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HOPES FOR THE NEW YEAR

COUNTY WICKLOW'S WISH LIST FOR 2022

With another difficult year coming to a close, Wicklow Times asked our TDs, Senators and County Manager what their hopes are for County Wicklow in the year ahead.

Sinn Féin TD John Brady said that his main 2022 wish is for a new beginning.

"The challenges faced by businesses, workers, and their families in Wicklow throughout 2021 have been compounded by rising inflation. Energy costs, rents, and even an ordinary food shop have become much more



John Brady TD

expensive," he said. "But I believe that all

of this along with the sacrifices that have been made, and continue to be made, has focussed the minds of people on the type of community they wish to live in. Covid has brought out the very best in so many people in so many instances. I think that we are now looking much closer on how we can better our localities,



Pictured at the 'Heavy Heart Walk' which took place in Glendalough were Owen Windsor, Laura Maher, Tracey Ward, Connie Concagh, Audrey Byrne, Rachel Cullen, Olivia Ward, Niamh Lynham, Eamon Ward, Nathaniel and Thorin Maher.



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our communities and society, rather than short term individual gain. In 2021 we managed to get work on the long overdue Arklow Sewage Treatment Plant started and agreement to have the old Bray Courthouse handed over for community use, but there's much more that needs to be done in 2022.

"We need a health service that is fully resourced and equipped to serve the needs of ordinary people. There is a need for increased mental health services for young people across the county. People need timely access to a GP. Dental services cannot be allowed to become the preserve of only those who can afford to pay.

"I want to see 2022 to be remembered as the time that we reimagined what kind of county we wanted as community. I

believe that 2022 can become a year when ordinary people refuse to listen to excuses and demand answers to the delays in the provision of services to our county.

"Huge praise must be given to all our frontline workers during 2021, our nurses, doctors, retail workers and all our essential workers continue to so much, it is beyond time that they received the just monetary reward that they deserve. However, I think what is critically needed in 2022 is

a new government."

Social Democrats TD Jennifer Whitmore said

"I always look forward to the start of a New Year - excited for the

potential it brings. I know that 2021 was *Continued on page 3*



Jennifer Whitmore TD

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May O'Neill celebrating Christmas in Knockananna with Kate O'Keefe.

Introducing Greystones' Most Beautiful Baby 2021

It was big baby smiles all round when the winner of Greystones' Most Beautiful Baby 2021 accepted his framed cert last week.

Arriving with proud parents Fergal and Laura, 11-month-old Ré took his newfound fame and glory in his stride. And he was far more interested in staring down the camera than thinking about how he might just spend his winning gift voucher on.

The €50 gift voucher coming from Ali Gibbon and her baby boutique Lou & Belle, the Greystones shop having sponsored this year's competition.

Now in its sixth year, Greystones' Most Beautiful Baby attracted a bumper crop of entries for the 2021 title, with each of the 56 babies relying on a public vote to grab that crown.

And the votes came from all over the globe, including Japan and Australia.

Organised by The Greystones Guide, the online magazine was quick to point out that each and every one of the babies this year deserved to win - and if it had been left to judges, choosing a winner would have taken all year.



Parents Fergal and Laura with baby Ré, winner of Greystones' Most Beautiful Baby 2021 award, and Ali Gibbon from Lou & Belle

Housing Adaptation Grants

Housing Adaptation 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 from Wicklow County website, www.wicklow.ie. or tmulhallburke@wicklowcoco.ie

Wicklow Garda Youth Awards

Nominations are now being accepted for deserving young people from around the county. Awards will be considered for young people who make their communities a better place to live. Group awards for two or more young people who have contributed positively to their community. Special Achievement Awards will be for those who have overcome great difficulties. A Community Safety Award will be presented for making their community a safer place.

Anyone, including a family member, can nominate someone for an award.

To be considered eligible, the young person must be aged between 13 and 21 and permanently living in Co. Wicklow. Nomination forms are available by emailing emma.j.skinner@Garda.ie and from the Wicklow Garda Youth Awards Facebook page. Nominations must be returned by the end of February 2022 to Emma Skinner, Juvenile Liaison Officer, Bray Garda Station.

Luisne Centre for Well Being

Luisne will be opening at Egan Business Centre, Upper Dargle Road, Bray. Luisne promotes a holistic and integral approach to health and wellness. It does this on a personal, community and planetary level. This famous well being centre was previously located in Kilcoole. Now back in action, the Centre is conveniently located in Bray, Exit 6 from M11. Lots of well being classes and sessions are being scheduled from 31st January.

Community Activities Fund

A Special fund of €282,686 to support community groups impacted by COVID-19 is now open. This fund is for small-scale capital projects. These projects should comply with the objectives of WCC Local Economic and Community Plan. There are two parts to the funding scheme: over €1,000 and under €1,000. Application forms are available at www.wicklow.ie. Or from WCC Community, Cultural & Social Development, County Buildings, Wicklow. 0404 20208 or cep@wicklowcoco.ie.

Bray Adult Education Centre can open the door to your future

Throughout the pandemic, teaching and learning have continued at Bray Adult Education Centre. This KWETB centre has taken large numbers of adult learners through their courses successfully in spite of all the difficulties.

Some students have gained qualifications to work in Healthcare, Childcare or the IT industry, some have opened up their creative side with Art, Crafts and Design, and some have taken courses giving them skills that can improve a person's chances in life no matter what direction that life might take.

What all the centre's students have in common is a refusal to let problems get the better of them. The times we live in are full of troubles but that has not stopped these adult learners from getting stuck in.

Nowadays, Bray Adult Education Centre, located in Bray Civic Centre beside the HSE, takes in new students in January each year. Some of the centre's courses still have places to be filled.

There is no better way to beat the January blues or wipe away the problems of Covid than signing up and taking off on one of the tremendous learning journeys on offer. The door to the future is open.

Bray to Greystones Cliff Walk

The Bray to Greystones Cliff Walk remains partially closed, it is safe to walk from Bray along the Cliff Walk as far as Windgates steps. From there walkers can take the alternative Bray Head Looped Trail, which can be quite challenging or return on the Cliff Walk back to Bray. The Greystones side of the Cliff Walk is extremely dangerous and is closed in certain spots. The Council continues to assess and has put in place measures for the short-term protection of the public and are actively pursuing an alternative route for the sections of the walk which are currently closed due to erosion.

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HOPES FOR THE NEW YEAR

Continued from page 1

another difficult year for many of us, for our families, friends, and small businesses. So, apart from the obvious wish for 2022, that Covid would just leave us be, is that we maintain our strong focus on what matters most: our health, our families and our communities. I have no doubt that our strong sense of togetherness will continue through this difficult period, onto what I hope is a healthy and happy 2022.

"My work in 2022 will continue on from my focus in 2021 working with individual constituents all across the county. Public services have suffered through Covid, resulting in difficulties in accessing essential supports, and I will continue to work with constituents to highlight and address these. My work with community groups, from Wicklow to West Wicklow, Bray to Arklow will also continue. I am always in awe of the work that volunteers across the country put into their local communities and I look forward to continue my support of these."

"As Social Democrats Spokesperson for Climate and Biodiversity, 2022 will be a very busy year. My priority will be ensuring that Government quickly rolls out measures to help us address our climate and

biodiversity crises, and that they do so in a way that individuals and communities are assisted in making the changes that are required. Top of this list is the need for a reliable and frequent public transport - we have never seen sufficient focus or investment in public transport for Wicklow and this needs to change.

"We also need a greater focus on our children, including progress to a national childcare programme and greater investment in school infrastructure to increase school places. 2022 will hopefully see us get back to the things we all miss - creating shared experiences with people and our communities. Until then, Happy New Year."

Minister for Health Stephen Donnelly said "I



Minister Stephen Donnelly

know it has been an incredibly tough year for everyone as we had hoped we would be in a different place this Christmas. In particular, it has been devastating for the hospitality industry who have borne the brunt of the restrictions.

"The Government understands this which is why a number of supports have been put in place for businesses and workers most impacted. But we simply had to act as this new variant Omicron is far more transmissible than anything we have seen before and could easily, if left unchecked, overwhelm our health care system."

"The good news is we are in a much better position than last Christmas as our booster programme ramps up to full capacity."

We are now administering almost 350,000 boosters a week, including over 7,000 in Wicklow, with close to 1.6m boosters now taken up nationwide.

"We are currently second in the EU for booster vaccination uptake which is a sign of the incredible support from the public for the rollout. Despite everything, key projects in Wicklow such as the Arklow Waste Water Plant, upgrade of the N11, extra school places, new respite beds and the Rathdrum Primary Care Centre are either in

place or progressing.

"There is no doubt 2021 was a tough year but it was better than 2020 and I know we are going to be in an even better place again in 2022. Please continue to



Senator Pat Casey

be sensible so everyone can enjoy their Christmas and look forward to a Happy Healthy New Year."

Fianna Fail Senator Pat Casey said "In 2022 I will continue my work with my Fianna Fáil Government colleagues to ensure that Wicklow gets delivery on key priority areas. On the economic front I will work to see continued delivery of supports for our shattered hospitality and tourist industry as we repair the devastation caused by Covid Lockdowns. I am also working closely with Minister Darragh O'Brien to get delivery on affordable housing for all areas of Wicklow."

"On the education front

we are making real progress on a number of vital School Building projects and I will continue my work to ensure delivery on these. I will also work to get sports capital projects delivered in all areas of Wicklow and that the exciting Greenway projects get shovels in the ground in 2022."

Chief Executive of Wicklow County Council Frank Curran said "The Covid Pandemic continues to be a major challenge into the New Year. Our focus in Wicklow County Council is to continue to protect our staff, continue to deliver our services and to support our communities. Housing and the delivery of social housing in particular continues to be a priority. Affordable housing will also come on stream during 2022."

"Climate Action and Biodiversity is a huge pri-



Chief Executive Frank Curran



Michelle, Huw, Harley and Joel Griffiths at the monthly 'cars & coffee' meet at Coffee Delights in Bray. Pic: Joe McQuillan

ority and progress is being made in relation to the recent development of a solar carport at County Buildings, energy retrofitting of Council housing stock and buildings, active travel solutions and a range of projects in relation to biodiversity such as the Brittas Bay

Biodiversity Project.

"During 2022 there will be major progress in relation to the Blessington Greenway, the East Coast Greenway and the Arklow Shillelagh Greenway, N11/M11 Improvement Scheme, the Arklow Wastewater Treatment Plant, the Arklow Flood

Relief Scheme and Public Realm upgrades in all our towns and the opening of the Florentine Centre in Bray.

"During 2022 we will also adopt a new County Development Plan which will chart the road ahead for the following six years."

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A 'Mystery Man' that appeared overnight recently on South Beach in Arklow, placed there by an unknown artist. The sculpture is about 3 metres high and made of metal. It depicts a man wearing a hat and looking out to sea.

Construction of Greystones Coastguard Station to start in early 2022

The Department of Transport has stated that funding has been approved for the construction of the Coastguard Station in Greystones.

The Office of Public Works (OPW) are also actively engaging with Wicklow County Council in relation to the formal transfer of the site identified for the new station. It's expected work will commence on the new station in early 2022.

Welcoming the progress, John Brady TD said "The Minister recently confirmed to Sinn Féin that the Department of Transport had approved funding for the construction of the Greystones coastguard station which will go ahead early next year.

"The estimated cost of the station is in the region of €3.9 million. It is envisaged that contracts will be awarded by the end of 2021. It is believed that the running time for the construction

project could take two years.

"Wicklow County Council and the OPW are also working in relation to the formal transfer of the site in the harbour for the new Coast Guard Station in Greystones. A digital survey of the site has also taken place as part of the transfer process.

"This is a very welcome development. And one that is long overdue as there have been far too many delays to date. The coastguard service provides a vital service to the coast of Greystones, and the provision of a modern coastguard station that meets the needs of the service is critical to the functioning of the service.

"The delays in developing the new Coastguard station have not just directly

impacted on the service itself, it has also delayed the refurbishment of the Garda station in Greystones. The refurbishment of Greystones Garda Station is included in the 'Capital Works programme 2016-2021' for An Garda Síochána. The planned works include the refurbishment of the existing station and redevelopment of adjacent buildings. These works are currently contingent on the Coast Guard moving from its current location in the adjacent buildings beside the Garda station.

"Again, I welcome the Minister's confirmation of these developments to Sinn Féin and look forward to witnessing the commencement of work at the Greystones site in the New Year".

'Portable pool needed for West Wicklow in 2022'

Minister Simon Harris TD has requested Wicklow County Council avail of the new Portable Swimming Pool programme being developed by Swim Ireland.

Minister Harris said: "Swim Ireland are soon to get delivery of a new type of portable swimming pool, a number of which will be available for local authorities to install during 2022.

"Swim Ireland's portable pool programme is part of a wider programme to open up swimming to young people who might not normally get access to such a facility.

"The West Wicklow area is an obvious place for Wicklow County Council to avail of the programme and would be a good opportunity to test the level of public demand for a municipal pool for the West Wicklow area".

Minister Harris continued: "I am delighted with the progress to

date by the campaign to deliver a municipal pool for West Wicklow. National sporting bodies such as Swim Ireland have come on board to support the project and I have highlighted to my colleague the Minister for Sport the national priority this project should be afforded.

"A new steering group to deliver a permanent municipal pool for West Wicklow has been established including representatives from the Pool Campaign, Swim Ireland, Water Safety Ireland and the County Council.

"I have asked my colleague the Minister for Sport and Swim Ireland to facilitate a portable pool in Wicklow in 2022 and I have notified local schools about the opportunity".

Minister Harris concluded: "The Pool Campaign can count on my continued whole-hearted support and I look forward to progressing the project in 2022."

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Pictured is the new Pride Rainbow Crossing on Arklow Main Street, unveiled recently by Arklow Municipal District Council. It's the first rainbow crossing to be installed in Co. Wicklow.

Permanent coordinator on the way for Bray Local Drug and Alcohol Task Force

A permanent coordinator will be appointed to the Bray Drug and Alcohol Task Force.

This follows a series of representations made to the Minister by Green Party TD Steven Matthews, who has been in frequent contact with the Bray Task Force in recent months following the departure of their previous coordinator in August 2021.

The remaining staff at the service feared that they would be left in a

similar situation that they had been between 2017 and 2019 when they were left without an official coordinator for two years.

Deputy Matthews made a series of representations on behalf of the Task Force to both the Minister for Health and the HSE and has welcomed clarification that the process of filling this post has begun and

should be completed early in Q2 of 2022.

Discussing the issue, Deputy Matthews said: "I have seen the work that the Bray Local Drug and Alcohol Task Force do first hand both as a local councillor and more recently as a TD and to hear that they risked being without a coordinator for another sustained period was very concern-

ing. Many vulnerable people in our community rely on this service and it needs to be fully staffed and resourced to adequately address their needs.

"The HSE have assured me that temporary measures are in place with an administrator taking on the role of coordinator on a temporary basis until the role can be formally filled. This recruitment process has already begun and should not be rushed given how integral the role is to the operation of this service.

"I have offered and look forward to meeting with the current staff of the service early in the new year and offer any support I can in terms of funding opportunities and improvements to the service that they offer.

"This is a vital service, located in the heart of Bray and the people that rely on the supports offered by this service should be given the best possible opportunities and the provision of a full-time coordinator will be a vital step in the right direction," concluded Deputy Matthews.

Council staff vacancies to be filled

New outdoor Council staff for the Greystones Municipal District are to be recruited in January, Councillors have been told.

Five of the twelve outdoor staff positions in the district are currently vacant as staff have left or retired, however a motion put forward by Social Democrats Cllr Jodie Neary for more outdoor Council staff for Greystones has now been accepted.

Most of the vacant positions are to be recruited in January. Also a study of the staff numbers required is to be done early in 2022.

The motion called for a debate on the urgent need for outdoor council ground staff to support the ongoing work of the Council as well as Greystones Tidy Towns.

"Existing outdoor staff have had to do more with less support while community groups such as Greystones Tidy Towns are working with less outdoor resources to help them with their incredibly valuable work," said Cllr Neary. "An outdoor summer brought more foot traffic, increased litter and less people available to volunteer due to covid restrictions."

Cllr Derek Mitchell said "It is disturbing that so many positions have been allowed to be vacant at one time, no wonder it has been so difficult to get work done. I did an analysis of the amount of staff and the budget which each district of Wicklow gets and Greystones had half the budget and under half the staff of the other four areas even though they have a similar population.

"I voted against the Council Budget as I could get no commitment to improve this. I am glad management now seem to recognise change is required and I hope the report recommends more staff for the rapidly growing town."

GREEN CHRISTMAS RECYCLING IN DECEMBER/JANUARY

WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL

Recycling Centre

Christmas Opening & Closing Times

Avoca

Tuesday 23rd Dec 9am-1.45pm
Christmas Eve Closed
Christmas Day Closed
Monday 27th Dec Closed
Tuesday 28th Dec Closed
Wednesday 29th Dec Closed
Thursday 30th Dec 9am-1.45pm
New Year's Eve 9am-1.45pm
New Year's Day Closed
Sunday 2nd Jan Closed
Monday 3rd Jan Closed
Tuesday 4th Jan 9am-4.30pm
(Closed for lunch 1-2pm)

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Sunday 2nd Jan Closed
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Tuesday 4th Jan 9.30am-4.30pm

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Bring your Christmas Tree to any of the collection points below. They will be shredded, composted and used again!

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	LOCATION	DATE
Arklow	Arklow Recycling Centre, Croghan Industrial Estate	4th -17th January
Aughrim	Tidy Towns, The Pavillion, Rednagh Road	4th -17th January
Avoca	Avoca Recycling Centre, Ballymurtagh, Avoca	4th -17th January
Baltinglass	Rampere Recycling Centre, Rampere, Baltinglass	4th -17th January
Blessington	County Council Yard, Naas Road	4th -17th January
Bray	Bray Recycling Centre, Beechwood Close, Boghall Road	4th -17th January
Bray	Lidl, Boghall Road	4th -17th January
Greystones	Carpark in front of the Wicklow County Council Offices on Mill Road near to the bottle banks	4th -17th January
Hollywood	Church Carpark, Hollywood	8th January only Donations in aid of Tidy Towns 10am - 12pm
Wicklow	The Murrough Recycling Centre, Wicklow	4th -17th January
Wicklow	Green King, Coolbeg (Road opp. Beehive)	4th -17th January

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LET'S HAVE A GREEN CHRISTMAS.

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MARY KAVANAGH INDEPENDENT

Wicklow Co. Council
Wicklow MDC

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Graphic Design HND
Fashion & Textiles HNC
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Furniture Design & Cabinet M. Level 6
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Applied Health & Social Care HND
Applied Psychology

BODY THERAPIES & HOLISTIC HEALTH

Beauty & Body Therapy
Nail Technician & Salon Administration
Hairdressing Junior Stylist
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Holistic & Wellbeing Studies

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Marie Fidgeon and Vincent O'Reilly are pictured at the launch of Stan O'Reilly's book 'Tall Tales and True Stories' in St. Brigid's Hall in Rathnew.

Funding announced for East Coast Greenway viability study

The Greystones to Wicklow Greenway has received Stage 1 funding of €350,000 from Transport Infrastructure Ireland.

The funding will be used to carry out an in-depth assessment of the viability of a Greenway route.

The coastal route is approximately 20km in length extending between the southern end of the Bray to Greystones cliff walk at Greystones harbour to the Murrough Car Park at Wicklow.

Wicklow County Council had funded an initial feasibility study which suggests that it is potentially feasible to develop a coastal route through the designated conservation area of the Murrough Wetlands Special Area of Conservation and the Special Protection Area if the route is developed so as to ensure that there is no disturbance to birds species, habitats, and features of interest. Any significant impacts will have to be mitigated for.

Irish Rail has commissioned a Coastal Protection Study of the area along the railway line, between Merrion Gates and the County boundary with Wexford. The preferred route that has been recommended is neutral of any potential Coastal Protection Study recommendation.

In welcoming the funding announcement, Cllr Shay Cullen, Cathaoirleach of Wicklow Council, thanked the members of the Council and Oireachtas members for their support; Minister Harris and his team for initiating the Taskforce and getting the various agencies around the table, Minister Donnelly and Deputy Matthews for supporting the initiative and the Chief Executive and his team for their



A section of the railway line between Greystones and Wicklow Town. Irish Rail has commissioned a Coastal Protection Study of the area along the railway line.

commitment to it.

Chief Executive, Frank Curran, welcomed the announcement saying Wicklow County Council is very conscious of the sensitivity of the environment and the unique biodiversity of the area and aims to ensure that a key element of the Coastal Route will be recognition, protection and appreciation of this.

Wicklow County Council is expected to go to tender in the New Year to procure consultants to progress the project.

Green Party TD Steven Matthews said "I have been working with various residents groups as well as Wicklow Town Team and Wicklow County Council regarding the proposals for this Greenway Route in recent months and I am fully aware of the envi-

ronmental concerns, particularly in relation to the potential biodiversity damage that the implementation of this Greenway may have.

"I have been assured by both the Department of Transport and TII that this funding will in part be used to carry out a full environmental impact assessment of the various routes and will seek to put forward a plan that causes the least amount of impact possible.

"This environmental assessment is an incredibly important step, and it is vital that all potential routes are fully assessed. I look forward to engaging further with resident groups, businesses and the Wicklow Town team in the new year and I know there will be some concerns not only in relation to biodiversity but

other matters in relation to this sensitive environmental landscape.

"All these issues will be investigated as part of the overall viability assessment of this project and the input of local stakeholders will make up an integral part of the final report.

"A green route from Greystones to Wicklow has the potential to bring huge economic and tourism benefits to Wicklow Town and combined with my proposal to extend the DART to the town, these projects are examples of much more positive investment in the area than has been seen in recent years. I look forward to working with various Government Departments in the new year seeking as many funding opportunities for the area as possible."

€1 million funding for N81 improvements

Funding of €1 million is being provided towards improvements along the N81.

Welcoming the news, Minister Simon Harris said: "The improvement of the N81 is a key priority for me. It is the main artery linking West Wicklow to areas of major employment in Dublin and a very heavily used road.

The announcement by the TII includes a number of Minor Works improvements including the Hangman's Bend realignment scheme and new footpaths at Tuckmill. Funding has also been allocated towards further examination of the necessary road safety improvements needed to the south of Blessington and

the need for proper bus stop facilities at Hollywood Cross.

"I am very grateful for the feedback I received from West Wicklow Commuters when I surveyed them about improvements to the N81. I am working with Transport Infrastructure Ireland and the National Roads Authority about how to make the road safer and improve public transport along the route. I am also to meet with my colleague the Minister for Transport to ensure a more integrated plan is put in place between the transport agencies to ensure a holistic improvement to the N81 that will combine active travel, road safety and effective public transport alternatives for motorists along the entire route".



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STAY SAFE & TAKE CARE

Lengthy waiting lists for school dental visits

Statistics sent to Social Democrats TD Jennifer Whitmore by the HSE have revealed lengthy waiting lists for dental visits to school. Normally, children in either 1st, 2nd and 6th classes are given routine dental check ups in schools free of charge. However, during the current pandemic this has not been the case.

The Spokesperson for Children says "Children in Wicklow would normally have dental check ups in schools at certain stages of their development which is provided free of charge. It's an important part of the health package for children in this country as dental fees are often very costly, especially for families on low or fixed incomes.

"Unfortunately, waiting lists for CHO6 which includes most of Wicklow except for West Wicklow, are significantly climbing as a result of covid putting a pause on this programme. The Principal Dental Surgeon in the Community Healthcare East has advised me that in the Healthcare East section

of the HSE which includes most of Wicklow (minus West Wicklow) and Dublin South East, the waiting list for children receiving in-school dental visits was zero.

"In the 2019/2020 school year this had climbed to an astronomical number amounting to 4,915 children in 2nd class and 322 in 6th class. Figures for the current school year include a marginal decrease in the number for 2nd class to 4,763 but drastically increasing to 4,139 for children in 6th class. That means a total of 8,902 students in primary schools across Wicklow and Dublin South East are waiting on a school dental visit.

"West Wicklow is

included in Kildare and Dublin South West figures where waiting lists are very high. While we don't have individual figures for West Wicklow, the total figure for the CHO area 7 is 19,151.

"How the HSE expects to be able to get through these numbers is beyond comprehension. I have followed up with questions seeking information as to what the plans are to address these growing waiting lists especially for those children with medical cards. These children will be most disadvantaged as currently, private sector dentists are not taking on more medical card holders as a result of a dispute over the cost of PPE equipment with the HSE. This means that

families who can't afford dental visits will be negatively impacted by the lack of in-school dental visits.

"While I recognise that Covid is an issue and with cases rising again there may be further delays, there does need to be support in place for families hard pressed for money. The HSE was said they will deal with people on an individual case by case basis but beyond that there are few supports in place. I will follow up with the Minister on this in the hopes of a there being a comprehensive plan to address dental issues in vulnerable children, and the return to school dental visits in the near future".



Sylvia Ehigiator, Amy Darkwah and Dayna Tyrrell at the recent Erasmus+ event in BIFE which saw students preparing for their Erasmus+ work placements in Spain and Finland as part of their studies.

Wicklow schoolchildren join bid to plant a million trees

Pupils from 12 Wicklow national schools have joined a campaign that's planting more than a million trees in Ireland and Africa, this year.

In the lead up to Christmas, close to 50 class groups at national schools across the county will hold tree planting ceremonies on school grounds, local parks and public land, and will lend their backing to communities who will be planting tens of thousands of new trees in Uganda, Kenya,

Senegal and Malawi before the end of the year.

The schools initiative is part of the One Million Trees campaign, which will see Self Help Africa plant over a million trees this year.

Supported by the INTO teachers' union, the campaign will see native

Irish seedlings being distributed for planting by each participating class group. Workshops, collections and other activities are also being held in hundreds of schools to support tree planting activities in Africa.

The schools taking part in the effort include St Patrick's NS and St John's NS, Arklow, St Cronan's, Scoil Chualann and St Fergal's NS, Bray, Wicklow Educate Together, Scoil Naomh Iosaf, Baltinglass, Scoil Naomh Brid, Kiltegan, Coolfancy NS, Ballinahinch NS, Roundwood NS and Scoil Mhuire Realt na Mara, Brittas Bay.

INTO President Joe McKeown said that the campaign was a great opportunity for schoolchildren to learn more about trees, and climate issues, and also play their part in the worldwide effort to combat climate change.

"Young people are very aware of the challenges of global warming. A campaign like this gives them the chance to engage directly with the issue, and also learn about the impact in parts of the world that are extremely vulnerable to climate change," he said.

Former INTO President Mary Magnier, who is an ambassador for the One Million Trees schools campaign said that she been overwhelmed by the support that the campaign has received from schoolchildren and their teachers right across the country. The venture is also being backed by the Gaelic Players Association (GPA), who include thousands of primary teachers in their ranks, and is supported by Glenisk, who have mobilised public support by promoting the tree planting initiative on their products.

Self Help Africa planted 'One Million Trees' in Africa and a further 100,000 native trees in Ireland last year, and are on course to achieve a similar target in 2021, thanks to the support of Irish primary schools.

To find out more visit: selfhelpafrica.org/onemilliontrees.



Schoolgirls Amber Heneghan, Nicole Connolly and Sienna Heneghan from Maynooth are supporting the INTO schools campaign to plant one million trees in Ireland and Africa to combat climate change.

Fundraising campaign to get therapeutic treadmill in St Catherine's

A GoFundMe Campaign has been set up by Bray woman Annette Kinne in order to raise funds for St Catherine's Special School.

In 1970, it was the mission of a group who formed as the County Wicklow Association to provide schooling and care for individuals with moderate and severe learning disabilities.

From 1975 to the present day the St Catherine's Special School has grown and developed. The school now consists of 18 classes for students with Severe and Profound Learning Disabilities (LD), Severe and Profound LD and Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), Moderate LD, Moderate LD and ASD and is located in two buildings. St. Catherine's Special School, under the patronage of St. Catherine's Association Ltd, will deliver a service of excellence that is student centered, responding to their identified needs, ensuring that each achieves their full potential and is supportive of both students and their families.

Annette has set up this GoFundMe page in the hopes of raising enough money for a Therapeutic Treadmill for the children in St Catherine's.

Annette writes, "It will strengthen the children and help get them out of wheelchairs and moving! Thank you for your contribution which will be life changing for children like my son Alexander and his school friends."

To donate, go to <https://www.gofundme.com/f/yz7ny>

'SNAs are integral and must be respected'

Green Party TD Steven Matthews has offered his 'respect for SNAs' to support a new campaign. He was speaking after the online conference hosted by the Forsa Trade Union that represents thousands of Special Needs Assistants (SNA) across the country.

The campaign titled 'Respect for SNAs' is seeking to increase the minimum qualification requirements for new hires - which reflects the high level of training attained by the vast majority in the sector, the minimum requirements for many schools and reflects the highly complex nature of the role.

Discussing the campaign, Deputy Matthews said: "I have written to Minister Foley in recent days offering my full support to the 'Respect for SNAs' campaign and asked for her Department to urgently engage with the unions representing this sector.

"The current entry requirements for the SNA role in schools has not been changed since 1979 and while the Department of Education has accepted that a review of the role may be required, there has been very little urgency placed on this issue at a senior Government level. During the last 40+ years our understanding of the additional needs that children may have and the supports that are needed to ensure that they are given the opportunity to reach their full educational potential has increased dramatically.

"When the covid restrictions have allowed, I have been fortunate enough to be able to visit schools across Wicklow to see the work of SNAs both in mainstream classrooms and in Special Education

Needs (SEN) classes first-hand. The work that they do is highly varied, challenging and requires significant experience and training to deal with day-to-day-classroom situations.

"The vast majority of SNAs currently employed in our schools have 3rd level qualifications but the current definition of the role does not reflect this degree of professionalisation. The reality is that most schools set their own basic third level requirements when advertising for SNA vacancies so this proposed change for the Department of Education would simply be reflecting what already exists in practice.

"I welcomed the opportunity to attend the recent online conference and have been in frequent contact with a number of SNAs from across Wicklow about their campaign. I hope to be able to meet with them in person in the new year to continue my support and I look forward to working with my Green Party colleagues and the Minister's office in the coming months to work towards getting the level of respect, at a Government level, that our SNAs deserve. SNAs are a fully integral part of the education system and they want to be recognised and respected for the professionals that they are," concluded Deputy Matthews.



Purple House Cancer Support, Bray were the successful recipients of €10,000 as part of the St. Patrick's Festival x TikTok Creative Fund. Pictured from left are Rowan McFarland, Zara Hannigan, Veronica O'Leary (Director & Founder) & Emma Harney (Marketing & Media Partnerships Manager, St Patrick's Festival), Theresa Grant (Family Liaison Therapist), Kate Freeny & Isobelle Rhatigan. Photo by Bekah Molony

Purple House receive St. Patrick's Festival x TikTok Creative Fund

TikTok and St. Patrick's Festival have announced the recipients of the €100,000 St. Patrick's Festival x TikTok Creative Fund, which has been awarded to ten community groups across Ireland. Purple House Cancer Support, Bray, will receive €10,000 from the St. Patrick's Festival x TikTok Creative Fund, to provide children's one-to-one Art Therapy sessions and adults Art and Crafts Cancer Therapy classes.

The fund, which was designed to support and inspire creativity in Irish communities, will be distributed to ten community groups and charitable organisations in counties Dublin, Cork, Offaly, Louth, Kilkenny, Wicklow, Cavan, and Donegal.

This €10,000 project award will support the work of these local groups in developing and delivering creative responses to their own unique community challenges. A pop-up community choir, dance workshops, heritage projects and tours, and arts and craft therapy sessions are just some of the projects which will be supported by the St. Patrick's Festival x TikTok Creative Fund.

This creative investment forms the final part of the €500,000 commitment made by TikTok earlier this year to support St. Patrick's Festival 2021. This took place over six days in March through SPF TV, a dedicated online TV channel, and an historic partnership with Oireachtas TV which brought the Festival to 1.1 million homes in Ireland during lockdown. St. Patrick's Festival 2021 was Ireland's most significant digital festival to date, with more than 102 million global engagements.

The St. Patrick's Festival team will now commence work with each of the ten selected community groups to realise their ambitious creative projects.

Founded in 1990, Purple House was the first Community based Cancer Support Centre in Ireland and today operates a wide range of support services including counselling, complimentary therapies, bereavement counselling, services for children and young adults including play therapy, creative arts and one to one support, CLIMB programme for children, camps & workshops for children, hospital transport, survivorship programmes, support groups, cancer rehab gym, meal distribution, PH choir, Yoga and Mindfulness, CheckMeOut.ie

health awareness campaigns aimed at 18-30 year olds and more.

Speaking about the funding, Veronica O'Leary, Director of Services, Purple House Cancer Support said: "When children or adults access our services, they are often in crises mode, anxious and confused. They often don't know how to express or verbalise their feelings and emotions. Our counsellors and therapists are especially trained to respond to the child or adults needs in wherever they are at that time. Interaction now helps people cope more future life challenges and gaining resilience. This creative fund will allow us to expand services and sessions as the need for our services is growing constantly. We will be able to continue to provide, Children's One to One Art Therapy sessions and Adults Art & Crafts Cancer Therapy classes. On behalf of Purple House Cancer Support and all of our clients, we would like to sincerely thank the St. Patrick's Festival x TikTok Creative Fund."

Minister for Rural and Community Development, Heather Humphreys, said: "I very much welcome this initiative from St Patrick's Festival and TikTok which is helping voluntary organisations and local groups across Ireland empower and inspire their communities through arts, culture, and creativity. This fund is a vital tool in helping communities re-invigorate important local projects after a very difficult period. It is great to see such creativity, artistic flair but also real community value in the work of the ten recipients, and I have no doubt the €10,000 award will support these local groups in continuing to deliver creative responses to their own unique community challenges."

Caroline Goulding, Director and Data Protection Officer at TikTok, said: "At TikTok our goal is to inspire creativity and to

bring joy, so we're delighted to see 10 inspirational and deserving community groups receive €10,000 each from the St. Patrick's Festival x TikTok Creative Fund. We believe that arts and culture are essential for enriching, nourishing, and illuminating our communities, so we're pleased that this fund and our TikTok masterclass will help to nurture creativity in these communities across Ireland for years to come."

Anna McGowan, Interim Director of St. Patrick's Festival, said:

"We're delighted to support 10 wonderful community groups to connect with their communities through art and creativity with the St. Patrick's Festival x TikTok Creative Fund. Each organisation has their own unique history and personality and responds to the needs of their members and communities in distinct and creative ways. We look forward to guiding these community groups throughout the creative process and sharing that experience with the wider public in next year's St. Patrick's Festival's celebrations."

These ten groups from eight counties across Ireland will also be invited to participate in a special community focused TikTok masterclass, where they can develop and enhance their storytelling skills through the TikTok platform and learn how best to harness the potential of social storytelling to communicate with their audiences.

The artistic journey of each community group, from selection through to the presentation of their creative project, will be captured and shared on both St. Patrick's Festival and TikTok platforms. A selection of work will also be showcased to Ireland and the world during the national St. Patrick's Festival in March 2022. Details of the Festival will be announced in the coming months.

Roundwood butcher becomes TikTok sensation

Keith Grant from Grant Master Butchers in Roundwood has witnessed his business increase ten fold as a result of utilizing TikTok to communicate the art of butchery.

The award-winning butcher has racked up a whopping 506,300+ likes on the social media channel. One video in particular reached 1.2 million views for the Wicklow native. The videos are aimed at educating people on different cuts of meat and general knowledge about butchery with lots of humor thrown in for good measure. Keith's audience continually ask questions and many have cited that they have now returned to buying their meat from their local butcher because they want quality.

Speaking about the success Keith said "I'm a very shy guy and I was very nervous about getting in front of the camera but I'm passionate about what I do and I wanted to share some knowledge."

"TikTok has kinda snowballed into a great channel to drive business and create awareness of the shop. I've since invested in an ecommerce website and I've customers buying from all corners of Ireland, I'm blown over with the response to my content."

Grant Master Butchers source all of their meat locally from farmers within a few kilometers of the shop. They pride themselves on selling prime Irish quality meat. One of their specialities is Wicklow Wagyu Beef raised in the foothills of the Wicklow mountains, but you'll need to be quick to land yourself some Wicklow Wagyu as it sells out fast!

View Grant Master Butchers on www.tiktok.com/@keithgrantmasterbutchers



Keith Grant of Grant Master Butchers

Wicklow householders help stem the rising tide of dumped food in Ireland

Wicklow is in the top 5 most active counties when it comes to users of OLIO, a new food sharing app which connects neighbours to give away unwanted food and other items that may otherwise end up in landfill.

New research reveals that sending 1kg of food to a landfill produces the same carbon emissions as doing this with 25,000 plastic bottles.

Even before its rollout in Ireland this week, word of mouth has meant OLIO already has over 36,000 sign-ups, with users giving away 10,500 food portions.

People can give away food and other unwanted household items by uploading a photo and description on the app, plus details about where and when to collect it.

Others can then request these by searching or browsing through the listings, where they will see what's available nearby.

"People in Wicklow seem to have an innate sense of community and food is valued. They also like to give and care about

each other and the planet," said OLIO co-founder and CEO, Tessa Clarke.

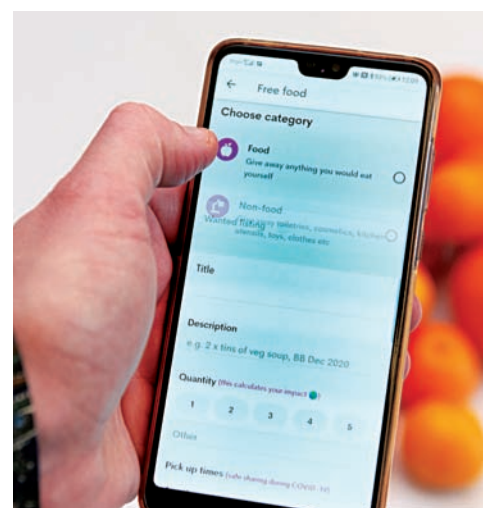
She was inspired to build the app in the UK five years ago after struggling to find anyone to take the unwanted food from her fridge when she was moving house.

"By enabling people to easily share more and waste less, we aim to help transform our throw-away society into a giveaway society."

One Irish OLIO user, Lindsay Ray, 38, has so far given away 121 items and collected 69, saving the equivalent of 56 meals and 18,000 litres of water.

"There are already close to 2,500 people living within a 5km radius of me, so there's an active group of people sharing and giving away," she said.

"I use OLIO when doing



a clear-out or if I come across something I no longer need. I've given away tea, coffee, tins of soup, lentils and pasta. Last week my partner discovered a spare tin opener, which we were able to give to another OLIO user.

"Apart from the decluttering benefits, it feels really great to be able to give to others, while reducing waste. People in my area

are into recycling and waste reduction in a big way, so items are usually requested within an hour or two."

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) data shows an estimated one million tonnes of food are wasted in Ireland each year, costing approximately €700 per household annually and equivalent to 3.6million tonnes of carbon dioxide collectively.

OLIO's own research uncovered that a third of people feel "physical pain" when they throw away good food.

OLIO's rollout here comes off the back of a €36 million funding round announced in September that will enable it to accelerate its international expansion plans.

In five years, OLIO has acquired over 5 million community members worldwide. Over 34 million portions of food have been shared, with the pandemic increasing the number of listings coming onto the app by five-fold.



Tessa Clarke and Saasha Celestial-One, Founders of OLIO

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Amelia and Darren Ronan at the launch of Stan O'Reilly's book 'Tall Tales and True Stories: Anecdotes of the East Coast', in St. Brigid's Hall in Rathnew.

Further investment in Wicklow Sensory Gardens

Three Wicklow organisations were successful in their application to the government's €1 million fund to develop sensory gardens.

Welcoming the news, Minister Simon Harris said: "Sensory gardens are designed to stimulate the senses. The plants and the materials are specifically chosen to stimulate the senses of sight, smell, touch, taste and sound. While sensory gardens are popular with the entire community, they are particularly beneficial to children and adults with Disabilities.

"In October I was delighted to open the Greystones Sensory Garden and the government today has announced funding for a further three sensory gardens at: the Ardeen Cheshire Home,

Shillelagh; St Catherine's in Newcastle; Sunbeam Houses Day Services.

The grants awarded range from €3500 to €8,300 and is part of a €1 million government fund which will see the development of new and improved sensory gardens targeted for people with disabilities of all ages across the country.

"I am delighted to see that a number of these projects involved people with disabilities being involved in the design and build of their sensory garden, bringing to life the horticultural skills they have developed in day and residential services.

"I would like to congratulate the three successful organisations that applied to the fund. I know first-hand the positive impact of initiatives like this has and support for these services will continue to be a priority for me.

Newcastle mixed-use development gets green light

An Bord Pleanála has granted permission for a mixed use two and three-storey development at the rear of the Castle Inn pub in Newcastle.

A third party appeal was lodged with ABP against the development after the Council granted permission to ABBD Development Ltd in January.

The development will consist of 20 houses, 14 apartments in a three-storey block and 6 commercial units, as well as car parking and bicycle spaces, lights, and landscaped town park.

It's envisioned that the style of the development will be that of a 'traditional 19th century townhouse'.

The existing pub car park will be reduced in size by almost half to allow for a 10-metre wide linear park.

The approved development is a slightly altered one from the initial proposal of 22 houses and 13 apartments.

The appeal against it raised the issue of the lack of capacity of the Sewage Treatment Plant to cope with it, and the flood risk around the development. The appeal also highlighted the need to retain the rural character of the village and expressed the concern that the development is too large in scale.

The appeal was supported by another resident who pointed out that the residents of the area are largely opposed in principle to the development on similar grounds.

In a survey conducted among local residents, 71% (179) opposed the development. Residents are concerned about its visual impact as well as the loss of an amenity space which is used for community events.

ABBD maintained that the layout and design have been audited by the consulting engineers and by reference to the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (DMURS). ABBD also said that a letter from Irish Water in response to a connection application



confirms sufficient capacity in the Newcastle Wastewater Plant to cater for the proposal.

ABP's Inspector's Report determined that "the proposed scale of development can be assimilated into the town without crowding the existing residents. The traditional style is in keeping with the indigenous built form and character."

In its final decision, ABP stated that the development "Would constitute and acceptable residential density in this rural hinterland location, would not seriously injure the residential or visual amenity of the area, would not detract from the character of the village, and would be acceptable in terms of urban design."

Disappointment in Delgany as funding no longer available

Funding for a proposed village centre road and footpath improvement scheme in Delgany is no longer available, Greystones Municipal District councillors have been informed.

Councillors were given the news at the Municipal District meeting on 14th December, at which representatives from Delgany Community Council and the Delgany Village Business Alliance (DVBA) were also in attendance.

Delgany Community Council and DVBA were disappointed to hear that the village centre improvements planned for early 2022 will not be proceeding. This is the second time that the village has lost out on funding for much needed road improvements.

Delgany Community Council chairperson, Paul Armstrong stated "The needs of the Delgany Community are simple but they are extremely urgent and they must be prioritised. We want to ensure the safety of road users, particularly vulnerable road users. We need proper footpaths that allow people to walk safely through the village. We also need a road traffic plan that allows access to the village without causing gridlock.

"It is essential that the issue of road traffic and associated safety risks be addressed as soon as possible before there is a serious accident. Several developments have been given planning permission in the last year and this will increase the risk associated with HGV traffic in the village and increased traffic as developments come on stream.

"We cannot have a situation where pedestrians, cyclists and vulnerable road users continue to be exposed to this ever increasing risk. Wicklow County Council receives large amounts of money in the form of levies gathered from

developers as a result of new developments in the Delgany area. This money must be re-invested into ensuring the safety of the community in Delgany and visitors to our village. It is unacceptable that Delgany should continue to suffer the impact of an expansion in population and traffic without any of the essential improvements to our roads and footpaths in the village centre which are required now.

"Footfall in the village has increased significantly in recent time and will continue to increase as new businesses open. We are all delighted to welcome the re-opening of the Wicklow Arms as a great addition to our thriving business community.

"Customers of local businesses are walking on footpaths which have been unsafe and sub standard for many years. Cars are parking on the narrow footpaths forcing pedestrians out onto the road. Delgany Community Council and local businesses have shown themselves willing to engage to come up with practical and workable solutions to our traffic problems."

Patti Shields, spokesperson for the Delgany Village Business Alliance, echoed Paul's comments: "In our capacities as representative groups (DCC/DVBA) we have worked together in an unprecedented manner to align on the priorities of our growing village and have actively communicated those needs to both the representation from WCC and our elected officials.

"The safety issues presented by the poor condition of footpaths, illegal parking and the speed and volume of through traffic cannot

be ignored, and must be addressed immediately.

"We will continue to work towards a solution that brings our Village not only to an acceptable and safe standard, but also provides a sense of community and vibrancy for all who come to experience Delgany - our businesses, our amenities (like the Burial Ground and Heritage Trail), and our unique Village community atmosphere.

"We have strong 'destination' businesses already in the Village and more investment and businesses coming forward in 2022 - and our ability to provide safe and proximate access to our customers is paramount. We also need to provide a plan that works for some of our most unique businesses, like the abattoir that serves Farrelly's Butchers, which is one of only three operating in all of County Wicklow.

"We look forward to continuing our work with the DCC and the community to attract the proper investments and funding to make Delgany Village live up to its full potential, however we must put a priority forward to solve the safety issues immediately."

DCC Chairperson, Paul Armstrong concluded by saying "We are calling on all of our elected representatives to champion our village for immediate investment.

"We need a plan to bring our village centre road and footpaths up to an adequate standard to ensure safety for everyone as a matter of urgency. The current situation is unacceptable, unsafe and cannot be allowed to continue."

Old Bray Courthouse approved for community use

The Courts Service has approved the transfer of the Old Bray Courthouse on the Boghall Road in Bray to Wicklow County Council for community use.

Welcoming the news, Sinn Féin TD John Brady said "A formal request had recently been made by Wicklow County Council to the Courts Service for the former Bray District Courthouse. This request has now been approved and the legal process of transferring the old Courthouse to the Council has now begun. The law departments of the council and the Courts Service have now commenced work on the transfer, and it's hoped that work will be complete in the first half of the new year.

"This is a fantastic result for the community and once the process is complete the new center will be a fantastic community asset.

"The building on the



Boghall Road in Bray has been vacant since 2006, when court sittings and services were relocated to alternative accommodation in the town center. In October 2020 the Courts Service informed me that the old Bray Court House was surplus to their requirements and that they were willing to transfer it to Wicklow County Council."

"I'm delighted that the campaign has been so suc-

cessful in getting to this stage. The next step will be securing the necessary funding so that necessary work within the building can be carried out. Hopefully this can be done as quickly as possible so that the community can get in and start using the new community hub."

Cllr Dermot 'Daisy' O'Brien said "It's critically important that we identify sites and opportunities for developing community

facilities. We are currently working off a deficit in that regard and as our district grows and develops, we must grow and develop its amenities.

"The well-being of our community is directly linked to the facilities it provides, whether that be sports, leisure, support services or places to gather in groups."

Cllr Grace McManus concluded "This is very welcome news to be starting off a new year with. People are looking to build back and strengthen our sense of community, and projects like this give them space to do so. My appreciation for all the work that has gone into this so far, and I'm looking forward to seeing what this space can become."

Plan to create new events space at Abbey Grounds

A planning application to enhance and redevelop the Abbey Grounds in Wicklow Town into the Abbey Gardens and event space was passed unanimously by the members of Wicklow Municipal District at their December meeting.

Wicklow County Council was awarded €500,000 Destination Town Funding from Fáilte Ireland to restore the garden, in tandem with maximising the usability of the entire site as a multi-functional public amenity and outdoor events venue.

The project will greatly enhance the visitor experience in Wicklow and provide a high-quality amenity and heritage asset that will provide a welcome focus for visitors and locals, including:

- Conversion of the Coach House to a café/exhibition space and public toilets
- Provision of an outdoor performance area/multi use space
- Universal access and increased pedestrian circulation routes throughout
- Public seating
- Enhanced biodiversity consisting of high quality and attractive planting in keeping with the historical context of the site and landscape
- Heritage interpretation and orientation

- Provision of appropriate backlighting of the Abbey Ruins.

Cathaoirleach of Wicklow County Council, Cllr Shay Cullen, said: "I'm delighted that the members of Wicklow Municipal District voted unanimously to approve the Part 8 application in respect of this fantastic project. The Abbey Grounds public amenity will complement the recent Fitzwilliam Square and Market Square developments and is another

step in the regeneration of our County Town."

Cathaoirleach of Wicklow Municipal District, Cllr Gail Dunne, added "this is a positive finish to the year for Wicklow Town, the Abbey Grounds is the perfect setting for outdoor events and theatre and exactly what Wicklow needs, the entire town will benefit both socially and economically".

Mr Frank Curran, Chief Executive, Wicklow County Council, acknowl-

edged the assistance and support of Fr Donal Roche in helping to get the project to this stage of the process and also commented that "this is really exciting news for Wicklow Town and entire county and the implementation of the project in 2022 will have a positive impact on our local economy and tourism industry. I would also like to acknowledge Fáilte Ireland's financial assistance towards this innovative development."

Wicklow creative talent sought for new TV and film initiatives across Ireland

Three new free opportunities launched for screenwriters, directors and producers

Interested in a career in film or television? Or do you want to take the next step in your emerging or established profession? The National Talent Academy for Film & Television (Academy) has launched three new opportunities for creative talent who want to develop a career in television or feature films. The focus on regional creative talent for these opportunities means the Academy is making individual calls to creatives in counties across the country - including Wicklow.

All three initiatives are free and aimed at those new to the sector as well as those with emerging and established careers in the industry. They will be hands-on, immersive and highly interactive and are focused on screenwriting, directing and producing.

The Academy, which was established earlier this year, aims to roll out a suite of experiential and exciting programmes and opportunities - with a focus on diverse and regional creative talent - across 2022.

Last week it launched its new website www.nationaltalentacademies.ie which provides a range of information and skills development as well as launching its first three programmes.

They are:

o Pathways. This is aimed at opportunities for new talent; for those who don't work in the industry and want to find out more.

o Script Mentorship. This is a scheme for new writers and script editors. Ideally, for those who have gained a foothold in the industry but need to develop their craft to progress further.

o Shadowing. This programme allows screenwriters, directors and producers the opportunity to gain on-set experience on high-end TV and feature film productions. This is for established talent who want to take their career to the next level.

More details about the initiatives and how to apply can be found on www.nationaltalentacademies.ie

The Academy is an initiative of Fís Éireann/Screen Ireland and is managed by the Galway Film Centre. It is part of the National Talent Academies network, which also includes Animation managed by Animation Ireland and a number of regional Crew Hubs managed by the Atlantic Academy (Danú Media) in Galway, Film in Limerick in Limerick and Clermont Enterprise Hub in Wicklow. The network has been established to develop a highly skilled, diverse talent and crew base throughout the country and to further build capacity within the sector.

National Talent Academy for Film & Television, Galway Film

Centre Talent Executive, Jade Murphy said: "We are delighted to partner with Fís Éireann/Screen Ireland and the many stakeholders in the sector to bring the ambitions of the National Talent Academy for Film & Television to life. Our aim is to support talent in building sustainable careers in the sector by removing barriers to entry and providing tangible opportunities for people to upskill and develop. We encourage anyone interested to get in touch and start a conversation today."

Gareth Lee, Skills Development Manager for Fís Éireann/Screen Ireland said: "We're delighted to see the National Talent Academy for Film & Television Drama announce its first batch of activities for the sector. With the other Talent Academies and Crew Hubs coming on stream in 2022, it truly is an exciting time for skills development within the sector with lots of opportunities on the horizon for new, emerging and established talent. We're looking forward to working collaboratively with stakeholders through the National

Talent Academies network to grow the skills base and support further growth within the sector."

Andrew Byrne, Project Manager TV Drama for Fís Éireann/Screen Ireland said: "The formation of the new National Talent Academy network is an important opportunity to deliver industry growth in Ireland and to reach and empower new and a diverse range of talent and crew. This will ensure the sector is aligned and working collaboratively to reach next generation audiences and international creative partnership. Ireland has a real opportunity to become a global leader in story-telling and production, further building on an incredible year of audio-visual production to date."

The Academy is encouraging people interested in a career in screenwriting, direction and production and existing industry members who wish to develop their skills or talent pathway further to visit www.nationaltalentacademies.ie and view the current and future opportunities provided across a range of innovative opportunities and initiatives.



Pat Ó Sé from Shelton

Documentary on Kerry families who were moved to Arklow area

Between 1956 and 1957 seven families left West Kerry for a new life in the parish of Kilbride, beside Arklow. RTÉ Raidió na Gaeltachta will broadcast a documentary about this as part of their Christmas schedule on 30th December at 12.08pm.

The families were moved under a Land Commission resettlement scheme, and they were attracted by the prospect of better and bigger landholdings, and the chance to save their families from emigration to the US. They moved to the areas of Sheepwalk, Raheen and Shelton and land from Lord Wicklow's estate was divided up amongst them.

Some of them found it very difficult to settle, heartbroken at leaving friends and relations behind, and some never returned home. Their families and the generations that followed are still based there, most of whom are involved in farming in the area.

RTÉ Raidió na Gaeltachta broadcaster Helen Ní Shé travelled to Kilbride to speak to some of those who left, and their families about that time. She interviews Muiris Ó Súilleabháin, Pat Ó Sé and his sister Caitlín, and also some of those left behind in Kerry at that time about the impact on them.

This can all be heard in the programme Ó Chorca Dhuibhne go Cill Bhríde on RTÉ Raidió na Gaeltachta on Thursday 30th December at 12.08 pm.

If you can't tune in live, you can listen back to the programme on the website, www.rte.ie/mag



Muiris and Micheal O Súilleabháin standing beside the pulper their father brought from Corca Dhuibhne in Kerry when they moved



The cast of Smother



Kate Dunne and Orla Phelan celebrating the Christmas Season in Knockananna.

CLASSIFIEDS

Luke 2:22-35 GOSPEL

When the day came for them to be purified as laid down by the Law of Moses, the parents of Jesus took him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord - observing what stands written in the Law of the Lord: Every first-born male must be consecrated to the Lord - and also to offer in sacrifice, in accordance with what is said in the Law of the Lord, a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons. Now in Jerusalem there was a man named Simeon. He was an upright and devout man; he looked forward to Israel's comforting and the Holy Spirit rested on him. It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death until he had set eyes on the Christ of the Lord. Prompted by the Spirit he came to the Temple: and when the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for him what the Law required, he took him into his arms and blessed God; and he said: 'Now, Master, you can let your servant go in peace, just as you promised; because my eyes have seen the salvation which you have prepared for all the nations to see, a light to enlighten the pagans and the glory of your people Israel.'

As the child's father and mother stood there wondering at the things that were being said about him, Simeon blessed them and said to Mary his mother, 'You see this child: he is destined for the fall and for the rising of many in Israel, destined to be a sign that is rejected - and a sword will pierce your own soul too - so that the secret thoughts of many may be laid bare.'

C.J.

Over 1,200 Christmas dinners provided to older people

The Order of the Knights of St Columbanus, Irish Rural Link (IRL), the national network representing the interest of rural communities and ALONE, the national organisation that supports older people to age at home, teamed up again this Christmas to ensure older people living alone across the country had a dinner on Christmas Day.

On Christmas Day, not everyone has family or friends to celebrate Christmas with or have family or friends come to share dinner with. Following the Covid-19 restrictions over Christmas 2020, there was an increase in the number of older people who spent Christmas day on their own. With Covid-19 numbers increasing once again and older people still nervous about mixing with others, IRL and ALONE collaborated once again to provide dinners.

Through its Support & Befriending Service, ALONE identified over 700 people who were on their own during the Christmas season and would require meals.

In Dublin, ALONE Volunteers

picked up Christmas dinners from the Knights of Columbanus in the RDS and delivered them to over 450 older people.

Through its national network of Meals on Wheels providers, IRL were able to match up a Meals on Wheels service to over 320 older people who not just got a meal but had someone call to them on the day. Their efforts were complimented by local community groups and centres who also were delivering Christmas dinners.

Seán Moynihan, CEO of ALONE said, "Nobody should be alone at Christmas and this thoughtful delivery of a dinner for Christmas day coupled with a call from our Support & Befriending

volunteers and staff hopes to combat these feelings of isolation and loneliness as best we can. We are so thankful for our relationship with Irish Rural Link and Knights of St Columbanus who have enabled us to reach more older people than ever before on Christmas Day. We are happy to be able to reach those who are having a difficult winter - with the costs of fuel and food increasing drastically and the continued uncertainty COVID-19 brings. The demand has increased again this year as we reach out and expand across the country."

Seamus Boland, CEO of IRL, said: "Christmas can be a very difficult time for people, especially for older people living alone.

Meals on Wheels is an important service at any time of the year but is especially important at Christmas to make sure people have a nutritious meal but also provide human contact, that many people don't have but even more so during the pandemic. This initiative with ALONE is ensuring that no person goes without a dinner on Christmas day."

Paddy Sheridan, Christmas Dinners Committee at the Knights of St Columbanus said "We are grateful once again for the collaboration of ALONE in ensuring those in need receive this Christmas Day service. We will distribute approx. ALONE is a vital part of this distribution operation."

Happy Trails Therapeutic Riding School awarded €10,000

Happy Trails Therapeutic Riding School in Enniscorthy was recently awarded €10,000 in the Aviva Broker Community Fund awards. The Riding School was nominated by Siobhán Briscoe of Travers Insurances.

The Aviva Broker Community Fund provides an opportunity for financial advisers/brokers throughout the country to support their chosen local charities or community organisations by nominating them for an award.

Siobhán Briscoe informed the judges that "Happy Trails is such a special place for many special people. Olive, Dave, their family and the many volunteers provide remarkable care, love, support and unique therapy sessions to children, teenagers and adults of all ages with a variety of disabilities".

On hearing the winners announced she said: "I am absolutely thrilled Happy Trails is one of the winners in the 2021 Awards. This funding donation is vital to them completing the 'Raise the Roof' project and to support the work underway to provide services all year round to

those that truly need it."

Olive Barrett of Happy Trails said: "I just cannot believe it, this is a dream come true for us and for all our clients. We can finally get the roof works completed on our horse riding and sensory arena. We will then have an indoor facility that will safeguard against having to cancel sessions due to bad weather and, in wintertime, this will make a huge difference to the children, teenagers and adults who depend so much on our service."

Brian O'Neill, Head of Communications, Brand & Sponsorship at Aviva Ireland said: "We were deeply humbled to hear and see the amazing work that our winning charities and community organisations are involved in and the positive impacts that they have on peoples' lives."

Now in its fourth year, the Aviva Broker Community Fund, which

was launched in September, has increased its total fund by €20,000 to €120,000 this year to donate to worthwhile projects completed by charities and community organisations. The Aviva Broker Community Fund awarded thirty-two separate donations, broken down as follows: One charity donation of €20,000 to the best submission, plus four runner-up donations of €5,000 to the shortlisted charities; Three local community organisation donations of €10,000 to the best submissions, plus two donations of €5,000 to those shortlisted community organisations; Two donations of €10,000 each, to two projects that aligned with the themes of diversity and inclusion and climate action; €1,000 donated to 20 charities and community organisations drawn from the list of those entries not shortlisted.

'Thank you for supporting Christian Aid Ireland'

Dear Editor

Despite all the difficulties we have faced close to home over the past year, it has been inspiring that so many of your readers remain steadfast in their commitment to help those living in poverty around the world - through their support for Christian Aid Ireland.

The arrival on our shores of the Omicron variant is another reminder of the need to vaccinate the whole world against coronavirus. However, for millions of people around the globe, coronavirus is not the only - or even the worst - crisis they face. Conflict and climate change are powerful drivers of poverty, and millions of people in countries such as Afghanistan and South Sudan have been caught between the effects of both. Political instability in Afghanistan, combined with the worst drought in 27 years, have worsened the country's hunger crisis. We have all been moved by the heart-breaking scenes as starving Afghan families do all they can to try to feed their families. We have even seen the most desperate contemplate selling their own children to buy food.

Christian Aid has worked in Afghanistan for around 30 years and we are responding still, by providing food packages to some of the most vulnerable families. And we are working hard to press governments to allow more humanitarian aid to reach those most in need. I want to thank your readers for the sacrifices they make to share what they have with those who have so little. Their exceptional generosity is bringing hope to communities struggling with the effects of coronavirus, conflict and climate change.

Rosamond Bennett
Chief Executive,
Christian Aid Ireland

CLASSIFIED ADS & PLANNING / APPOINTMENTS

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



Helping elderly people in Wicklow stay in their own home at an affordable cost

We all want our elderly relatives to get the best possible care....ideally in the comfort of their own home. But how do we go about organising this? Many people are nervous about the nursing home option at this stage. So, what about private care at home?

There are many private visiting care agencies which offer home care, but this service can be expensive, costing upwards of 25 euro per hour and 200 euro per night. This is a lot of money for any family to pay on an ongoing basis. And because these are visiting carers, are you going to have the same carer coming every time or will there be many different carers coming in, which can cause confusion and anxiety for the elderly person.

If your relative wants to stay at home but if private visiting care is too expensive and not consistent, do we have any other option?

Affordable Live-in Homecare (ALHomecare for short), has been placing live-in carers nationwide since 2013 and has placed more than 500 live-in carers in this time.

The carer comes and lives with the client in the client's own home. They are there at night for the client's comfort and reassurance or in case of an emergency. Then by day the carer does housekeeping, prepares meals, keeps company and provides personal care, if required.

The carer normally works 5 to 6 days per week and 7 to 8 hours per day. The carer can break her working day



Tom Quinlan of ALHomecare

into blocks of time so for example, she/he can do 2 hours in the morning, 2 hours in the afternoon and 3 hours in the evening. If night time care is the issue, then the carer can provide active care by night and then rest by day.

Live-in care means consistent, reliable and dedicated care in your relative's own home. The carer develops a dedicated and supportive relationship with your relative which gives you and your relative great peace

of mind. All ALHomecare carers are Garda-vetted, reference checked and provided with ongoing training and support. And all placements come with a 3 week trial period. So, there is ample time to make sure things are working out to your and your relative's satisfaction.

The fact that ALHomecare has placed over 500 live-in carers and currently has over 150 live-in carers working in the country shows that this is a tried and tested service that works!

ALHomecare's most popular grade of carer, the Carer Plus costs from 485 euro per week with accommodation and food provided to the carer. For this, the carer lives in,

works 5 days per week, 7 hours per day. Then any extra hours she/he works costs 12 euro gross per hour.

This means that ALHomecare is offering a home care solution that is not only very reliable, professional and personalised, but also excellent value for money.

Remember: You can claim up to 40% tax relief on home care, if your relative is incapacitated i.e. in capable of caring for themselves.

The ALHomecare continues to stay in contact with the family and the carer throughout the placement to make sure the relationship is successful. It is a genuine win-win solution to home care.

ALHomecare charges a placement fee at the start of the placement for their work in carefully selecting the carer and then matching the carer to the client to ensure a successful placement.

Back in 2013 a primary school teacher called Tom Quinlan was trying to organise home care for his mother, Ann. Ann had COPD, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and her condition got so bad that she ended up in intensive care.

She recovered enough to be discharged and the discharge coordinator gave Tom's family the choice between a nursing home and a visiting care service. Because Tom's parents had only recently celebrated their 40th wedding anniversary, Tom didn't want to consider a nursing home.

So he phoned some visiting care services but the cost was way beyond what he could afford.

Tom contacted his friend in Poland and asked her if she could help him find a lady who would come over to Ireland and live with Tom and his family and help with the care of his mother.

A lovely lady called Lena came over in October 2013 and took care of Ann until she passed away at home in April 2014.

During this time, Tom realised that there must be many other families out there in a similar situation who needed an affordable home care solution for their elderly loved one....

So ALHomecare was born and has been going from strength to strength in the past 8 years and now has over 150 live in carers working all over Ireland.

To find out more about Tom's affordable live-in home care service, visit www.alhomecare.ie Or phone Tom Quinlan on 087 744 0729.



Through the KRA Renewables' Grant Process, Nissan Ireland received funding to generate green electricity for their Dublin Head Office and to strengthen its sustainability ambitions.

2022 Community Energy Grant Process opens

Community Energy Projects are now being accepted for inclusion as part of KRA Renewables' Grant Application Process for 2022. The grants will enable homeowners, communities and private sector organisations to make clean energy savings on their properties.

In 2021 KRA Renewables acted as Project Coordinator for the Communities Energy Grant through SEAI, and secured grant funding on behalf of Nissan Ireland among others. This grant funding has resulted in energy upgrades to several of their buildings and branches this year.

As a Grant Coordinator, KRA Renewables facilitate grant applications on behalf of the beneficiaries and support established and innovative approaches to achieving energy efficiency in Irish communities. The funding is available across sectors and building types and funding of 3 between 30% and 80% is available for projects which reduce energy use and increase energy efficiency.

Throughout the process, KRA Renewables assists with all works related to Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Technology, Energy Audit, Tendering, Project Management and the overall Grant Process.

For more information on the communities energy grant process see kra.ie/renewables.

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