary music programme boasts an enviable line-up throughout August and September with other performances from Something Happens, Jack Lukeman, Niamh Regan, Hothouse Flowers, Paddy Casey, Eleanor McEvoy, Mike Hanrahan and more.

With a total of 26 live performances taking place over a 6-week period, the Whale Theatre presents this series of events under the theme "disPLAYced", seeking to

highlight the extent to which thousands of Irish artists, arts workers and productions have been displaced by the restrictions imposed as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. This poignant and timely "disPLAYced" theme is explored in more detail in Andrea Splendori's spoken word/music event, "Social Fabric Podcast".

Speaking about the launch of the Whale Theatre's "disPLAYced" programme and re-opening, the theatre's Owner & Founder Ross McParland commented "We are thrilled to be welcoming artists, audiences and staff members back to the theatre and we are very grateful for the support we have received during the long, dark

months of being closed, as well as for the Live Performance Support Scheme grant which is a much-needed boost as we prepare for our re-opening".

Theatre fans can look forward to seeing Limerick's award-winning Bottom Dog Theatre Company performing "A Wilde Fan" starring Miles Breen, as well as the hilarious "Seven Ages of MAM", from Pauline O' Driscoll Productions. Younger arts audiences are also well catered for, with Ceol Connected presenting their critically acclaimed and unique production "The Quiet Tree", suitable for audiences aged 3-6 and their families.

Now more than ever before, we all need a bit of a laugh, so Neil Delamere is set to provide some of that much-needed comic relief! There will also be music of different genres, including jazz from the Carole Nelson Trio, classical music from tenor Ross Scanlon and trad from acclaimed musical duo, Steve Cooney & Cormac Breatnach.

Extensive Covid-19 Health & Safety measures have been implemented at the theatre in preparation for the reopening, including reduced capacities, contact tracing systems and enhanced cleaning and disinfecting protocols. Face coverings will be mandatory for audiences, and the majority of performances are slightly shorter than usual, with no intervals.

The Whale Theatre's "disPLAYced" programme kicks off on Thursday 19 August and runs until Thursday 30 September. To explore the programme in full and to book your tickets, please visit www.whaletheatre.ie.

This programme is supported by The Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media through the Live Performance Support Scheme.



Mike Hanrahan is coming to the Whale Theatre

In the Marl-Walled Court of the Fairyqueen - an exhibition by Laura Ni Fhlaibhin

Courthouse Arts Centre, 15th August - 5th September

Wexford-born artist Laura Ní Fhlaibhín presents a new body of work at Tinahely Courthouse Arts Centre.

Drawing on research undertaken during two residencies at the community studio houses in Tinahely's Market House - site of the village gaol from circa 1804 until the building of the new courthouse in 1843 - in the marl-walled court of the fairyqueen exists both as a text and as suite of votive objects, from clay 'spirit creatures' to wall drawings, tiny bronzes, commemorative plate and an embroidered flag bearing the emblem of a hare.

Ní Fhlaibhín's discovery of the use of marl clay as a primary material for building rudimentary houses prior to the Famine provides a starting point for her explorations into aspects of the colonial judiciary, the fate of Famine-era 'criminals', and the historic exploitation of the area's natural assets.

Archival research into court records points to the transportation of convicts to the New World during the nineteenth century, in addition to the harvesting and transportation of timber from Wicklow's ancient oak forest to England's shipyards, and, reputedly, to build the Old Palace of Westminster. These histories form a reimagined narrative of a justice dispensed not by colonial powers, but by the herbal wisdom of Biddy Early, barrister-witch, in a tribunal informed by poet Brian Merriman's comic masterpiece, *The Midnight Court*.

Through transformative process including casting metal, firing and glazing, marl clay, bronze and steel become carriers of social history, architectural oddness and impenetrability. Invading small spaces, ledges, nooks and crannies around Tinahely's Market Square and the

Courthouse Arts Centre, Ní Fhlaibhín's almost insignificant works subtly repopulate the town while the Gallery plays host to the eponymous text.

The project will be accompanied by a short pamphlet available from the gallery/.

Laura Ní Fhlaibhín completed her MFA at Goldsmiths, University of London in 2019 and her BA at the National College of Art and Design, Dublin in 2013. She is the current recipient of Goldsmiths MFA Graduate Almacantar Studio Bursary Award, and Burren College of Art Emerging Irish Artist Residency award. She was awarded Firestation Dublin Studio Bursary 2020 and Tyrone Guthrie Residency 2020.

The exhibition is being curated by Anne Mullee, an independent

curator, researcher and art writer based in Dublin. She holds an MA (Hons) in Cultural Policy and Arts Management from UCD, a HND in Fashion Journalism from the University of the Arts (London), and a Certificate in Art & Design Certificate from TUD. Mullee was curator of The Courthouse Gallery & Studios, Ennistymon, Co. Clare from 2016-19, and is the recipient of multiple awards from the Arts Council, European Connections in Digital Arts (EUCIDA), Clare County Council and Dublin City Council. She has participated in residencies in Ireland and Iran. Her writing has appeared in *Paper Visual Art*, the *Visual Artists News Sheet* and *Partnership & Participation: Community Archaeology in Ireland*.



Hospitality and retail interdependent for town centre renewal, survey shows

Outdoor dining and hospitality are nominated as key to the renewal of town centres by a majority of consumers (54%) in a new survey by Champion Green. Free parking in towns (51%) and a voucher or loyalty scheme specifically for local businesses (46%) are also popular suggestions to encourage recovery in local economies.

Hospitality not opening as planned this week is a significant blow to local renewal, according to Marian O'Gorman, who is also Chairperson of Kilkenny Design Group.

"The selection of local cafés, bars and restaurants is seen by many people as a reason to come into the local villages, towns and cities, and enhances the shopping experience", she says.

People are now more aware of the connection between supporting local and prospects for economic recovery and jobs, the survey also shows.

There is recognition of the need to support

local business, with 49% claiming to now spend more in smaller local businesses due to COVID-19. Over one quarter, 28% of all adults, say they spend more online with local businesses too.

Two-thirds say supporting the local economy and jobs (67%) is the top motivation for spending with local traders. 56% of respondents say they are aware of shops or businesses locally that will not reopen after the pandemic.

The convenience of having shops nearby (59%) is also acknowledged as an important reason for staying local

by more than half of respondents.

However, just 51% of adults say they are confident in their employment situation, over the next 3 months, and only 30% have confidence in the state of the Irish economy in the short-term.

The new survey marks the anniversary of the launch of Champion Green, a year ago.

It was launched by Sven Spollen Behrens, Director of the Small Firms Association (SFA), with Damien English TD, Minister of State for Business, Employment and Retail. Both men participated in a Champion Green webinar on the support local campaign and initiatives to rebuild communities and town centres.

The survey canvassed 1,000 respondents, representative of the national adult population, examining their support for local business and changes in spending habits, as well as consumer sentiment, according to Sven Spollen-Behrens, Director of the Small Firms Association.

"People are realising that economic recovery is to a large degree dependent on their consumer behaviour and their support of local businesses. This is a very positive sign. We would encourage small businesses to build on this local loyalty, with concerted community efforts to create the right environment for consumers to return."

Almost 1 in 3 (32%) say they will continue to spend more online with Irish-owned businesses, which bodes well for omnichannel business growth. 22% say they will continue to spend more with local businesses, overall, going forward.

87% of all adults currently shop in their local area at least once a week, while 30% eat out locally once a week at a minimum. The average individual's discretionary spend per week in their locality is put at €120, excluding household groceries.

"People have supported local cafes, service providers and shops

throughout the pandemic, in person and online. Now we really need that to continue, so that small business can recover, and quickly", Champion Green founder, Marian O'Gorman, says.

Cheaper prices locally (35%) are most desired from local businesses going forward, consumers also report, with only a quarter (26%) rating value for money as a reason to shop locally.

Plans for Champion Green this year include a clickandcollection.com platform for locally produced goods and a National Champion Green Week in September to encourage and reward consumer support for local brands and businesses.

The initiative is backed by a €1m investment to drive consumer support for local enterprise and to help SMEs adapt business.

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. A.S.



Sven Spollen Behrens, Director of the Small Firms Association (SFA), with Damien English TD, Minister of State for Business, Employment and Retail and Evelyn Moynihan, CEO Kilkenny Design

CLASSIFIEDS

GOSPEL: LUKE 15:1-3, 11-32

The tax collectors and the sinners were all seeking the company of Jesus to hear what he had to say, and the Pharisees and the scribes complained, 'this man' they said 'welcomes sinners and eats with them.' So he spoke this parable to them: 'A man had two sons. The younger said to his father, 'Father, let me have the share of the estate that would come to me.' So the father divided the property between them. A few days later, the younger son got together everything he had and left for a distant country where he squandered his money on a life of debauchery. When he had spent it all, that country experienced a severe famine, and now he began to feel the pinch, so he hired himself out to one of the local inhabitants who put him on his farm to feed the pigs. And he would willingly have filled his belly with the husks the pigs were eating but no one offered him anything. Then he came to his senses and said, 'How many of my father's paid servants have more food than they want, and here am I dying of hunger! I will leave this place and go to my father and say: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you; I no longer deserve to be called your son; treat me as one of your paid servants.' So he left the place and went back to his father. 'While he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was moved with pity. He ran to the boy, clasped him in his arms and kissed him tenderly. Then his son said, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I no longer deserve to be called your son.' But the father said to his servants, 'Quick! Bring out the best robe and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. Bring the calf we have been fattening, and kill it, we are going to have a feast, a celebration, because this son of mine was dead and has come back to life, he was lost and is found.' And they began to celebrate. 'Now the elder son was out in the fields, and on his way back as he drew near the house, he could hear music and dancing. Calling one of the servants he asked what it was all about. 'Your brother has come' replied the servant 'and your father has killed the calf we had fattened because he has got him back safe and sound.' He was angry then and refused to go in, and his father came out to plead with him; but he answered his father, 'Look, all these years I have slaved for you and never once disobeyed your orders, yet you never offered me so much as a kid for me to celebrate with my friends. But, for this son of yours, when he comes back after swallowing up your property - he and his women - you kill the calf we had been fattening.' The father said, 'My son, you are with me always and all I have is yours. But it was only right we should celebrate and rejoice, because your brother here was dead and has come to life, he was lost and is found.'

C.J.

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Keep your pets safe this summer as temperatures soar

As temperatures are soaring lately, Petmania offers these tips for pet owners to help care for their furry friends in the sun.

Like their human companions, most pets enjoy the warm weather, but Petmania says it is important to stay vigilant and to be aware of any signs of distress. Dogs and cats can become dehydrated and overheat very quickly in hot weather, and are at risk of heatstroke which can be fatal if untreated. With the right precautions, everyone including

our furry buddies, can enjoy the summer sun.

Knowing the signs of heatstroke could potentially save a pet's life. Heatstroke can occur when an animal's temperature rises to a dangerous level. If their temperature rises above 40°C they must see the local veterinarian as soon as possible.

Emily Miller of Petmania Ireland

said "Pets enjoy the warm weather just as much as we do and like ourselves, there are a few essential steps to take to ensure that they are protected from the strong sunshine. We really want to encourage pet owners to stay vigilant in the hot weather and be aware of the signs of heatstroke. If there are any concerns don't take a chance, call

your vet immediately. With a few precautions, our beloved pets can have a lot of fun in the sun!"

Petmania Ireland advises that pet owners check the following signs of heatstroke and report to a vet if present: A temperature of 40 to 43 degrees Celsius; If the pet is staggering, having a seizure or in a stupor; Excessive panting; Dark or bright red tongue and/or gums; Sticky or dry tongue and/or gums; Bloody diarrhoea or vomiting.

The Irish-owned pet retailer recommends these tips to keep pets



RECRUITMENT



BORD OIDEACHAIS AGUS OILIÚNA
CHILL DARAGUS CHILL MHANTÁIN
KILDARE AND WICKLOW
EDUCATION AND TRAINING BOARD

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

LOCAL CO-ORDINATOR

37hpw, School Completion Programme,
Wicklow/Ashford/Rathnew/Newtownmountkennedy

Full details are available www.kwetb.ie and click on 'vacancies'.

Closing date for receipt of completed applications:

12 noon on Monday 26th July 2021.

Dr Deirdre Keyes, Chief Executive.

WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL

1 Fortem Capital Ltd t/a FUSE Training seeks permission/retention permission for a removable extended plastic fascia signage board, with projecting individual lettering advertising 'FUSE' and decorative brackets at each end of that trading name (the logo for this business). The background of this plastic fascia board is in a black colour whilst the illuminating lettering is in white and the brackets in yellow. And (b) the erection of sheeted fascia made of plastic on the doorway surrounds, over the entire surface area of this facade, which displays a printed advertisement of the branding icon for 'FUSE' 6at the former Bray Cinema Complex on Quinsborough Road, 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 Town 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.

PLANNING

WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL

Planning permission is being sought by Stevens Martin Management Contracting Limited for the development of 'Block A' comprising 8 no. light industrial warehouse units and associated works at Block A, Bullford Business Campus, Kilcoole, 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 Town 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

Alphaplan Design (Tel: 0404-64123 or 086-2461269 Email: eugene@alphaplandesign.com) Seeks planning permission for change of use (removal of planning condition no. 3 of planning ref. no. 04/113) from restricted use as a dwelling to use by all classes of persons at Conary Upper, Avoca, Co. Wicklow, for C. Moore. The planning application may be inspected, or purchased at a fee not exceeding the reasonable cost of making a copy, at the offices of the planning authority during its public opening hours and a submission or observation in relation to the application may be made to the authority in writing on payment of the prescribed fee within the period of 5 weeks beginning on the date of receipt by the authority of the application.



safe and well in the sunshine:

1. Ensure pets have access to the shade at all times when they are outside, such as under a table or a tree.

2. Make sure cool water is available for drinking, whether the pet is indoors or outdoors. Water should be fresh and refilled often.

3. Dog owners should avoid walking them in the afternoon when temperatures are at the highest, and instead opt for a morning or evening walk. Senior dogs, dogs that are overweight, dogs that have thick fur, or dogs with a pushed-in nose (such as boxers, pugs and Pekingese) are even more at risk of overheating.

4. Check the ground before taking dogs out for walks or letting cats



BORD OIDEACHAIS AGUS OILIÚNA
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KILDARE AND WICKLOW
EDUCATION AND TRAINING BOARD

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

CARETAKER

required for Bray Institute of Further Education,
Bray, Co. Wicklow, 39 hours per week

Full details are available www.kwetb.ie and click on 'vacancies'.

Closing date for receipt of completed applications:

12 noon on Friday 30th July 2021.

Dr Deirdre Keyes, Chief Executive.



**Music Generation
Wicklow
Cill Mhantáin**

EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST

Kildare and Wicklow Education & Training Board on behalf of Music Generation Wicklow invites expressions of interest from suitably qualified and experienced persons interested in being selected as:

Voluntary Committee Members of Wicklow Local Music Education Partnership.

Applicants should have a demonstrated track record in one of the following areas: music education, education, cultural programming, community or youth development.

Further information and Expression of Interest Forms contact: Ann Catherine Nolan at anncatherinenolan@kwetb.ie

Closing date for submission of completed forms is 17.00 on 30th July 2021

For more information on Music Generation Wicklow see

www.musicgenerationwicklow.ie



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EDUCATION AND TRAINING BOARD



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WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL



Music Generation is Ireland's National Music Education Programme. A Music Network Initiative, co-funded by L2, The Inland Funds, The Department of Education and Skills and Local Music Education Partnerships



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