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Tuesday 12th October 2021 First Floor, The Boulevard, Quinsborough Road, Bray. A98 R6D7. Tel: 01 - 2869111 E-mail: wicklowed@localtimes.ie www.wicklowtimes.net

RURAL DEVASTATION

BANKS ACCUSED OF DESERTING RURAL COMMUNITIES

There is mounting anger at what people see as the devastation of local rural communities, with the closure of banks, post offices and Garda stations. Sinn Féin TD John Brady has condemned the Government for its failure to address the continuing erosion of the fabric of our local communities as evidenced by the announcement of the closure of Bank of Ireland branches across the country, three of which are in County Wicklow - in Carnew, in Rathdrum, and in Tinahely. In Blessington, AIB will no longer allow counter cash transactions at its branch there.

Brady said: "For the people of Carnew, Rathdrum, Tinahely, and Blessington these developments represent a devastating blow. The Irish taxpayer funded the Bank of Ireland to the tune of €4.7 billion in order to bail it out. It is a bank in which the Irish government remains a substantial shareholder. "Yet, it comes as no surprise that Minister Paschal Donohue is prepared to stand by and watch this economic devastation of local communities. This government has overseen



Ethan Copeland, Nia Jameson, Charlotte Tenney, Emily Williams and Emma Byrne enjoying Harvest Day at Brittas Bay National School last Thursday. Pic: Michael Kelly

a continual erosion of the social, economic, and cultural fabric of our local communities.

"We have witnessed the loss of Post Offices, the loss of Garda Stations, and the loss of local commerce in our towns and villages. Traditionally in Ireland, the local parish has been the fundamental building block of Irish society. It is where most people first develop a sense of community identity, of belonging. To close Banks, to close Post-Offices, to close Garda Stations - it is not a simple matter of empty buildings with boarded up windows, it is not just a matter of inconveniencing people, it is not just a simple matter of disregard for communities - it is an attack on the wider structure of Irish society, through the destruction of the fundamental building block of the local community.

"As a country we are being forced to address the question of whether we want a country designed for the needs of shareholders - or of society as a whole.

"I, along with Sinn Féin, remain committed to not only defending our local communities, but to working to reimagine the design and development of a society that works for the good of that community. A society that contributes to collective and individual wellbeing."

AIB has written to customers in Blessington to inform them that from December 13 the branch will no longer offer over the counter transactions such as cash, cheques, coin, foreign exchange and bank drafts. The move has led to fears that Blessington will have no bank service in the town with Ulster Bank announcing their plans to leave the Irish market on a phased basis.

On a positive note the Irish League of Credit Unions (ILCU) has reaffirmed the commitment

of credit unions to remaining open in local communities across the island of Ireland.

Continued on Page 3

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Need to develop your website? Why not avail of the Trading Online Grant? Find out more by attending the next Trading Online Seminar on Wed 20th October, 2021.

For further details or to book GO:
www.localenterprise.ie/Wicklow/Training-Events/Online-Bookings

Local Enterprise Office Wicklow, Wicklow County Campus, Rathnew, Co. Wicklow
Phone: 0404 30800
Email: enterprise@leo.wicklowcoco.ie



Liam, Aidan and Conor Kelly having fun in Rathdrum at the launch of the new green area at the entrance to the town.

Wicklow Active Retirement Association

Wicklow Active Retirement Association meets every Tuesday morning in the De La Salle Pastoral Centre at 11am beside St. Patrick's Church, Wicklow Town. Fifty of their members have just returned from holiday in Rosses Point, Sligo, where they spent four nights in the Yeats Country Hotel. Various tours were taken during the week. Their next trip will be a day trip to a surprise destination. New members are encouraged to join them at their Coffee Mornings on Tuesdays. Contact 087 2276760.

Ballinaclash raffle

The Ballinaclash Community Association would sincerely like to thank all those who participated in their raffle and congratulate the winners:

1st prize - Load of Logs from John Byrne won by Eileen and Paddy Kennedy of Rathdrum; 2nd prize - €100.00 voucher from Global Village Powerscourt won by Ann Busher of Rathdrum; 3rd prize - Celebration Hamper from Fionnuala & Winnie won by Gwen of Clash; 4th prize - €50.00 voucher from Van der Well Garden Centre won by Sunil of Dublin; 5th prize - Health Care Products from New Vision Healthcare won by Bill Newson of Aughrim; 6th prize - Double Duvet & Gift Set from Shelly Fitzgerald won by Maura; 7th prize - Chocolate Hamper from Dora Burke won by Mick The Bruiser Clash; 8th prize - Newbridge Pendant & Chain from Sandra Coleborn won by Andy.

Wicklow Racing News

Philip Rothwell and Adam Short combined to win the mares' handicap hurdle at Clonmel on Thursday September 30th with the 16/1 chance Paddy Wickla.

The five-year-old came from well off the pace to beat the David Dunne-trained 4/1 joint-favourite Pretty Little Liar by a length and a quarter for owner Anne Dowling.

Rothwell said, "This is wonderful as Paddy Dowling, who was a very good friend of mine, passed away two years and I bought this mare with him and his wife Anne and the family have carried her on. Glenmalur Lodge is a hotel they have and Paddy was from Wicklow, hence this mare's name."

"This is a lovely day for them. I didn't think this would come today, I thought she might need the run. She fell when running a super race at Kilbeggan."

"We have had her on the back-burner and she ran a nice race back at Ballinrobe the last day and it gave her confidence. She is a summer filly so we'll run away wherever we can find ground that isn't too soft."

The Hot Spot Music Club

Upcoming gigs at The Hot Spot Music Club, above the Beach House at Greystones Harbour.

22nd October

Andy Irvine, troubadour singer and songwriter. Support by Daorí Farrell, traditional singer and bazouki player.

6th November

Van Morrison's Songbook. With Celtic Soul, 7 piece band from Bangor.

Full details on all events with times, bookings and admissions from: thehotspot.ie; hotspotmusicclub@gmail.com, 087 2917519.

Top prize in EuroMillions

An online player in Wicklow is celebrating after winning the top prize of €500,000 in last Tuesday's EuroMillions Plus draw.

The Garden of Ireland player became the biggest winner of the night after purchasing their ticket at www.lottery.ie on the day of the draw. The winning numbers for the Tuesday 5th October EuroMillions Plus draw were: 08, 21, 44, 48, 49.

Brockagh Clothes Bank

Give your unwanted clothes to the Brockagh Resource Centre clothes bank, located at the back of the building. All proceeds are in aid of the centre's maintenance. You can also empty your glass and drink cans in the other recycle banks too.

Heritage Council's Adopt a Monument scheme seeks new applications

The Heritage Council is calling for new applications for its Adopt a Monument scheme, which offers communities a way of promoting pride in their past and opportunities to develop and understand the story of their locality.

Bringing the historical legacy of monuments into the heart of communities, it is a chance to work collaboratively, to get active, and participate in community development, while boosting tourism, business, and employment opportunities.

Communities from across Ireland are encouraged to apply, including new communities and minority groups, as well as established voluntary groups that have been caring for a monument for years. The Adopt a Monument scheme will provide expertise, mentoring, support, and networking to help to preserve and protect the monument for

future generations.

Since the scheme started in 2016, more than 20 groups have taken part and adopted a diverse range of monuments, including a walled garden, castles, churches and graveyards, Anglo-Norman earthen fortifications, a 20th century handball alley, and 19th century mining buildings.

Ireland's industrial heritage is represented in the Adopt a Monument Scheme by a community from picturesque Glenmalur, who applied to adopt the large nineteenth century ore crusher building at Baravore.

It stands as a testament to the hard working miners and entrepreneurial pioneers who sought to

delve into the rich natural resources that lay hidden in the valleys.

The New Crusher builds a two storey building of cut stone granite built in 1859-60. It is recognised as undoubtedly the finest extant example in Ireland of a rolls crusher house.

It was constructed towards the end of the mining era in Baravore and still stands as a testament to the entrepreneurs of the nineteenth century.

Head of Conservation at the Heritage Council, Ian Doyle said: "The Adopt a Monument Scheme is a new way of bringing monuments into the heart of a community and for participants it offers opportunities to

work collaboratively, to undertake research, and to get to know more about the history of their area. For the monuments, the scheme has the potential to ensure ongoing maintenance and care, greater protection through increased civic value, and much higher standards of interpretation and understanding. "Application forms and full details about the Adopt a Monument scheme are available here: www.heritagecouncil.ie/projects/adopt-a-monument

The closing date for completed applications is Tuesday, 2nd November 2021 at 5pm. Entries should be emailed to adoptamonument@heritagecouncil.ie.

Apollo Bridge Club returns to Face to Face bridge

Apollo Bridge Club returned to face to face bridge at Presbyterian Church Hall, Dublin Road, Arklow, on Thursday night, 30th September, at 7.15pm.

All members need to comply with all covid recommendations advice by the Contract Bridge Association of Ireland. Everyone coming to play bridge must be fully vaccinated and wear mask if moving around.

"Our President Nancy Quinn welcomes everyone back. We are looking for new members to join our club. There is no need for a partner as we have a joker system in place. We are a very sociable and friendly club and learners and improvers are welcome. If you wish for any more details phone Marie 0872027529."

Bray rower to take on the Atlantic Ocean



Andy O'Reilly

This December Bray Rowing Club's Andy O'Reilly will take on one of the world's toughest rows by attempting to cross the Atlantic Ocean! And in the process he'll be raising funds for Bray Rowing Club and Purple House Cancer Support.

Andy will be taking on the premier event in ocean rowing - a challenge that will take him more than 3,000 Miles west from San Sebastian in La Gomera, Canary Islands, Spain (28oN 18oW) to Nelson's Dockyard, English Harbour, Antigua & Barbuda (17oN 61oW). The annual race begins in early December, with up to 30 teams participating from around the world. The atmosphere is electric as people help each other prepare for the challenge of the mighty Atlantic Ocean. All with the same objective - to take on the unique experience of crossing an ocean in a rowing boat.

You can help Andy reach his fundraising goal at www.gofundme.com/f/andys-atlantic-rowing-challenge

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Shay Fitzmaurice, Managing Editor - shay@localtimes.ie

Ian Colgan, News Editor - ian@localtimes.ie

Sales / General enquiries - info@localtimes.ie

'A FAILURE OF FAITH'

Frustration with lack of progress on Tinahely Wastewater Treatment Plant

West Wicklow councillors have expressed their disappointment with the lack of progress on Tinahely Wastewater Treatment Plant upgrade works. Councillors say they were led to believe Tinahely would be included in Irish Water's latest funding announcement under the Small Town and Villages Growth Programme, but it was not.

Cllr John Mullen (FF) described a meeting between councillors and Irish Water last week as "frustrating".

"There's €2.78 million that is supposed to be ring-fenced for this," he said. "For the last number of years, we have been told by Irish Water officials and officials in Wicklow County Council that Tinahely was at number one in need of a rural upgrade and Dunlavin was at number one in regard to a water connection. We were told this on two or three occasions at meetings that were arranged in both our district and at Irish Water clinics. This has not transpired. We have had other announcements made since then. We were told this morning (Monday, 4th Oct) that the €2.78m couldn't be broken down as to how it would be spent. Again, that goes against what we have been told on several occasions by Irish Water officials."

"West Wicklow is the most rural Municipal District. This is rural district money that is ring-fenced for wastewater and water connections and to have none provided out of that fund at the moment would be an absolute disgrace and a failure of faith in our dealings with both Irish water and management on this issue. I think an urgent answer is required as to what has happened from being assured on three occasions that this would proceed and what has happened since."

Backing up Cllr Mullen's remarks, Cllr Vincent Blake (FG) said "We were led to believe at all times that funding would be made available for small water and sewage schemes throughout Ireland and that Wicklow County Council would get its fair share of allocations. We have been campaigning for four years to try and get an upgrade for the sewage in Tinahely and Shillelagh to no avail. I always believed with every meeting we had that they were prioritising those two places for an upgrade. Time and time again we asked who was

making the priority list. Irish Water told us the Council were making the list, the Council were saying Irish Water was making it. We can go nowhere in terms of building or looking after our villages if we don't have waste water infrastructure and certainly what we heard this morning from Irish water was very disappointing."

Director of Water Services at Wicklow County Council, Colm Lavery, told councillors at last week's meeting of Wicklow County Council that "Irish water make the decisions on it, Wicklow County Council has no say whatsoever in relation to how the €2.78m we were allocated is spent. We were asked for our priorities by Irish Water. Tinahely, Dunlavin, Aughrim and Shillelagh were the top four priorities we gave back to them. Irish Water have only announced one of those schemes so far that's to be funded, which is Aughrim."

"Obviously, I was disappointed myself that Tinahely wasn't announced by Irish Water last week and I have made contact with the head of asset management in Irish Water who makes the decision on what is being allocated. He indicated to me that the small Town and Villages Growth Programme is a rolling programme. He said that it's only the second tranche of projects which have been announced throughout the country, that there will be further tranches announced in the future and that Wicklow will get its full allocation under the programme for other locations."

In a statement to *Wicklow Times*, Irish Water said "Since Irish Water established the Small Towns and Villages Growth Programme (STVGP) and allocated funding, having identified the need to support growth in smaller towns and villages, we have been working with Local Authorities across the country to ensure that the investment is made appropriately in accordance with the relevant county development plan.



Cllr John Mullen

"Irish Water has reviewed the nominations in detail to determine which project(s) could be funded, taking into account the order of priority provided by each local authority, the allocation available and the potential solutions and cost estimates."

"Wicklow was allocated €2.78m under the STVGP and as such, it was not possible to progress upgrade works at all nominated sites with the allocation available, therefore, the review initially looked at the top priority sites only."

"In May 2021, Irish Water announced that Wicklow's top priority site, Aughrim Wastewater Treatment Plant, was selected for funding under the STVGP. This project is progressing through the necessary stages including detailed design, planning, procurement and construction. Further updates on timelines for delivery will be provided as the project progresses."

"Unfortunately, due to the scope of work required at Tinahely Wastewater Treatment Plant (Wicklow's No.2 priority), it cannot be accommodated in the current STVGP allocation for Wicklow in combination with the Aughrim Wastewater Treatment Plant project already announced. However, Irish Water will continue to develop the scope for Tinahealy in preparation for the next capital investment programme. Also under STVGP, Rathdrum (No. 3 priority) and Dunlavin (No. 4 priority) had drinking water supply deficits identified (there is sufficient capacity in these Wastewater Treatment

Plants for the Wicklow County Council growth allowances). Drinking water supply works at both Rathdrum and Dunlavin are progressing via separate national programmes and will provide the necessary capacity for grow in these settlements."

"Irish Water has recently commenced design work on a project to rationalise the Dunlavin supply to the Greater Dublin Area supply. The project will address supply interruptions due to low groundwater yields, while also facilitating growth in the area. This will ensure a safe and reliable water supply for customers in Dunlavin and facilitate growth and development in the area. Further details and timelines will be confirmed later in the design process."

Irish Water is also progressing a number of other wastewater infrastructure upgrades across Wicklow under the Capital Investment Plan. Works for the new Arklow Wastewater Treatment Plant are already underway. The Avoca Wastewater Treatment Plant is continuing to progress through the necessary planning & design stages and it is hoped that a planning application can be submitted in early 2022.

The upgrade of Blessington Wastewater Treatment Plant is currently in the detailed design phase with construction works scheduled to begin later this year. When completed, the project will increase the capacity of the plant to serve a population equivalent (PE) of up to 9,000. The project is due to be completed next year.

"Along with these significant wastewater infrastructure upgrades, Irish Water also continues to upgrade drinking water supplies across the county. We are progressing works at Vartry Water Treatment plant which are due to be completed later this year. These works will improve water quality for over 79,000 people in Bray, Wicklow Town, Enniskerry and Greystones."



Lauren and Kate Martin with Charlotte Rossi enjoying Harvest Day at Brittas Bay National School. Pic: Michael Kelly

RURAL DEVASTATION

Continued from Page 1...

They say Credit unions have been at the heart of Irish towns and villages for over 60 years and put their members' interests ahead of profit. They offer members a range of financial services including access to cash and loans, and in ever increasing numbers, debit cards and current accounts. The ILCU is encouraging Bank of Ireland customers affected by the closures to contact their local credit union to find out about the range of financial services they offer. It's easy to become a member and to switch your banking business to the credit union.

ILCU Head of Communication Paul Bailey said,

"The closures only further highlight the profit over people ethos of the so-called pillar banks. Many towns and villages across Ireland will be left without access to a banking service including basic cash withdrawals. In contrast, credit unions have been at the heart of Irish communities for over six decades and remain dedicated to those communities. They exist solely to provide financial services to their members who are their shareholders."

"Credit unions will not desert their members. Their doors are open to new members where people will find friendly, familiar and trusted staff who will always go the extra mile on behalf of their members."

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Wicklow Patchwork Group are holding a raffle in aid of Wicklow Dementia Support Group. The prize is this beautiful Tulip and Pin Wheel Quilt which was made by Wicklow Patchwork Group members to assist with the fundraising efforts of Wicklow Dementia Support Group who are currently WPG's designated Charity. Members collaborated by making the blocks which were then assembled by member Gwen Gould. "We would like to thank Gwen for all her work in putting the blocks together. A big thank you also to all our members who made the blocks. A special word of thanks to Nikki Foley of The Sewing Shed who very kindly did the wonderful quilting for us." The Raffle Ticket Price is €5.00 per ticket. The draw will take place on Sunday, 31st October. To purchase raffle tickets contact Wicklow Patchwork Group by email - admin@wicklowpatchwork.ie

Agreement with Kildare County Council to finish Blessington Greenway

Wicklow County Council is to enter into an agreement with Kildare County Council to allow for the completion of the Blessington Lakes Greenway.

This is due to a section of the greenway being within the boundaries of Kildare County Council.

Updating Councillors on the Greenway at last week's meeting of Wicklow County Council, Chief Executive of Frank Curran said "There is detailed design, a new route, the route is finally tied down, there is car parking and a tarmac surface, everything is done and ready to go to An Bord Pleanála and construction will start as soon as it gets through ABP's process."



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Noise issues on Kilmac parallel service road

Kilmacanogue residents whose houses are next to the parallel service road are "suffering extreme distress" from the noise of the traffic on the road, Cllr Joe Behan (Ind) has said.

Speaking at last week's meeting of Wicklow County Council, Cllr Behan said that "as well as that, the traffic on the main carriageway has increased substantially with the increase in the speed limit."

He added, "Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) have said in the past they will only consider funding for noise abatement measures in the context of new road construction, but in fact what the residents in this area would say is that it is a new road."

He added that since the introduction of the parallel road, there is "more noise and more traffic, and more traffic on the inner road as well. In dealing with Wicklow County Council staff the residents are more or less being told that nothing can be done."

Cllr Behan also asked if a safety audit on the road had been done since the road was opened.

"There is still quite a lot of speeding on that section and in fact a number of the new bol-

lards were already locked down within a few hours," he said.

He also complained over the lack of a footpath linking Kilmacanogue to Bray. "There is no footpath for students going to school and other people who want to go between the two places. Bray and Kilmacanogue are part of the one Municipal District and local residents feel strongly there should be a footpath connection," he said.

Responding to Cllr Behan, Director of Services Colm Lavery said that "There should be no additional speeding on the road because the speed limits that were in place actually remain; a 60km speed limit on the main line through Kilmacanogue and the parallel service road itself has a reduced speed limit of 50km an hour. They have not changed."

A safety audit was carried out on the road last Monday evening. Mr Lavery said that "any issues that are picked up in that audit will go back to the contractor. There are obviously a few issues that will need to be dealt with as



Cllr Joe Behan

that report is finalised. The issue of the footpath has been raised at a number of council meetings.

"This is an issue that we have raised on numerous occasions with TII. TII have not agreed to a footpath along that road because the footpath would be on a road with a 100km an hour speed limit as you come out from

Bray on to the dual carriageway and they say there is a safety issue in that.

"This came up again at our recent SPC meeting and the councillors present decided to make contact with TII directly on this. As you know, we are providing for a greenway between Kilmacanogue and Bray.

"We have undertaken land surveys and are currently deciding on the preferred route option for that greenway, so that is the preferred option in terms of providing a link between Kilmacanogue and Bray for pedestrians and cyclists.

"If there are particular noise issues in relation to Kilmacanogue, bring those to our attention and we will bring those concerns to TII, but as I said there has been no increase in the speed limit."

The Council is to carry out a speed limit review of the whole county and Director Lavery said "there will be no change in the speed limit on the mainline through Kilmacanogue until that process is completed."

Matthews calls for action on approved 30kph speed limit zones for Bray

Green Party TD Steven Matthews has called on Wicklow County Council to urgently proceed with his agreed 30kph speed limit zone for Bray town centre.

Discussing the proposal, Deputy Matthews said "In 2018 I produced a detailed map proposing 30kph speed limits around some residential roads and approaching Bray Main Street. I drove and cycled around the town for a week researching where we needed speed limits to improve road safety for children, the elderly and other vulnerable pedestrians and brought my mapped proposals to the District Engineer in Bray.

"We discussed further options and improvements and sought input from An Garda Síochána. The plan was supported by the district superintendent and passed by Bray Municipal District and then sent to Wicklow County Council for approval. That was late 2018 and despite numerous requests, the council has not progressed this vital safety measure which had full support of Bray councillors and the Gardai.

"I have written to the Chief Executive and Director of Roads Services asking that they urgently proceed to put the Bray proposal to the full council membership for ratification. I would hope that when councillors see my Bray plan, that they would request the council to carry out a similar assessment for all our towns. I had started work on a similar Greystones plan in 2019 and I have an outline map ready to present to local area councillors.

"There is unprecedented funding and resources available to local authorities to invest in creating safer roads and footpaths across Wicklow and implementing 30kph zones is an easy measure to improve safety for all of us, including drivers. I'm confident that our councillors want to improve safety for all and will support these measures but the council executive need to be proactive and present these options to councillors. 30 kph speed limits save lives, create quieter streets, and generally produce a result that benefits all pedestrians and road users.

"I have also asked the Chief Executive to focus on the creation of neighbourhood slow zones and especially on the creation of 30kph slow zones around our schools. These zones can be timed to coincide with school opening and closing times and should be supported by the installation of highly visible road markings and electronic variable message signs. Bray Green Party Councillor Erika Doyle and I have submitted a detailed request for a Slow Zone around St Cronan's, Gaelscoil Uí Chéadaigh and St Patrick's schools on Vevay Road and Cllr Doyle has submitted this as a motion to be heard at the next Bray Municipal District meeting. Road safety has always been a priority for me, and I will continue my work with Wicklow County Council to see improvements across the county," concluded Deputy Matthews.



Steven Matthews TD



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Wicklow & District Lions Club represented Ireland Lions on Saturday 2nd October for the annual HomeFest for the homeless. A selection of food items were presented to various venues in Wicklow to highlight the need for the homeless to be recognised and to give them a little personal party. Wicklow Lions hope to repeat this caring project over the coming months. Wicklow Lion Jim Molloy is pictured presenting very welcome food to the Simon Hostel in Wicklow Town to mark HomeFest, a special day for the homeless throughout Ireland

Harris calls for task force to address Kilpedder Village issues

Minister Simon Harris TD has requested that Wicklow County Council put in place a task force to address Kilpedder Village's upkeep and enhancement.

Minister Harris said "I recently met with residents in Kilpedder about a number of challenges their village is facing and outstanding maintenance, public realm and pedestrian safety issues in their village.

"As it stands Kilpedder is often overlooked by the local authority for a wide range of basic maintenance issues due to the fact the village is divided between the Greystones and Wicklow Municipal Districts.

"The community in Kilpedder takes pride in the appearance of their area, but the condition of the footpaths are extremely poor and community leaders would like more support from the local authority in their efforts to enhance their area".

Minister Harris continued "I have requested that the CEO of the Council put a dedicated team in place to progress a number of the basic maintenance issues for Kilpedder Village and that a plan be put in place to fix footpaths, install public lighting and support the local community in maintaining their village".



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Funding to enhance streetscapes and shopfronts

Wicklow will receive a total of €320,000 to support the enhancement of streetscapes and shopfronts in rural towns and villages as part of a new €7 million national fund, Minister Harris has said.

Minister Harris said this announcement of the Streetscape Enhancement Initiative from Minister for Rural and Community Development, Heather Humphreys TD, will provide funding to property owners to improve the facades of their buildings and will be a great boost for communities in Wicklow.

The Streetscape Enhancement Initiative is a key part of the Our Rural Future campaign and will make rural towns and villages more attractive places to live, work and visit. The allocation of funding is based on the number of towns and villages in each county.

Minister Harris said, "Funding of €320,000 for Wicklow towns and villages will see communities across our county becoming more colourful,

vibrant and attractive places. Projects will include upgrades to building facades, artwork, murals, lighting, street furniture and canopies.

"Other projects across Wicklow will include the commissioning of murals in towns and villages, the provision of street planting, shrubbery, trees and flowers boxes and the illumination and lighting of architectural features. It also includes the installation of canopies and street furniture which will contribute to the great work done by many bar and restaurant owners this summer.

"Collaboration and strategic thinking will form a key part of this initiative; Local Authorities will work with businesses and property owners, and we'll also see strategic

collaboration between property owners themselves to paint buildings or shopfronts in vibrant colours."

Announcing the new initiative yesterday, Minister Humphreys said, "We have all seen the huge success of towns across the country who have put a major focus on improving their streetscapes by painting buildings in vibrant colours, upgrading and restoring their traditional shopfronts and removing unnecessary clutter from their main streets.

"Outdoor Dining is here to stay, and I believe that will only be a positive for towns and villages across the country. Through this fund, we want to make sure that people are looking out at vibrant, colourful and welcoming streets in our rural towns."

Matthews meets with environmental NGOs in Newcastle

Green Party TD Steven Matthews has met in Wicklow with a group of national environmental NGOs to discuss maritime planning issues and progress on Marine Protected Areas.

Speaking after the meeting Deputy Matthews said "I met with Birdwatch Ireland, the Irish Wildlife Trust, the Irish Environmental Network and SWAN (the Sustainable Water Network) at our beautiful East Coast Nature Reserve in Newcastle to hear their expert opinions and concerns for our marine environment and ecology.

"These groups have huge knowledge and experience and played a significant role in assisting the Joint Oireachtas committee, which I chair, in examining the Maritime Area Planning Bill. They have concerns, which I share with them, on the lack of Marine Protected Areas in Ireland and the decades of neglect of our marine environment. Currently Ireland has less than 2.5% of our marine area protected but in our Programme for Government we secured a commitment to designate 30% of our seas as protected. It is not a simple task as there is still no real definition of a marine protected area and what activities may be permitted or restricted and the monitoring of marine environments is more difficult than on shore.

"The meeting was very timely as on the same day my Green Party colleague Minister Malcolm Noonan was representing Ireland at the international OSPAR Commission where agreement was reached on a major Marine Protected Area. With a large-scale public consultation recently concluded, Minister Noonan and his officials are now preparing the legislative process for Ireland to deliver on the commit-

ment to 30% Marine Protected Area.

"The Maritime Area Planning Bill will provide the process for large scale offshore renewable potential to deliver clean, green energy resilience for our island, decarbonising our economy, creating thousands of jobs as we electrify transport and heating and providing a local and long term economic boost for Wicklow and Arklow ports as hubs for renewable energy. However, these developments must be held to the strictest environmental standards throughout every aspect of their life cycle from build, operate, maintain and repowering and be required to submit comprehensive environmental reports with their



Deputy Matthews at Newcastle Nature Reserve

planning applications.

"Healthy seas provide for tourism, fishers, recreation, coastal communities and play a vital role in carbon sequestration. Therefore we must ensure that maritime planning doesn't just protect what we have, it must also be tasked with helping to restore what we have lost through

decades of neglectful practises and pollution and with providing us with marine environmental data that we have never before had the resources to adequately collect. It is a priority for me to see maritime planning and marine protection aligned by delivering legislation which provides for both."

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Barnstorm Theatre Company:

ALICE & THE WOLF

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A VERY OLD MAN WITH ENORMOUS WINGS

Wed 27 & Thurs 28 October | 7pm

A beautiful, strange & rich classic piece of magical realism to captivate the entire family. Age Suitability: 8+ years.

Increase in number of people waiting for a driving test in Wicklow

August figures from the Road Safety Authority have revealed a substantial increase in the number of people waiting for a driving test in Wicklow.

As of the 5th October this year 1,523 people in Wicklow are waiting for a Driving Test. This is a substantial increase from August figures which showed 986 people were waiting for a driving test in Wicklow.

"This is a worrying trend," said Jennifer Whitmore TD, who asked the Minister for the current breakdown of the Wicklow figures after being approached by a number of constituents.

"The fact we are seeing a substantial increase in just two months despite the Government committing to addressing waiting lists begs the question, what has been done in the meantime, to address the growing backlog of people on the waiting list, since Covid?"

"Having to wait a long time to get a Driving Test can be very disruptive for people. I've had mothers contacting me during the

summer, panicking and wanting to know when they will get a driving test date because they have to be able to drive their kids to school come this September. People need transport to go to work especially now that offices are reopening and for various other things.

"While the backlog formed throughout Covid when testing facilities were shut amid the Covid-19 pandemic, the Government should have foreseen this and put in place extra resources to address this backlog before it got to such an unsustainable level.

"The Minister for Transport did commit to clearing the backlog within 15 weeks increasing the number of testers across the country including daily testing capacity. I have yet to receive figures on what this will mean for Wicklow and how this will address

delays here but it is clear that none of the measures the Minister has put in place is addressing long delays, in fact we are seeing an increase from August figures which is very concerning. I will continue to monitor this and the Government's response to tackling waiting lists across the board" concluded Deputy Whitmore.

Also speaking recently on the matter, Sinn Féin TD John Brady said "Last year we warned Minister Ryan his lack of preparation and planning for driving tests was going to cause chaos during 2021. Unfortunately, this has now transpired, with what must be a record of 225,000 people currently waiting on a driving test or theory test.

"This time last year, we called for additional testers to be hired to help address the growing backlog, but it took months for

the Minister to grant approval for the 80 extra testers the RSA themselves requested. They are still not in place.

"In November we asked the Minister to put the theory test online, but it took until June of this year to bring in a restricted pilot scheme.

"It is predominantly young people affected by these delays, which is having a massive impact on their lives. The delays are impacting their employment opportunities and will become a major problem for many as they return to college in September.

"Young people deserve better. The government needs to increase testing and theory testing capacity immediately. This should include the fast-track recruitment of staff, longer opening hours, and the establishment of pop-up centres where necessary."



Angelea Singleton, Grainne Macklin, and Grainne Ring enjoying a round of golf at Wicklow Golf Club

Rathdrum Primary Care Centre officially opens

Rathdrum Primary Care Centre was officially opened this week on Monday 11th October.

Attending the opening, Minister Simon Harris said: "During my term of office as Health Minister, I was really pleased to be able to announce a new Primary Care Centre for Rathdrum. It is brilliant to now see this major health facility for the community finally opened.

"This new facility will provide public health and community nursing, physiotherapy, occupational therapy, speech and language therapy, dietetics and counselling. It will also be home to an on-site GP Practice.

"As a one stop shop for a wide variety of primary health care it will greatly improve the delivery of local health services in Rathdrum."

Minister Harris added: "The opening of the Primary Health Care Centre forms part of a wider regeneration of Rathdrum Town Centre. In addition to the Primary Care Centre, the new Library will open next month and I am currently working with Wicklow County Council for an application for funding for a new community centre for Rathdrum. I look forward to working with the community on these project and for the development and the further enhancement of Rathdrum in the years ahead."

Deficit danger for Council

Wicklow County Council is in danger of running a deficit due to a shortfall of income from parking and planning fees, Chief Executive Frank Curran has said.

Mr Curran has urged all councillors from Political Parties to appeal to TDs for assistance in securing the funding.

Addressing councillors at last week's meeting, Mr Curran explained that the income from these streams is still down due to Covid, as it was last year, however the Government grant of €2.8m that the Council got last year which prevented it from going into deficit may not materialise this year.

"We lost money from goods and services due to parking and

planning fees because of Covid. We got a grant from central Government last year in respect of €2.8 million which prevented us having a deficit. Again we are down parking and planning fees, it's not as bad as last year but we are still down.

"The Department is telling us that it is talking with the County and City Management Association (CCMA) about this, but it seems to be unproductive," he said. "So that is an issue for us, if we don't get the funding, it has an impact on our budget and we're likely to

run a deficit. We will work as much as we can with the department to try and get the same grant we got last year. I would ask any councillors in political parties to raise it with Oireachtas members. It's important we get this funding."

"At the moment we're €1.2 million short on income that we would have expected this year," the Council's Director of Finance Brian Gleeson said. "We would hope, that maybe we'll be able to identify some savings in payroll due to the slowdown in recruitment. If not, we'll have to stall capital transfers at the end of the year to eliminate or reduce any deficit that we'll have."

Enjoy breakfast and help raise vital funds for Childline

Childline Breakfast Week will raise vital funds to keep Childline listening to children and young people in Wicklow and across Ireland every day and night.

ISPC Childline is calling on communities, clubs, crèches, businesses and others in Wicklow and across Ireland to enjoy breakfast together this month and help raise vital funds to make sure every child in Ireland has somewhere they can turn this winter and beyond. Childline Breakfast is a highlight of the annual fundraising calendar for Childline and, in recent years, has seen individuals in Wicklow come together for the most important meal of the day and help raise important funds for Ireland's national listening service for children. This year, Childline Breakfast Week will run from October 18th to 25th. Participants can choose to host a breakfast during the week, or at an alternative time of their preference. By gathering with friends, colleagues, neighbours or club-mates to enjoy breakfast together, you can help keep Childline listening.

Children and young people who contact Childline may feel lonely, hurt, upset or isolated - or they may simply seek a listening ear. By listening, supporting and empowering, Childline ensures they never have to face their challenges alone. Childline continues to be here for all children and young people in Wicklow and across Ireland 24 hours a day, every day, but relies heavily on public and corporate support to make this possible.

To register your breakfast today, or find out more, see ispc.ie/breakfast-2021 or contact the ISPC Childline fundraising team on 1850 50 40 50.

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Andrew Kinsella and Miley Doyle of the Wicklow County Council Recycle Centre in Avoca present new Avoca Ladies Team Captain Stephanie Power with a new set of jerseys

Pupils of Bray asked to Think Before They Flush in bid to help protect local environment

Pupils in schools in Bray are being urged to 'Think Before They Flush!' Clean Coasts in partnership with Irish Water are asking pupils to help protect their local environment by being mindful of the connection between the toilet and our beaches.

Only the 3 P's (Pee, Poo and Paper) should be flushed down the toilet and everything else should go in the bin. If the wrong things, like wipes, dental floss and sanitary items get flushed down the toilet they can lead to blockages, wastewater overflows and discharges to our marine environment where they can harm wildlife or wash up on our shores.

As part of the Think Before You Flush campaign, national schools in Bray are receiving information and resources about the Think Before You Flush campaign in a bid to reduce the number of wastewater blockages and overflows to our environment.

Why #ThinkB4UFlush? Approximately 2,000 blockages occur in the Irish Water wastewater network every month, 75% of which are caused by wipes. Raising awareness of this issue particularly with schools will help get this important message out to a

wider younger audience. As part of the Think Before You Flush campaign, schools in Bray will receive an information pack containing Think Before You Flush resources for display as well as educational activities.

From a recent survey conducted earlier this year it was found that there has been a significant 33% reduction in the number of people flushing sanitary related items down the toilet, which is a great achievement, but we need to continue. The same survey found that 1 in 4, which equates to approximately 1 million people are still flushing inappropriate items down the toilet, with the highest incidence of sewage related littering in the younger age profiles. The reason many people gave for flushing unsuitable items down the toilet was simply not knowing the impact that their flushing behaviour can have on their local environment.

Speaking about the campaign Donal Heaney, Regional Operations Manager from Irish Water said: "At our wastewater treatment plants we are removing lots of wipes and other items from the screens at the inlet. Our crews are also dealing with thousands of blockages in our sewers, that can cause overflows to the environment. We are delighted to be working with schools in Bray to raise awareness of this item and encourage teachers, pupils and their families to Think Before You Flush."

Elaine from Clean Coasts added: "We know that by educating children on environmentally responsible behaviour, it sets them up to become environmentally responsible adults and possible future change makers. Making small changes in our homes, only flushing the 3 P's; Pee, Poo and Paper down the toilet and simply putting a bin in your bathroom can have a significant positive impact on our local waterways, beaches and rocky shorelines." Join the campaign at www.thinkbeforeyouflush.org and follow @CleanCoasts on social media.



Wipes and sanitary products being removed by large screens at Irish Water Wastewater treatment plant

Coillte & Easy Treesie celebrate National Tree Day

Coillte's Deborah Meghen, Easy Treesie's Orla Farrell and pupils from Rathdrum Boys National School teamed up at Avondale Forest Park to plant native wild cherry trees grown in the Coillte nursery to celebrate National Tree Day.

The goal is to encourage schoolchildren and their families to plant more trees to help tackle the increasing threat from climate change.

"Trees are not only beautiful to look at," said Deborah Meghen, Coillte's Stewardship Director. "They and forests have a very important role to play in our fight against climate change too," she said.

The Triple Climate Benefit of trees:

- Trees act as a carbon sink, constantly removing carbon dioxide from the air and converting this to oxygen as the tree grows.
 - They not only clean the air we breathe, they also store carbon in their trunks and branches preventing it from being released back into the atmosphere as CO2 - which traps warm air exacerbating global warming.
 - They produce wood, an environmentally friendly substitute for the construction of homes and buildings.
- "Coillte's Avondale Forest Park, is a beautiful giant playground for children and adults where you can relax and receive a physical and mental health boost



Coillte's Deborah Meghen, Easy Treesie's Orla Farrell and pupils from Rathdrum Boys National School teamed up at Avondale Forest Park to plant native wild cherry trees

from the stunning trees and forest," said Meghen.

The Wild Cherry Tree is this year's chosen tree for National Tree Week.

- It's usually found in hedges and flowers with a white or pale pink blossom in the Spring.
- It's probably not as well known as other native Irish trees such as birch, alder, holly, oak and ash. Its wood is also valued for high quality furniture.

"The goal is to plant a

million trees with Ireland's one million school children and their communities by 2025 as part of the world trillion tree campaign," said Orla Farrell, Project Founder of Easy Treesie. "We are delighted that today we are planting our 200,000th tree, in collaboration with Crann - Trees for Ireland and the Tree Council of Ireland."

Coillte plans to donate over 100,000 tree saplings nationwide in partnership

with the Tree Council of Ireland and the Easy Treesie Project in 2021. It is also supported by The Department of Agriculture, Food and Marine. These trees are being planted by school children, adults and community groups across the country this year.

For those interested in accessing trees for their local school or community, please contact the Tree Council of Ireland at www.treecouncil.ie.

Local organisations shortlisted for national environmental award

Ireland's National Environmental Awards, The Pakman Awards has announced that two Co. Wicklow organisations, Tinahely Community Area Projects Ltd and Annie Pooh, have been shortlisted for a 2021 Pakman Award. The Pakman Awards is Ireland's leading environmental awards programme which recognises excellence in sustainability, recycling and waste management.

Tinahely Community Area Projects Ltd has been shortlisted in the Online Green Packaging Award category. The Pakman Awards judges commended Tinahely Community Area Projects for their community run recycling centre and dedication to driving environmental awareness locally and within the wider community. In conjunction with Leader and Wicklow County Council, they have created a variety of community projects, including walking festivals, biodiversity and education programmes for local schools and most recently a purpose-built recycling centre.

Annie Pooh based in Greystones has been shortlisted in the Online Green Packaging Award category. The Pakman Awards judges shortlisted Annie Pooh for their dedication to preventing waste by reusing and refusing packaging as much as possible. Annie Pooh is a zero-waste refill shop, and helps customers choose and use reusables, ditching single-use plastics. The business encourages customers to reuse whatever they have at home before buying new items.

The winners of each Pakman Award category will be announced at this year's awards ceremony which takes place at The Shelbourne Hotel on Friday, 29 October in accordance with government guidelines.

Each category winner is eligible to win the Overall Pakman Award, which celebrates outstanding achievements in recycling and waste management over the last two years.

Now in its seventh year, the National Environmental Awards honour individuals, businesses, community groups and organisations across Ireland who have demonstrated excellence in waste management and recycling practices.

From local community group efforts to improve recycling, to corporate schemes that prioritise prevention of waste and innovation in waste management, the Pakman Awards play an important role in highlighting and acknowledging these achievements.

Commenting on the 2021 Pakman Awards finalists announcement, Repak CEO, Séamus Clancy said: "I am delighted to announce that two Co. Wicklow organisations, Tinahely Community Area Projects Ltd. and Annie Pooh, have been shortlisted for the 2021 Pakman Awards. The Pakman Awards are always evolving, and our categories honour the great work of individuals, communities and organisations across the country.

"Despite difficult conditions over the last 18 months, most businesses and organisations have continued to implement exemplary waste management, sustainability, and recycling practices and with both our existing and new categories, we want to highlight these efforts and celebrate their achievements.

"The quality and innovation displayed in our entries for 2021 gives me confidence that we are making great strides to protect our environment and plan for a more sustainable future. We look forward to welcoming our finalists to the Pakman Awards evening on Friday, 29 October and hope they inspire others to take action too."

Irish Water continues with programme of works in Arklow

Since the beginning of 2020, Irish Water in partnership with Wicklow County Council and supported by regional contractors Ward and Burke Ltd, has completed a substantial amount of work in the town to drive down leakage and provide a more secure and reliable water supply for businesses and residents.

The works included significant network improvements across Arklow including the installation of 1.5km of new water mains and almost 100 leaks detected and repaired through Irish Water's Find and Fix programme, resulting in improved water quality and supply.

The works also involved the replacement of almost 80 backyard service connections which are found in older premises, often installed to the rear of a property and typically made of iron or lead. Due to the age and the poor condition of the pipework, they were a significant source of leakage and supply disruption for customers. Backyard services are usually shared, running through a number of neighbouring properties making it difficult to detect and repair leaks.

Since all properties share a connection, leaks and bursts affect all properties, usually resulting in low pressure. Irish Water said they would like to thank all those who facilitated and assisted in the provision of their backyard services programme which has not only reduced the number of bursts and outages,



but has also considerably improved the water quality for entire communities.

The works also included the installation of new valves to manage pressure as well as optimising existing valves which will have substantial operational benefits and will generate more stable network pressures. These improvement works in turn will reduce stresses on the water network, reduce the number of bursts, and improve water quality.

Speaking about the works, Joe Carroll, Leakage Reduction Programme Regional Lead with Irish Water said: "The size and scale of the leakage challenge nationally is well documented. Reducing leakage is not only about replacing

old pipes or fixing bursts, it involves detailed planning, collaboration and a number of different work streams which will make the most impact on leakage levels in a given area. These included water mains rehabilitation, backyard service replacement, leak detection and repair, and pressure management works which will have a significant long-term impact on the levels of leakage being recorded in the drinking water network and will safeguard the water supply in Arklow now and into the future."

The works have delivered extensive cost savings by providing improved water network operation that will require less maintenance in the

future and by Spring 2021 had already enabled a reduction in plant production at Arklow Water Treatment Plant by 700,000 litres of water per day.

This means 20% less drinking water now needs to be treated and distributed due to these Leakage Reduction Programme works. Additionally, significant environmental benefits have been achieved due to the reduction of raw water intake serving the water treatment plant.

Speaking on this, Gerard Brady, DBO Engineer with Irish Water, added: "As part of the management and monitoring of the Arklow Water Treatment Plant, Irish Water has been able to record and quantify reduced demand at the water treatment plant. This reduced demand will result in long term benefits and efficiencies in the operation of the treatment plant and network."

Irish Water said that it "acknowledges the co-operation and patience of local residents and businesses while we worked to complete these essential works to safeguard the water supply for Arklow now and into the future."



Arklow

Arklow awarded funding for Abbey Lane regeneration project

Arklow Municipal District has been awarded €81,000 from Failte Ireland under the Local Authority Weatherproofing and Outdoor Dining Infrastructure Scheme which will be used to enhance the outdoor dining experience in Arklow.

Abbey Lane was identified as an area of opportunity to become a much-needed outdoor community space within the town centre. It is hoped to transform this under-utilised space into an all-day family friendly, vibrant socialising hub by including a sheltered dining area with lighting and heating, murals, various greening options and some sit and chat areas.

A small decking area will also be introduced for buskers, street performers, poetry recitals, heritage and cultural talks. Local artists and craft designers could also make use of this space creating another venue for tourists and locals. This area is ideally located for this project as it is well lit and very accessible for all.

Cathaoirleach of Arklow Municipal District, Cllr Miriam Murphy, stated: "I am delighted that Arklow Municipal District's application for funding for an outdoor dining facility was successful. The sheltered dining area will be a great addition to the town, transforming the space will support local businesses by encouraging increased pedestrian activity."

Bray Chamber President calls for clarity on new centre traffic plan

Ruth Donnelly, Fianna Fáil's local area representative for Bray & President of Bray Chamber of Commerce is calling on Wicklow County Council to clarify how traffic management will be affected by the opening of the new Bray Central development which has been confirmed to open in the coming months.

The developer has given a new completion date of January 2022 with the possibility of opening the car park section in advance to allow for Christmas shopping in the town.

Welcoming the news of the revised completion date Ruth said "While it is great to see progress being made on the development and a completion date to look forward to there seems to be very little information on how traffic will be affected in the town and I am calling on Wicklow County Council to clarify this as soon as possible."

With unconfirmed reports that Penney's will be the anchor tenant, it is expected that this along with the new Stella cinema will cause an increase in vehicle traffic in the town.

Ruth explained "I have spoken to a number of concerned business owners who I feel have valid concerns over getting the traffic management plan correct to ensure the



Bray Chamber President Ruth Donnelly

town does not come to a standstill. I have particular concerns over the junctions which will see an increase in traffic turning east from the main street towards the new car park and accessing the Quinnsboro and Florence

roads which are one way."

Ruth concluded "The new centre is integral to the growth and development of the town and its existing retailers. We need to therefore ensure that the overall experience for visitors of the town starts from the time they arrive to when they leave and that means having a simple and effective traffic plan."

Speaking at last week's meeting of Wicklow County Council, Bray District Manager Lorraine Gallagher said the delay to the opening of the Florentine Centre was due to Covid shutdowns, labour shortages and lack of supplies of materials. Myself and the Bray municipal administrator met with the Chief Executive Officer of Oakmount and the site manager onsite on 2nd September, and it was clear that there's been substantial progress despite the challenges. The main contractor indicated they have a programme in place to reach the practical completion date of the 31st of January, and they've said to us they will endeavour to have the car park open in December, because it is very important to the retail sector for the Christmas period."

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Ailbhe and Tommy Kelly finish a round of golf at Wicklow Golf Club.

Three angling initiatives in Wicklow awarded sponsorship funding

Inland Fisheries Ireland, the state agency with responsibility for the protection and conservation of freshwater fish and habitats and promotion of angling, has announced funding for projects under its annual Sponsorship Programme.

The programme supports novice or 'beginner' anglers and the development of sustainable angling tourism in Ireland, which could grow in popularity, particularly in rural and peripheral areas.

In Wicklow, sponsorship funding was granted to the Irish Federation of Sea Anglers for three initiatives: The 'Leinster CAST angling pathway 2021' coaching programme at Kilcoole; The 'Arklow 2021 Junior Coaching Programme,' which was held at Arklow South Beach; A new promotional video to promote the 'World Championships for U16s & U21s' event, which is taking place in Arklow in 2024.

According to a recent survey by Ipsos MRBI, over 327,000 adults in Ireland consider themselves an angler. Now, more than ever, people are discovering the positive effects angling has on mental health and wellbeing, the state agency has said. In another survey, undertaken in 2021 by Amárach Research, some 18% of adults that had never been fishing before said that they are "likely" to try angling in the future.

Inland Fisheries Ireland's Sponsorship Programme received proposals from community groups, clubs, associations and other bodies earlier in the year.

Wicklow student appointed Ambassador at St Patrick's Pontifical University

Following a university-wide recruitment process, Mark Paul Behan-Clarke from Wicklow has been appointed Student Ambassador in St Patrick's Pontifical University, Maynooth.

While students have always supported Faculty in university life, this is the first programme to formally recruit and recognise the skills brought by students to such an important role.

Mark Paul applied for the role as he really values the experience and quality teaching he has been provided with so far during his studies. Mark Paul said: "My experience in St Patrick's Pontifical University

has been amazing, small lecture sizes made meeting new people easy and it's really easy to talk to lecturers if you have any problems or questions.

The university creates an environment which is very family like. When things went online due to Covid in my second year, everyone in college was very accommodating and always willing to help you especially in these difficult times", he added.

The Ambassadors will be a vital link for incoming students, assisting with orientation activities, providing campus tours and being on hand with advice and recommendations on how best to transition from second level into life at university. The Student Ambassadors will also assist at university events throughout the year passing on their firsthand experiences of life at St Patrick's.

St Patrick's Pontifical University is located in Maynooth. Maynooth is unique in being Ireland's only University town. The town and campus are extensions of each other. Students enjoy the benefits of having all the amenities they need close at hand without the busyness of a large city, while still being very accessible to Dublin which is only 30 minutes away and served by excellent rail and road links.

St Patrick's Maynooth opened its doors as an educational institution in 1795. In the intervening two centuries, it has established for itself an impressive reputation for scholarship and learning. Today, as a Pontifical University, St Patrick's specialises in the study of theology and philosophy at both postgraduate and undergraduate level and related areas, in one of the most beautiful campuses in Ireland.



Mark Paul Behan-Clarke

National Broadband Ireland to host information events in Blessington

National Broadband Ireland (NBI), the company delivering the National Broadband Plan (NBP) on behalf of the Government, will host a pop-up information event in Newtown Square, Main Street, Blessington on Friday the 15th and Saturday the 16th of October, with the events taking place from 10am to 4pm each day.

These upcoming events aim to give even more people an opportunity to learn about the NBP, when high speed fibre broadband is coming to Blessington and how they can get connected. The NBI team will be on-hand to register people for future updates on the rollout in their area.

Peter Hendrick, CEO of National Broadband Ireland said, "National Broadband Ireland is excited about the opportunity to engage directly with the people of Blessington and give them information about when high-speed broadband will be available, let them know how they can connect to the NBI net-

work and how they can register for progress updates specific to their Eircode."

NBI currently has construction underway to bring fibre to 5,031 premises in the townlands in the Blessington Intervention Area, which includes Naas, Ballymore Eustace, Kilbride, Ballysmuttan, Hollywood, Mullacash, Vallemount and Killeel among others, all of which are already eligible to order services on the new high-speed fibre broadband network.

Once these premises are available to order these customers can choose their broadband services from a retail service provider (RSPs) of their choice. This is

expected to bring significant benefits directly to consumers and businesses where competition between RSPs will ensure quality bundled packages offer choice around voice, broadband, TV and mobile at competitive prices.

In advance of the Fibre-to-the-Home rollout, the NBP provides for the delivery of Broadband Connection Points nationwide. These facilities - which include sports clubs, community centres and tourist sites - will provide free public access to high-speed internet in the rollout area. There are nine Broadband Connection Points in Wicklow, six of which have already been

connected, including Ballycooge Community Hall, Ballinacor GAA Club, Wicklow GAA Centre of Excellence, Brockagh Resource Centre and Wicklow County Campus.

In total, there are 14,871 premises in the Intervention Area (IA) in County Wicklow, which includes homes, farms, commercial businesses and schools. This equates to 23% of all premises in the county. Under the National Broadband Plan, Wicklow will see an investment of €59m in the new high speed fibre network. NBI is encouraging people to keep-up-to-date with Eircode specific updates at <https://nbi.ie/eoi/>.

Sport funding initiative opens for Wicklow entries

Valero Energy (Ireland) Limited has announced that its Texaco Support for Sport initiative will be held again this year.

Open to sports clubs across the 26-counties, irrespective of sporting discipline, size, membership, age, cultural appeal or gender - including clubs that may have made an unsuccessful application previously - the initiative sees a fund of €130,000 being set aside for distribution to sports clubs on a twenty-six, county-by-county basis.

Last year, the successful county winner to receive a €5,000 award was Roundwood and District Athletic Club who applied under the scheme for funding to 'purchase

new sports equipment'.

Launching the scheme this year, James Twohig, Director of Ireland Operations, Valero Energy (Ireland) Limited said: "At a time when many sports clubs have had to weather difficulties and limitations of one kind or another, the Texaco Support for Sport initiative opens up an avenue to funding for those that need it most."

Leading the adjudication process once again is Texaco Support for Sport ambassador, acclaimed broadcaster and former Irish

rugby international, Donncha O'Callaghan.

Information and rules governing the operation of the scheme can be viewed online at www.TexacoSupportforSport.com, the most important requirement being that applicant clubs be properly constituted and hold a valid Games & Sports Number (GS Number) issued by the Office of the Revenue Commissioners and featured on a recent list published by them on 30th June 2021.

Open for applications from now until 31 December 2021, adjudication will take place in January 2022.



Former Irish rugby international Donncha O'Callaghan with young supporters Jack Whelan and Grace Kelly

'Report on full-time fire service in Bray is a whitewash'

Wicklow Sinn Féin Public representatives have labelled a report on the provision of a Full-time Fire Service in Bray by the Wicklow Chief Fire Officer as a "complete whitewash". They also say that it was not an independent report that had been requested by them and that it was based on outdated and wrong data and facts.

Sinn Féin TD John Brady said "In January my colleagues Cllr Dermot 'Daisy' O'Brien and Cllr Grace McManus brought forward a motion to the council calling for an Independent report to be carried out on the provision of a Full-time Fire Service in Bray. They also stated that it was critical that the firefighters would be consulted as part of the process and that the public representatives would have an input into the setting of the terms of reference. Unfortunately, what has been furnished is a complete whitewash.

"The report was carried out by Wicklow Chief Fire Officer Aidan Dempsey; he also prepared the previous report in 2014. In 2014 I described that report as being deeply flawed, unfortunately this rehash of the old report is no more than another whitewash aimed at trying to maintain the current status quo. This updated version of the 2014 report falls well short

of what was requested by my colleagues. It is in no way independent, neither did the firefighters have any input, nor did the public representatives have any say regarding the terms of reference.

"Like the previous version of this report in 2014 this updated one is deeply flawed. The data contained in this report is from the 2016 Census, so it's already 5 years out of date. Mr Dempsey gives an overview of planned future development in the area, however again this is deeply flawed as it fails to take into consideration over 1500 residential units that have either been given planning permission or are currently in the planning process. It doesn't take into consideration the new shopping centre on the Southerncross Road, the new Lidl store on the Boghall Road or the new Bray Town Centre development.

"Since 2007 we now have 3 flawed reports that

have looked at the feasibility of a full-time fire service, they were carried out in 2007 and 2014 and now this current one. All were carried out by the Wicklow Chief Fire Officers that were in place at the time. All 3 used out of date census data and failed to consider the future development of Bray, the population of which is expected to grow by 20% in the coming years. It's critical that we have a truly independent report carried out on the fire service in North Wicklow. I'm calling on all public representatives to reject this report and demand one that looks at all the major issues within the fire service in North Wicklow."

Cllr Grace McManus added "We are still awaiting a report that includes firefighters wellbeing and workers' rights within it. These are not optional add ons, they are a core ask from elected representatives and still need to be examined alongside a

report that examines projected growth of our town. The aim is to ensure a fire service fit for our future, that will keep the community and our firefighters themselves as safe and well as possible"

Cllr Dermot 'Daisy' O'Brien concluded, "What we don't need is a report that aims to justify a pre-existing stance on whether Bray needs a Full Time Fire Service or not. What we do need is a process that takes into consideration every single factor that ensures without any doubt that we have a Fire Service that is fit for purpose and capable of sustaining the highest quality of staff in the highest quality working environment with the most confidence that they will be in a position to respond when needed.

"To plan for the future of Bray and not include the growth and development of the Fire Service in those plans is a recipe for disaster in my view."



Liz McGauley and Wendy Nairn with pupils from Brittas Bay National School's 3rd Class at Harvest Day in the school's garden.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Sirs,

I have been petitioning for a full-time fire service for North Wicklow since 1995. I made calls to local Councillors. I brought proposals and at the time demographic numbers to their attention with areas that would benefit by North Wicklow having a station manned full time. Unfortunately my many appeals fell on deaf ears.

With Bray, Greystones, Kilcoole, Enniskerry, Delgany, Woodbrook Glen and even Southern Shankill plus many other surrounding areas at bursting point with houses and factories being built the need for such a service is greatly highlighted. Woodbrook Glen being covered by Dun Laoghaire Fire Service is ridiculous because it is too far from that area's Fire Station and should be included in the

area covered by a Wicklow Station. One of the main problems with Bray's Fire Station is that the location is not suitable for the service. The Station should be moved to Kilmacanogue. For Bray, Greystones and surrounding areas, and easy access

to the M50, it would make things a lot safer. With Bray's Station being close to three schools it would make sense to relocate anyway.

If the Station was manned full time in the location I

have suggested I believe it would save many lives. Shankill, Northern Bray plus surrounding areas would be covered through easier access and lives would be saved. A Station on the N11 in Kilmac would service Bray, Enniskerry, Kilmac, Delgany, Kilcoole, Greystones, Newtown Mount Kennedy, and ALL of Wicklow as far as Arklow. Most importantly, we would have a Paramedic with an Ambulance service too.

If there was a huge blaze in somewhere in Woodbrook Glen there is NO way a Fire Truck from Dun Laoghaire would get there in time. Time to move on this. It is a diabolically needed, essential and long over due service.

Sincerely,

Gareth O'Toole

12 new defibrillators for Bray and Greystones

Minister for Health Stephen Donnelly has launched 12 new defibrillators for Bray and Greystones.

The life-saving machines were provided by both Bray and Greystones firefighters to run from the beach promenade in Bray, across Bray Head walk, and through the coastal walk and along the seafront in Greystones.

The idea to raise money for the defibrillators from local businesses was triggered after firefighters attended a number of call-outs to cardiac arrests where a defibrillator was used to save lives.

The defibrillators along the Greystones section of the route

will be housed at The Grove - Bray Head Walk, The Marina, Carraig Eden House at The Cove, Greystones South Beach Car Park, Temple Carrig School, and Roches Chemist.

Greystones Fire Brigade will maintain the equipment and plan to issue a map showing the location of each machine.

Minister Donnelly said: "I would like to commend both the Bray and Greystones Fire Brigade for the extraordinary work they have done in raising the funds for

these new defibrillators.

"They have seen first hand how defibrillators can make the difference between life and death.

"Our firefighters do a superb job and show a commitment to their work that goes above and beyond.

"They are on call 24 hours a day 7 days a week and are expected to turn out to a call within 4 minutes of the pager going off.

"We are extraordinarily lucky to have such dedicated firefighters in both Bray and Greystones. The rolling out of these new defibrillators is a fantastic initiative and will undoubtedly help to save lives."

Kilquade residents ask for N11 exit be re-examined

Kilquade residents are seeking changes to the proposed reconfiguration of the Kilquade exit as part of the N11 upgrade scheme.

Outlining his support for the residents, Minister Simon Harris said "I support the alternatives suggested by Kilquade and Kilpedder East residents to the proposed link road from the Farrankelly road across farmland at Garden Cottage, Kilpedder.

Residents first heard about this proposal via a public announcement shared on social media.

"These measures were not included in the original maps and drawing on public display by the N11/M11 project team at the Glenview Hotel in 2019.

"I support the alternatives suggested by Kilquade and Kilpedder East residents who have come forward with alternative proposals for the improvement of the Kilquade Junction which would see the construction of a single lane parallel road linking Junction 11 with the L1042 that would retain public transport and connectivity to local businesses.

"Residents have highlighted to me the recent safety improvements on the N11 at Kilmacanogue and requested a similar design be put in place at the Kilquade exit. I support these alternatives and I have made clear to the N11/M11 project team in my own submission to revisit this proposal and listen to the local community."

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The focus of the course is to develop the skills to work in the equine industry, while at the same time developing learners' personal, interpersonal and workplace skills. The content includes core modules in work experience and communications/customer service as well as a range of vocational modules including stable and yard routine, equine nutrition, equine anatomy and physiology, horse confirmation and evaluation, and animal welfare (with a particular emphasis on equine welfare)



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Pictured at the launch of the Netwatch Family Carer of the Year Awards are Shauna Tighe, former Dublin Young Carer of the Year, and Mick Galwey, Netwatch Brand Ambassador and Ireland rugby legend.

Nominations open for the 'Family Carer of the Year' Awards

Family Carers Ireland has launched a nationwide call for nominations for its Netwatch 'Family Carer of the Year Awards'.

The national charity is calling on members of the public, particularly from Wicklow, to help shine a light on Ireland's forgotten frontline by nominating family carers and young carers they know who go above and beyond every day in caring for loved ones with additional needs.

More than 500,000 people in Ireland provide unpaid care in the home for children or adults with physical or intellectual disabilities, frail older people, those with palliative care needs or those living with chronic illnesses, mental ill-health or addiction. The 19 million hours of unpaid care provided each week by family carers would cost the state €20bn a year to replace.

The last 18 months have been incredibly difficult for all but in particular for family carers who saw services and supports for their loved ones depleted and, in many cases, eradicated. The blanket withdrawal of supports such as homecare, respite, personal assistance hours and residential care during lockdown forced many to

care alone, around the clock.

Ireland has almost 67,000 young carers aged between 10 and 17 caring for a loved one including Shauna Tighe (17), a previous Dublin Young Carer of the Year, who helps her Mam and Dad to care for her younger brother Daniel, who has a rare genetic disorder called Sotos Syndrome. She says: "Being a young carer is definitely hard but the good outweighs the bad. It's brought me many different experiences and given me a special bond with my brother."

Catherine Cox, Head of Communications and Policy, Family Carers Ireland said: "Ireland's family carers provide remarkable levels of care for their loved ones. Their essential contribution to society - particularly during the past 18 months - deserves to be acknowledged and supported. When the country shut down, they stepped up and kept their loved ones safe at home."

"The Netwatch Family Carer of the Year Awards are a timely opportunity for us all to honour the

extraordinary work of each and every one of Ireland's family carers who have contributed immensely in the fight against Covid-19 - often to the detriment of their own emotional, physical, social and financial wellbeing. As a society, it's time we applaud the forgotten frontline of this pandemic and give them the recognition they so truly deserve."

Colin Hayes, Netwatch Head of Business, Ireland & UK said: "Our communities are full of inspirational people who go above and beyond to help care for and shield family members with additional needs. These awards are dedicated to seeing and recognising family carers."

Nominate someone you know today at www.familycarers.ie or call the National Freephone Careline on 1800 24 07 24 to request a nomination form by post. Nominations should be submitted online or returned by post no later than Friday 22nd October. Finalists will be announced in late October.

Sporting heroes race around the world for Tallaght Hospital

Tallaght University Hospital Foundation (TUHF) is turning their annual Cycle into a virtual event this November.

With frontline staff still working to try and keep Covid-19 at bay, for safety reasons, they have opted to take a virtual approach. This year's cycle will be a virtual race between four teams led by four sporting heroes, with people being encouraged to sign up online to their favourite team!

People can join the Rugby Team, led by Linda Djougang, Ireland International rugby player and Tallaght Nurse; the Gaelic Football Team, led by multiple All-Ireland winner James McCarthy; the Hurling Team, led by Leitrim and Thomas Davis hurling hero Zak Moradi; and the Football Team, led by Shamrock Rovers' star Neil Farrugia.

Speaking at the launch, Douglas Collins CEO said, "We are so grateful to our ambassadors and delighted to continue with our annual cycle for Tallaght University Hospital, albeit virtually. With a target of €30K, all funds raised from this year's Virtual Cycle will go towards building a new sensory room, to improve the experience for patients attending Tallaght University Hospital's Emergency Department with Autism Spectrum Disorder and Sensory Processing Disorders."

"This sensory room will help to create a safe space for patients away from overstimulation, along with helping medical professionals provide the best treatment for our patients with these specific needs," he continued.

From 5th to 28th November, each team will battle it out in a race to reach as many milestones as possible over the month of November. Whether people are at home on their exercise bikes or out on the roads, it is easy to get involved. Simply sign up at www.tuhf.ie/cycle, pick a team, get on your bike, and start clocking up those Kilometres for Tallaght University Hospital. The individu-



Linda Djougang, Ireland International rugby player and Tallaght Nurse, will lead the rugby team

al entry fee is €30, and entry for schools/clubs is €15.

For those unable to take part, people can still support their chosen team by donating kilometres, to help them towards their next milestone and edge them ahead of the competition, all in aid of a worthy cause!

The goal for each team is to reach as many milestones as possible by collectively travelling the most kilometres. The main aim will be to cycle the most kilometres, but there will be certain milestones for each team to reach throughout the weekend, to see who is doing best. For example, the first milestone for each camp to reach will be Dublin to Galway which is 200km, and then Galway to the Reykjavik which is 1500km, followed by

Reykjavik to Toronto which is 4000km, and so on.

These milestones will be a great way to motivate each team. TUHF believe that the power of numbers will truly help each team reach the milestones and win!

There will be a top prize of European cycling holiday in 2022, for the individual who cycles the most kilometres, and a top prize of a hotel voucher for the most fundraised overall. There will also be fantastic smaller prizes for the most fundraised in each camp.

To encourage cashless fundraising in accordance with government and HSE recommendations, when signing up via the TUHF website, iDonate will generate a fundraising page, allowing people to start fundraising immediately.

Seven Blas na hÉireann winners from Wicklow

In a year like no other, Blas na hÉireann have just announced the award winners for 2021, with seven winners from County Wicklow.

With the annual pilgrimage to Dingle stalled, this year's winners tuned in for a second year running from every corner of the country for a virtual celebration of the very best in Irish food.

The team at Blas na hÉireann has been working since March to ensure that Blas 2021 went ahead. Chairperson Artie Clifford feels that now, more than ever, it is essential to shine a light and give that all important boost to the talented producers dotted around the island.

"These are the 14th annual Blas na hÉireann awards," says Artie, "and despite the very challenging situation, I am delighted to report a record entry level from producers right across the island. This large increase in entries has raised the bar across all categories, allowing us to introduce new products and producers to the buyers and press with whom we work, which is really exciting. Congratulations to all the winners and to every producer who participated. It is always such a rewarding experience to see the wealth

of exceptional foods being produced on the island of Ireland, and this has been the best year yet."

Now in their 14th year, the Blas na hÉireann awards are the all-island food awards that recognise the very best Irish food and drink products, and the passionate people behind them. The biggest blind tasting of produce in the country, the criteria on which the product is judged as well as the judging system itself, which was developed by Blas na hÉireann with the Food Science Dept of UCC and the University of Copenhagen, is now recognised as an industry gold standard worldwide.

Products from every county in Ireland were entered into this year's competition to win Gold, Silver or Bronze Blas na hÉireann awards in over 150 food and drink categories, as well as key awards like Supreme Champion and Best Artisan Producer.

The bronze, silver and gold winners from Wicklow across a range of different categories are: 1. Avoca Ireland Silver & Bronze; 2. Ballyhubbock Farm - Bronze; 3. Clare Anne Taylor Couture Cakes - Bronze; 4. Kerry Foods - Bronze; 5. The Butler's Pantry - Gold & Best in County; 6. The Happy Pear - Silver & Bronze; 7. Wicklow Farmhouse Cheese Ltd. - Bronze.

Knockanna camogie team to play in Croke Park

Féile will give a Wicklow GAA U-15 club side the opportunity to showcase its talents at Croke Park. The event will take place later this month as part of the competition's 50th anniversary celebrations. Knockanna camogie will represent the county in Croke Park on Monday, October 25th.

Teams from 32 counties were entered into a draw with the prize of a trip to play at GAA HQ in the celebratory event.

John West, sponsors of the GAA's annual Féile na nÓg (football) and Féile na nGael (camogie and hurling) competitions, says it was delighted to honour its pledge that no child would be left behind following the cancellation of last year's events.

Throughout its sponsorship, John West has focused on encouraging children to participate in

Gaelic games, while emphasising the importance of nutrition plays in fuelling young athletes.

This year's running of the competition saw it take place on a county basis in August, with the age-grade moving to under-15, ensuring children who missed out in 2020 got a chance to compete.

John West Féile has brought together thousands of young hurlers, camogie players and Gaelic footballers in a celebration of the GAA's community ethos through

underage competition.

"Féile highlights the importance of sport in children's lives and that is something John West is truly passionate about," said John West Ireland General Manager, Peter Rooney.

"The chance to play at Croke Park is an added element designed to once again allow clubs play against and foster links with teams in other counties and provinces."

According to Uachtarán Chumann Lúthchleas Gael, Larry McCarthy, one

of the great benefits of a lifetime involvement in the GAA is the friendships and memories made as a result.

"As a competition, Féile has been superb at living up to this from its very earliest days. To reach its 50th anniversary is a significant milestone and generations of players have experienced the joy of being a part of Féile na nGael and Féile Peile na nÓg.

"I was delighted at the move to the under-15 age-grade, which enabled those who were disappointed to miss out last year, due to the pandemic, to have the opportunity to play and be a part of Féile."

Greystones Sensory Garden opened

Greystones sensory garden was officially opened on Friday in Burnaby Park. The garden, which is a collaboration between Greystones Tidy Towns and Wicklow County Council, was joined opened by Cllr Shay Cullen, Cathaoirleach, Wicklow County Council and Cllr Lourda Scott, Cathaoirleach, Greystones Municipal District.



At the Greystones Sensory Garden were Marie McCooey, Chairperson of Greystones Tidy Towns, Aisling Foran, Chairperson of the TripleA Alliance, Aidan Foran, Minister Stephen Donnelly, Councillor Shay Cullen Cathaoirleach of Wicklow County Council, Minister Simon Harris, and Cllr Lourda Scott, Cathaoirleach of Greystones Municipal District

The garden is specifically designed as a place of peace and tranquillity with a variety of colours, textures and surfaces to provide visitors with a wide variety of sensory experiences in ways that may not usually be encountered. It provides numerous opportunities to stimulate all the senses and will be of particular benefit to those with sensory processing issues.

Speaking at the opening, Cllr Shay Cullen acknowledged that the development of the garden was a great example of what can be achieved within local communities, when volunteers such as Tidy Towns groups work with the Council to undertake projects which would not be possible otherwise.

He highlighted the

work of Greystones Tidy Towns volunteers and the many other Tidy Towns groups throughout Wicklow who give of their time throughout the year to maintain and improve the appearance of our beautiful county.

Cllr Lourda Scott added that working in partnership with Greystones Municipal District staff, Greystones Tidy Towns had been tireless in their efforts and enthusiasm to improve the town and commended, in particular Marie McCooey, Chairperson, and all of Greystones Tidy Towns volunteers for their hard work and dedication in bringing the sensory garden to completion.

Minister for Health, Mr Stephen Donnelly TD,

and Deputy Simon Harris, Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science, both spoke at the opening and commended the volunteers and everyone involved. They emphasised the importance of such community projects while Minister Donnelly highlighted the availability of a new Department of Health €1m fund specifically to develop sensory gardens nationally.

Ms Aisling Foran from the Triple A Alliance, who worked in partnership with the Tidy Towns on the project, paid tribute to the Tidy Towns volunteers and presented Ms Marie McCooey with a bouquet of flowers.

Ms Rosemary Lambe, Past President of the

Sugarloaf Lions Club, presented Ms Marie McCooey with a 'Good Citizenship Award' on behalf of the Club. The Club also made a contribution of €2,500 towards the Greystones sensory garden.

Minister Simon Harris said "I am delighted to see this project finally come to fruition. This is a remarkable transformation of this section of the park into a place of beauty, peace and tranquillity for many Greystones residents. In addition to providing a safe space for people with autism, children with special needs and children with Downs Syndrome it will also be a useful form of therapy for all members of the community allowing them a space to relax and meditate."

"This week the government launched a €1 million fund which will see the development of new and improved sensory gardens targeted for people with disabilities of all ages across the country and the garden here in Greystones shows the potential and positive impact these amenities can provide.

"I would like to thank and pay tribute to everyone in Greystones Tidy Towns and the Triple-A Alliance for their work on this project over several years and Greystones Municipal District Council's support to make the Sensory Garden a reality."



Management and staff members of the Woodenbridge Hotel, supporting the Irish Hotels Federation campaign

Hoteliers call on government to maintain vital supports for tourism

13,900 livelihoods supported by tourism in Wicklow

Hotels and guesthouses across the country have experienced an estimated €5.3 billion collapse in revenues across 2020 and 2021, according to figures from the Irish Hotels Federation (IHF).

With occupancy figures nationally expected to reach just 32% for the year, compared to 73% for 2019, hoteliers in Wicklow are calling on the Government to retain existing business and employment supports, saying they are vital for the recovery of the sector and the wider tourism industry.

Gerard O'Brien, Chair of the IHF's Wicklow branch states: "As Ireland's largest indigenous employer, tourism supported almost 270,000 livelihoods including 13,900 in Wicklow prior to the pandemic. Our industry has been hardest hit by the restrictions, and the ensuing economic and financial impact of Covid has been devastating. The Government supports so far have been critical, and a lifeline for many businesses, helping to restore employment and support the viability of businesses until we get back to a more stable footing. However, we need a firm commitment that they will be retained until the impact of the

pandemic has passed. Tourism will recover, but it will take time."

Specifically, hotel and guesthouse owners are seeking the extension of the EWSS employment supports at current levels, to help businesses retain and develop their teams over the coming months along with the extension of the local authority rates waiver until June 2022, when the summer season begins. "A failure to act decisively now would have major economic implications given the reliance of many parts of the country on tourism for prosperity and employment, including in Wicklow," says Mr O'Brien.

The IHF is also calling for the 9% tourism VAT rate to be retained until after 2025, to provide certainty and allow Irish tourism to compete internationally. "As an island nation, international tourism is critically important, accounting for almost 70% of tourism revenue pre-Covid. It is also a highly competitive industry, and we can expect competition to

increase significantly as we vie with other markets for international visitors. Most travel agents are already contracting for 2023, yet they have no certainty around tourism VAT, and this is undermining advance bookings and ultimately tourism's recovery," says Mr O'Brien.

While tourism performed well during the summer months in some regions, hotels and guesthouses now face an uncertain nine months until the 2022 summer season. Bookings have fallen sharply in the absence of overseas visitors, along with meetings and events which would normally sustain the sector during the off-peak season. Expectations are that overseas tourism into Ireland will remain severely constrained next year and is unlikely to recover to pre-Covid levels until 2024/2025.

Mr O'Brien concluded: "Our industry has a proven track record as a major contributor to the economy. Tourism's recovery is just beginning. The pro-tourism Government measures introduced have been vital and with their continued support we can fully recover the ground we lost during the pandemic."

New Marketing Strategy for Avondale Business Park

A new marketing strategy has kicked off for Avondale Business Park in Rathdrum. The industrial site contains 20 acres of zoned and serviced sites for business and industry that have lain dormant for many years now.

Speaking about the site Cllr. Pat Kennedy said "Avondale Business Park is in an ideal location within the county from which to base any business. It is situated only 40 minutes from Dublin and is easily accessible from the N11/M11. It is situated on the edge of Rathdrum and entry and exit from the Park is not hindered by any level of traffic congestion. The train station is also only a few minutes' walk away. There is also a great quality of life to be had in Rathdrum with the redevelopment of Avondale, Glendalough out the road, and Brittas Bay only a short drive away.

"These sites are fully serviced and ready to go for any business. I have been pushing for a new strategy for the Park for a number of years and for engagement with the IDA and Enterprise Ireland. The site has now been cleaned up and we are looking to engage with

potential investors. I am happy to meet with and speak to any business or employer who wants to make Rathdrum their place of business."



Marie McCooey, Chairperson of Greystones Tidy Towns, with Ministers Stephen Donnelly and Simon Harris at the opening of the Sensory Garden in Greystones

Road National Championships take place in Wicklow

Ryan Mullen of Trek Segafredo won his eight senior Irish title in Co. Wicklow last week and added to the Time Trial title he won the previous Thursday. The 27-year-old outsprinted domestic based Daire Feeley (All human/VeloRevolution Racing Team) who acquitted himself very well in esteemed company.



Photo by Bryan Keane

Conn Mc Dunphy of EvoPro Racing picked up the bronze medal 38 seconds in arrears. The U23 Race was won by John Buller of Amicle Cycliste Bisontine ahead of Liam Curley of Spellman-Dublin Port. George Peden (Team PB Performance) was third.

The 160-kilometer race featured 2,474 meters of elevation and proved to be a thrilling encounter as the large field was thinned down with each attack. After 60-kilometers of racing a group of seven had formed at the head of the race including Nicolas Roche, Eddie Dunbar,

Rory Townsend, Conn McDunphy, Matthew Taggart, Liam Curley and last year's champion Ben Healy.

Eddie Dunbar and Nicolas Roche lifted the pace once more on the Kilmacurragh climb with 94-kilometers to ride and pulled clear of the lead group. They looked to be away, extending the gap to 45-seconds until Dunbar crashed out of a greasy bend. The Cork man remounted his bike and slotted into chase group one.

Ryan Mullen and Daire Feeley were in the second chase group but fought their way back to the front of the race. From there the attacks kept coming until eventually there were six - Roche, McGlinchey, Feeley, Mullen, McDunphy and Taggart.

Onto the final lap with 22-kilometers remaining Mullen and Feeley made the decisive move and Mullen backed his sprint to bring home the Irish Champions jersey once more.

"No one saw that coming, did they? I didn't," Mullen joked at the finish.

"The first lap there was a selection made at the top of the first climb. I personally didn't think it would go that early, but it

did, and that was all cards on the table to not get spat out the back. It was just a wearing down process the whole time, that first selection was 15, 20 guys in it. Because of how hard we went; it was just the strongest legs in the race were in it."

On Roche and Dunbar's long range attack Mullen said: "It definitely wasn't an ideal scenario, but there was also a long way to go so I wasn't too worried. I mean a lot can happen in two hours. A lot can happen in one lap never mind four, so I knew it would come back, well I hoped it would anyway."

Mullen may not be renowned as a sprinter he had confidence in the gallop to the line.

"I have got a good sprint on me, but I have just never get to use it. I prefer not to use it, just attack and hopefully no one follows me but, yeah, the sprint is there."

On silver medallist Feeley, Mullen said: "Fair play to Daire Feeley, he was heroic all day. He stood out, he was the first guy to attack the whole race and last man standing today so honestly fair play to him."

Next year Mullen teams up with Sam Bennett at Bora-Hansgrohe and will likely play the role of lead out man.

"I'm really looking forward to it, yeah, it's going to be a huge opportunity



The Men's Senior Race. Photo: Bryan Keane

to work alongside Sam. And it's going to look cool on TV, the Irish Champion leading out Sam, so looking forward to that."

on his wheel, but look, his experience stood to him at the end of the day."

"To be honest with you I can't complain with second against that field."

O'Brien had tried to secure victory with a breakaway attempt midway through the race, but Annie Roche and Emma Smith combined to close

girls kept me under pressure the whole way.

"When they caught back on it was just a case of recover and get myself ready for the sprint. I tried



The Junior Women's Race winners: Emma Smith of Navan Road Club, Aoife O'Brien of Torelli-Assure-Cayman Islands-Scimitar, and Anne Roche of Scott Quanta Racing. Pic: Bryan Keane

Irish based Daire Feeley was still processing his silver medal winning performance.

"I haven't really got a chance to think about it at the moment, I thought I had him being honest coming in the road. I was

In the junior women's road race Aoife O'Brien of Torelli-Assure-Cayman Islands-Scimitar proved strongest in the sprint for the line. Emma Smith won silver and Annie Roche claimed the bronze medal.

the gap which grew to a maximum of 20-seconds.

"I tried to break up the race as much as possible. I went on the second lap and I had about three laps by myself. I just misjudged it, (I attacked) a bit too early. And the two

to break it up again on that drag on the last lap and Emma kept with me.

"And when we work up until the line; and it was just cat and mouse and I was delighted to get it. I had nothing left. It was such a tough race."



Reyan Mullen of Trek - the Men's Senior Race Winner. Pic: Bryan Keane



Nicholas Roche of Team DSM leads from Eddie Dunbar of Team Ineos in the Senior Men's Race. Pic: Bryan Keane

Win a coaching session with shamrock rovers for your school

Shamrock Rovers and GOAL have teamed up to offer primary and secondary schools the chance to win a coaching session with Shamrock Rovers to celebrate GOAL Jersey Day and their new partnership.

All schools who register to take part in GOAL Jersey Day will be automatically entered into a competition to win. Register to take part on GOAL Jersey Day by 6th October to be in with a chance to win. To sign up to GOAL Jersey Day, please visit jerseyday.org.

The competition will give schools across Ireland the opportunity to win a one-hour football coaching session and hero talk with selected players from Ireland's most successful football club, Shamrock Rovers.

Celebrating a shared passion for Irish sport, humanitarian agency GOAL announced its new partnership with Shamrock Rovers Football Club earlier this month. The partnership will see Rovers getting behind GOAL's Jersey Day on the 8th October as well as a number of promotional and fundraising initiatives throughout the season.

Founded by sports journalist John O'Shea, GOAL has a long history of collaborating with the best of sporting stars and organisations. This proud tradition



Ronan Finn and Barry Cotter of Shamrock Rovers

lives on today as GOAL teams up with Ireland's most successful football club. As well as donning their hoops for Jersey Day, Rovers look forward to joining their friends and neighbours at the long-established, much loved Tallaght GOAL Mile this December.

GOAL's Director of Fundraising, Eamon Sharkey, is particularly thrilled about the partnership saying: "I've been a Rovers fan for decades and

know just how much heart and determination this club has. They understand the importance of courage and community, which are deeply rooted in everything GOAL does. This partnership will bring together two long-established, much-loved and truly passionate organisations to help vulnerable communities devastated by poverty, hunger and conflict across the world".

On behalf of Shamrock Rovers F.C., Club Director

Mark Lynch said: "Upon meeting Eamon and talking about how Shamrock Rovers could help GOAL, we knew that this partnership would be an excellent opportunity for Rovers to broaden our community programme through the various support events that we and GOAL could deliver together. Community is at the heart of Shamrock Rovers and the club is continuously engaged in supporting and building relationships with our local community. We are also mindful of the need to support vulnerable communities on a more global level and this partnership is the ideal way to achieve this.

"Club partner Umbro have generously committed to donate €5 to GOAL for every Shamrock Rovers jersey sold between the 1st - 8th of October, which Shamrock Rovers will match. We look forward to doing our bit for those in need by working in partnership with GOAL."

The club has also provided complimentary pitch side signage to GOAL at the South Stand end of Tallaght Stadium.



Mary Neville (85) from Stoneybatter and Caoimhe (17) from Carlow launching the largest ever pollination project in Ireland

Gaisce calls on the public to plant a bulb to protect bees

The largest ever pollination project in Ireland is launched to mark 35 years of Gaisce

To celebrate 35 years of Gaisce - The President's Award, the organisation is encouraging people in Wicklow regardless of age, location or size of back garden to take up their own Gaisce challenge this autumn and plant a pollinator-friendly bulb to protect one of the most important players in the climate change battle - bees.

If planted in autumn, the bulbs will bloom in Spring. The #BulbsForBees campaign is supported by President Michael D. Higgins and the 'All-Ireland Pollinator Plan' who have worked with Gaisce to undertake the largest ever pollination project in Ireland. The pollinator friendly bulbs will bloom in Spring creating a variety of flowers including crocus tommasinianus barr's purple, allium moly and muscari armeniacum.

Over the next two weeks, over 50,000 pollinator-friendly bulbs will make their way to every post-primary school in the country; to Gaisce Award Partners including disability services, prisons and volunteer centres with the help of An Post; and over 300,000 bulbs through the Irish Local Development Network for distribution to the wider community and youth sector with support from the Department of Children, Equality, Integration, Disability and Youth these bulbs will be provided for free.

In Wicklow, community and youth groups can contact County Wicklow Partnership about collecting their Gaisce bulbs, while their stock lasts. Members of the public are encouraged to visit their local garden centre to pick up a pollinator friendly bulb to participate in the challenge by October 21st.

You can find out how to participate in the project and how to receive a special commemorative certificate of participation from the Gaisce - The President's Award website.

Commenting in support of the campaign, President of Ireland Michael D. Higgins, said: "I thank all those who will be partaking in this special Gaisce challenge and who, by doing so, make a profound statement of their real desire to protect the life we share on this planet."

Also commenting, Yvonne McKenna CEO of Gaisce - The President's Award, said: "We are calling on people in Wicklow to pick up a pollinator bulb and

plant it, to help safeguard the future of our vital bee population. One third of our bee species is threatened with extinction in Ireland. This is because we have drastically reduced the number of flowers they eat and places where they can safely nest. We're asking everyone from schools and local authorities to sports clubs and shops to come together and create an Ireland where pollinators can survive and thrive."

Joe Saunders, CEO at the Irish Local Development Network, added: "We are delighted to support the #BulbsForBees campaign by using our links to community groups in every part of the country. This is a fantastic initiative by Gaisce - The President's Award to protect our bee population. We want everyone in the county to participate in their own Gaisce challenge that will protect the future for us all. Just like the Gaisce Award itself, this doesn't happen overnight. A bulb planted now will need care and attention before it blossoms in the Spring, and that's something wonderful - and important - for everyone to be part of."

For more information please visit: www.gaisce.ie/bulbsforbees/

Wicklow RNLI announce winners of photo contest

On 26th June, the Wicklow RNLI Fund Raising Branch launched their first ever Photo Contest, open to all. Over 200 photographs were submitted by 72 amateur and professional photographers in two categories, Wonderful Winter Wicklow and Wicklow Town - Between Sky and Sea.

"The photographs were judged anonymously by volunteer crew members from the RNLI, a very demanding process given the number and quality of the entries. Winning and selected Honourable Mention photographs will be published as the front covers of our local RNLI 2021 Christmas Cards, Note Cards and Postcards," said Jill Clancy Harrold, a member of the Fundraising Branch. "We're really so excited now to announce the Winner and Honourable Mention photographs."

The winners are: (In alphabetical order by Photographer)

WINNING PHOTOGRAPHS

Susanna Brasswell (St. Patrick's Snow)
Peter Byrne (Sister Silhouettes)
Willie Byrne (Annie Send Away)
Colum Clarke (Sealed with a Kiss)
Fiona Downes (Wicklow Head Lighthouse)
Catherine Farmer (Snowy Night)
Mary Finlay (Yawl on the River)
Kevin Holbrook (Harbour Anchor at Dusk)
Patrick Lalor (Vartry in Spring)
Erika Landers/Amelia (Wicklow Postcard)
Skye O'Brien (Travelhawk Beach)
Maurice Thomas (Phil Healy's, Winter)

HONOURABLE MENTION PHOTOGRAPHS

Susanna Brasswell (Wicklow Waves)
Bried Collins (Red Sky in the Morning - Sailor's Warning)
Colm Colohan (Castle Storm Waves)
Liz Doyle (Up River)
Mary Finlay (Church and Boat on the River)
Michael Hogan (Castle Morning)
Chris Howes (Lonely Cloud, Slip Away)
Maria Hughes (Coming Home)
Peter Loughlin (Storm on the East Pier)
Roxy Luke (Black Castle Sunset)
Shevaughn Mulder (Sun and Snow)
Sean Olohan (Wicklow Winter Scene)
Sean Scanlon (Harbour Sunrise)
Wojciech Stypula (Starry Night, Moon Halo)
Maurice Thomas (Dark Clouds over Wicklow, Bridge Tavern)

Gregg Fisher, also a member of the Fundraising Branch, said "we were totally thrilled by the number of people who submitted their work to our contest and the extraordinary quality of that work. The Judges were fantastic and meticulous in reviewing the many entries. We invite everyone to see these beautiful Christmas Cards when they go on sale in shops around town on 1 November, and all sale proceeds go to our Wicklow RNLI. We are also in the process of trying to arrange a local exhibition in time for the Holiday Season. Stay Tuned."

The Wicklow RNLI Fundraising Branch wants to give special thanks to the entire Wicklow RNLI Fundraising Committee, the 2021 RNLI Photo Contest Subcommittee, our diligent volunteer Judges, or wonderful printer and, especially, the Crew of the RNLI who risk their lives to save those in peril on the sea.



Strutting and Fretting

Written and performed by Chris McHallem

RTE Radio One at 8:00pm on Sunday 17th of October

On the last night of a spectacularly unsuccessful tour of Macbeth, the lead actor sits in his dressing room trying to work out where it all went wrong.

Balancing his own disappointments with a fervent appreciation of Shakespeare's genius, he touches on such subjects as the death of Trotsky, theatre etiquette and the working methods of medieval witches.

Strutting and Fretting is a hilarious and thought-provoking comedy from the wicked pen of Bray writer and actor Chris McHallem, who has written extensively for stage, TV, film and radio. He has also worked with the RSC, The Royal National Theatre, The Gate and The Abbey as well as numerous film and TV appearances including a popular stint on the BBC's Eastenders.

Starring Chris McHallem as James and Jane McGrath as Wendy; Directed by Conall Morrison; Adapted from the stage production directed by Michael James Ford; Producer: Kevin Brew; Series Producer: Kevin Reynolds

Pupils encouraged to join in creative celebration of ability

Minister of State with responsibility for disability, Anne Rabbitte T.D. recently launched the sixth annual "Someone Like Me" primary schools competition.

The prestigious national art competition is organised by the National Disability Authority as a national celebration of the things that unite children of all abilities and a way of developing more positive attitudes towards persons with disabilities.

Minister Rabbitte encouraged primary school pupils across Wicklow to follow the lead of the more than 8,000 children who have taken part over the last five years, learning about inclusivity and diversity through the medium of art.

The Minister stated that: "One in seven people in Ireland has a disability and research shows that persons with disabilities report more social isolation and less participation in social activities than those without a disability."

"Covid-19 gave us all an insight into what it is like to feel socially isolated. Positive attitudes support persons with disabilities to take part in society and so it is vital that we place 'ability' under the spotlight as a way of fostering positive attitudes amongst all our young people to enable everyone to feel a valued member of society."

"In what is an Olympic year, we only have to look to our Olympians and Paralympians to see how, as a nation, we have celebrated each athlete's ability, rejoicing in their incredible collective success. Similarities exist between all people and ability

unites us not just in sport but in day-to-day life.

"I would like to congratulate the National Disability Authority for their commitment to supporting teachers by providing in-depth cross-curriculum lesson plans so that pupils can take part in this competition in an easy and meaningful way."

The Someone Like Me art competition junior and senior lesson plans will be delivered to every primary school in Ireland over the coming days. They are also available on the Someone Like Me website to enable children who are taught at home to also take part.

The competition, which offers a range of prizes up to the value of €750, is open to all primary school pupils from junior infants to sixth class and entries are welcome from individual pupils, a class pod or even a whole school as a combined effort. Entries can come in all shapes and sizes and can be anything from a poster or collage to a papier-mâché or mixed media sculpture.

There will be a junior and senior category winner in every county, along with an overall national winner. The deadline for entries is Friday 3rd December 2021, the United Nations International Day of Persons with Disabilities.

More information can be found at www.someonelikemearartcompetition.ie.

Coming up at Whale Theatre

Louize Carroll - Up Close & Personal

Friday 15th October @ 8pm. Tickets €20

Louize is a Chartered Occupational Psychologist with special interest in working with adults and young adults who are in the creative industries.

A member of the Psychological Society of Ireland (PSI) and the Division of Work and Organisational Psychologists (DWOP) she has spent a large part of her career working to change mental health systems in Ireland through her work with Jigsaw and currently as part of A Lust for Life Mental Health Advisory Panel.

She has several peer-reviewed publications and is a regular contributor with the Sunday Business Post. She has also been working as a musician and composer for the past 15 years. She is currently the bass player with the band The Blizzards. She is the co-founder and director of Prism Therapy Online.

In this Up Close and Personal special event, we'll be delving into Louize's musical influences, what informs her work as a psychologist, her areas of specialisation with trauma, anxiety and the challenges faced by individuals in the creative industry. As always we will have some music and plenty of interaction from the audience, including a Q&A session



Ryan Sheridan

Saturday 16th October @ 8pm - Tickets €22.

Ryan Sheridan, is a Platinum-selling Recording Artist, Songwriter, Performer and Producer based in Dublin, Ireland.

Ryan started his performing career at the age of 15, in the acclaimed 'Riverdance the show', touring the Americas, Europe and Asia. By age 18, he had moved to New York City, to perform in the Gershwin Theatre on Broadway and it was here that Ryan found his interest in songwriting.

After years of performing on Broadway and playing in pubs and clubs in New York's Lower east side, Ryan returned to Ireland. After playing in several bands and opening a venue in Ireland, he eventually decided to bring his songs to the streets of Dublin and became a busker. It was here that he would work on his craft and trademark sound and be spotted by a Record Label's A&R. Since then, Sheridan's durable presence on the gig circuit, where amidst his energy-driven, charismatic shows, has led to 2 no.1 Albums in both Ireland and Germany, 5 Sold-out European and Irish tours, has been a guest for Paul Simon, Brian Adams, Taylor Swift, Simply Red, The Script and Rea Garvey. 2020 saw Ryan enter a new chapter of his career. Facing challenges of a global pandemic led Ryan to build his studio and Produce and Record his 3rd upcoming Studio Album, which will be released later this year on RubyWorks Records.

In 2021, Ryan became a featured Artist & Producer for SE Electronics and has Produced, the High Kings, Aine Cahill, Charles James Livingstone and 'PureM Best Newcomers' Lowlight Gathering.



Des Bishop

Sunday 24th October @ 8pm. Sold Out. Register on waiting list at www.whaletheatre.ie or call the booking office on 01 2010550

The openness and honesty of his presenting style combined with his restless imagination and perceptive comic observations make Des Bishop a must-see for fans of unique, insightful and provocative comedy.

"Funny, erudite and effortlessly delivered." - The Scotsman, UK "One of the finest performers at this years festival. Fast paced and clever. A sure-fire winner." - The Sunday Age, Melbourne "Charismatic, sincere, eloquent and always seeking the angle." - Chortle "Edgy material snappy never sappy Bishop has judged this one beautifully." - The Age, Melbourne



'The Least I Can Do' - Short Film Premiere

Friday 22nd October @ 8pm. Sold Out. Register on waiting list at www.whaletheatre.ie or call the booking office on 01 2010550

Seán Treacy is a 17-year-old filmmaker, actor and TV presenter from Ashford. Since the age of seven, he has been making short films with friends and family. In 2017, he entered his first film festival at the age of 12.

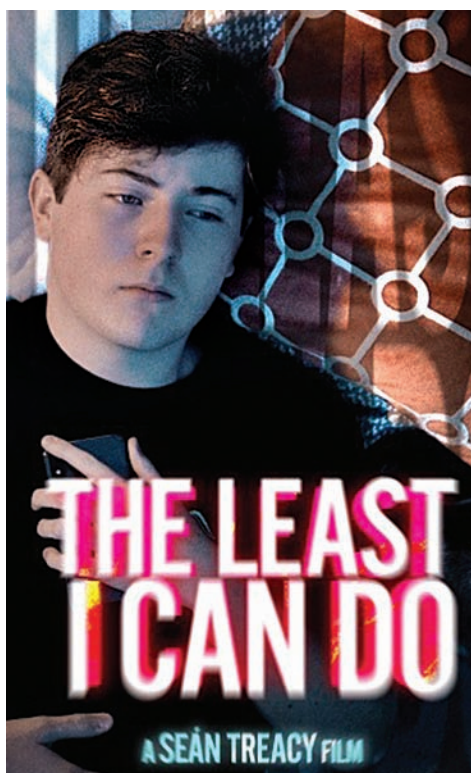
He came home with first prize, and this was the catalyst for Seán to dive deep into the world of filmmaking in the pursuit of achieving a full-time career as a writer/director in his adulthood.

In April of 2021, at the tail end of his time in his 5th year of secondary school, he found a new concept brewing. Four months later, he had his new project complete - a short film by the name of 'The Least I Can Do' - a film fundraised by believers in the power of young creativity and created almost entirely by teenagers of Ireland (including actors from Kilkenny, Kildare and Dublin), with the exception being young composer Alberto Hernández from Portugal.

This film tells the story of the innocent 17-year-old David who finds himself going to his first ever party - only to witness his best friend get far too comfortable with a female partygoer without permission or consent.

Following this pivotal night, the film's protagonist attempts to cope with this new perspective of who his friends truly are, while also trying to deal with the overwhelming guilt of his inaction at the party as he befriends the very girl who was assaulted, and who has since left David's school.

What comes of this tale is a new understanding of right and wrong, of good and evil, and of what it means to actually be there for others when they need it most.



'Winter Weekend' West Wicklow Festival

The West Wicklow Chamber Music Festival has launched its inaugural Winter Weekend, a mini-festival running from Friday 12th - Sunday 14th November at Russborough House, Co. Wicklow. Founded six years ago by Wicklow pianist Fiachra Garvey, the West Wicklow Festival's flagship summer programme has quickly built a stellar reputation for its inviting mix of world-class performances and creative family events. The Festival's new Winter Weekend promises to condense the wonderful music and warm Wicklow hospitality that audiences have come to expect from the summer Festival, into a single November weekend at Russborough House.



Mairéad Hickey

Friday 12 November, 8pm Russborough House

Mairéad Hickey (violin) & Fiachra Garvey (piano)

Celebrated for her captivating expression, soaring tone and fearless virtuosity, Irish violinist Mairéad Hickey's natural ability to communicate with beauty and integrity has entranced audiences worldwide. Mairéad will perform with Wicklow-born Fiachra Garvey, a multi award-winning pianist and the Festival's Artistic Director, who is widely recognised for the infectious enthusiasm of his masterful performances.

Together they will present four extraordinary masterpieces for violin and piano, taking us from the noble intensity of Brahms' First Violin Sonata to the contrasting darkness and light in Debussy's swansong Sonata. In the second half of the programme, Deirdre McKay's "a quarter million miles from the moon", which takes its inspiration from the immense quietude of space, is the calm before the irresistible drama of Richard Strauss.

PROGRAMME:

Brahms: Violin Sonata No. 1 in G major, Op. 78

Debussy: Violin Sonata

Deirdre McKay: "a quarter million miles from the moon"

Strauss: Violin Sonata in Eb Major op 18



Fiachra Garvey

Saturday 13 Nov, 8pm Russborough House

Kristine Balanas (violin) & Margarita Balanas (cello)

Latvian sisters Kristine and Margarita Balanas are two of the most exciting and versatile artists of their generation. Known for their distinguished artistry and mesmerising stage presence, they have dazzled audiences all over the world in venues such as Carnegie Hall, Laeiszhalle Hamburg, Foundation Louis Vuitton, Royal Festival Hall, Walt Disney Concert Hall and the Philharmonie, Berlin.

Kristine and Margarita have selected an alluring programme for their West Wicklow Festival performance. Including Bach's famously visceral Cello Suite No. 1, Handel's melodious Passacaglia, excerpts from Vivaldi's Four Seasons, Ravel's stunning Sonata, and the Latvian composer Pēteris Vasks' shimmering Castillo Interior, their performance will combine some of the most



Kristine and Margarita Balanas

virtuosic and life-affirming works in the repertoire. We are especially delighted that the Balanas sisters will perform the world premiere of A Russborough Diversion, a new arrangement by Anne-Marie O Farrell, commissioned by the Festival.

PROGRAMME

J.S. Bach: Prelude, Sarabande and Courante from Suite No.1 in G major for cello, BWV 1007; Preludio, Loure and Gavotte en Rondeau from Partita in E major for violin, BMV 1006

Pēteris Vasks: Castillo Interior

Anne-Marie O Farrell: A Russborough Diversion (newly arranged commission)

Ravel: Sonata for violin and cello

Handel: Passacaglia (arr J.Halvorsen)

Vivaldi: 'Summer' from The Four Seasons

Sunday 14 November, 3pm Russborough House

Sharon Carty (mezzo-soprano) & Gary Beecher (piano)

Kildare mezzo-soprano Sharon Carty is admired by audiences for her musicality and intelligence, as well as for the warmth, clarity and agility of her voice. Sharon will perform with the acclaimed Cork pianist Gary Beecher, who in 2019 was awarded First



Gary Beecher

Prize at the prestigious International Nadia and Lili Boulanger Voice-Piano Competition in Paris.

Schubert composed more than 600 songs in his short life, each a mirror to the human experience. Gary and Sharon will perform a selection of six of them, beginning with 'Viola', a ballad about a lovesick snowdrop, and ending with 'An die Musik', a hymn to the art of music, and one of Schubert's best-known songs. Also featured are Chansons de Bilitis, Debussy's setting of collection of poems by his contemporary Pierre Louÿs, Grieg's Six Songs, offering a distinctly Norwegian take on German Romanticism, and closer to home, a selection of songs by English and Irish composers.

PROGRAMME

Schubert: Viola, Op.123, D.786 | Die Junge Nonne, Op.43, D.828 | Du bist die Ruh, Op.59/3, D.776 | Gretchen am Spinnrade, Op.2 D.118 | An die Musik, op.88/4, D.547

Debussy: Chansons de Bilitis

Grieg: Six Songs, Op.48 (14.5)

Hamilton: Harty Sea Wrack

Joan Trimble: My grief on the sea

Jake Heggie: The Haughty Snail King | Animal Passion

William Bolcom: Amor



Sharon Carty

October at Mermaid

A Very Old Man With Enormous Wings

Wednesday 27 & 28 Thursday 28 October 7pm €10

Age suitability: 8+, Duration: 45 mins

(Allergy Warning: Goose Feathers)

Gabriel García Márquez's darkly comic tale, brought to the stage for children and adults to share.

In a kitchen, in a theatre, two storytellers and their audience find something remarkable — a very old man with enormous wings. The wise neighbour woman tells us he's an angel. The priest says he's an imposter. Pilgrims flock to see him, hoping to be healed by him, hoping for a gawp. They leave with something different than what they expected.

Adapted from Gabriel García Márquez's *Un señor muy viejo con*



unas alas enormes, Dan Colley and Riverbank Arts Centre bring this classic piece of magical realism to the stage in search of its beautiful, strange, emotional richness.

Developed and Co-Produced as part of Theatre Artist in Residency at Riverbank Arts Centre, Kildare; supported by field:arts.

Once Off Productions Presents Arán & Im by Manchán Magan

Friday 29 October 8pm (€16/14|Duration: 70 Mins)

We need to find a way of talking about the Irish language - about the sublime beauty and profound oddness of this ancient tongue that has been spoken on the island for 2,500 to 3,000 years, and is now slipping slowly from our grasp.

What can the word for the lonesomeness of a cow bereft of her calf, *diadhánach*, teach us about our current methods of food production?

Why does one need to orientate oneself to the sun to give directions in Irish?

Arán & Im is a the-

atrical performance in which Manchán Magan bakes sourdough bread while offering insights into the wonders of the Irish language - exploring potent words of landscape, terms of intuition and insight, and the many phrases that bring

to life the mysterious glory of our natural world.

The show is a celebration of language, land and local Irish food.

(Arán agus Im is a bilingual show, entirely understandable to Béarlóirí)



Anakronos Presents Citadel Of Song: (Plague-Proof Ballate From Boccaccio's The Decameron

Saturday 30th October 8pm (€16/14)

As the Black Death ravaged their city, ten people left Florence and went into the countryside to build a fortress of songs, stories and dances that would protect them from pandemic-induced soul-destroying fear and creeping dispassion. This is the frame of Giovanni Boccaccio's *The Decameron*, the iconic masterpiece of Western literature written during & relating to the plague that swept through Asia and Europe between 1347 and 1351.

While the cataclysm of the Plague always remains suspended in the background, the songs in *The Decameron* centre on the joyful, hopeful, fraught & painful aspects of romantic love - an enduring preoccupation of humanity.

Anakronos borrows Boccaccio's conceit and re-presents his lyrics for today in a way that is artistically original, accessible, and emotionally poignant.





Two Chaps Deli - 'It's a lifestyle'

A new Deli has recently been set up in Bray offering breakfast, lunch, coffee and treats.

Two Chaps Deli operates out of a van on Bray Seafront (down the laneway between Box Burger and Bray dart station), where the two chaps (Conor Costello & Andrew Mowatt from Greystones) sell their nutritious food which they push as part of a healthy lifestyle.

"Our food consists of ingredients which are as locally sourced as possible and are of the best quality. We try to push eating nutritious food as often as possible in order to live a happy healthy lifestyle. After all, our motto is 'It's a lifestyle'.

"Our mission is all about promoting a healthy wholesome way of life, this can be done through eating well but also by getting outdoors and exercising both your body and mind. We want to help build a community of like minded people and we have already got excellent feedback and reviews of our food so far," they say. We have had morning yoga sessions down at the deli which were a great hit and we have many more plans to do group activities in order to continue to build the community."

Ability to Work Fund supporting Wicklow people

Securing a work placement is a vital first step towards employment for people with a disability. That's according to Rethink Ireland and financial services group State Street who are marking the first year of a €1.5 million Fund that empowers people with disabilities to gain employment.

Rethink Ireland created the Ability to Work Fund in partnership with State Street and the Government of Ireland. It provides €1.5 million funding over three years to four not-for-profit organisations – WALK, Employability Pathways, Not So Different, and the UCC Disability Support Service Mentoring Programme – who are helping develop the talents and skills to those living with a disability.

People with a disability are half as likely to be in

employment as others of working age, according to the National Disability Authority, and the Covid-19 pandemic created particular challenges for organisations working to support people with a disability access employment.

Minister for Justice, Social Protection, and Rural and Community

Development Heather Humphreys TD, commented: "My Department is delighted to support the Ability to Work Fund. The Fund is supporting some fantastic not-for-profit organisations who do vital work in providing services and supports to people with disabilities to help them access employment

opportunities. Initiatives such as the Ability to Work Fund can play a significant role in tackling the barriers to employment faced by people with disabilities."

For more information please visit: www.rethink-ireland.ie/awarded_fund/ability-to-work-fund-2020-2023/

CLASSIFIEDS

Mark 10:17-27 GOSPEL

Jesus was setting out on a journey when a man ran up, knelt before him and put this question to him, 'Good master, what must I do to inherit eternal life?' Jesus said to him, 'Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone. You know the commandments: You must not kill; You must not commit adultery; You must not steal; You must not bring false witness; You must not defraud; Honour your father and mother.' And he said to him, 'Master, I have kept all these from my earliest days.' Jesus looked steadily at him and loved him, and he said, 'There is one thing you lack. Go and sell everything you own and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come follow me.' But his face fell at these words and he went away sad, for he was a man of great wealth.

Jesus looked round and said to his disciples, 'How hard it is for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God!' The disciples were astounded by these words, but Jesus insisted, 'My children,' he said to them, 'how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.' They were more astonished than ever. 'In that case' they said to one another 'who can be saved?' Jesus gazed at them. 'For men' he said 'it is impossible, but not for God: because everything is possible for God.'

C.J.

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PLANNING

WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL
Anita Lawless, is seeking Planning Permission at ROBIN HILL, NEWTOWNBOSWELL, ASHFORD, CO. WICKLOW A67 VH90. The Application is for the upgrade of the existing septic tank system to a new 8-person wastewater treatment unit and 60 sqm soil polishing filter in accordance with the EPA 2021 standards together with all associated site development works. The planning application may be inspected or purchased at a fee not exceeding the reasonable cost of making a copy, at the offices of Wicklow County Council, County Buildings, Wicklow during its public opening hours and a submission or observation in relation to the application may be made to the authority in writing on payment of the prescribed fee within the period of 5 weeks beginning on the date of receipt by the authority of the application.

WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL
James and Elizabeth Lawless, are seeking Planning Permission at TRINITY, NEWTOWNBOSWELL, ASHFORD CO. WICKLOW A67 DX43 - The Application is for the upgrade of the existing septic tank system to a new 8-person wastewater treatment unit and 60 sqm soil polishing filter in accordance with the EPA 2021 standards together with all associated site development works. The planning application may be inspected or purchased at a fee not exceeding the reasonable cost of making a copy, at the offices of Wicklow County Council, County Buildings, Wicklow during its public opening hours and a submission or observation in relation to the application may be made to the authority in writing on payment of the prescribed fee within the period of 5 weeks beginning on the date of receipt by the authority of the application.

WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL
We, Irish Water, intend to apply for permission for development at the existing Wicklow Wastewater Treatment plant at Knockrobin Murragh, Wicklow Town, Co. Wicklow. The development will consist of new infrastructure and alterations at the existing sludge treatment centre to increase the volume of liquid sludge imports for dewatering, so that it can operate as a Satellite Dewatering Centre in addition to its current operation for sludge treatment. The proposed development comprises:
• Lime Silo
• Mixer shed
• Trailer shed
• Control room/ kiosk
• Odour Control Unit
• Pumps and other mechanical and electrical works associated with the above
• All associated ancillary site development works
The planning application may be inspected or purchased at a fee not exceeding the reasonable cost of making a copy at the offices of Wicklow County Council, County Buildings, Wicklow during its public opening hours and a submission or observation in relation to the application may be made to the authority in writing on payment of the prescribed fee within the period of 5 weeks beginning on the date of receipt by the authority of the application.

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A 'Repair Café', a meeting spot equipped with tools, materials, and volunteers to repair clothes, furniture, and other household items

Take action against climate change with sustainability fund

Communities across Wicklow will have the opportunity to apply for a grant of up to €5,000 through the 'Accenture Sustainability Challenge' supported by the social innovation platform ChangeX. The initiative is designed to provide the vital resources required by communities to kickstart sustainability projects in their own locality.

Niamh McKenna, Head of Impact at ChangeX says "It is our ambition to enable and to support local community groups, schools, and organisations to take action against climate change and start innovative but doable environmentally-focused projects in their own areas. From experience, we know that community-led projects have proven hugely successful for communities across Ireland and we are looking forward to seeing even more groups and organisations come together to roll out more of these green initiatives across the country."

Grants of up to €5,000 are available plus a starter resource pack, mentorship and technology tools for teams across the country to start a sustainability project within their own community. Entrants can choose from a portfolio of six ideas that have already been tested and proven to have a positive social or environmental impact within communities in Ireland.

These include a 'Garden Pocket Forest' aimed at increasing biodiversity and green space within local communities; a 'Repair Café', a meeting spot equipped with tools, materials, and volunteers to repair clothes, furniture, and other household items; a 'Community Fridge' a communal place where surplus food is shared with the local community by local businesses and individuals; an 'Open Orchard' to provide free fruit to residents and greenery to urban environments; a 'Plastic Free 4 Kids' initiative aimed at helping Primary Schools become plastic-free and a 'Pollinator Plan' to support biodiversity with an all-Ireland pollinator plan.

To apply, visit www.changex.org/ie/funds/accenture-sustainability-

challenge where you can explore the six ideas, register your team, and receive more information on the steps to complete the Challenge.

The fund will support up to 15 teams across the island of Ireland. Groups,

individuals and organisations who are passionate about building a thriving community are encouraged to apply to roll out one of the six initiatives for their community at www.changex.org. Open to communities across the

island of Ireland, applications will be allocated on a first-come, first-served basis once applicants successfully complete a 30-day challenge to kick-start their idea and take their first steps towards making their project a reality.

RECRUITMENT



COMHAIRLE CONTAE CHILL MHANTÁIN
WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL

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

- **PERMANENT EXECUTIVE LIBRARIAN**
REF: 36/2021 Salary €49,040.00 – €59,913.00 gross per annum (includes 2nd LSI)
- **PERMANENT & TEMPORARY CLERICAL OFFICER**
REF: 38/2021 Salary €25,102 – €41,089 gross per annum (includes 1st LSI)
- **PERMANENT/TEMPORARY PART-TIME/FULL-TIME CLEANERS (County Buildings/Municipal Districts/Libraries)**
REF: 40/2021 Salary: €562.26 – €637.12 gross per week

CLOSING DATE FOR RECEIPT OF COMPLETED APPLICATION FORMS IS 12 NOON ON THURSDAY 4TH NOVEMBER, 2021 SHARP.

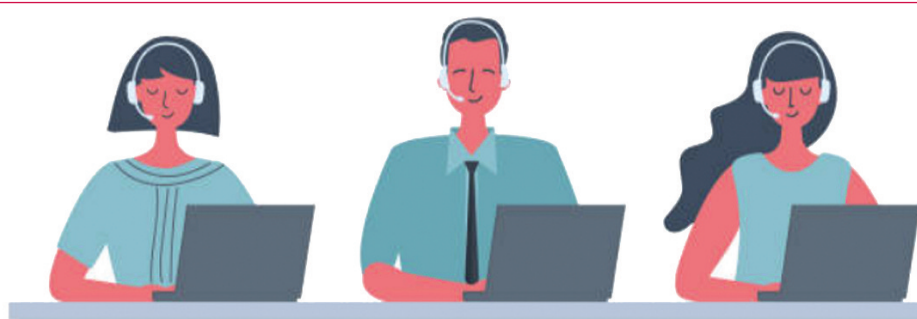
Application Forms and further details may be obtained from Enterprise & Corporate Services at 0404 20159 or by emailing recruitment@wicklowcoco.ie and on the Wicklow County Council website www.wicklow.ie.

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

Wicklow County Council Is an Equal Opportunities Employer.

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

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



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Quinsborough Road, Bray.
Co. Wicklow. A98 R6D7.
Email: shay@localtimes.ie

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