

LOCAL Wicklow Times

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Tuesday 30th November 2021 First Floor, The Boulevard, Quinsborough Road, Bray. A98 R6D7. Tel: 01 - 2869111 E-mail: wicklowed@localtimes.ie www.wicklowtimes.net

NO PCR TESTS IN WICKLOW

Calls are mounting for Minister for Health, Stephen Donnelly, to address the situation of there being no Covid-19 PCR tests available in Co. Wicklow on most days.

Wicklow is one of ten counties where it is now nigh on impossible to get a PCR test appointment, according to official HSE sources.

The latest data shows that Covid cases have risen in three of Co. Wicklow's Local Electoral Areas in the past week (Baltinglass, Bray East & Bray West). Baltinglass still has the highest 14-day incidence rate per 100k people in the county at 1,628.

Sinn Féin TD John Brady said: "At a time

when we are witnessing thousands of new cases a day, and the Government is pressing ordinary people to self-administer antigen tests, this goes beyond shambolic into the category of negligence.

"Throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, we had a Minister for Health in the County. First, we had Simon Harris, now we have Stephen Donnelly. They have overseen the tragedy that occurred in our nursing homes, a travesty that merits a

public inquiry. Then we had the scandal of private hospitals administering vaccines to private schools.

"Followed by the spending of hundreds of thousands of euros on testing centres in the county that never opened. Now we have a travesty, where there are no Covid-19 PCR tests available in County Wicklow.

"These two Government TDs have serious questions to answer. Taken in conjunction with the cri-



Granddaughters of Olympic Gold medal winner Ronnie Delany - Rebecca, Jodie, and Hollie Delany - are pictured at the official unveiling of Ronnie Delany's statue in Arklow. See more on page 4. Pic: Michael Kelly

sis in health services across the board in Wicklow, Ministers Harris and Donnelly have overseen a debacle in health across not just our own county, but across the State.

"Patients are having serious difficulties in attempting to secure appointments with GPs. Which in many instances means that they are being denied access to treatment for chronic conditions for prolonged periods. We need to see a complete overhaul in the approach to health in the county."

Local Aontú representative Ciaran Hogan has also spoken out on the government's failure to have PCR testing facilities able to cope.

"We approached the usual winter flu season, full knowing that people would get the flu, and they would need to take a PCR test to confirm if

was or wasn't Covid. And yet there was no appreciable rise in the capacity of PCR testing or analysis turn around which has lead to the whole system crashing," he said.

The Aontú leader Peadar Tóibín TD has described the situation as an 'emergency' for the families and individuals affected by the shortage of PCR Tests.

He said "Aontú is calling on the government to invest in testing services immediately to ensure that they can operate 24 hours in the day. Pop up testing centres should be opened in each of these nineteen counties where testing appointments are no longer available. PCR Testing is a key tool in the fight against Covid yet citizens have now to wait up to 2 days for a test and up to 4 days for a result. Despite advice to restrict movements

this wait is almost certainly leading to the spread of the illness.

"Many sectors are in crisis now because healthy staff have to stay at home while they wait for a test.

Continued on page 5



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Greystones Active Retirement members at a talk on growing your own herbs, given by Frank Coleman earlier this month

Greystones Active Retirement activities continue

Members of Greystones Active Retirement Association (GARA) continue to enjoy ongoing activities including Art (Mondays 2:30pm to 4:30pm), Short Mat Bowling (Tuesdays 10:45am to 12:45pm) and Bingo (Thursdays 2:30pm to 4:30pm).

The organisation announced that there will be no Christmas Party this year due to Covid restrictions. However other upcoming activities include:

Tuesday 30th November 2021. 2.30pm to 4pm: Knitting workshop with Delia Barry. Bring along knitting needles and wool.

Tuesday 7th December 2021 2.30 to 4pm: Poetry and Prose Readings for Christmas. More materials and readers are needed, so please text Alice Quinn @ 0868639433 to indicate your wish to attend.

All activities take place at Kilian House Family Centre, beside Holy Rosary Church. New members are always welcome. Registration takes place at Killian House Family Centre on Tuesday mornings from 10:30am to 11:30am



Delia and Hilda at the Craft Workshop on 16th November

Rathmichael Historical Society

The December meeting of the Rathmichael Historical Society will take place on Wednesday December 1st when it will host 'A Book and a Bell: Glendalough on the Morning of May 15th 1106' by Mary Kelly at 8pm on Zoom - log onto www.rathmichaelhistoricalsociety.ie for further information

Walking group in the Brockagh

On Monday mornings weekly at 10am join the Laragh walking group at the Brockagh Resource Centre for a walk around the Glendalough area for approximately one hour. No need to book, just show up on the day.

Wicklow Racing News

Baltinglass native Thomas Dowling made the perfect start to his training career when he saddled Mullacash Buzz to win the seven-furlong handicap at Dundalk on Friday 19th November. A former jockey, the three-year-old was his first runner as a trainer and landed a 66/1 surprise when holding off the Andy

Slattery-trained Sunset Nova by a head under Danny Sheehy. Dowling said, "We're a small operation, we only have a handful of horses. It's nice to start things off on the right foot. It's only myself and my other half Nicola doing them at home. We work hard and it's nice to reap the rewards. We are based not far outside Naas in Mullacash and the owner Martin Flinter is actually our landlord, so it's quite fitting that our first winner is for him. We only have seven horses at the minute. We'll try building quality rather than quantity; we'll keep the numbers low."

Wicklow Welcomes Christmas Appeal

The Wicklow Welcomes group is asking people if they would you like to buy a Christmas Gift Voucher for someone living in Direct Provision.

If they go to www.wicklowchamber.ie/shop and check the box to say its for the Wicklow Welcomes Christmas Appeal. "We hope to be able to give 20 euro to everyone living in Direct Provision in Ashford and Wicklow Town. It's also a great way to support local business.."

Housing Adaptation Grants

Housing Adaption Grants are being accepted for older people and people with a disability. The purpose is to allow these groups to remain living independently in their own homes and to avoid their having to be care for in hospitals and nursing homes.

The grants are available in three categories; Mobility Aids Grant; Housing Adaptation Grant; Housing Aid for Older People.

All three grants are means tested. Details are available from Wicklow County Council's website, www.wicklow.ie, or from tmulhallburke@wicklowcoco.ie

Funding for community groups

County Wicklow will benefit from €282,686 in funding announced as part of a special Government fund to support community groups impacted by COVID-19. The closing date for applications for County Wicklow is Monday 31st January 2022. Details of the scheme will be advertised in local press and on www.Wicklow.ie in the coming weeks. Any enquiries should be addressed to cep@wicklowcoco.ie.

The Giving Tree is back in Bray and needs your support

Bray Rotary Club will host their annual Christmas Giving Tree next weekend and will be on the steps of the Holy Redeemer Church, 4th and 5th December and again on Saturday 11th and Sunday 12th.

They are now in their 19th year and help in excess of 300 people each year.

How the Giving Tree works is that Gift Tags are placed on the tree with first names and ages of local needy children and also vulnerable teenagers and adults.

Bray Rotary get the names from the four St Vincent de Paul Conferences in Bray, Purple House Cancer Support, Five Loaves Soup Kitchen, Ark Housing, Bray Community Helpers, Open Door Day Centre and CASA, the Caring and Sharing Association

The public take a gift tag; buy that person a suitable present, bring it back to the tree (unwrapped) and Rotary distribute them to the Charities.

Each year they get huge support from the people of Bray, especially families, and have many regulars coming year after year.

Organiser Una Whelan says "We realise people have many calls on their generosity especially at this time of year but we would be grateful for any help, we are catering for the least fortunate and often forgotten."

If you would like any further information, please contact Club Secretary

Una Whelan on 086 8091117. Or Club President, Pat Hastings on 0879572797.

Each year Christy Kavanagh, of Kavanagh's Christmas Tree Farm kindly donates the Giving Tree.

Full Covid regulations will be followed with social distancing, mask wearing and hand sanitising in place.

Bray Christmas GIVING TREE

Providing Christmas presents for Local Charities

- Five Loaves Soup Kitchen
- Purple House
- Open Door
- Ark Housing
- St Fergal's St Vincent de Paul
- Holy Redeemer St Vincent de Paul
- Little Bray St Vincent de Paul

Collection takes place on steps of Holy Redeemer Church Sat & Sun 4th and 5th and Sat & Sun 11th and 12th

Collective of artists open new Pop Up Shop in Newtown

A local community of artists have pulled their creativity together and created a rather unique little pop up shop in Newtown.

Tamara Fiabane is the founder of The Collective NTMK and owns her own arts and crafts business as well as managing The Collective.

"We opened up last year thanks to the goodness of the landlord of an empty premise, he allowed me to set up a little pop up shop with the aim to help local artists and makers to showcase and potentially sell their art & crafts in the absence of markets," Tamara explains.

"We had a great success over December last year, the shop was then closed till May due to restrictions. We opened again with a very slow summer but we are back now in full swing."

The pop up shop is now open four days a week (Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday), and showcases over 20 artists from Newtown and surrounds.

The collective makes everything they sell, recycling as many materials as possible to make their crafts. They don't use plastic or unnecessary packaging.

"We have proved that if there is a will there is a way," continues Tamara. "We are so passionate about what we do and what we stand for, you can definitely see that through our pieces that we create."



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'Open our Car Park!'

Independent Councillor Joe Behan has made an impassioned plea to Bray Municipal Council and the developer to open the long closed town car park.

"This long running saga of the Florentine Centre is hopefully soon coming to an end. However, we have been told that the practical completion of the main buildings will not happen until the end of January 2022," he said.

"Time will then be needed for shop-fitting, etc. to be done so it would appear that the earliest we can hope to be able to use the Centre and its facilities

is sometime after that.

"Despite rumours we have still not been told who the main anchor tenant will be but hopes are high that it will be a big name outlet with a large and loyal following. We certainly hope so!

"In the meantime I appeal to the Council and the Developer to open the car park for the use of shoppers during the busy pre-Christmas shopping season.

"This will be the fourth Christmas when the town has had to do without a main car park on the eastern side of the Main Street.

"The lack of car parking in this area has directly affected the local traders who have struggled valiantly against all odds to keep their businesses open.

"The impact of Covid restrictions on the town trade

hasn't helped either.

"It is beyond time that the people with the power to fix this do so and ensure that we get our car park back as a matter of urgency. If we are serious about encouraging shoppers to return to Bray we must provide the car parking needed.

"So please ... please... please...Open Our Car Park!" Cllr Behan concluded.

Council urged to apply for retrofitting funding

Only four county/city councils have applied for retrofit funding under the Energy Efficiency Retrofitting Programme launched this year with Wicklow County Council not one of them, Jennifer Whitmore TD has said. The information was revealed to Deputy Whitmore through a number of parliamentary questions.

Under this Programme, a target of 2,400 social homes to be retrofitted is in place for 2021. However, to date only 199 social housing units have been completed as we near the end of this year.

Deputy Whitmore said, "While COVID has delayed works such as tendering, surveying and construction work, it seems that Wicklow County Council has not

applied for funding under this measure. Wicklow is expected to upgrade at least 55 units as part of the Energy Efficiency Retrofit Programme and it is likely it won't reach this target by the year's end.

"The fact of the matter is that Wicklow County Council has not applied for funding which makes it difficult for us to reach this target. While the Council is undergoing

retrofitting, it is not under this Programme.

"While it is the case that more local authorities will be applying for crucial retrofit funding in the coming weeks and months I hope that Wicklow County Council takes this opportunity to get crucial funding to upgrade its social housing stock. €45m was provided for this in Budget 2021 which could go a long way



Jennifer Whitmore TD

towards addressing cold damp housing ahead of rising fuel prices and climate change.

"I have met con-

stituents waiting so long to get their house up to scratch and are worried about rising energy costs. People living in cold damp homes are less likely to be able to afford rising fuel prices and more likely to enter fuel poverty and many are pensioners who are on fixed incomes and can't afford to go through other channels. It also makes it harder for them to adjust to climate change and reduced air quality in their home and surrounding environment.

"I am urging Wicklow County Council to engage with the Department of Local Government to ensure it is accessing all available funding opportunities. We have a long way to go with retrofitting older, colder homes in this country with a national target of retrofitting 500,000 homes by 2030 with a cost of approximately €28 billion. It's not impossible but it will take a lot of work from local authorities to help achieve these figures," concluded Deputy Whitmore.

In a statement to Wicklow Times, the Council said "Wicklow County Council applied for and received approval for 57 houses from the Department for our Retrofit Programme 2021 for €1.488m. The allocations were only finalised in April 2021. Wicklow County Council appointed a contractor to complete the works and the contractor is making great progress since starting in September. In order to make a claim to the Department we have to claim the complete house works. We have a number of houses near completion and also partially but none ready to be claimed as yet. Communication with the Department is ongoing and it is anticipated that the claim will be submitted in early 2022 for the 57 house scheme."



Ailbhe Bradley from Knockananna at the Junior B Football final between Knockananna and Avoca. The replay of the final was won by Knockananna 2-12 to 1-08. Pic: Michael Kelly

'New pedestrian safety and crossings needed in Blessington'

Minister Simon Harris TD updated his Blessington constituents on a number of pedestrian safety improvements in Blessington.

Minister Harris said: "Baltinglass Municipal District Council have prioritised the improvement of the Kilmalum Road/N81 junction to ensure pedestrian safety. The proposed realignment would improve visibility for pedestrian and the provision of a controlled crossing point on R410 Naas Road.

"I had raised the need for a safe pedestrian crossing between the 65 bus stops and Burgage near the Texaco Garage. The council advise that their District Engineer met with Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) regarding the need for funding for a pedestrian crossing. Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) have agreed carry out an assessment of the location and I have urged TII to carry out their survey as quickly as possible. This is a dangerous location and the winter months make it ever more hazardous for pedestrians crossing to get the bus."

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Ronnie Delany statue unveiled in Arklow

A statue honouring Olympic Gold Medallist Dr Ronnie Delany was officially unveiled in his home town of Arklow on Friday 19th November.

President Michael D Higgins sent a special message for the occasion describing Ronnie Delany as a "true sporting legend and a wonderful ambassador for Ireland."

Dr Delany was born in the County Wicklow town on 6th March 1935 and was previously honoured by Wicklow County Council with a Civic Reception in 2016 and the naming of a housing estate there in 2019 after him.

Ronnie Delany achieved international fame when at the age of 21 he won a Gold Medal in the 1500m race at the Olympic Games in Melbourne, Australia, on 1st December 1956. He went on to achieve more success on the track and later in business working with Aer Lingus and the B&I shipping company.

In 2006, Dr Delany was granted the Freedom of the City of Dublin. That same year he was conferred with an Honorary Doctor of Laws Degree by University College Dublin. In 2013 Villanova University appointed and proclaimed Ronald M Delany Doctor of Humane Letters. The Royal College of

Surgeons in Ireland awarded him an Honorary Fellowship in 2009.

Following the previous honours in his home town, it was decided to further honour Arklow's famous son with a sculpture to mark his remarkable achievement. Renowned sculptor Paul Ferriter was commissioned to bring to life the famous event of 1956.

Welcoming the guests to the unveiling, the Leas Cathaoirleach of Wicklow County Council, Cllr Tommy Annesley, said he appreciated the dedication required to achieve sporting honours. Ronnie had achieved more than most, culminating in winning the ultimate honour, an Olympic Gold Medal.

"This statue is no more than Ronnie deserves and I am honoured to be here this afternoon to join Ronnie and his family and friends, to pay this very special tribute to one of Arklow's finest", he said adding: "Statues are very rare, and are reserved for special people who have achieved something out of the ordinary-and Ronnie did exactly that."

Cllr Annesley thanked all of the sponsors who

contributed to this wonderful commission and thanked the sculptor Paul Ferriter for his skilful depiction of Ronnie in his prime.

Chief Executive of Wicklow County Council, Mr Frank Curran, said the decision taken by Wicklow County Council in 2016 to commission a statue to afford the ultimate accolade to Arklow's Olympic gold medal winner Dr Ronnie Delany, was one of the easiest decisions ever made by the Council. He said: "It is a fitting tribute to an athlete who beat all others in the 1500m final in the 1956 Olympic Games in Melbourne."

He thanked all those involved in the project, the local committee, established by the Arklow town team; Michael Nicholson, Director of Services, and all his staff and the staff of Arklow municipal district. He also acknowledged the elected members who supported the project from the start.

Mr Curran had no doubt that people would be as impressed as he was with this statue, and how the sculptor Paul Ferriter has uniquely captured Dr

Ronnie Delany. He congratulated Mr Ferriter for his wonderful work.

He added: "When we emerge from the effects of COVID and return to normal, this statue, situated as it is, at the entrance to Ronnie's birthplace Arklow, will act as a beacon to signify the towns return to growth post-COVID. This investment by the Council, coupled with other significant developments in Arklow, such as the wastewater treatment plant, and the floor relief scheme, will enable the town to finally reach its full potential as a place of prosperity."

The Cathaoirleach of Arklow Municipal District, Cllr Miriam Murphy, said this was a very special day "when we honour one of our own" explaining how Ronnie was born in Arklow." She added: "In fact we are practically in his front garden as he lived a stones throw away from this very spot. Only a very small number of athletes have won Olympic medals representing Ireland, and gold medals are particularly scarce, so Ronnie's gold medal at the Melbourne Olympics in 1956 was



Gold medal winner Ronnie Delany and his wife Joan pictured with his grandchildren at the official unveiling of his statue in Arklow

truly special.

"We had honoured Ronnie with a Civic Reception in 2016 to celebrate the 60th anniversary of his great triumph. There is also a housing development in Arklow named Delany Park, in honour of Ronnie. And now we have the ultimate honour for Ronnie. This wonderful statue greets everyone as they arrive in Arklow and it will serve as a reminder of his marvellous achievement, as

an Arklow born athlete."

Cllr Murphy extended a special welcome to Ronnie's wife Joan and his extended family.

Mr Kieran Mulvey, Chairman, Sport Ireland, said Ronnie Delany was the iconic figure in Irish Athletic sporting history in Ireland. "His sporting achievements are legendary and he has served as an inspiration to successive Irish athletes who have gone on to win international success in

Olympic and World championships," he stated.

He went on: "At the raw young age of 21 years this gangly youthful figure confounded the greats of the athletic world by winning the Gold Medal in the 1500 metres Final at the Olympic Games in Melbourne in 1956. He achieved it in a then Olympic record time of 3.41.2, and he was then only the seventh man to

beat the four-minute barrier in this prestige race."

Mr Mulvey explained how Ronnie won many races worldwide, he was the "King of the Boards" in the USA, where competition was the keenest, and became as he is now a living legend of international sporting achievement.

Dr Delany expressed his thanks and said he was honoured and privileged to have the statue erected for him.



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'Urgent action needed to prevent Christmas credit crisis'

Sinn Féin TD John Brady has called for urgent action to prevent a further worsening of the current cost of living crisis that placing huge burdens on so many families.

"Rampant inflation driven by huge rent increases, and an almost unprecedented rise in energy and fuel costs is crippling low-income families. This deteriorating scenario will result in driving many families into the hands of illegal money lenders over the Christmas period," Deputy Brady has warned.

"There is currently a cost-of-living crisis in this country. Which is being driven by huge rent increases, crippling energy costs, and fuel prices, to which the Government have placed an added burden by increasing carbon taxes.

"For many families, they are being forced to choose between food or fuel. Do they spend what little they have on putting food on the table or do they put petrol in the car, to get to work, to get kids to school. All in the hope that maybe somebody can or will do something at a Governmental level that helps them stay afloat a little longer.

"Consumer inflation was measured at 5.1% in October, the highest rate since 2003, at the height of the Fianna Fáil driven property folly. In the

twelve months up to September, inflation in Ireland rose by 3.7%.

"Electricity prices have risen by 20.5%, the cost of gas has gone up by 14.2%, and home heating oil by 45.7%. The cost of petrol and diesel have gone up by a further 15%. All in the last year.

"A recent Sinn Féin survey, with over 14,000 respondents, has revealed that more than three quarters of the people of this country believe that their mental health is being impacted by the outrageous increase in the cost of living.

"98.5% of all people who responded to the survey believe that the Government is not doing enough to address the crisis in the cost of living.

"Despite the extraordinary rise in the cost of living, wages are staying the same, crippling ordinary workers and their families. If action is not taken immediately, we are going to witness a scenario over the Christmas period, where large numbers of families are going to be forced into the hands of illegal money lenders.

"This is a real problem that needs to be addressed immediately. According to a St. Vincent de Paul

survey of former customers of Provident, a licenced money lending company - which often charged interest rates of more than 186%, but which has since left the Irish market, the most common borrowing needs were household goods, school costs, and food and energy bills.

"This situation is beyond party politics, and I am calling on the three Government TDs in Wicklow to back me in my calls for a crisis action plan that would include- the removal of VAT on energy bills, a scrapping of carbon tax increases, the abolition of third level fees, an emergency energy debt discretionary fund to help families with heating and electricity costs.

"I am also calling for the introduction of an information campaign that will educate individuals as to the dangers of borrowing from illegal money lenders and inform people about low-income-borrowers' access to credit unions.

"I am also calling on the Minister for Social Protection, and the Citizens Information Board to urgently review their decision to cut funding for the Citizens

Information Service in Wicklow Town, which also allows for the provision of a MABS service to the local community out of their offices."



Aughrim artist Eoin O'Connor (right) with Fiona Melrose and Peter Dineen at the opening of his new shop in Gorey.

Cllr. Joe INDEPENDENT
BEHAN



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NO PCR TESTS IN WICKLOW

Continued from page 1...

"I know of child care facilities that have to shut classes due to staff waiting for PCR tests. Parents needing to work are furious that they can't bring in their children to these facilities and some are threatening to withhold payment. This puts the childcare facility in debt or danger of closing. On one hand the government are not providing timely PCR but yet are telling certain people not to do an Antigen tests.

"The idea that the government is considering an increase in restrictions with all the social and economic costs that entails because in part of a lack of testing capacity is shocking. Last booking opportunities for PCR Tests in certain centres can be as early as 4.30pm and none seem to go beyond 7pm. People can go shopping in a Tesco for 24 hours a day yet at this key juncture Government PCR testing is keeping near office hours"

Ciaran Hogan added: "Aontú have been calling on government to approve rapid antigen tests for more than a year. These tests allow people to very quickly confirm if they have transmissible covid infection, and would drastically reduce the pressure on the PCR testing system. It should never have come to this."

A spokesman for Minister Donnelly told *Wicklow Times*: "Demand for tests is at an unprecedented level at the moment. Over the

past seven days 210,000 PCR tests were completed which is a level we once thought would be unimaginable to reach.

"In addition, the HSE is looking to further boost capacity by recruiting additional staff to Community Test Centres and making arrangements with private providers as well as using the National Ambulance Service.

"But they are prioritising people who are referred by a GP and to close contacts of confirmed cases who are identified as requiring a COVID-19 PCR test. It is imperative that these two groups get their test appointment as quickly as possible.

"The high prevalence of COVID in the community is driving the extremely high demands on the Testing System. Of course, it is frustrating for people trying to get tests but there is a point at which the capacity is limited.

"And while Test slots may not be available on the booking portal at a particular point in time the system is constantly monitored and appointments are added throughout the day. It is vital that the public follow the public health guidelines to help drive down the COVID rates in the community. The good news is that, in Wicklow, while cases have risen, it does have the lowest seven day case rate in the country."



John Brady TD at Red Lane in Kilmacanogue

'Proper parking facilities needed in Red Lane area'

Sinn Féin TD John Brady has expressed his dismay at the decision by the National Transport Authority (NTA) to place traffic cones along an area at the bottom of the Red Lane area of Kilmacanogue, close to the entrance to the Glenview Hotel, in order to prevent locals parking there.

Deputy Brady said "The area at the bottom of the Red Lane where the NTA has placed the traffic cones to prevent cars from parking there has been traditionally used by locals wishing to park up as they accessed public transport, or met to car-pool, as there are no park and ride facilities available in the area.

"Locals also use the Red Lane to park their vehicles in the winter months, due to the fact that as homes are situated on steep inclines, heavy frost or ice on surfaces means that many could find themselves stranded at their homes during bad weather.

"This action by the NTA will have the unintended consequence of forcing commuters, who would rather be using public transport or car-pooling, back towards single occupant car journeys, at a time when there is both a huge need and a huge focus on the

need to cut out car journeys due to climate change.

"The NTA needs to provide locals with alternative parking facilities in order to allow them to continue to access public transport.

"The failure to provide park and ride facilities is an issue that affects rural dwellers who wish to avail of public transport across the country. This failure to put in place proper parking provisions illustrates yet again the gap in understanding on behalf of the government of the challenges that face people in rural Ireland when attempting to access public transport."

Deputy Brady concluded: "The decision to block off the partial lay-by used by locals in order to access public transport needs to be reconsidered. Provision needs to be made for proper parking facilities in the area."

Irish Water progresses project to upgrade water supply in Roundwood

Irish Water is currently progressing with the delivery of a significant upgrade to the water supply in Roundwood.

Irish Water says that the delivery of this project will help to provide a safer and more secure water supply for local customers while also supporting future residential and commercial development.

Works will involve the construction of 4km of new water mains and ancillary works along the R764 in Roundwood to the new, state-of-the-art, water treatment plant in Vartry, reducing future issues associated with water quality and providing the community of Roundwood with a secure, safe and robust water supply.

The project, which is being carried out by Ward & Burke under Irish Water's national Leakage Reduction Programme, began last week and is expected to be completed by the end of March 2022.

To facilitate the safe delivery of these works, some traffic management may be necessary to include a stop & go system, however, local and emergency access will be maintained.

Joe Carroll, Water Network Programme Lead with Irish Water, said: "These works are part of a significant investment by Irish Water to safeguard the water supply across Wicklow and we are delighted to progress this important project for Roundwood. The new scheme will see



Vartry Water Treatment Plant

the construction and commissioning of new water mains from Roundwood to Vartry Water Treatment Plant which will ensure a reliable water supply for the local community. Irish Water is committed to providing a safe, secure and sustainable source of drinking water for our customers and this important project will have significant long-term benefits for the area.

"Irish Water and Wicklow County Council will make every effort to maintain normal supply to our customers throughout the delivery of these vital works. Some short-term water interruptions may be necessary, however, the project team will ensure that customers are given a minimum of 48 hours' notice prior to any planned interruptions. Standard working hours

are between 8am and 6pm, with no work anticipated on Sundays or public holidays. Irish Water and Wicklow County Council understand that this type of work may be inconvenient and work crews will make every effort to minimise any disruption these necessary works may cause."

These works are being carried out as part of Irish Water's national

Leakage Reduction Programme which will see €500 million invested up to the end of 2021 to reduce the level of leakage across the country by fixing and replacing ageing water mains.

As part of this programme, Irish Water, in partnership with Wicklow County Council, has delivered approximately 17km of new water mains in Wicklow.

Built heritage funding schemes now open for applications

Owners of eligible buildings in County Wicklow are invited to apply for grants to help protect and conserve historic buildings.

This follows an announcement from the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage of built heritage funding for the conservation of historic properties.

Grants are available under two schemes:
* The Historic Structures Fund (HSF) and
* The Built Heritage Investment Scheme (BHIS).

The closing date for applications is 28th January 2022 see www.wicklow.ie under latest news for full details and application forms.

Commenting on the funding, Cllr Shay Cullen, Cathaoirleach, Wicklow County Council, stated: "This funding allocation is very welcome news for the owners of historic buildings all over the county and will greatly support them in their efforts to look after this important aspect of our Wicklow heritage".

The Built Heritage Investment Scheme (BHIS) and the Historic Structures Fund (HSF) support labour-intensive projects to

repair and conserve our historic built environment. The projects will also provide vital support for local jobs in conservation, traditional skills and construction. Owners or custodians of historic properties are eligible to apply, whether these are community groups, public authorities or private individuals.

Under the BHIS, grants of between €2500 - €15,000 may be allocated to eligible projects. There is also scope under the BHIS to apply for a smaller maintenance grant for works of upkeep to protected structures.

Under the HSF scheme grants of €15,000 to €50,000 are available under Stream 1. This includes a new allocation for historic shopfronts. Allocations of €50,000 up to €200,000 are available under Stream 2 and a new 'Vernacular Building' allocation offers a grant of €5000-€10,000 for repair and conservation of structures of heritage interest which may not be included on the

Record of Protected Structures

"Historic buildings, traditional houses and shopfronts contribute so much to the character and attractiveness of our towns, villages and countryside. It is in everybody's interests that they are repaired and conserved and offering grant funding to owners is a very practical way of achieving this", said Heritage Officer Deirdre Burns.

Wicklow County Council administers the schemes on behalf of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage and is currently inviting applications.

Full details and application forms are available on www.wicklow.ie / latest news, please read carefully. For paper copies (and to return completed applications) please email plandev@wicklowcoco.ie. Postal applications are also accepted to 'HSF/BHIS' Planning Section, Wicklow County Council, County Buildings, Wicklow Town.

Closing date for applications is Fri 28th Jan 2022. For specific queries please email Deirdre Burns Heritage Officer on dburns@wicklowcoco.ie.

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Christmas appeal launched to support Bray Women's Refuge

Social Democrats TD Jennifer Whitmore has launched a Christmas Voucher Appeal for Bray Women's Refuge.

Deputy Whitmore said "I am asking people to show their support for the women and children fleeing domestic violence in Wicklow by purchasing shopping vouchers that the families and the Women's Refuge can then use to hopefully make this Christmas a more special time for them.

"The Bray Women's Refuge is the only refuge in Wicklow and

with rising demand for its services, they need all the support they can get. Not only do they help women and their children who need a safe place to escape violence or the threat of violence, they assist women to understand their legal rights and entitlements and help to increase public awareness on the issues relating to domestic violence.

"Contributing to this Appeal is a great way to engage this Christmas in a worthy cause and something that is so important to families in Wicklow. It's also recognition of the hard work Bray Women's Refuge people do in making our communities safer for women and their children. So much more support is needed and this is one way we can all con-

tribute. I am encouraging people to keep it local by supporting local enterprises and shops when purchasing a voucher.

"Anyone who can support this cause can drop off their shopping vouchers at my constituency office in Greystones on 3 Hillside Road or email me at jennifer.whitmore@oireachtas.ie for any queries."



Pratiksha Kamat

Online meeting explores migrant voting rights

Independent councillor Mags Crean and Pratiksha Kamat held an online community event about migrant voting rights and local government.

The event was attended by members of the migrant community interested in local politics and interested in knowing more about their voting rights.

Cllr Crean explained that "This is an important conversation to raise awareness that every resident in Ireland regardless of their nationality can vote in the local elections and every resident in Ireland can run as a candidate in local elections".

Pratiksha Kamat is supporting the work of the Immigrant Council of Ireland to encourage the migrant community to get involved in local politics.

Pratiksha added that "we need to provide spaces for migrants to learn more about local government in Ireland and how it impacts on our lives and how we can get involved in helping the community".

Wicklow's mortgage market examined in new report

A new detailed mortgage report published last week by Banking & Payments Federation Ireland (BPFI) shows that the average age of home mortgage borrowers continues to increase with the number of first-time buyers (FTBs) aged 30 or under more than halving in the last 16 years.

According to the report, Wicklow had the country's second highest median monthly repayments (excluding self-builds), loan values and property values in the country in most categories (except median FTB loans on new properties, which were higher in Kildare).

The report shows that in H1 2021 the median monthly mortgage repayment for FTBs was €841, more than €300 less than that for a mover purchaser. Dublin had the highest FTB median repayment of €1,107 followed by Wicklow (€1,054), Kildare (€976) and Meath (€942). The counties with the two biggest cities outside Dublin (Cork and Galway) had median repayments between €800 and €900. All other regions had median repayments of less than €730.

According to the report, mover purchasers accounted of 44% of home mortgages in Wicklow in H1 2021 - the highest share in the country.

Looking at the regional breakdown of the mortgage market, Dublin leads the way with

31.3% of home purchase mortgages in the twelve months ending June 2021, while commuter counties Meath, Kildare and Wicklow each had at least 4% of the national market. Outside Dublin and the commuter belt, Cork is the largest single market with 11.7% of mortgages, followed by Galway and Limerick with 4.8% and 3.8% each. The share of mover purchase mortgages varies significantly by region.

Assessing the key role which self-builds are playing in the housing and mortgage market, the report finds that self builds accounted for 37% of FTB mortgages for new properties and almost 47% of mover purchase mortgages for new properties. In most regions (the exceptions are Dublin, Cork, Kildare, Meath and Wicklow), mortgages for self-builds outnumbered mortgages for the purchase of new builds.

Commenting on the findings of the report, Brian Hayes, Chief Executive, BPFI said: "This detailed report provides important

insights into the mortgage market in Ireland and, for the first time gives us a very clear picture of the market across many dimensions, from age and type of house to geographic location."

"The most welcome finding, first of all, is that we can see a strong and full recovery in the mortgage market in H1 2021 following the extreme difficulties that were experienced last year with drawdown figures back to 2019 levels. However, the impact of Covid-19 restrictions continues to be felt on home loans for new properties, with existing houses accounting for close to 50% of the First Time Buyer Market, who in themselves account for a large majority of the overall mortgage market."

"Looking forward however it's encouraging to see from the latest CSO and Department of Housing figures that there were more than 24,000 housing starts and almost 14,000 completions in the first nine months of this year. During that same period our own data shows that BPFI members have been supporting customers with almost 22,000 mortgages approved for FTBs and almost 10,000 for mover purchasers and will continue to support people around the country looking to buy or build their new home."

BOOST YOUR PROTECTION



Booster doses of COVID-19 vaccine are currently being offered to:

- Everyone aged 60 and over
- Healthcare workers

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Your COVID-19 vaccine offers protection against hospitalisation and severe illness from COVID-19, but this protection may weaken over time. Infections and illness in people who are fully vaccinated can happen.

How will I get my booster dose?

- If you are aged 70 or over, you'll be invited for your booster vaccine by your GP.
- If you are aged 60 to 69, you will get a text message from the HSE with a vaccination centre appointment.
- Healthcare workers will be invited for their booster vaccine at their workplace or at a HSE vaccination centre.

It is very important to take your booster appointment when it is offered.

What type of vaccine?

You will be offered a single booster dose of the Pfizer or Moderna vaccine. You can get one of these vaccines even if you already got a different COVID-19 vaccine. You should get your booster dose around 5 months after your last COVID-19 vaccine. If you had COVID-19 since your last vaccine, you should get a booster dose at least 6 months after your positive test.

What about other groups of people?

People with high-risk health conditions and people aged 50-59 will be invited for their booster next. When it is time for your vaccination you will get a text message from the HSE with a vaccination centre appointment.

#ForUsAll

For more information visit hse.ie or freephone 1800 700 700



Rialtas na hÉireann
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Sandra Dunne out taking photos for the new calendar

Fundraising calendar to help complete East Glendalough School's Sports Hall

In 2012, the first sod was turned on the new Sports Hall building at East Glendalough School in Wicklow Town. When completed it will be for the community's use as well as the school's.

Since then, over €150,000 has been raised by the local community through fundraising events, however €40,000 is still needed to complete the build.

A new fundraising project by local woman Sandra Dunne aims to help the school reach that target.

Sandra has put together a new 2022 calendar with stunning photos of some of Wicklow's most beautiful locations and wildlife, and proceeds from its sale will go towards the new sports hall.

"With plenty of time in 2021 due to the lockdown for the first 5 months of the year, I decided to do something positive with this time and produced a calendar showcasing the beautiful nature and scenery around Wicklow," Sandra explains.

"I've included the talented work of a pupil from the school who is also an avid nature lover."

The calendars are sponsored by Gym Plus meaning that all the money from the sales goes towards the building costs.

They are available to buy from East Glendalough School, The Sports Room, Bridge Street Books and The Coffee Shop in Wicklow Town for €10 each.



The new E.G.S. Sports Hall under construction

Clubs to find out successful applications to Sports Capital Grants in New Year

Fine Gael Minister Simon Harris TD has updated local Sports Clubs on the likely publication date for successful applications to the Sports Capital Grant.

Minister Harris said "I have written in support of many Wicklow Sports Capital applications. Our local clubs provide an enormous contribution to the community through extensive volunteerism and it is only right that this be supported through the Sports Capital Programme.

"Grants for 'equipment-only' projects were announced back in August but larger Capital Funding applications are still being assessed.

"The Minister for Sport advises that this assessment work is continuing, and every effort is being made to complete it as quickly as possible. Given the record number of applications received however, it is likely to take a further number of weeks to have these assessments complete with final recommended allocations expected early in the New Year."



'There is something of the marvellous in all things of nature'. Aristotle

2022

One of the photos for the new calendar

Dublin Array applies for licence to carry out marine surveys

RWE Renewables Ireland Ltd. has applied for a licence to carry out further marine surveys at the site of the proposed Dublin Array offshore wind farm.

The application for a Foreshore Licence has been made to the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage and is open to public submissions until 17.30 on December 17th.

The Dublin Array project is a proposed offshore wind farm which will be located on the Kish and Bray Banks approximately 10 kilometres off the coast of South County Dublin and Wicklow. It is being developed by RWE Renewables and Saorgus Energy. The project, which is still in the design stage, will comprise between 45 and 61 turbines and will generate between 600 and 900 megawatts (MW) of clean, renewable energy.

wind farm and the optimal construction approach. The license, if granted, is not a planning consent that allows the project to be constructed.

The Dublin Array project team are hoping to finalise the planning stage design of the project in 2022. As part of this process the team plan to hold another extensive phase of public consultation. After this, a development consent (i.e. planning permission) application will be submitted, most likely towards end of 2022 subject to the proposed new planning system under the Maritime Area Planning legislation being in place at that time.

There will then be a further opportunity for public engagement and comment.



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Plastic from Wicklow's recycling centres turned into litter refuse bags

Wicklow County Council is supporting the development of plastics recycling in Ireland aiming to increase the amount of our plastics reprocessed in Ireland rather than exporting our plastic for recycling.

The Council now sends plastics from our five recycling centres to Shabra Plastics & Packaging in Monaghan who use some of that material to make the green litter bags that are used in our street bins and by groups doing litter clean-up events.

It means that the Council supplies the raw material to make the bags which are then used in our services.

Commenting on the development, Cllr Shay Cullen, Cathaoirleach of Wicklow County Council, said: "It is great to see the processing of recycling plastics is increasingly happening at home, securing jobs in Ireland while ensuring the highest standards in the processing of those materials. I am delighted to see the waste generated in this county being remade into a product that Wicklow County Council can use on a daily basis."

Working with Shabra Plastics Wicklow County Council is creating a circular economy with resources collected from the public in recycling centres coming back for use in the Council's own work programmes.

Shabra Plastics sort the plastics Wicklow County Council sorting them into plastic type and quality. All of the plastics from Wicklow that go to Shabra remain in Ireland for further processing and manufacturing.

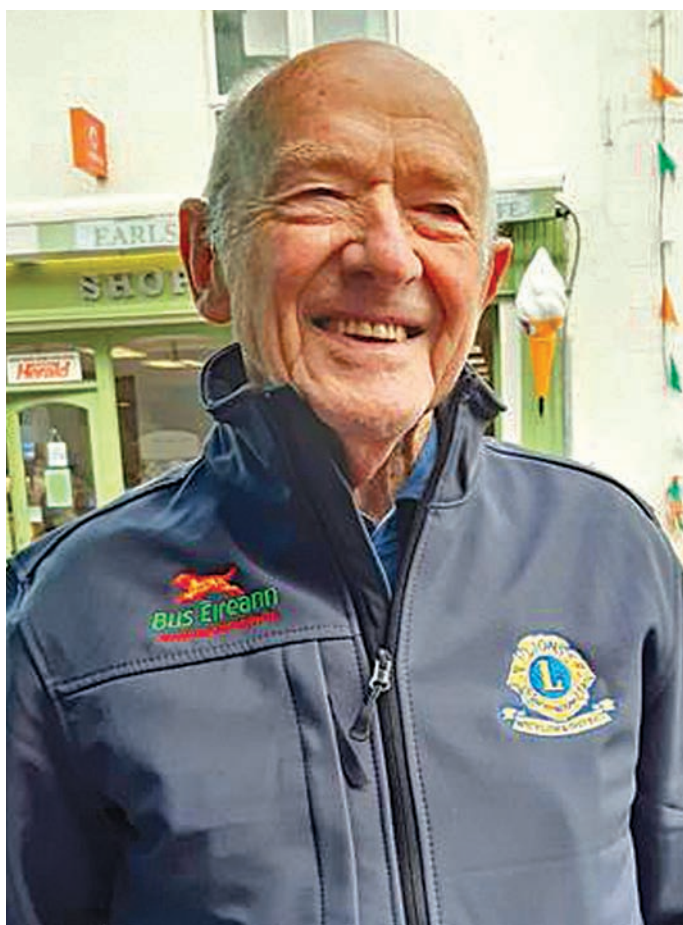
In addition, several packaging and plastics manufacturers now use the plastics from Wicklow's recycling centres to make their products. Companies that use Wicklow's plastics after sorting and processing by Shabra include Waddingtons in Arklow, Holfields in Wexford and the Quinn group.

The plastics are manufactured into a diverse range of packaging materials including bags, containers and trays.

Irish companies are increasingly looking at the carbon emissions impacts of their process as well as responding to consumer



Pictured with refuse bags made from recycled plastic are Cathaoirleach of Wicklow County Council Shay Cullen with Andrew Lawless of Wicklow Tidy Towns and Jim Callery, Environmental Awareness Officer at Wicklow County Council.



90 year old Joe Goode is pictured sporting the new Wicklow and District Lions Club jackets sponsored by Bus Éireann. Bus Éireann is sponsoring new jackets for Wicklow and District Lions Club for 2022. "We are delighted that Bus Éireann are the sponsors of our new jackets for 2022," said Sean Olohan, President of Wicklow and District Lions Club. "Just as members of our club go above and beyond to support charitable activities in our local communities, Bus Éireann also plays an important role in connecting our towns and villages across County Wicklow. From our recent Diabetes Awareness Day and school 'peace poster' competition to our quiz nights in support of Wicklow RNLI and Wicklow Tidy Towns, we hope members of the public keep an eye out for our new jackets and continue to support our local fundraisers, especially our upcoming Christmas Food Appeal."

demand for sustainable products. There is a growing market for good quality plastics so that manufacturers can increase the recycled content in their packaging.

The Wicklow recycling centres produce a high-quality recycling material which is due to the effort the public put into cleaning and separating materials for recycling ensuring that plastic, as with other materials, are of the highest quality suitable for remaking into new materials.

Wicklow County Council received its first batch of recycled bags this month from Shabra Plastics and was delighted with their strength and quality. "As part of local government's commitment to lead on Climate Action we are looking at the resources we use," said Jim Callery, Environmental

Awareness Officer, adding: "Greening our procurement is part of that process. Through green procurement we can improve the sustainability of our purchases lowering consumption of virgin materials and as an important added bonus we support Irish jobs."

Andrew Lawless of Wicklow Tidy Towns said that the public have long had concerns about the export of our waste plastic to distant countries for recycling. He stated: "It is lovely to see a closed loop where plastic waste from Wicklow can be made into a product to be used again in the County. Wicklow Tidy Towns is delighted to be the first volunteer group in County Wicklow to try out the new bags for the work we do in Wicklow Town".

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Matthews criticises 'empty rhetoric' on climate action

"What we are doing here is protecting my children, your children, your grandchildren and every child not born yet in this country."

Speaking in the Dail last week on the Government's Climate Action Plan, Green Party TD Steven Matthews was critical of what he described as "rhetoric and complete inaction" from opposition parties when it comes to their plans on climate action and their criticism "just for the sake of criticism".

He said that decisions on climate go beyond the next election cycle and that bravery and not populism is needed by politicians to take action on climate change.

During his contribution, Deputy Matthews praised the ambition of the recently published Climate Action Plan. He acknowledged the challenges that it will pose but maintained that actions outlined in the plan are completely necessary. However, he stressed that the reason it needs to be so ambitious is down to the successive failings of previous Governments to take substantive action in the last 20 years.

Deputy Matthews went on to highlight the average age of the TDs in the Dail as being approximately 50 years old - using this point to highlight that most of the negative consequences of climate change are unlikely to impact on them directly. Deputy Matthews outlined "Most of us won't be around when the real horrors of climate change hit this country. Most of us won't be around when farmers are having trouble farming on flooded land. Most of us won't be around when sea level rises impact our coastal communities. Most of us won't be around when parts of the planet will be hugely challenged by mass migration - when parts of the planet won't be liveable."

Deputy Matthews stressed that these decisions are difficult and may not be popular when it comes to the next election but emphasised that the climate action plan goes above politics and keeping your seat. He criticised politicians



Steven Matthews TD

for only keeping their eye on the next 5 or 10-year election cycle and instead highlighted that the climate crisis needs to be tackled, reiterating that "What we are doing here is not for us. It's not for our political gain or careers. It's not about anyone looking to keep

their seat or lose their seat - what we are doing here is protecting my children, your children, your grandchildren and for every child not even born yet in this country. We are doing this so that in the next 20 or 30 years they have the chance to grow up in a country that won't be hammered by climate change".

Deputy Matthews concluded by welcoming some of the recent criticism of the climate action plan by opposition TDs but was highly critical that they were not suggesting alternatives and instead using their speaking time to just criticise for the sake of it. In his closing remarks he called for the opposition to work with the Government on tackling the climate crisis as it is not a partisan issue and requires cross-party co-operation.

12-year-old Wicklow girl calls for support for children with a cancer diagnosis

Anna Mae Doyle from Wicklow is calling on locals to support Cancer Fund For Children through the Santa Cause Appeal.

Anna Mae, age 12, lives with her mum Ciara her dad Ken her older sister Erin who is 14 and her brother Ryan aged 18. In July 2020 Anna Mae was diagnosed with Osteosarcoma, a bone cancer in her leg and began treatment straight away.

Along her journey Anna Mae and her family have been greatly supported by Cancer Fund for Children which is why she is keen to promote the cause so that other children and families like hers can benefit.

Cancer Fund for Children are currently fundraising to build Daisy Lodge for Mayo - an eight-suite therapeutic short breaks facility on the shores of Lough Corrib, near the village of Cong for children with a cancer diagnosis and their families. Planning permission has been secured by Cancer Fund for Children (CFFC), the charity behind Daisy Lodge, and construction is set to commence in the next 24 months.

The motivation to build the centre is driven by the experience of a similar



Anna Mae Doyle

centre, Daisy Lodge Newcastle Co. Down which was built in 2015. This new project in Mayo will double the capacity for these families affected by cancer and effectively ensure that no child in Ireland will face cancer alone.

"My treatment plan was 29 weeks of chemotherapy," says Anna Mae. "I had 10 weeks of chemo, then I had my operation to get a prosthesis put in. Three-quarters of my leg bone was removed, and I had a metal bar put in to replace my femur. Then I

had 19 more weeks of chemo just to make sure all the cancer cells were gone. On the 8th of April, I had my last chemo and I rang the bell!"

For such a young girl Anna Mae speaks very eloquently about how cancer changed her life but focuses on the good things that came out of her journey including the amazing people she has met on the way.

The highlight of her journey, was her stay at Daisy Lodge in Newcastle with her family of which she says "it really brought us together and helped us feel like a normal family again."

With your support Cancer Fund for Children can continue to provide a lifeline of therapeutic short breaks to families like Penny's struggling to cope with a childhood cancer diagnosis, whilst they continue to raise funds to build a new Daisy Lodge in Co. Mayo.

To get involved in Cancer Fund for Children's Santa Cause and support children like Anna Mae, go to cancerfundforchildren.ie.



Aughrim based artist Eoin O'Connor is pictured with Arklow sisters Bernie Fitzgerald, Pauline Fitzgerald and Deirdre Kelleher at the opening of his new shop in Gorey.

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A Government of Ireland initiative



Santa Claus from Holyhead touring Greystones on his sleigh before the Christmas Lights being switched on. Pic: John McGowan

Holyhead Santa comes to Greystones

Greystones is now officially ready for Christmas following the switching on of the Christmas lights on Saturday 20th November.

Santa arrived from Holyhead, which is twinned with Greystones, along with other visitors.

There was a Santa Claus Parade throughout the streets and housing estates of Greystones. Starting at 4pm Santa's Sleigh began at Eden Gate and included Charlesland, Delgany Wood, Beechbrook, Seagreen and Redford Park to name a few. The children of Greystones were encouraged to come and wave at Santa as he passes by.

The Light Up Greystones event was streamed live on the greystones.ie facebook page for people to watch from the comfort of their own home.

This special event was

presented by Anna Daly and Laura Wood with special appearances from Dustin the Turkey, Bressie and performances from Ross Scanlon, Dylan Crampton and DoMiSo music school. There will be special messages from Santa Claus as he officially turns on the Greystones Christmas lights.

Throughout the town also look out for creative festive windows and don't forget you can post your letters to Santa in his special post box at the Meridian centre. For more information about these exciting activities and to find out the full list of locations on Santa's parade visit greystones.ie

on Instagram and Facebook.

"I would like to pass on the thanks from our Holyhead visitors who were with us," said Kathleen Kelleher. "They were very impressed by our town and what it has to offer. They received a very warm welcome from all the town. And, of course, the Holyhead Santa was a big feature with all the boys and girls."

"The contingent was able to meet with Wicklow County Council officials and members of the Greystones Town Team. Light Up Greystones 2021 was a collaborative effort of many of the groups in our

town. It was a huge success and was an outstanding start to the Christmas season in Greystones."

Holyhead Mayor Richard Parry and Deputy Mayor Adrienne Edwards were part of the contingent. Mayor Parry said "Well done to all in Greystones for a wonderful Light Up Greystones 2021."

"All of us who were with you for the event would like to say thank you. We were all greeted very warmly. We will be going back to Holyhead with fond memories and warm friendships. You live in a most exciting town and we look forward to further visits."

Santa's Post Box magically returns to Delgany Village

Our reliable source from the North Pole reports that Mr. Claus has been very pleased with the continued good behaviour of the children in Delgany during 2021 so he had his elves return the special Express Post letter box to Delgany Village, right outside the Delgany Mini Mart.

His elves once again contacted the Delgany Tidy Towns to help organise this and the box is installed and ready to accept your letters!

All your letters for Santa can be posted in this magic mail box and they will be sent express post directly to the North Pole! Our North Pole source tells us that Santa particularly enjoys hearing about what presents children would like and seeing their Christmas drawings.

For children to receive a reply from Santa they need to address their letters; Santa, North Pole and are reminded to please include a parents email address. Santa letters can then be placed in the magical post box, with families encouraged to lodge their letters before December 20th so Santa can reply before loading up his sleigh.

The Christmas post box is located outside the Delgany Mart.



Gifts for a Lifetime this Christmas

We're always rightly reminded at this time of year that the gift of a puppy is for life, not just for Christmas.

That's equally true for the goats, pigs, chickens and other livestock that's bought annually by Irish people who support Self Help Africa's increasingly popular 'Lifetime Gifts' seasonal charity campaign.

The animals, improved breed livestock that are reared at community level in the organisation's African programme countries can have a transformational effect on the lives of local families.

In the past decade, people from Wicklow have sponsored breeding programmes that have distributed hundreds of cattle, goats, pigs, sheep, chicks and guinea fowl and numerous beehives to small-scale farming households across sub-

Saharan Africa.

And the charity's alternative Christmas gifts have also supported the distribution of bicycles to farm advisors and community-based paravets, has provided thousands of kilos of improved quality crop seed to farmers, and has provided hundreds of African families with new fruit trees and vegetable gardens.

With the countdown to Christmas now well underway, seasonal shoppers are being invited once more to give gifts that can have a lasting impact, both at home, and amongst some of the poorest in the world.

As the coronavirus pandemic has pushed more and more of our

buying online, Self Help Africa has stocked its 'Lifetime Gifts' web shop with a range of great products, that each come with thoughtful gift cards and e-cards for the friends and relatives in whose name their 'virtual' gifts are being bought.

Why not fill those seasonal stockings with cards to show that you've invested in chicks, goats and piglets for families in Ethiopia and Malawi, have helped plant stands of tree seedlings that will provide food, shelter and protect the environment in Uganda, or have bought beehives in Burkina Faso and farm tools and seed, to help families in Zambia grow more on their land.

Self Help Africa is Ireland's leading development organisation working with rural poor communities to increase

the productivity and income potential of Africa's millions of small-holder farmers. The organisation is the official charity of the Irish Farmers Association.

'Lifetime Gifts' range in price from €12 for vitamin packed sweet potato vines, and €15 for improved quality seed, to piglets and goats for €30, beehives for €35, farm tools and bicycles for €70, and a whole host more.

All 'Lifetime Gifts' come with a corresponding gift card that is sent to you or to your intended gift recipient on your behalf. Alternatively, you can select and send an e-card to your loved one straight away!

To find out more about Self Help Africa's 'Lifetime Gifts' for 2021 go to selfhelpafrica.org/ie/shop for more information

Two hours free parking during Christmas period in Wicklow Town

Shoppers can enjoy two hours free Christmas parking in all Pay and Display Parking areas in Wicklow town from now until Saturday, 1st January 2022.

There's free parking at the Murrrough and St Manntains Car Park for the Christmas period and shop owners and staff are encouraged to use these car parks to free up spaces for their customers in the Abbey Street, Church Street Car Parks and the Main Street.

The initiative on special Christmas parking arrangements was agreed by the Cathaoirleach and Members of Wicklow Municipal District.

Cathaoirleach Cllr Gail Dunne invited people to avail of the free parking over the Christmas period saying: "It's an excellent opportunity to shop local and support Wicklow for the festive season and enjoy a wonderful shopping experience in Wicklow Town, where social distancing can be more easily practiced than in

larger urban centres".

Please note the Traffic Wardens will continue to monitor and enforce illegal parking during this time.

Loading Bay restricted hours between 9am to 12 noon, Monday to Friday, will also still apply.

Trial One Way System Update

Following feedback from local businesses, members of the public, the Wicklow Town & District Chamber of Commerce and Wicklow Municipal District Elected Representatives, a number of alterations have been made to the one way system and further changes will be made over the coming days that will result in 19 additional parking spaces, including extra disability spaces. Furthermore a wider traffic lane is also being introduced together with additional signage.

Best Dressed Window

Wicklow Municipal District together with Wicklow Town & District Chamber of Commerce will sponsor the Best Dressed Christmas Window Competition.

The winner and runner-up will receive a Christmas Hamper and Wicklow Town Vouchers. This year the winners will be decided by members of the public by online voting. Details can be found on Wicklow Town Facebook page. There is no need to formally enter the competition, but retailers must have their displays ready by Monday, 13th December.

Wicklow Town & District Chamber of Commerce President Matt Forkin added that "the window displays provide a happy and festive welcome to our town encouraging people to Shop Local, Support Wicklow and at the same time creating a wonderful Christmas atmosphere in the town"

Is Ireland's most Christmassy home in Wicklow?

Energia has launched its annual competition to find 'Ireland's Most Christmassy Home'.

Now in its sixth year, Energia is looking for households in Wicklow to enter the competition to be crowned 'Ireland's Most Christmassy Home' and be in with the chance to win up to €6,000 for their chosen charity.

To enter, simply share a photograph of your home decorated for the festive season. Full details on how to enter are available at: www.energia.ie/imch

To date, Energia has donated €36,000 to charities across Ireland on behalf of the winners, and this year that figure will rise to €48,000. Previous winners have donated to charities including Alzheimer's Action, Arklow RNLI, and Wexford Homecare Hospice.

The winner will receive €6,000 for the charity of their choice, while the second and third place runners up will receive €4,000 and €2,000 respectively. In addition to the charity donation, Energia will also gift each of the finalists a €500 Smart Home Store voucher.

Households have until midnight on the 5th of December to submit a photograph of their outdoor Christmas decorations and light dis-

plays online to enter. Energia's elves will then review all applications and select 6 finalists before announcing the shortlist on Monday the 13th of December. Members of the public will then be able to vote for their favourite home by SMS up until Sunday, December 19th. The winners will be announced on Monday, December 20th.



LEGACY MONTH

Will them well

Consider leaving a legacy gift in your will

My Legacy, an umbrella group of 80 Irish charities, is calling on the people of Wicklow to consider making their will this, and to consider including a legacy gift for a cause they care about. The group are asking people to 'grow their legacy' as part of this year's My Legacy Month campaign, which was officially launched by renowned gardener Diarmuid Gavin earlier this month.

My Legacy Month is an annual campaign that seeks to remind people of the importance of making a will and generates awareness about legacy giving as

a sustainable way to support a charity. Throughout November, My Legacy has been encouraging people to take time to think about their wishes and to take

three simple steps to make their will.

3 Simple Steps to Writing a Will

According to My Legacy, the three simple

steps involved in writing a will are:

1. Make an appointment with a solicitor: A solicitor will give expert advice and support. This is the first step to discuss your wishes and decisions for the future.

2. Look after loved ones first: A will provides for loved ones, assigns guardians, protects assets, and helps reduce inheritance tax.

3. Consider a legacy gift to charity: If you have a cause close to your heart, consider leaving a gift to that charity in your will. A gift may be big or small and is tax free.

Aoife Garvey, Chairperson of My Legacy and Head of Acquisition at Concern Worldwide, says that by remembering a charity in their will, the people of Wicklow can support communities across the world: "Throughout the challenges of the pandemic, Irish charities have continued to provide essential services and support to the most vulnerable people in our society here at home and the wider world."

"The act of leaving a legacy gift to a cause you care about, even a small gift, can have a huge impact for a charity and the people, animals or communities they support. When we think about philanthropy or legacy-giving, we might imagine that it's something that the rich and famous do, but the truth is for a charity and for its beneficiaries, a legacy gift from someone here in Wicklow is just as important to help them protect their services and to be prepared for the challenges of the future."

My Legacy was established in 2006 by a small group of notable Irish charities and has now grown to an umbrella group of 80 Irish charities working together to make legacy-giving the norm in Ireland.

My Legacy asks people to consider leaving a legacy gift to a favourite charity, once family and friends have been taken care of and all other important personal decisions have been made. Further information on how to make a will and the My Legacy Month campaign is available at www.mylegacy.ie



Pictured are Paul McKnight, Anne Marie Daly, Julie Brennan, and Mark Felton of Felton McKnight Solicitors. Felton McKnight Solicitors LLP were recently awarded with the Quality Assurance Award due to their excellent performance. This award was on foot of their office being independently audited by the Institute of Legal Research & Standard. (ILRS). They are a general practice providing legal services of an excellent standard to our local community in all areas such as Family Law, Conveyancing, Personal Injury, Wills & Probate, Employment Law, Powers of Attorney and Mental Capacity Law.

Why you should talk to your solicitor

"Perhaps the most obvious reason you would consider talking to your solicitor would be in the event that you wish to buy or sell your house. You may also consider talking to your solicitor in the event that you wish to make a will," says Mark Felton of Felton McKnight Solicitors in Greystones.

"Most solicitors will be able to provide these services and will be happy to do so. However, the level of services solicitors can provide goes well beyond these two core areas. For example, your solicitor can assist you with the preparation of an Enduring Power of Attorney which is a document that you can sign to set out who it is you wish to have your permission to manage your affairs for you if you should become incapable of doing that for yourself as a result of losing your mental capacity at some stage.

"Buying and selling businesses, letting property, Employment Law problems and family Law matters are all areas of law that your solicitor can also provide expert advice about, not to mention offering assistance in the event that you were injured through no fault of your own.

"You can talk to your solicitor in confidence in the knowledge that everything you say is strictly confidential, which is a very important part of the solicitor client arrangement. If you have concerns or need sound legal advice you can talk to your solicitor and they will be happy to assist you."



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Wills & Probate

Enduring Power of Attorney



Eilish Bradshaw
 Partner, Conveyancing & Probate Department

Our Elder Law Department provides advice for wills and estate planning. We can also advise and assist with putting plans in place for later life or dealing with the possibility of incapacity through ill-health. Our dedicated practitioners can meet with you in your home or at our office to discuss your plans.

Contact eilish@benvillrobinson.ie and kaley@benvillrobinson.ie for all your Wills & Probate related queries.



Avondale Community College Principal Elaine Fitzgerald, and Head Teacher Lilly Tobin present past pupil Lubna Azmat with the school's Outstanding Achievement Award. Lubna is in her second year studying medicine in UCD.

Wicklow teens share inspiring stories at event marking World Children's Day

Wicklow teenagers Angelica Foley and Franny Raven took to the stage at the RDS in Dublin recently for Child Talks, an annual event hosted by the Ombudsman for Children's Office to mark World Children's Day.

After a devastating 18 months for children and young people, Child Talks 2021 gives children an opportunity to have their say on the impact the pandemic has had on their mental health, Direct Provision, scoliosis, gender equality, climate change and a range of other issues.

Angelica from Arklow discussed fast fashion and how she struggled to make a personal difference in the face of such a huge global issue.

Franny, from Redcross, told a story about her daily struggle with people that led to her leaving school early. However during lockdown, a passion

for animals inspires her to reach out, make friends and reconnect with the world again.

In keeping with this year's theme, children aged 10 to 17 shared their Hopes for the Future and called on those in positions of power to listen and to learn from what they have to say.

Dr Niall Muldoon, the Ombudsman for Children said: "Children have been through so much since March 2020 - they have missed out, fallen behind and taken the blame. The theme of this year's Child Talks is My Hopes for the Future and it is inspiring to hear how our young people are dealing with challenges and looking forward. This year's speakers bring so much hope and positivity highlighting the strength of our young people."

Child Talks 2021 was presented by former speakers Katherine Amusan (17) and Oisín Putt (19) and it was watched by students in classrooms across the country.

Dunlavin school takes on challenge to 'Build the Future'

The Construction Industry Federation (CIF) in association with Sherry FitzGerald is launching a national competition for senior cycle students called 'CIF Build the Future - Schools Challenge,' which can be entered via cif.ie/cifchallenge.

In Wicklow, St. Kevin's Community College Dunlavin has submitted its application along with over sixteen schools and 40 teams nationwide who have already entered within a month of the competition opening.

Aimed at Transition Year students, it is a team-based project where students work together to design a residential housing development help address sustainability, climate change, solve the housing crisis and showcase innovation in construction. The submitted designs will need to be eco-friendly, affordable. The competition will run until March 1st 2022 with judging taking place until mid-March.

The winning team will present their designs at the Ireland Skills Live Event in the RDS. In addition, they will receive a day's "Construction Experience" provided by Technical University Dublin and a TOPCON Complete construction package to include most up to date laser equipment and 1/2

day instruction, as well as a prize for each of team members.

The second team selected will also present their design at Ireland Skills Live Event in RDS in March 2022 and a TOPCON Construction package to include the latest equipment plus a half day's instruction with individual prizes for each team member.

The third team selected will also present their design at Ireland Skills Live Event in RDS in March 2022 and receive TOPCON measuring equipment, along a prize for each team member.

All entries and team members will receive a certificate of merit in recognition of their work.

This programme was developed by the CIF in collaboration with TUI, the Techno Teachers Association Ireland, the Engineering Technology Teachers Association and the Institute of Guidance Counsellors. This programme is designed to complement current teaching and career guidance principles.

CIF's Director General, Tom Parlon stated "There's a clear career path from building site to boardroom for those who want it. We saw how last year's competition celebrated the creativity and purpose that's sometimes taken for granted in the construction industry. We're marrying young people's concerns about homelessness, climate change and inclusivity with construction to demonstrate that a career can make a difference and have a real purpose."

Mark FitzGerald, Chairman, Sherry FitzGerald encouraged the students to be creative in their approach as "Every generation in Ireland will benefit from your creativity and your ideas."

He said "We need to build a better and more sustainable society through the built environment. We've got many of the big things right in Ireland, but we've underestimated the challenge of getting the built environment right. It is the biggest challenge of the 21st century. You don't just need accommodation; you need really interesting jobs and careers. This is your country, this is your society. We owe it to your generation to give you the opportunity to make a difference."

Open letter to Harris and Donnelly asks for in-person examinations to be cancelled

An undergraduate and postgraduate student from Trinity College Dublin, László Molnárfi and Gisèle Scanlon, have written an open letter to Minister for Higher Education Simon Harris and Minister for Health Stephen Donnelly asking that in-person examinations for Semester 1 be cancelled across Irish universities due to serious student and staff wellbeing concerns.

As of Friday, within 72 hours of the letter being made available online, the letter had been co-signed by over 5,000 students and academic staff from across Ireland's Higher Education sector.

László Molnárfi and Gisèle Scanlon say that between 150 and 300 students in any individual exam could be potentially affected either through awaiting a PCR test or being a close contact or being symptomatic.

"We don't believe that this is fair to undergraduate students who will have to attend and we don't think that this is fair to postgraduate students who are invigilating the exams day in, day out," they say.

The letter states: "We, the undersigned, are writing to you based on our grave concerns around the treatment of undergraduate and postgraduate students,

academic, professional and support staff in the sudden return to in-person exams across the third level college sector in Ireland for semester 1 of 2021, perpetuated by the national guidelines, or lack of, by the Irish Universities Association (IUA) and the Irish government.

"We consider the way assessments are being currently planned to be held in Irish Universities a health and wellbeing crisis of the utmost urgency which requires immediate action. This is an emergency situation which will have severely detrimental effects on the wellbeing of all members of our College communities.

After 1.5 years of online learning, a sudden return to in-person exams would be

catastrophic for the mental health of students. In Trinity College Dublin, for example, counselling services averaged over 100 on the waiting list and waiting times of 40+ days during the build-up to exams last year (2020). This will become even worse this year. Our international students, who rely on this service more than any other cohort, will be left to fend for themselves with no weekend or overnight crisis support currently available, and so will many others. With 33.9% of students saying that their mental health worsened due to Covid-19 according to a Union of Students Ireland (USI) poll in their pre-budget submission for 2022, mental health must be a key consideration in any decision-making.

"Furthermore, since many Colleges continued with online education for a big portion of Semester 1, students are wholly unprepared. This will further worsen the impending mental health crisis, if a decision is not made by the Government to immediately cancel in-person exams and replace them with their online counterparts. To this day, online classes are being held in universities, barring the obvious example of Trinity College Dublin, such as in NUI Galway.

"This is not to mention that students from the countryside are disadvantaged, as they will have to travel up from their homes in crowded public transport, and spend hours in cramped exam halls with a lot of different people. Packing hundreds of people in examination centers

poses a serious Covid-19 danger, both for students and student staff and academic and professional staff who invigilate, considering the rapidly rising cases. Yesterday, on the 20th of November 2021, there were 5,959 new cases.

"This raises another question. What do we do with students who are feeling unwell? A student being facilitated online whilst the rest of the class is sitting the exam in person is an obvious inequity. The student who has to travel to the physical exam is disadvantaged having to use public transport and then to sit in a hall full of students, which would mean possible exposure to the virus.

"At a time when there are but a few weeks left until Christmas and students will be travelling home to families across the country and abroad, there are serious worries by the student and staff community alike that a student might catch Covid-19 or develop long-Covid. Exam plans currently in-place could inadvertently facilitate a 'super-spreader' event, since many participants will be in contact with each other outside of their restricted class sizes which have been in place until now. Trinity College Dublin, plans to facilitate 12,696 in-person examinations in the RDS Simmonscourt examination center which will operate at 60% capacity, accommodating 1,600 students, including those from University College Dublin (UCD), per session for two sessions a day.

"Similarly, serious ill-

ness and even death could befall physically-vulnerable people of our communities, such as those with autoimmune diseases, who in many cases were not even able to attend physical lectures until now, if people are essentially forced into the examination halls come assessment time. According to the USI's mental health report from September 2019, 28.1% of those surveyed for mental health across Ireland's study body had at least one type of disability. In Trinity College Dublin, 10% of the total student population is registered with the disability service, and as per the Higher Education Authority's (HEA) statistics, in the academic year of 2018-2019 students registered with disability support services represented 6.2% of the total student population in higher education.

"Finally, unions are worried that if someone falls sick in the exam hall, the wait times at the hospitals will make it difficult to get them help. In a recent case, a student had to get an ambulance on-campus of Trinity College Dublin and was told of a 6-hour waiting time. Considering all this, is it not better then, to err on the side of caution?

"We have endured so much uncertainty throughout the pandemic as students, academics and education support professionals, we would like a clear decision which would allow us to plan and stay safe and contribute to protecting our family and friends safety as national numbers rise and we approach Christmas.



Simon Harris, TD, Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation & Science meets with Creating Our Future Ambassadors Emilie Pine, Professor of Modern Drama at UCD, and author of the No.1 non-fiction bestseller *Notes to Self* and Professor Luke O'Neill, Chair of Biochemistry, Trinity College Dublin. Over 10,000 ideas have been submitted to Creating Our Future ahead of the 30th November deadline for ideas. Pic: Jason Clarke

2021 PURE MILE SUCCESS

Due to Covid-19, the annual Pure Mile Gala Evening, which would usually attract hundreds of Pure Mile Volunteers, was unfortunately cancelled this year. However, Pure consider it important to celebrate the hard work and achievements of all the Pure Mile Volunteers in Cleaning Up The Wicklow/Dublin Uplands.



The Ballyteige, Ballinatombay, Ballinabarney, and Wheeler's Road Pure Miles

The Pure Mile is an environmental, community, heritage initiative, established by the Pure Project, which encourages communities and groups living in rural areas of Wicklow, South Dublin and Dun-Laoghaire, to adopt a mile of road, or miles of road, in their local area, or in the Wicklow/Dublin Uplands and organise litter picks, clean-ups, anti-dumping campaigns, research information about their local wildflowers, plants, trees, animals, and the built, cultural, and social heritage of an area.

2021 was the twelfth year of the Pure Mile, with the largest number of groups and volunteers involved in the project since it was established in 2009. In the first year the Pure Mile had 6 miles of road (9.6 kilometres), and over the years the project has grown extensively to over 200 communities, groups, scouts, beavers, primary schools, secondary schools, walking groups, cycling groups, running groups, businesses and organisations, who collectively improved and enhanced over 800 miles (1,280 kilometres), of road, mountains, woodlands, valleys, forestries, upland amenities, car parks, and beaches, with the removal of tonnes of illegal dumping and litter from the

Wicklow/Dublin Uplands. Over 2,000 litter picks and clean-ups were organised in 2021 and additional projects included, natural heritage, built heritage, community, biodiversity, and education.

The groups ranged from all over Wicklow, South Dublin and Dun-Laoghaire and each one will receive a Pure Mile Certificate of Participation, and all will be included in the popular Pure Mile Calendar, which will also be launched this month.

Minister for Health, Stephen Donnelly T.D., commented on the success of Pure Mile 2021,

'The tremendous work done by the Pure Mile Project has been a remarkable success story since it started 12 years ago. Never before have so many people taken advantage of the stunning countryside we have in this country. As a direct result of getting out to enjoy the mountains, lakes and beaches more of us are starting to appreciate just how precious it is and why it needs to be protected. The record numbers of volunteers and the ever-increasing number of areas now being cleared of litter and rubbish by the scheme is helping to transform our great outdoors. I can't praise highly enough the team behind the project and the thousands of Pure Mile

Volunteers from over 200 communities who took time out to collect rubbish from our roads, fields, hedgerows, and uplands, over the past year. It really is making an important difference.'

Mr. Frank Curran, CEO Wicklow County Council commented, 'For over fifteen years, the Pure Project has proven extremely successful in tackling the issue of illegal dumping, engaging with communities, and creating environmental awareness. I would like to congratulate all of the Pure Mile Volunteers in keeping the Wicklow/Dublin Uplands Clean, the way it should be, and I wish the project continued success into the future.'

Cathaoirleach for Wicklow County Council, Cllr. Shay Cullen also commented,

'I would like to thank The Pure Mile team and in particular Ian Davis for his dedication and enthusiasm. The Pure project is going from strength to strength and this can only happen with wonderful volunteers throughout the County, who have grown the project since its conception in 2009 to the countywide success that it now is. They are an inspiration to us all and an example of how we can all do a little to make a big difference to our local

community and environment.'

The Pure Mile is the perfect opportunity for communities and groups who want to make a positive contribution to their locality and environment, and assists people in improving and enhancing the place they live in, or recreate in. Special interest groups such as, walking groups, cycling groups,



The Cool Killer Cows Whisperers Pure Mile group

scout groups, businesses, and organisations, adopt a mile, or miles of road, in the Wicklow/Dublin Uplands and help Pure to Clean Up The Uplands. Pure provide all groups with Pure Mile signage, Pure Mile bags, gloves, litter pickers and Pure Mile high-vis vests, and they also remove all of the rubbish collected by the groups.

Ian Davis, Pure Project Manager commented on the success and growth of the 2021 Pure Mile,



Eight-year-old Amira Morgan Darcy was honoured by the Pure Project who made her the first Wicklow Pure Mile Youth Ambassador

'The Pure Mile has grown every year and we now have thousands of volunteers involved in the project. Due to Covid-19 we saw an increase in volunteers getting involved with more people out walking their local roads, rediscovering their local areas, becoming more aware of their natural environment and landscape, the flora and fauna, and appreciating

hedges, and drains, and they have made a huge difference to the areas they live in, or recreate in.'

Twenty-Three Pure Mile groups will receive Certificates of Recognition for their efforts and a cash prize of €250, with a total of €5,750 distributed to groups which will further assist them in their local projects to improve and enhance the

Ballyduff Pure Miles - Litter Free / Community, Barndarrig Pure Miles - Litter Free / Community, Barnbawn Pure Miles - Anti-Dumping, Greenan Pure Miles - Anti-Dumping, Trooperstown Pure Miles - Anti-Dumping, Ballyramond and District Community Group Pure Miles - Anti-Dumping, Old Boley Glencree Pure Miles - Clean Up The Uplands, Rathdangan Pure Miles - Clean Up The Uplands, Lackan Pure Miles - Clean Up The Uplands, Glencormack/Killough/Little Newtown/Rocky Valley Drive Pure Miles - Clean Up The Uplands, Glencree Walking Group/Atha Cliath Cleanup The Uplands Team Pure Miles - Clean Up The Uplands, Tuckmill Lower Pure Miles - Clean Up The Uplands, Ballyteige Wheeler's Lane B a l l i n a t o m b a y Ballinabarney Pure Miles - Heritage Interpretation, Stratford on Slaney Pure Miles - Community, Beech Road/Millennium Road/Love Lane/Shelton Pure Miles - Community, St. Mary's College Arklow Pure Miles TY Group-Education, Michael Cullen (Rampere/Raheen Pure Miles) - Individual Award, Amira's Pure Miles - Pure Mile Youth Ambassador 2021.

Pure was launched in

2006 and since that date it has proven extremely successful, in both reducing illegal dumping, and engaging with all demographics in society. It's the first project of its kind in Ireland involving a multi stakeholder approach collaboration with, the Department of Environment, Climate and Communications, Wicklow County Council, South Dublin County Council, Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Council, Coillte, National Parks & Wildlife Service, and the Wicklow Uplands Council.

If any groups, communities, individuals, schools, walking groups, cycling groups, scouts, businesses, anyone, wants to get involved in next years Pure Mile, they can contact Pure at info@pureproject.ie or download and application from pureproject.ie/what-we-do/the-pure-mile/. You can also write to; Pure Project, Wicklow Mountains, National Park, Kilafin, Laragh, Bray, Co. Wicklow and they will post out all the information or request an application form and information pack by phoning Pure on 0404 45547.

Pure would like to congratulate and thank all of the 2021 Pure Mile Groups Further information on Pure can be found on www.pureproject.ie



The St. Mary's College Arklow PURE Mile group



The Lackan Pure Mile group

December at Mermaid

THEATRE

Rise Productions Presents Fight Night

FRIDAY 3rd December | 8pm (€18/16)

Winner of Best Actor and Bewley's Little Gem awards at Dublin Fringe, and nominated Best New Play at the Irish Times Theatre Awards, Aonghus Óg McAnally returns with his smash hit solo show Fight Night by Gavin Kostick for a 10th Anniversary nationwide tour. A gripping journey charting the comeback of Dan Coyle Jr, a failed amateur boxer living in the shadows of his overbearing father and his brother's Olympic success. After years out of the ring, the birth of his own son reignites his competitive fire, and he takes the first tentative steps on his road to redemption. This fast-paced and engaging solo performance combines intense physicality with a deeply emotional storytelling experience that will leave audiences both exhausted and exhilarated.



MUSIC

Redmond O'Toole

SUNDAY 5th December | 3pm (€16/14)

Bray native Redmond O'Toole presents a program focusing on masterpieces for the guitar from the 20th century. The concert will explore the legacies of the instrument's greatest virtuosos and their most successful collaborations with composers.



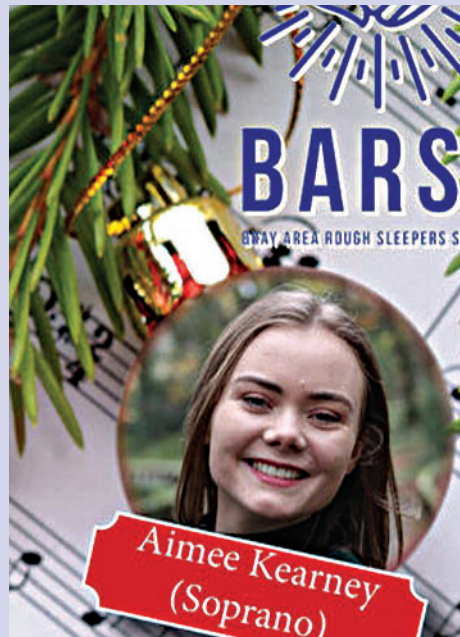
MUSIC

Festive Christmas Concert

SATURDAY 4th December | 8pm (€20)

This evening of festive delights to usher in the Christmas season includes a wide variety of Christmas favourites and popular classics from a range of musical artistes.

All proceeds from the evening will go to Bray Area Rough Sleepers Support (BARSS), the local Bray homeless charity which provides food to the homeless on the streets of Bray 365 nights a year. BARSS is a voluntary group which relies entirely on donations and local support. (Hugo O'Donnell, Highly Strung & Aimee Kearney & will be performing as part of this event.



OPERA

Irish National Opera Presents:

Peter Maxwell Davies' The Lighthouse

TUESDAY 7th December | 8pm
€30/27 | Sung in English with English Subtitles | Duration: 75mins

A Scottish lighthouse goes dark. A visiting supply ship finds the building in order. But the keepers have vanished without trace. Three singers in multiple roles explore the psychological state of the fractious men, relive an official investigation and project a supernatural explanation.

The composer, who based the structure of the opera on the Tower of the Tarot, leaves no simple answers. Based on an actual event in December 1900.

A pre-show talk will take place in Mermaid's gallery at 7.30pm for a very limited number of ticket holders (15 max). Please contact box office directly on 01-2724030 to book your spot.



St. Gerard's Junior School are winners at FÍS Film Awards

Budding young moviemakers honoured at prestigious awards ceremony which acknowledges talent and, this year, lockdown turbulence Lockdown, Irish language movies, outstanding contributions and achievements in filmmaking have been recognised at this year's FÍS Film Awards.

The renowned event which celebrates the moviemaking abilities of primary school students took place virtually on 19th November. Pupils from across the country tuned in to the online ceremony which was hosted by RTE's Sinead Kennedy. 2021 winners from Wicklow included: St. Gerard's Junior School - Award for Best Junior Film for 'The Party Crasher'.

In the movie, Harry Potter learns a valuable lesson about the importance of friendship after he uses his magic at a party to help him win all the prizes.

Guest of Honour, Minister for Education, Norma Foley, TD spoke at the awards filmed at the Institute of Art, Design & Technology (IADT) National Film Making for: Costume Design, Sound Track,

Hosted jointly by IADT's FÍS Office in collaboration with the Professional Development Service for Teachers (PDST TIE). This year's event was hosted virtually due to COVID, with the ceremony broadcast via www.fisfilmproject.ie. Shortlisted films throughout Ireland battled it out for the contest with the judging panel shortlisting just 18 films.

Counties represented across the award-winning films include Limerick, Donegal, Dublin, Galway, Kerry, Laois, Leitrim, Waterford, Cork, Sligo, Wicklow, Kildare and Tipperary. This year saw a variety of new awards up for grabs with accolades for Outstanding Achievement in Film Making for: Costume Design, Sound Track,

Adaptation, Special Effects, Best Newcomer, Best Junior, as well as awards for curriculum relevant films that included subject areas such as History, Science and COVID-19. A unique montage of all the award-winning films can be viewed on fisfilmproject.ie/

The awards ceremony showcased the successes of the FÍS Film Awards project which exposed primary school students and teachers to all aspects of the film-making process. The concept behind FÍS is to help children not only develop essential communication and team working skills, but technological skills to assist them in a digitally driven world. It also aids teachers in developing children's problem solving and investigative minds and

is aligned with the Government's digital strategy for schools.

This year marked 21 years since the inception of the highly successful FÍS project. To commemorate the occasion, the judging panel introduced a special merit award, to be presented to a school that demonstrated deep learning, imagination, creativity, tenacity and commitment in light of the challenges faced by all schools, pupils and teachers due to the pandemic.

The FÍS Film Project 21st Anniversary Special Merit Award went to county Galway school, Scoil Eanna, Ballaun.

The school also received the award for Outstanding Achievement in Filmmaking Award for Cinematography for their film 'Hidden'.

Back to the Future - an exhibition by Kathrina Shine

At Courthouse Arts Centre until Sunday December 12th

"Back to the Future" is an exhibition in two parts. The 1st part is an exploration of the history of mark making going back 100,000-73,000 years ago, to the origins of what we now recognise as graphics, language & alphabets. A glimpse into how globally we were more connected than disconnected. The 2nd part is a sample of Kathrina's own journey as an artist over the last 23 years with mark making & creating. Featuring paintings, paintings & technology, sculpture & film.

Kathrina Shine is a multi-Disciplinary artist, with a background in Architectural draughting, Theatre, Film, Fine Art Painting and Design. She has seamlessly moved between these areas of creativity using her skills to produce award winning films for BBC.Nth. Ireland, RTE & TG4 and stunning abstract Visual art for the last 23 years. She has lectured at the Royal Conservatoire Scotland, The Gaiety School of Acting and worked as a Researcher for the Film Department at Trinity College.

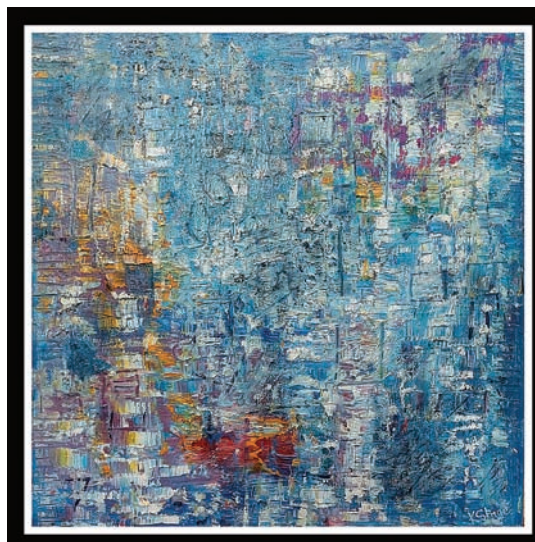
In 2004 Kathrina received a Distinction in The Principals of Visual Structure from UCLA. Her Art work can be found in the O.P.W. National Collection and many private collections nationally and internationally. Her work is now on display at "Gallery @ No: 5" (5 Main Street Wicklow Town) and www.kathrinashine.ie

"I am a multidisciplinary artist based in Wicklow," says Kathrina. "My background is in architec-

tural draughting/theatre/film and abstract/abstract realism paintings. Since 2011 I have mainly concentrated on painting. I work in acrylics, oils, inks, photographic collage with textures. The paintings are built, layer upon layer, the inks work less so. Textures include glass beads, lava sand, rice or small found objects. I work mainly with knives, but will use any object with a shape or an edge, that will make the right mark to balance the piece.

"What motivates me to paint in abstraction is a personal belief that pure realism, is better captured in photography or film. What happens on my canvas is channelled & influenced by the other art forms I have worked in. The major themes are extrapolated from nature, poetry, politics, mythology, technology, human emotion or simply the joy of colour. I am perpetually researching something. I received a distinction in the Principals of Visual Structure from FETAC (QQI) /UCLA and realised those same principals apply to fine art, filmmaking, set design and architecture.

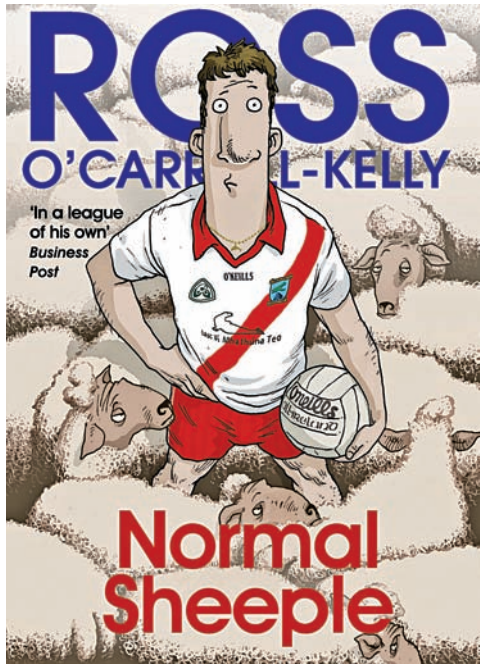
"I have always abstracted things, even when model making in architecture. My buildings were always abstract with creative use of wire, wool, lightbulbs, anything that could be repurposed. I believe seeing the ROSC catalogues 1967 / 1971 affected me profoundly and opened my eyes to all the possibilities and methods of creating paintings that connect with the viewer. The artists that really caught my attention back then were Joan Miro, William De Kooning, Mark Rothko & Bridget Reilly."



Coming soon to Whale Theatre...

NORMAL SHEEPLE...An Audience with Paul Howard, aka Ross O'Carroll-Kelly

Friday 10th December @ 8pm. Tickets €27.50 available online at www.whaletheatre.ie or call the booking office on 01 2010550



"My old man is the Taoiseach and he's hell-bent on taking Ireland out of the EU. My wife wants to ban sheep and cows from Ireland. My teenage daughter is heading for the Jaitacht. And I'm about to become a Kerry football legend. But, hey, we're just Normal Sheeple."

Join Ross O'Carroll-Kelly creator Paul Howard for an evening of readings, stories and laughter. Paul Howard is a multi-award-winning journalist, author, playwright, comedian and screenwriter. He is best known in his native Ireland as the creator of Ross O'Carroll-Kelly, a fictional rugby jock whose exploits have been the subject of 19 satirical novels that have sold more than one million copies and won three Irish Book Awards. He is the author of four hugely successful Ross O'Carroll-Kelly plays, which enjoyed long, sell-out runs and remounts in Dublin, Cork and Limerick. He also wrote the book and lyrics for two successful musicals: 'Anglo: The Musical', a puppet-based comedy about the collapse of Ireland's banks, in 2012; and 'Copper Face Jacks: The Musical', which enjoyed sell-out runs in 2018 and 2019. Promoted by Wicklow County Council under the LLMPs (Local Live Music Performance Scheme).

Let It Snow - Festive Tunes and Broadway Showstoppers

Saturday 11th December 2021 @ 8pm. Tickets €25 available online at www.whaletheatre.ie or call the booking office on 01 2010550

Boulevard Productions presents Let It Snow, Festive Tunes and Broadway Showstoppers. Featuring your favorite Christmas songs and Broadway hits. Starring Róisín Sullivan, Mark O'Looney, and star of Angela's Ashes - The Musical, Eoin Cannon. Accompanied by David Wray.



Sammy Snowflake's Christmas Catastrophe: A Mini Panto

Sunday 12th December 2021 @ 11am, 1.30pm and 4pm. Tickets €8 or €28 for a family of 4 available online at www.whaletheatre.ie or call the booking office on 01 2010550

Christmas is coming, and everyone is busy at the North Pole. Mrs Claus is baking and Sammy Snowflake, the Head Elf is making toys. And junior elf Sparkle Toes has been given a special job this year!

She has to fly high and sprinkle magic dust in the night sky to light Santa's way. But there's just one problem. Sparkle Toes has vanished! And she was last seen having a snowball fight with naughty Jack Frost. Worse than that, Jack lost the fight and everybody knows that Jack Frost is a sore loser. It's a Christmas Catastrophe! Will Mrs Claus and Sammy find Sparkle Toes in time to save Christmas? Join ArcLight Drama Studio for a heartwarming Christmas adventure full of music, magic and panto fun. 'Sammy Snowflake's Christmas Catastrophe' will delight young audiences this December. A perfect Christmas treat for younger children.

Duration: 35 minutes.



Editor PJ Cunningham with Anne O'Grady and Rosemary O'Grady at the launch of 'Grassroots - Stories from the Heart of the GAA' at Croke Park. Pic: Aisling Conway

GAA's 'little bit of madness' joins fans together

Wicklow GAA fans have been told a new publication on life within the Association highlights the 'madness' which joins them together.

Uachtarán Chumann Lúthchleas Gael, Larry McCarthy, was speaking as he launched 'Grassroots - Stories from the Heart of the GAA' at Croke Park.

The book, edited by Bray Emmets clubman, author and journalist, PJ Cunningham, is a comprehensive treasure trove of GAA-related tales containing 150 stories, sourced from every county.

It features stories from contributors including All-Ireland winning football managers Sean Boylan and Joe Kernan, as well as players Bernard Flynn and Keith Barr.

According to the GAA President, the Association has always been about more than just games.

"The reach and influence of the

GAA and the focal point it provides in so many communities ensures it has attained a special status in the lives of so many.

"Half of the stories in 'Grassroots' are mad, but that is what the GAA is all about, at some level, is it not?"

"In truth, this little bit of madness in our lives is what joins us together so well.

"'Grassroots' is about the embellishment and enrichment of great deeds and great figures in the GAA.

"There is a story about a boy playing in a camogie match, which led to a car chase in a bid to capture him. That is a bit mad for sure.

"And of a player standing on a crossbar in the last minute of a match to stop Tyrone football

great Frank McGuigan kicking a 35-yard free to win a game in New York's Gaelic Park.

"That's mad too, but is indicative of the particular madness that is part and parcel of what we are.

"The GAA is essentially about people and places and these two powerful ingredients feature in many of the stories submitted for publication."

This theme was amplified by Cunningham, who said the power of the GAA was that "ordinary people come together to do extraordinary things for their communities".

'Grassroots - Stories from the Heart of the GAA' is published by Ballpoint Press and retails at €19.99. It is available online and in bookshops.



PJ Cunningham with Tommy Murphy, Jackie Napier, and Thomas Coleman at the launch of 'Grassroots - Stories from the Heart of the GAA'. Pic: Aisling Conway

'Light Up Your Bike' during these darker days and evenings

Cyclists are reminded that the use of bike lights is a legal requirement when cycling during lighting up periods. If you choose to cycle without lights, or your lights fail when on the road, you become less visible and run the risk of a €40 fixed penalty notice.

The use of bike lights helps increase your visibility to other road users and there are many types and styles to choose from. Most bike lights tend to be battery or dynamo operated.

If using battery operated bike lights, rechargeable/non-rechargeable, it is important to remember that they may run out of power whilst on your journey. That is why it is important to have a back-up pair which can be easily attached to your bike. It is also important to remember that bike lights are not just for adults they are also to be used by children and teenagers when cycling to school.

Top tips for lighting your bike:

Batteries - if you opt

for disposable battery powered lights ensure you have enough power left to complete your journey fully lit. However, a better option might be rechargeable battery powered lights. All you must do is ensure they are fully charged each time by disconnecting when required and recharging either at work or home.

Spare - It's useful to get into the habit of carrying some spare lights or spare batteries with you - especially if you have a slightly longer journey. Spare lights don't need to be expensive and it might be a good idea to keep some at work, so you don't get caught out on the way home. Remember to recycle your old batteries.

Beware Thieves - If

your lights are detachable then never leave them attached to your bike while it's unattended.

Dynamos - If you are buying a new bike, you may consider getting a dynamo fitted. Modern hub dynamos give you good light with minimal effort and no need to worry about theft or the batteries running out.

Cllr Shay Cullen, Cathaoirleach of Wicklow County Council, said: "I am pleased to be supporting this very important 'Light Up Your Bike' initiative to remind cyclists to make sure they have the correct lights on their bikes and to check them regularly. Bike lights are a simple yet effective way to improving visibility. As the evenings are getting

darker, we need to ensure that the lights are also working on our children's bikes and to check them regularly."

Inspector Paddy Casey, An Garda Síochána, Bray District, stated: "An Garda Síochána is delighted to be part of this very important road safety initiative in County Wicklow. A bicycle is not just for leisure activities but also used by some as a means of transport which comes with a personal responsibility to ensure that cyclists and their bicycles are appropriately equipped and visible to all other road users. This campaign is about the County Wicklow Road Safety Together Working Group bringing awareness to cycling safely on our



Launching the Light Up Your Bike safety campaign were Cathaoirleach of Wicklow County Council Shay Cullen, Cathaoirleach of Baltinglass Municipal District Avril Cronin, Inspector Paddy Casey, Wicklow County Council Road Safety Officer Linda Healy, RSA Road Safety Promotion Officer Orlaith Maguire, Cathaoirleach of Greystones Municipal District Lourda Scott, Garda Candice Dowling, Liam Cullen (District Administrator for Baltinglass Municipality) and Cathaoirleach of Bray Municipal District Aoife Flynn Kennedy.

roads. An Garda Síochána is asking cyclists to make sure they are visible to all other road users by equipping their bicycles with the correct lighting, while using our roads."

Mr Sam Wade, CEO Road Safety Authority, added: "I am delighted to support this 'Light UP Your Bike' initiative to remind cyclists of what they can do to help make sure they are safe on our roads. Whether cycling for transport or for pleasure we want to make sure that cyclists are as visible as possible to motorists and other road users. As it

is darker in the mornings and the evenings are getting darker earlier we want to remind cyclists to check the white light to the front of the bike is working and the red light at the back.

Linda Healy, County Wicklow Road Safety Officer, said that "Using good quality lights on your bike is the best way to improve your visibility to other road users during

darker mornings and evenings. Bike lights are a legal requirement during Lighting-Up hours, which is from 30 minutes after sunset until 30 minutes before sunrise."

CLASSIFIEDS

Gospel Luke:1-10

The tax collectors and the sinners were all seeking the company of Jesus to hear what he had to say, and the Pharisees and the scribes complained, 'This man,' they said 'welcomes sinners and eats with them.' So, he spoke this parable to them:

'What man among you with a hundred sheep, losing one, would not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness and go after the missing one till he found it? And when he found it, would he not joyfully take it on his shoulders and then, when he got home, call together his friends and neighbours? 'Rejoice with me,' he would say, 'I have found my sheep that was lost.' In the same way, I tell you, there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one repentant sinner than over ninety-nine virtuous men who have no need of repentance.

'Or again, what woman with ten drachmas would not, if she lost one, light a lamp and sweep out the house and search thoroughly till she found it? And then, when she had found it call together her friends and neighbours? 'Rejoice with me,' she would say 'I have found the drachma I lost.' In the same way I tell you, there is rejoicing among the angels of God over one repentant sinner.'

C.J.

THE MIRACULOUS PRAYER

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

M.D.

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PLANNING

WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL
We Paul & Orlaith Cullen seek planning permission for Construction of new single storey dwelling, new entrance, waste treatment system and associated site works at Bahana Whaley, Ballinacash, Rathdrum, Co. Wicklow.
The planning application may be inspected or purchased at a fee not exceeding the reasonable cost of making a copy at the offices of Wicklow County Council, County Buildings, Wicklow during its public opening hours and a submission or observation in relation to the application may be made to the authority in writing on payment of the prescribed fee within the period of 5 weeks beginning on the date of receipt by the authority of the application.

WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL
Gary Egan and Sandra Kiely seeks planning permission for demolition of rear extension and construction of new single storey extension to rear and all ancillary site works at Keshamore, Davidstown, Donard, County Wicklow.
The planning application may be inspected or purchased at a fee not exceeding the reasonable cost of making a copy at the offices of Wicklow County Council, County Buildings, Wicklow during its public opening hours and a submission or observation in relation to the application may be made to the authority in writing on payment of the prescribed fee within the period of 5 weeks beginning on the date of receipt by the authority of the application.

CLASSIFIED ADS & PLANNING / APPOINTMENTS

CALL: 01 2869111 EMAIL: pauline@localtimes.ie
PLEASE NOTE DEADLINE FOR CLASSIFIED ADS AND APPOINTMENTS IS 12 NOON FRIDAY





Catherine Fulvio making Irish Coffee at Ballyknocken House & Cookery School

Leisure and UltraLuxe markets targeted at workshop for Ireland's Ancient East businesses

Last week more than 1500 one-to-one sales appointments were scheduled between 155 Irish leisure and UltraLuxe tourism suppliers, including four businesses from Wicklow, with Irish-based tour operators and destination management companies (DMCs), to help drive demand for Ireland among international visitors in both the leisure and the UltraLuxe markets.

The Wicklow businesses that attended were; Ballyknocken House, Wicklow Way Wines, Wicklow's Historic Gaol, and Powerscourt Distillery.

These meetings, which took place virtually over four days, represented tens of thousands of possible visitors and hundreds of millions in revenue for Ireland, as Irish tourism

attractions and activities across the country try to influence the travel itineraries of these high-profile tour operators and DMCs, for 2022 and beyond.

The workshop for businesses in Ireland's Ancient East took place on Tuesday and offered the Wicklow leisure and ultraluxe suppliers the chance to connect and pitch their offering to 24 Irish tour operators and DMCs. These operators represent some of the most influential high-end tour operators in Ireland who have expressed an interest in growing their leisure and

ultraluxe business into Ireland.

Responding to this, Fáilte Ireland developed a leisure and UltraLuxe programme in October 2020 to ensure that there would be consistency in terms of creation, delivery, and execution of leisure and UltraLuxe experiences across Ireland.

Ahead of these important B2B workshops, Fáilte Ireland provided a series of online webinars and mentoring supports for the Irish suppliers so that they were ready to pitch their experience at the virtual workshops.

The ultraluxe and

leisure markets are potential areas of sustainable growth for Irish tourism. Fáilte Ireland research shows that these international visitors are looking for truly immersive Irish experiences, meeting and engaging with the local people and community but more importantly eco-friendly and sustainable tourism experiences are key to the international traveller for 2022 and beyond.

Paul Keeley, Fáilte Ireland's Director of Regional Development, commented: "Fáilte

Ireland is really excited about the potential business that will come out of these virtual workshops for Wicklow. Typically, higher spenders, these markets offers us an opportunity to deliver sustainable growth to Irish tourism in the longer term.

"One size fits all approach does not work with this segment - they want to have an experience that is tailored and customized to their interest and motivations, and they are keener on the experiential elements than the materialistic elements.

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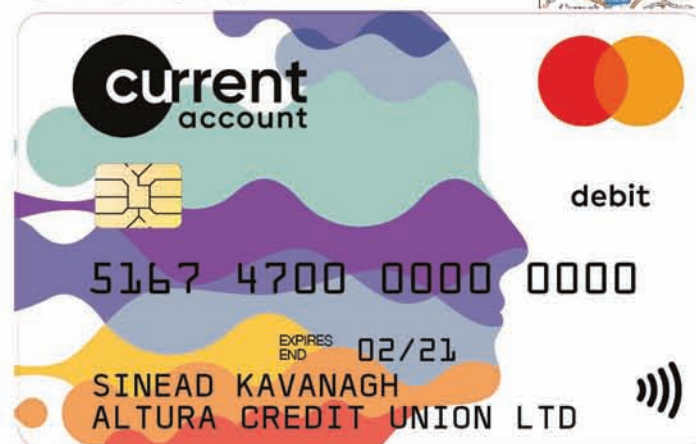
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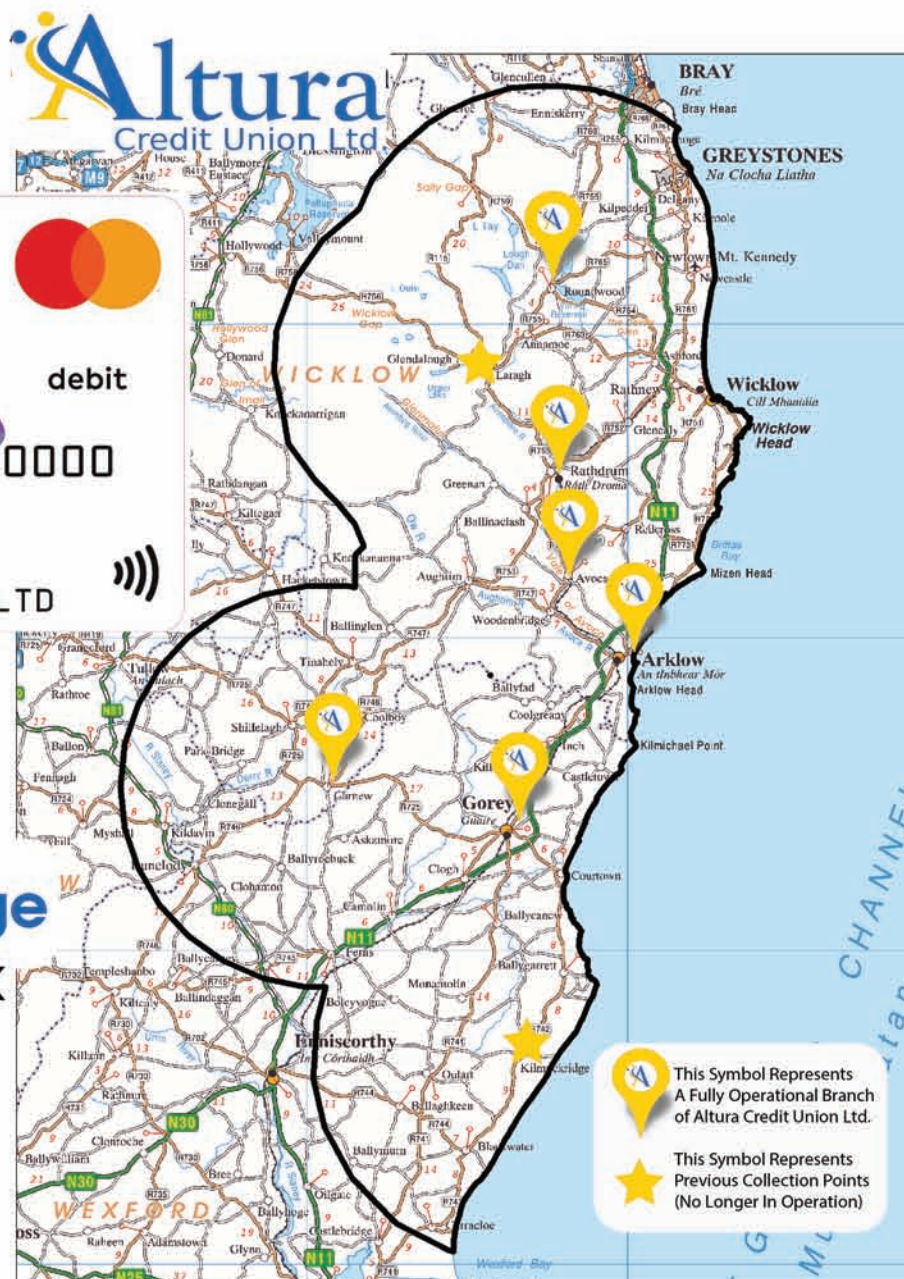
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