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Tuesday 7th December 2021 First Floor, The Boulevard, Quinsborough Road, Bray. A98 R6D7. Tel: 01 - 2869111 E-mail: wicklowed@localtimes.ie www.wicklowtimes.net

IT'S DOWN TO COVID..OK?

Sinn Féin TD John Brady has expressed his 'deep concern' at figures released to him from the Department of Further and Higher Education, which reveal the 'staggering number' of 10,300 craft apprentices left waiting to complete their off-the-job education training.

However, the Minister responsible, Simon Harris, says Deputy Brady hasn't factored Covid into the situation and that it appears that he hasn't grasped the huge advances that are being made in the apprentice scheme.

"Off-the-job-training, or Block Releases, which take place at ETB centres and Institutes of Technology across the State forms an essential part of the apprenticeship

training for skilled workers," Deputy Brady said. He added "These figures are very, very concerning. To have 10,300 apprentices waiting to complete their off-the-job-training is simply not acceptable. This training represents an important stage in the skills development of workers across all of our skills sectors.

"The learning outcomes that have been delivered to our apprentices in the past through

off-the-job-training has allowed for the development of a skills baseline across the board. Apprentices are often given skills challenges within their off-the-job-training that they may not encounter with their employer.

"What is doubly concerning is the fact that of the 10,300 apprentices left on a waiting list, 70% of these are in one of three apprenticeships which are key to our con-



14 year old Wexford girl Una Walsh, whose family are from Auhgrim, pictured playing the harp on the Late Late Toy Show. Pic: Andres Poveda



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struction industry - Electrical, Plumbing and Carpentry and Joinery.

"One of the biggest problems that the construction industry faces is the shortage of skilled personnel. Following the collapse of the Celtic Tiger, when Fianna Fail assisted the banks in bankrupting the country, we had a generation of skilled trades workers who were forced to emigrate to find work.

"I am calling on Minister Harris to put in place the necessary resources to get our apprentices trained, in order to bring the construction industry up to strength. Because, if he doesn't, there is no way that this country is going to be able to address the lack of skilled workers required to solve our housing crisis."

Responding, Minister Simon Harris said "The Deputy shouldn't be playing politics with this, he

will be well aware of the very real impact Covid has had on all aspects of society and our economy, including apprenticeships. What the Deputy doesn't acknowledge is that we now have more apprentices in training than before Covid, we have funding to increase by 50% the number of construction apprentices each year from next year, we have introduced the first ever financial grant for all businesses who take on an apprentice - a measure which will help many small businesses across County Wicklow and we have allocated an additional €20 million in funding to assist the apprenticeship system with Covid challenges." "When Leaving Cert students in Wicklow and across the country log on to the CAO website now, they will see apprenticeship options.

"Here in County Wicklow, I want to see

the development of apprenticeships including an apprenticeship training

centre and I am working with the KWETB and with the brilliant Bray

Institute of Further Education to make this happen."

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Olwyn King and family with Elves Jingles and Sparkles visiting Santa's Grotto at Coffee Delights in Bray. Pic: Joe McQuillan

Swim this December to support young people's mental health

Local youth mental health charity Jigsaw Wicklow are calling on people to join with them this December as they Swim for Jigsaw to raise vital funds to support their vital services.

Swim for Jigsaw is an all-water challenge that connects people and communities that are passionate about mental health. The challenge is to swim a total of 100 minutes and raise €100 to support their mental health services for young people. Swim in the sea, your local lake, do an ice bath or swim in your local swimming pool, the choice of swim challenge is yours.

"I am so looking forward to this challenge kicking off. I will be asking my friends and family to join me for individual swims, I will be encouraging our local community of sea swimmers to take on our Swim for Jigsaw 30-day challenge and I will be using the challenge as an opportunity to connect with the community with the goal of promoting and raising funds for youth

mental health," said Adam Burke, Youth and Community Engagement Worker with Jigsaw Wicklow.

It is free to take on a Swim for Jigsaw challenge, all you need to do is visit www.idonate.ie/swimforjigsaw and click 'Start Fundraising' to set up your Swim for Jigsaw fundraising page. Once you do so, Jigsaw will be in touch to also send you out your fundraising pack, including your personal branded Jigsaw neck snood.

Jigsaw understand and support young people's mental health. They are a charity made up of supporters, professionals, and volunteers who are passionate about supporting young people.

Their services and supports give expert mental health advice to young people. And they help families, teachers, and those who support young people develop ways to cope and the skills to be there when young people need them most.

For more information visit www.jigsaw.ie

Protest in Bray

Aontú Wicklow have organised a protest for Saturday 11th at 12:00 as part of the Save Navan Hospital Campaign. The protest will be held on the path at the junction of Vevay Road, Killarney Road, and Main street in Bray. The protest is in response to the HSE moving ahead with the closure of the A&E at Navan hospital including 4 ICU beds.

"We in Aontú believe that closing 4 ICU beds in the middle of the pandemic is an unjustifiable move, and thoughtless insult to the people who have suffered and given up so much to save the ICU strain on capacity." Said Ciarán Hogan Aontú Rep for Wicklow.

Mick's Movember Fundraiser

Mick Burns from Greystones has been participating in 'Movember' this month to raise funds for Wicklow Hospice Foundation.

Wicklow Hospice offers specialist and person centred palliative care to those with advanced life-threatening illness who are approaching the end of life. To make a donation, go to www.gofundme.com/f/7xmbv

Built Heritage grants

Owners of eligible buildings in County Wicklow are invited to apply for grants to help protect and conserve historic buildings. Grants are available under two schemes: The Historic Structures Fund (HSF) and The Built Heritage Investment Scheme (BHIS). Full details and application forms are available on the 'Latest News' section of www.wicklow.ie. For paper copies (and to return completed applications) please email plandev@wicklowcoco.ie

Help kids get back to being kids this Christmas

Children's Health Foundation, which raises vital funds to support sick children in Children's Health Ireland (CHI) at Crumlin, Temple Street, Tallaght and Connolly, is calling on people across Co. Wicklow to give a special donation this festive season and help get kids back to being kids.

Many parents across the country would give anything to have their kids at home this Christmas sneaking a peek at presents, refusing brussels sprouts or fighting with their siblings - but they'll be spending Christmas in hospital. In fact, 20,132 sick children were cared for as inpatients admissions, outpatients' appointments, day cases and emergency and urgent care responses in CHI at Crumlin, Temple Street, Tallaght and Connolly in December 2020.

Children's Health Foundation knows that a lot of parents whose children spend time in CHI's hospitals and urgent care centres really cherish their little ones' moments of mischief - whether that's getting up in the night hoping to hear Santa's reindeer on the roof or 'redecorating' the Christmas cake. There's something so special about seeing a child who has been through so much, with a beaming, mischievous grin stretching from ear to ear.

Laura, mum to Olivia and Joshua, who are both CHI patients for many years, being treated for a rare genetic condition says,



"Every year without fail, Olivia and Joshua would get sick and we would spend December in hospital, hoping that we could be home in time for Christmas. I've seen firsthand how tirelessly the healthcare teams work and it's thanks to supporters like you they have access to world-class equipment and research that helps them provide the cutting-edge, treatment and care that seriously-ill children like Joshua and Olivia need."

Denise Fitzgerald, Chief Executive of Children's Health Foundation says,

"Christmas should be the most magical time of the year for every child. It is children who create the true magic of the season - whether that's a smile of wonder at the Christmas lights or sneaking downstairs at 4am to see what Santa brought. We want to get kids back to being kids and we need your help to do that."

She added, "With the help of our supporters right across Ireland, we can invest in vital equipment, fund essential patient and parental supports and make ground-breaking paediatric research possible, that has

the potential to find new cures and treatments that will change the future of medicine for sick children."

Companies can become proud supporters of Children's Health Foundation and help get kids back to being kids.

Visit childrenshealth.ie/christmaswishes for all the details on how to support.

To make a special gift this Christmas and help make a real difference for sick children in CHI at Crumlin, Temple Street, Tallaght and Connolly, simply visit www.childrenshealth.ie/donate

Luisne Christmas Concert

Luisne Centre for Well Being is due to present it's annual Christmas concert on 17th December, 7.30pm-8.30pm.

"This is normally an event that we have shared from our old home at Darraghville, Kilcoole. Due to restrictions we will be unable to bring you all together on the night but with the magic of Zoom will be able to offer you a great line up of entertainment.

"We will be hearing wonderful Christmas stories read by Mrs Claus (Lorraine O'Brien) for all the children to enjoy. As well as that we will be present some old friends of Luisne, The Moving Skirts, a wonderful party of dancers bringing us their beautiful dances from around the world. Singer song writer Scott Maher will be joining us for live for a music session. And we will also be presenting a couple of very special projects that were completed before Luisne left their post at the Old Convent Kilcoole, a dance piece by the incredibly talented, Laura Sarah Dowdall and a musical/ video piece from brothers Josh and Ben Meakin.

"To Book email office@luisne.ie and you can pay via PayPal. Our family friendly event is only €10 per household and we look forward to seeing you all on the night."



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HARBOUR BARRED

Concerns over installation of gates at Greystones Harbour

Public representatives have expressed concerns over the decision to install gates at the northern breakwater at Greystones Harbour, restricting the public's access to a public amenity.

The gates were erected on November 30th for what the Council says are health and safety reasons, however it's led to fears that a precedent has been set for access to public amenities across Co. Wicklow.

Sinn Féin TD John Brady said "Since the gates were installed I've had a large number of people in contact with me expressing serious concerns about them. People are concerned that the erection of gates such as this,

at a public amenity, sets a dangerous precedent for accesses to public amenities across the County.

"I have been in contact with the council and outlined my concerns and asked for the rationale as to why the gates were installed. The council have cited the issue of overtopping at Greystones Harbour during weather events as being one of the reasons for their installation. Does this mean that similar gates are to be installed in the Harbours Arklow,

Wicklow Town and Bray?

"Since the construction of the new Greystones Harbour, Sispar are responsible for the delivery, management and operation of it. This has created some difficulties, particularly for local fishermen. These gates can't be yet another barrier for them.

"If Sispar are unable to manage the harbour and protect public access to it, then I believe a conversation needs to be had about the local authority taking it back in charge. The

harbour should be accessible for all, if there are issues relating to antisocial behavior, they need to be addressed by those who are tasked with it, not by punishing the entire public.

"Now that the gates are installed Wicklow County Council is stating that it will be setting out clear criteria under which the gates can be closed. These are conversations that should have taken place before now and been part of the decision-making process. Public space

must be accessible to all and the local authority who are supposed to be the guardians and custodians of it must do everything in their power to protect and enhance it and not restrict it from the public."

Social Democrats TD Jennifer Whitmore has expressed concern, saying that the installation of the gates would appear to be "a further continuation of the privatisation of the harbour".

"The Council have stated this is for health and safety reasons including antisocial behaviour in the summer months, which appears to be a reference to teenagers jumping off the harbour wall," said Deputy Whitmore. "I understand there are safety concerns, however

reality is that the Council took a publicly open facility, developed it and have not put in any provisions for teenagers in the site or provided any free alternatives for them elsewhere.

"The community has been calling for years for a swimming platform for people to jump off in the harbour. A lot of the activities in the area are already



Deputy John Brady and the new gate at Greystones Harbour



cost prohibitive so there really needs to be an alternative that is free for teenagers to use.

"I have also been calling for a youth club for years now and was promised a Youth Centre in Charlesland over four years now with no sign of it coming. This shows a huge lack of concern for our younger population in this town which continues to grow, and which will experience more anti-social behaviour as a result of no consideration given to their needs. The teenagers of this town are as much a responsibility of the Council as

any member of the community.

"I am concerned that teenagers will be climbing over the fence when it's closed adding more danger to the situation, rather than alleviating it. I have expressed my concerns to the Council on this as has my colleague Cllr Jodie Neary."

Cllr Derek Mitchell said that "The gates put on the North Pier by Sispar and the Council are to be kept open except when storms are overtopping the pier and/or when there is significant risk to other harbour users from anti-social behaviour. Last Summer

some people felt intimidated by large groups who had gathered there. Also there was a big danger from people jumping in front of moving boats; propellers in particular are sharp and dangerous."

Talking about the ongoing work at the harbour, Cllr Mitchell said, "It is expected that construction of the last Block, 'D', will start in March and finish in September 2023. This will have a commercial area on the ground floor and 30 apartments above. This area is currently hoarded off, I'm glad of progress towards finishing the area."

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Susan Ferguson and Pauline Leonard are pictured at the Unwanted Gifts sale in aid of Wicklow Cancer Support and St. Patrick's Church in the De La Salle Pastoral Centre, Wicklow Town.

NTA questioned on new N11 bus priority and park and ride facilities

Minister Simon Harris TD has received an update from the National Transport Authority (NTA) on the ongoing work to provide new shuttle bus services along the N11 for commuters in conjunction with the new bus priority measures to be introduced along the route.

Minister Harris said: "Work is ongoing on the new bus priority measures to be put in place along the N11. These measures will only be effective if introduced in conjunction with new dedicated bus services that give motorists a viable alternative to having to drive the entire length of their commute."

"The NTA have now published their Draft Transport Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area and this includes proposals for park and ride provision along the N11/M11 corridor."

"At present the initial proposal is for 3 bus-based Park & Ride sites along the N11/M11 corridor; a small scale site of 200 spaces at Junction 16 near Wicklow, a 600 space site at Junction 11 near Greystones and a 400 space Park & Ride at Junction 7 at Fassaroe. The locations and size of these park and ride proposals are subject to change and improvement."

Minister Harris was also updated by the National Transport Authority on changes to route 133 and the new route 131 from Wicklow Town to Bray.

"The NTA advised Minister Harris: 'The NTA plans to enhance the level of service provided between Wicklow and Dublin via the N11. The level of service on Route 133 will be improved and reconfigured to provide better journey times to destinations within the Dublin area.'

"We are also planning to introduce a new service on Route 131 between Wicklow Town (Colley Row) to Bray (DART Station) at the same time on an hourly basis all week, branching off the N11 at Kilmacanogue to serve Bray. This reconfiguration of services will be implemented by Q3 2022."

No cuts to frontline services in 2022 Budget

Wicklow's 2022 Budget, passed by the Council last week, was described as 'positive overall' by Chief Executive Frank Curran.

The Budget was passed by a large majority with just three councillors - Joe Behan, Derek Mitchell and Tom Fortune - voting against it.

The budget is €128 million which is €10 million more than last year's, with the increases coming in the areas of pay & pensions, housing services, climate action initiatives, library services and discretionary funds for the Municipal Districts.

The Budget contains no cuts to frontline services and no increase in the Annual Rate on Valuation (ARV) with regards to commercial rates.

It is to stay at 0.217. There will also be no change to the refund rate for eligible vacant properties which is to stay at 60%.

The budget allows for over €100,000 in PPE and Covid-related expenditure. Chief Executive Frank Curran said he expects 80% of the Council's direct Covid costs to be paid

by central government.

"Covid will continue to be a priority now and right into the new year," said Mr Curran.

"As we have always said from the start, our priorities are number one to protect our staff, two to continue to deliver our services and three to support our communities. That remains the priority."

The 6% increase in the Local Property Tax will yield over €1 million and this is to be ring-fenced for discretionary funding across the five Municipal Districts, Mr Curran said. Bray will receive €260,865, while the other Municipal Districts will each receive €195,649.

"I think it is and extremely positive a Budget, considering the circumstances we have faced over the last 12-18 months and the circumstances that we will be facing over the coming 12 months," said Head of Finance Brian Gleeson.



Head of Finance, Brian Gleeson

Outdoor recreation projects to benefit from €855,000

Four projects in County Wicklow will benefit under an allocation of €850,000 under the 2021 outdoor recreation infrastructure scheme (ORIS) announced this week by Minister Heather Humphreys.

The largest funding allocation of €450,000 will see repairs and safety works carried out on the great Sugarloaf walking route to ensure safe ascent and decent for walkers.

An allocation of €198,000 will allow for the re-routing of the Greystones to Bray Cliff walk, following a major land slippage earlier this year. The walk had a section closed and the funding announced will facilitate the introduction of a safe 2km re-route of the cliff walk. The works undertaken will include new signage and planting and enhancement of the adjacent natural habitat.

Funding of €162,000 will help to improve accessibility at the newly constructed Samuel Hayes Bridge in Rathdrum which will be welcomed by the thousands of walkers who use the Laragh to Clara Vale walking route.

Under the new Project Development Measure, the Council has received an allocation of €45,000 to carry out a study on the stream crossings required to complete the Three trout walking route in Greystones.

Chief Executive of Wicklow County Council, Mr Frank Curran, said this unprecedented investment will help further the Council's ambition to support our rural economies and make Rural Wicklow a

destination of choice for adventure tourism. He thanked Minister Humphreys and the Department of Rural and community development officials for their continued support for Wicklow.

Cathaoirleach of Wicklow County Council, Cllr Shay Cullen, added that through the ORIS fund, the Council is developing and enhancing the fantastic natural amenities in all our rural communities so more and more people can access and enjoy them. He thanked the staff of the Community, Cultural and Social Development Directorate and the Rural Recreation Officer for submitting such meritorious applications.

Minister Heather Humphreys said that the projects will benefit people of all ages and abilities for generations to come as outdoor pursuits have become an even bigger part of all our lives over the past two years.

Minister Simon Harris TD said "I am delighted to announce the investment of a further €855,000 in Wicklow Outdoor Recreation and Infrastructure Scheme which will benefit the following four projects. The 2021 Outdoor Recreation and Infrastructure Scheme is focused on developing rural Ireland's unique natural amenities and sup-



Funding of €162,000 will help to improve accessibility at the newly constructed Samuel Hayes Bridge in Rathdrum

port the adventure tourism sector in rural communities. The investment - a key part of Our Rural Future - will support rural economies and make Wicklow a more attractive destination for adventure tourism."



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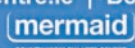
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Council to apply for Biodiversity Officer for climate action

Wicklow County Council will apply for funding for a biodiversity officer, Chief Executive Frank Curran has confirmed.

The funding is due to be announced as part of the Department of Housing's open competition to get additional staff for climate action in counties. However, funding will only be available to ten councils.

Speaking at last week's budget meeting, Mr Curran said "We are going to apply for that and I think we will make a successful application. Also the Department of Communications and Climate Action have agreed with the County and City Management Association (CCMA) to fully fund staff for the whole climate action area. There is funding coming through from both of those streams so we will know next year exactly what we are going to get."

Deputy Whitmore, the Social Democrats' Spokesperson for Climate Action says, "it is very urgent that Wicklow County Council put in a good application for one of the ten Biodiversity Officers due to be funded in the new year by the Minister for Housing. When I was a Councillor on Wicklow County Council we were the first Council in the country to declare a climate and biodiversity crisis and to set up the SPC for Climate and Biodiversity Action. The need for a Biodiversity Officer was first raised by me as Chair of the new Committee yet it has been years later the Council still has very few staff to support

the existing Climate Action Team.

"Currently we have an excellent Heritage Officer who does a lot of biodiversity work but is only one person. Local authorities will have to draft a Climate Action Plan starting in the new year which will have to be fully implemented if we are to reach our climate action targets on a local and national level. This will require the necessary staffing and funding to see this through.

"A Biodiversity Officer will go a long way to helping its implementation and vitally, keep a much-needed focus on the preservation of our environment and local biodiversity and the overall implementation of the Biodiversity Action Plan.

"Biodiversity Officers will also help ensure that housing developments comply with their planning permission and protection of existing natural heritage. It will also assist the Council to make decisions which help protect delicate ecosystems on land and offshore and advise as to how to increase biodiversity across the county.

"I have made enquiries with the Minister for Heritage Malcom Noonan and Minister Eamon Ryan regarding the provision of funding for the Biodiversity Officer and other climate action staff for Wicklow County Council".

Green Party TD Steven Matthews has also been stressing the need for the Council to have a Biodiversity Officer, saying "We

are in a biodiversity crisis, a water quality crisis and a climate crisis and our local authorities have a vital role in addressing these issues but need the resources to take real action. We have no time to waste, this is urgent, and every county needs this resource to guide and advise on all aspects of development, environmental management and council projects.

"In order to address this crisis with the urgency it requires, our local authority need the right resources and expertise. I am confident that our beautiful, wild and biodiversity rich county will benefit from the appointment of a full-time expert biodiversity officer and I look forward to continuing support for our local councils with national level objectives and funding to ensure they get what they need to do the job."

Speaking at last week's budget meeting, the Council's Head of Finance Brian Gleeson said that the 2022's budget will have "a major focus on climate". "€60,000 has been allocated for the Arklow decarbonisation implementation plan. €170,000 for the LED lights replacement programme which will commence in 2022, and €20,000 allocated for EV charging points," he said. "We are very much aware of the climate action commitments that we have and the energy targets that we face as an organisation and as a country."

New bureau formed to address Mid East region's energy efficiency targets

The three local authorities of Wicklow, Meath, Kildare County Councils have come together to address their combined climate change mitigation ambitions, with the setting up of the Mid East Energy Bureau.

The proposed Energy Bureau, with Wicklow as lead authority, will assist with the development of a culture of energy saving and carbon reduction throughout each of the three local authorities and to provide strategic advice on a range of emerging national initiatives which include the new Climate Action Plans, Decarbonisation Zones and the National Circular Economy Programme.

The Bureau will support

the three local authorities in the region to meet their 2030 Energy Efficiency and Carbon Emission Targets and to fulfil their exemplary role with respect to climate action. It is envisaged that the Bureau will accelerate the development of energy management systems in each local authority and enhance the investment required to achieve energy efficiency and carbon reduction in the region by 2030.

Welcoming the initiative and acknowledging the adoption by the Elected Members of the Budget 2022 which provides funding for this initiative, Cllr Rory O Connor, Cathaoirleach of the Climate Action and Biodiversity Strategic Policy Committee stated "To have any real impact, Climate Action needs to be a whole of organisation effort, whether that organisation is a business or a public sector organisation. When a number of organisations come together in a region the potential to make significant change is greatly enhanced. It is hoped that the establishment of the Mid East Energy Bureau will provide a platform for the three constituent local authorities to work collaboratively to bring about measurable climate action mitigation in the region."



A solar car port project installed at Wicklow County Council's headquarters in Wicklow Town will generate renewable energy and assist in achieving climate change targets.



Cllr Rory O'Connor, Stephen Byrne, Michael Nicholson (Director of Services, Wicklow County Council), Cllr Melanie Corrigan, Annalisa Ryan, Bryan Murphy, Eugene O'Mara, Ray Fitzpatrick, Marie Halvey, and Eddie Swaine are pictured at the signing of an agreement between Wicklow County Council and local Enniskerry groups to set up a management company to run the Bog Meadow facility in Enniskerry.

Anger at slow progress on East Coast Greenway project

An Environmental Impact Report to determine if the East Coast Greenway project can proceed will cost in the region of €600,000 to €800,000, Chief Executive of Wicklow County Council Frank Curran said.

Mr Curran was speaking at last week's Council Budget meeting. He said the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) report would determine whether or not the scheme is feasible. "We have to determine whether we can complete it and run the greenway through what is a Special Area of Conservation," he said.

The Council has applied for funding from Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) to carry out the EIA report and intends to lodge the report and the planning documents in the first quarter of next year.

Director of Services, Transportation, Water and Emergency Services Colm Lavery said "The route has been identified, the issue of how to procure that land is yet to be decided and we are consulting with TII in relation to that. TII have taken over the responsibility for Greenways, and the intention is to hopefully have planning and land access in place by the start of 2023 for construction to start. We then envision an 18-to-24-month construction period for the project."

Cllr Gail Dunne, Cathaoirleach of Wicklow Municipal District, said there is growing frustration among people in Wicklow that not enough is being done to progress the project. "I'm at the forefront of town team meetings and I see the anger that maybe not enough is being done," he said. "It is a project for the whole area between Wicklow and Greystones, and we have seen the Waterford Greenway and what it has done for the area. They are long-term projects but maybe things could be moved on."

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Visitors to Glendalough stop to take a selfie of the reflection on the water at the Lower Lake.
Pic: Michael Kelly

Significant reduction in people claiming PUP

Recent figures show that over 16,000 Wicklow workers have come off the Pandemic Unemployment Payment (PUP) and have returned to work.

The figures were provided to Green Party TD Steven Matthews by Minister for Social Protection Heather Humphreys.

Discussing the issue, Deputy Matthews said: "The Pandemic Unemployment Payment was an extraordinary measure brought in by Government and one of the most significant votes I have been part of in my short time as a TD. The figures I received from the Minister demonstrate the extraordinary demand at the peak of the pandemic in Wicklow with 25,730 people claiming at least one payment across the county.

"While it is hugely challenging and upsetting to lose your job, even on a temporary basis brought about by the pandemic, it shows how vital that this intervention was to protect families, couples, and individuals from a wide variety of sectors impacted directly by the pandemic.

"I fully accept that we are re-entering uncertain times given the

levels of Covid-19 in the community, but the data from the Department of Social protection clearly shows how much stronger a position we are in than at the worst of the pandemic. As of this week - 16,567 people in Wicklow had returned to work, coming off the PUP payment.

Of those former PUP recipients in Co. Wicklow, we know returned to work:

- 61% of people are currently working for their former pre-pandemic employer.
- 13% of people have moved to work with a different employer but have remained in their same broad pre-pandemic sector of employment.
- 26% of people have moved to work with a different employer in a different sector than that in which they worked immediately prior to claiming PUP.

"The above statistics are in line with the national average, but it

must be noted that while this improvement in the job market in Wicklow is very welcome - it's clear that we need to redouble our efforts to support people still in receipt of the PUP payment but also for those who have subsequently transitioned to another form of social welfare payment.

"In most of these cases, these people used to be employed in industries that have not fully reopened such as the music and live entertainment sector. We must continue to work with these sectors to ensure that as much support is offered as possible. The broader trends in the employment market in Wicklow are positive but I will continue to work with both my Government Colleagues, Wicklow County Council, and local employment services to ensure that supports are provided to anyone who needs them in the run up to Christmas and the new year, concluded Deputy Matthews.

Minister English visits Local Enterprise Office

Minister Simon Harris TD welcomed the recent visit by Minister for Business, Employment and Retail Damien English to Wicklow Town.

Minister Harris said: "My colleague Minister English met with the team in the Wicklow Local Enterprise Office (LEO). The LEO promotes entrepreneurship amongst start-ups and Micro-enterprises and are the "first-stop-shop" for anyone who is beginning their journey with a new business as well as those wishing to expand their existing one. As Minister for Further Education I am seeking to build the skills cluster in Wicklow for the jobs of the future and the support to job creation provided by the Wicklow LEO compliments this.

"Last year the Wicklow LEO supported 643 jobs across 150 client companies in the County and has been working with businesses across the Wicklow providing advice on trading online, mentoring, training, upskilling and financial support."

Minister English also visited the Clermont Enterprise Hub located on what will be part of the campus for the new Technical University for the South East.

"The Claremont Enterprise Hub goes from strength to strength and the inclusion of the Wicklow campus of IT Carlow in the new Technical University will be a driver of skills and jobs growth in Wicklow in the years ahead. As Minister for Further and Higher Education the enhancement and support for the development of Claremont is a key priority for me," Minister Harris concluded.

Solus Water Tower gets a facelift

One of Bray's most recognisable landmarks has had a makeover and been returned to its former glory.

Local residents - along with regular visitors - will be well familiar with the long-standing Solus Water Tower structure, visible on approach from the M11, at its location in Corke Abbey.

The Tower's elevated position means that for many years it has hosted equipment from all the major mobile phone providers, and was acquired in 2018 by Cellnex, Ireland's largest independent owner of telecommunications infrastructure.

Cellnex has designed a sensitive solution for the tower's refurbishment to respect both the iconic structure's past, and the visual amenity of its neighbours and the wider community.

€300,000 has been invested in the improvement works that's seen the famous Solus logo re-painted in the yellow and black, and all telecommunications



Pictured below and above, The Solus Water Tower before and after the improvement works.

equipment on the Tower kept out of sight.

The old Solus factory began manufacturing bulbs in 1935. Solus is

an Irish-owned company that was established over eighty-five years ago.

The factory has long since been relocated, but the well-known Solus Tower - bearing the company name and yellow and black logo - remains at the industrial estate in the town. Solus now operates from the Naas Road in Dublin.

Mark Shine, Site Management Director, Cellnex Ireland said: "We are delighted to have given a major makeover to the Tower, and to have done it in a way that respects its past history and responds to local community concerns. Sometimes, buildings that are initially industrial, become part of the landscape. Over time, they grow to be

associated with a certain place, and develop into a distinguishing feature of that area. We think it looks great, and hopefully the people of Bray agree."

Mark Corrigan, Managing Director, Solus said: "Solus has a longstanding connection to the community and residents of Bray, and while our factory has since relocated, we are proud of the impact it had and that the tower became such a recognisable landmark. With this refurbishment by Cellnex I hope that the Solus Tower will continue to be as useful for local communities and businesses through improved connectivity, as it was for us during our operations in Bray."



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BIFE students go global

Many of BIFE's students were getting ready last week at BIFE's Erasmus+ Event to head to Spain and Finland as part of their work experience internships.

Whether it be serving cocktails in the plush restaurants and bars of old town Malaga, tour guiding in Helsinki or serving up award winning tapas in Valladolid, Spain, whatever the role, they will come back with loads of experience and memo-

ries that will last a lifetime.

It was the Irishman Peter Sutherland who is described as the "Father of Erasmus" when he was appointed Ireland's EU commissioner in 1985. Erasmus was his brain-child and it has become a

lasting legacy for learners the world over.

Where once Erasmus may have been seen as a handy passport to foreign language learning, Erasmus+ is a lot more than that, offering students the opportunity to learn and grow together,

regardless of borders and to develop the essential skills necessary to live and work effectively in a global world. It offers students the opportunity to expand their horizons.

"Learners should not limit their horizons to Ireland," according to the Erasmus+ project manager and BIFE Deputy principal Gabriel Allen.

"Remember, we are all Europeans. Travel is very easy now. It's as cheap and easy to go to Paris as it is to go to Galway. These are the options that learners have now. The Erasmus+ programme offers the opportunity to learn a new language, to meet people from different countries, to experience new cultures and to make new friends for life. The memories that learners make from their Erasmus+ experience will stay with them for the rest of your lives".

BIFE Students Liarosa, Jacqueline, Camron, Jade, Gary and Reece were in Malaga last year/

"Erasmus+ was the



Bray Institute of Further Education (BIFE) students preparing for their Erasmus+ work placements in Spain and Finland as part of their studies, with Principal Ray Tedders, Deputy Principal Gabriel Allen, Sarah King and Louise Fortune.



Rachel Nugent at BIFE last week preparing for her Erasmus+ work placement

best experience I have ever had" according to Jacqueline Atkins Quigley (BIFE Bar Management Student '20). "I learned so much from the culture of the people here to their language and even skills

to help me pursue my career. I agree with Erasmus+ slogan 'Enriching lives, Opening minds' as it has done so for me such as I've gotten more confident in myself when talking to people

and have improved my communication skills. I have also improved my cocktail making and drink serving skills while working here."

Bethany (Benny) Deans, Ken Hanrahan,

Ryan Cromwell, Anthony Duffy, William Molloy, Kian Wallace travelled to Finland in 2019.

"It was a wonderful experience and -21 degrees was great weather to be walking around in shorts and sliders!" says William.

"It was a really good experience, if you have the chance to do it I would definitely recommend it," says Anthony.

Kian describes the experience as "life changing", while Ken says it was a "Great cultural experience along with great people, it's something I will always remember". "Overall it was brilliant. If I had the chance to go back I would take it in a heartbeat," adds Anthony.



Cathal Ryan, Luiza Meireles and Allesandro Pandolfi at the Erasmus+ event at BIFE last week.

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Christmas in Co. Wicklow



Santa and his elf switch on the Christmas Lights in Arklow, with members of the Arklow Fire Service and the Arklow Sea Scouts.

Have a magical Christmas in Bray

To help spread a little festive cheer and to continue to encourage the Bray community to shop, buy, hire and source locally first, Bray Chamber, Bray.ie and the Bray Municipal District Council recently launched its Christmas marketing campaign for 2021.

Cllr Aoife Flynn Kennedy, Cathaoirleach of Bray Municipal District said, "The Christmas in Bray campaign

aims to drive footfall safely into the town so I'm encouraging consumers to spend locally and help businesses to continue to bounce back. To support this campaign, there's free parking at weekends throughout December at Wicklow County Council Bray car parks so it makes perfect sense for everyone to shop local first this year."

Bray Chamber, Bray.ie and the Bray Municipal District Council will continue

to try and reach out to even more people in the lead up to Christmas through their digital platforms to raise the much-needed awareness that Bray Town is open for business safely and responsibly. Businesses can get involved in the Shop Local First initiative, feature on Bray.ie's 'See + Do', 'Eat + Drink' or 'Stay' pages by submitting a free listing here: <https://www.bray.ie/submit/>.

Christmas arrives in Greystones

There is free two hour parking in Greystones on Saturdays from now until Christmas. Usual restrictions apply and there is no parking on double yellow lines or in loading zones. This is another great opportunity to shop local for Christmas.

Greystones is now ready for Christmas following the Light Up Greystones Christmas event which took place on 20th November. This magical event included a Santa Claus Parade throughout the streets and housing estates of Greystones. The children of Greystones were encouraged to come and wave at Santa as he passes by.

The Light Up Greystones event was livestreamed 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, Bessie and performances from Ross Scanlon, Dylan Crampton and DoMiSo music school. There was special messages from Santa Claus as he officially turned on the Greystones Christmas lights.

Greystones Town Team, organisers of the events, said "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."

Free parking in Arklow for Christmas period

Shoppers can enjoy two hours Free Christmas parking in Council owned car parks in Arklow town for the Christmas period - running from Wednesday 1st December to Monday 3rd January 2022 inclusive.

Free all-day parking will continue as usual at the weekend.

Pay and display will remain as normal in Main Street, Lower Main Street, Upper Main Street and the Wexford Road.

The decision was agreed by the Cathaoirleach and Members of Arklow Municipal District.

The traffic wardens will be monitoring the traffic as normal and enforcing all other aspects of the parking bye laws in relation to illegal parking.

Following the introduction of new Parking Bye Laws on the 28th August 2017 the following changes apply all year round for Arklow:

- Free parking between 9.00am and 10.00 am each morning
- 15 minutes official grace period at any time of the day
- Arklow Town continues to offer free parking throughout the town on Saturdays and Sundays

Free Parking in Wicklow Town

Wicklow Town District & Chamber President Matt Forkin has given a warm welcome to the "2 Hours Free Parking" initiative for the Christmas period in Wicklow Town.

In welcoming this initiative by Wicklow Municipal & District Council, Mr. Forkin confirmed that there will be free all-day parking at the Murrough and St. Mantanns car park for the Christmas period.

He has urged shop owners and retail staff to use these free car-parks to enable extra spaces to be created for shoppers visiting the town, who want to avail of the 2 hours free parking in the Abbey Street, Church Street Car Parks and the Main Street.

In relation to the new one-way system recently introduced on a trial basis, Mr. Forkin has given a welcome to the recent changes, which have resulted in increasing 20 additional car parking spaces, including extra disability spaces. He noted that a wider traffic lane has also been introduced with additional signage.

Mr Forkin looks forward to local shoppers continuing to shop local this Christmas to support all of our family-owned and operated businesses in the town.

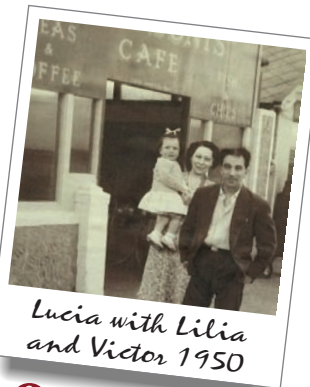
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There's no place like Wicklow

Wicklow is a winter wonderland this year so why not enjoy the magic of Christmas in County Wicklow?

This Christmas, challenge yourself to shop locally where possible, support small local businesses and think differently about gifts. Wicklow has everything you need for a magical Christmas so why shop anywhere else?

Save money on fuel, take the stress out of Christmas shopping and reduce your carbon footprint by supporting small businesses in your home county.

For a wide selection of delicious artisan food and drinks produced in County Wicklow, look out for the Wicklow Naturally label on products; think Wicklow Naturally www.wicklownaturally.ie

For beautiful crafts and bespoke decorations and gifts handmade in County Wicklow, look no further than <https://designireland.ie/designers//county/wicklow/categories/all/all/20> to see some of our talented local crafts businesses. If you prefer to shop in store, you can find hidden gems throughout the county such as the Latin Quarter in Redeross, with their gorgeous Bossa Nova Café and craft and gift shop offering handmade (Brazilian) crafts and supporting small communities, upcycling, combined with eco principles. See: <https://latinquarter.online/>

Vouchers always make a great present; support your local businesses by buying vouchers for your loved ones. From hairdressers to mechanics, pharmacies to boutique clothes and shoes, painting and decorating, landscaping, baking and beauty, your local town has all you need. If you want to treat that someone special in your life, think about the many experiences that County Wicklow has to offer; a cookery class in Ballyknocken, tasting local craft beers on a brewery tour with Wicklow Wolf or the Wicklow Brewery, whiskey tasting in Powerscourt Distillery, meeting the furry friends on a K2 Alpaca tour, wine tasting with Wicklow Way Wines, afternoon tea at Victorian Tea Times, a visit to SeaLife aquarium or Wicklow's Historic Gaol, tickets to a live show at Tinahely Courthouse, the Whale Theatre or Mermaid Arts Centre. The opportunities in County Wicklow are endless.

Christmas trees grown in County Wicklow, wreaths and garlands made from locally sourced materials can be found at Conor Browne Wreaths and Mountain View Farm, Kavanagh's Christmas Trees, Wicklow Way Christmas Tree Farm, Potters Farm, Glendalough Christmas Trees, Glenealy Christmas Tree Farm, among many others. You won't have to travel far to bring some natural greenery into your Christmas celebrations.

Enjoy a day out and visit Santa at many different locations around the county such as Christmas Winter Wonderland at Clissmann's Farm, Wicklow Christmas Market with Eco Ice Rink, Killruddery Estate, Rathwood Santa Express train, Festina Lente, Santa's Cabin at Russborough House, Powerscourt House and Christmas Island at Hidden Valley.

The Local Enterprise Office Wicklow "Look for Local" campaign aims to highlight small Wicklow businesses in every sector, asking that people continue to build on the recent groundswell of support shown to local businesses when looking to buy goods or services. Research carried out on behalf of the Local Enterprise Offices as part of their "Look for Local" 2020 campaign has shown that 96% of County Wicklow consumers were now more likely to buy local, either online or in-store, as a result of recent campaigns to highlight local businesses.

Please continue this trend in 2021 as everything you spend local, stays local and ensures local jobs.

Have a look online for ideas of local businesses that you may not be familiar with but that have

enhanced their website in the last year: <https://www.localenterprise.ie/Wicklow/Enterprise-Development/Look-For-Local/>

Arklow Shop Local 2021

Santa's Animated Snowmen have rolled into Arklow after escaping from the North Pole to spread festive cheer for 2021. Help Santa round them up to bring them home safe and sound for Christmas. Find the 22 hidden letters along the way to discover Santa's secret Christmas message for all in Arklow Town to be in with a chance to win a bonus prize. Some other



festivities in Arklow include the Window Display Competition and Golden Ticket draw.

There will be two hours free parking provided in Council owned car parks from Wednesday 1st December 2021 up to Monday 3rd January 2022 inclusive. Pay and display will remain as normal in other areas.

Bray Bounces Back

Throughout the festive season there's an array of events in Bray to keep the family entertained, including Christmas Cracker Concerts, Town Centre Christmas Lights, Christmas Projections on the Town Hall and Civic Offices, Santa's Post Box, Christmas Stories for children with thanks to Bray Library, Colouring Competition, Christmas giveaways including 'Find the Bray.ie Elf' and a virtual festive quiz.

The Christmas in Bray campaign aims to drive footfall safely into the town so consumers spend locally and help businesses to continue to bounce back. There is free car parking at weekends throughout December at Wicklow County Council car parks in Bray.

Greystones

#THINKLOCALBUYLOCAL

Greystones Town Team is encouraging shoppers to support local businesses as part of a #THINKLOCALBUYLOCAL campaign. This campaign highlights the range of retail and hospitality offerings available across Greystones allowing people to support local by visiting a Greystones business and post your purchase on social media with the hashtag #ThinkLocalBuyLocal, which will showcase businesses to audiences both local and further afield.

Look out for the beautiful shop window paintings by local artist Mary-Kate Hardy with many festive window displays around Greystones and post your letters to Santa in his special post box at the Meridian centre.

Check out Greystones.ie on Facebook and Instagram for the 12 days of Christmas daily giveaways for your chance to win great prizes from local businesses.

Wicklow Town vouchers make a great Christmas present and help to support businesses in your local town. Vouchers can be purchased from Bridge Street Books, Connolly Menswear and from the Chamber of Commerce office in Wicklow Enterprise Centre.

Wonderful West Wicklow

West Wicklow has everything you need this Christmas, with free parking available in all towns and villages. From Tinahely to Blessington, Baltinglass to Carnew, Dunlavin to Shillelagh and everywhere in between, you'll find a friendly face and warm welcome throughout the West. With a range of shops to choose from, you can get everything you need for a magical Christmas for all the family.

In welcoming the shop local initiatives throughout County Wicklow, the Cathaoirleach of Wicklow County Council, Cllr. Shay Cullen said "Now more than ever, it's important to shop local and buy in County Wicklow, where possible. It's also easier than ever before with many Wicklow businesses, small and large, now selling online. With Christmas just around the corner, you're sure to find that perfect gift in County Wicklow."



A full list of the County Wicklow food and beverage producers can be found on www.wicklownaturally.ie including:

- Wicklow Country Berries
- Glendalough Distillery
- Ridgeway Wagyu
- Gold River Farm Partnership
- Daisy Cottage Farm
- The Birds and the Teas
- The Chocolate Garden of Ireland
- Wicklow Rapeseed Oil & Sussed Nutrition Ltd
- Ballyhubuck Farm
- Wicklow Wolf Brewery
- Wicklow Way Wines
- Kilmullen Farm
- Jam Shack Preserves
- Clare Anne Taylor Couture Cakes
- Janet's Country Fayre
- Wicklow Farmhouse Cheese
- Killruddery Estate
- Mic's Chilli
- Miena's Nougat
- Conroy's Raspberries
- Orchard Centre
- Tara Hill Honey
- Powerscourt Distillery
- Ballynerrin Farm Free Range Eggs
- Coolattin Cheddar
- Wicklow Wild Foods
- Wicklow Brewery
- An Tairseach
- Wicklow County Organics



Wicklow Working Together

Shoppers will enjoy two hours free Christmas parking in all Pay and Display Parking areas in Wicklow town from 23rd November 2021 to 1st January 2022. Free parking is also available at the Murrough and St Manntans Car Park for the Christmas period.

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

**WE MAY
NOT HAVE A WHITE
CHRISTMAS BUT EVERY
CHRISTMAS IN COUNTY
WICKLOW IS MERRY
AND BRIGHT**





Brendan Shannon from Newtownmountkennedy, is pictured with Shannon Pollock from the Irish wheelchair Association at the prize-giving ceremony for the 8th Annual NRH Sports Championships held recently. The NRH Championships enable participants with Spinal Cord Injury, Acquired Brain Injury including Stroke, and Limb Absence to take part in a range of competitive events, and also to try out other sports that may interest them. These sports include Paraclimbing, Archery, Wheelchair Basketball, Wheelchair Rugby, Shot Putt, Power-lifting Tennis, Table Tennis, Swimming, Air Rifle Shooting, Boccia and Slalom. This annual event, run by the NRH Sports and Exercise Physiotherapy, and Aquatic Physiotherapy Departments, continues to partner with external organisations such as the Irish Wheelchair Association, Dun Laoghaire Rathdown Sports Partnership, Spinal Injuries Ireland, Acquired Brain Injury Ireland, Swim Ireland, Table Tennis Ireland, Tennis Ireland and Archery Ireland for this event. These groups provide excellent opportunities for people of all abilities to begin or continue sports that they may have been exposed to for the first time during their rehabilitation programme. This year, the event was held shortly after the Paralympic Games in Tokyo. Some great role models who are past patients of the NRH took part in this pinnacle of sporting events. These athletes include: Kerrie Leonard, Gary O'Reilly, Kate Kerr-Horan, Britney Arendse, Patrick Monahan and Colin Judge.

From recreational sport to highly competitive sport, patients are encouraged to try new or familiar sport in a different way while at the NRH, and the hospital's links with community organisations can then facilitate these activities to be continued after discharge.

Wicklow's Ed Randolph to be honoured at Volunteers in Sport Awards this week

Wicklow's Ed Randolph will receive nationwide recognition for his years of dedicated volunteer work with the Dublin basketball club, Dublin Raiders at next week's virtual Federation of Irish Sport Volunteers in Sport Awards ceremony. The awards ceremony will take place virtually over three days on December 7th, 8th and 9th, with Ed's award being presented on the 7th.

A Wicklow native, Ed Randolph founded Dublin Raiders Basketball Club in 1989 and has committed over 32 years to creating a safe, inclusive, fun and educational environment for all the club's members. Under Ed's outstanding coaching style and dedication, the club has grown to boast over 400 members and has produced some Irish internationals down through the years. Ed has dedicated his time to ensuring young players of the club have access to all opportunities to train and is also a keen advocate for Ireland's fight against racism, promoting inclusion throughout the club so that race, religion or disability will never be a barrier to players looking to join Raiders. Over the last three decades, Ed has made a remarkable contribution to basketball, to Raiders and to countless players, a contribution he will continue to make as the club's Chairman.



Ed Randolph

The Volunteers in Sport Awards celebrate the contributions of the band of volunteers across the country who give their time to Irish sport and physical activity every year. This equates to approximately 37.3 million hours of volunteering across Ireland's 13,000 registered sports clubs and associations and, according to Sport Ireland's 2021 'Researching the Value of Sport in Ireland' report, is worth an estimated €1.5bn to the exchequer.

Throughout September and October members of the public, sports clubs and governing bodies were invited to nominate an individual whose contribution to sport and physical activity in Ireland has made a real difference to their community, club or county. The nominations and award recipients were selected by a judging panel consisting of 12 individuals drawn from sports administration, the volunteer community and media, and included former Director General of the GAA, Paraic Duffy, RTE broadcaster, Marie Crowe and CEO of Gaisce, Yvonne McKenna.

In addition to the 32 county-level award winners, Amina Moustafa, a volunteer across many different sports including

football, basketball and swimming, received the overall Outstanding Achievement Award for her incredible service to the promotion of sport amongst women of diverse ethnic backgrounds, as well as her continued support of Sport Against Racism Ireland (SARI).

Máire Allen and Jacqueline McCormack have also received a Special Recognition Award for their amazing work with Roscommon Special Olympics Club. They have dedicated their time tirelessly over the last number of years and more recently, in the face of the challenging circumstances caused by Covid-19, did everything to ensure the club's members remained fit and active throughout the various lockdowns.

Pádraic Kearney (RIP) has been honoured with a Special Recognition Award for his commitment to Gaelic Games in Adare GAA Club (Limerick). Pádraic was incredibly committed to his community, with his volunteerism going far beyond sport. His untimely passing earlier this year has been felt by everyone in the club, especially the younger members, who Pádraic coached for many years.

Commenting on the awards, Minister of State for Sport and the Gaeltacht, Jack Chambers, TD, said: "It is an honour for me to support this year's Volunteers in Sport Awards and help recognise so many fantastic volunteers in our community. These awards have a special place in the sporting calendar as they recognise those who have given an incredible amount of time throughout the year who have ensured that sport can take place in our communities, and they do so without the expectation of gratitude or reward. The amount of hard work and dedication that these volunteers give to sport in Ireland is quite truly astonishing and I am privileged to support both the volunteers and these awards. I would also like to thank the Federation of Irish Sport and EBS, and all who will help make these virtual ceremonies a memorable occasion for all."

Speaking about the awards, CEO of the Federation of Irish Sport, Mary O'Connor said: "Despite another very challenging year for sport, we have once again seen how important volunteering has been to communities

across Ireland. We have an enormous amount of gratitude for the army of volunteers who have ensured that sport could take place in a safe and controlled manner. Whether it be on pitches, courts, tracks, pools or even community halls across the country, the volunteers are always there to make sure sport and physical activity continues to take place around Ireland. It gives me immense pride to be able to recognise so many of these volunteers at next week's virtual Volunteers in Sport Awards and I would like to extend my warmest congratulations to all of this year's recipients. I would like to also thank EBS for their continued support in bringing wider recognition of volunteers in sport in Ireland to life. I would also like to express my gratitude to Minister Jack Chambers who will be taking the time out of his schedule to attend our virtual ceremonies next week and helping us to champion and celebrate the recipients."

The awards will be streamed live each evening from 7pm on the Federation of Irish Sport's Facebook page here: <https://www.facebook.com/federationofirishsport>



COMHAIRLE CONTAE CHILL MHANTÁIN
WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL

COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES FUND UNDER THE COMMUNITY ENHANCEMENT PROGRAMME

What is it?

Wicklow Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) invites applications from community and voluntary groups and not-for-profit organisations for small scale capital projects that will support community groups impacted by COVID-19, particularly those in disadvantaged areas. The Community Activities Fund is funded by the Department of Rural and Community Development.

What does it fund?

Capital projects that comply with the objectives of County Wicklow's Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) for the development of community facilities such as community centres, men's and women's sheds, parish halls and youth centres, with small grants for running costs such as utility or insurance bills, as well as with improvements to their facilities, to carry out necessary repairs and to purchase equipment such as tables and chairs, tools and signage, laptops and printers, lawnmowers, canopies and training equipment.

There are two parts to this funding scheme:

1. Grants up to a maximum of €1,000 for small grassroots community projects that address disadvantage and fulfil the objectives of the LECP.
2. Larger grants greater than €1,000 for projects that can clearly demonstrate that they address disadvantage and fulfil the objectives of the LECP.

How to Apply?

Applications for funding can now be made under this Programme to County Wicklow LCDC by 4.00 p.m. on Monday 31st January 2022.

Application Forms are available from:

The Council's website www.wicklow.ie or from Community, Cultural & Social Development, Wicklow County Council, Whitegates, Wicklow Town, A67 FW96, telephone 0404 20208 or email cep@wicklowcoco.ie



An Roinn Forbartha
Tuaithe agus Pobail
Department of Rural and
Community Development

Ár dTodhchaí
Our Rural
Future



Kilbride painting to hang in Stormont

A painting of an abandoned petrol pump on the old N11 at Kilbride will soon be hanging in the Northern Ireland Parliament building at Stormont.

Bray artist, Tony Gunning, had his painting 'Red Petrol Pump' selected for this year's Royal Ulster Academy's annual exhibition, which is currently running at the Ulster Museum, Belfast. The painting was sold in advance of the

opening on 28th October but the artist has just recently learned that it was purchased for the NI Dept. of Finance and is destined for its new home in Stormont at the end of the exhibition which runs until 2nd January 2022.

It brought back a great memory of the artist's last visit to Stormont in 2015 when he was there with his wife for the launch of the Suki Tea Art Awards. They arrived early and got talking to the security personnel, one of whom kindly offered to give them a private tour of the NI Assembly rooms and some other off-limit places. "It turned out that he was the heroic individual who brought down Michael Stone who was armed with a knife when he attempted to access the Assembly in 2006 when it was in session" said Tony. Michael Stone was the UDA man who single-handedly attacked an IRA funeral at Milltown cemetery in 1988 with grenades and a handgun, killing three and injuring dozens more. He was released from prison in 2000 under the Good Friday Agreement.

Tony Gunning is an award-winning artist based in Bray. He has exhibited throughout Ireland and internationally including a solo exhibition at the European Parliament in Brussels. His work is in many private and corporate collections worldwide including the Bank of Ireland collection and Waterford Municipal Collection. He won the Curators Award and the Bank of Ireland Emerging Artist Award at EV+A 2007.

Tony is a member of the Signal Art Society and Visual Artists Ireland. His work can be seen currently on www.tonygunningfineart.com



Bray artist Tony Gunning with his painting 'Red Petrol Pump'



Veronica O'Reilly is pictured launching her new book 'Raw in a Cold Climate 2', with Wicklow Town District & Chamber President Matt Forkin, Wicklow Municipal District Cathaoirleach Gail Dunne, Nick Seymour, Tadhg Byrne and Valerie McHugh at Nick's Coffee and Healthy Habits in Wicklow Town.

Raw in a Cold Climate

Veronica O'Reilly's gentle approach to food is evident from the very first page of her new book *Raw in a Cold Climate 2*.

Her modest introduction and humble approach to her craft endear the reader from the start. Rather than being a preachy reminder to eat healthily, it is a sincere invitation to join her in her methods of procuring, preparing, sharing and eating.

The simple reminder that food is more than physical sustenance but also serves to bring people together, draws the reader in and inspires and challenges them to 'new levels of creativity'.

'Raw Food Cuisine consists of vegetables, fruit, seeds, nuts, spices and herbs, prepared to a maximum temperature of 43 degrees'.

Rather than making this sound like an impossible task, Veronica manages to break it down into a series of fun challenges, with a short list of ingredients and only a few simple processing tasks, Veronicas recipes are surprisingly uncomplicated.

The photographs are so visually appealing and Veronica is reassuring that everything will taste delicious even if it doesn't look like the photos - unlike a lot of modern cookbooks where the emphasis is on the aesthetic and overwhelming instructions, with less consideration for the taste.

While at first, late November seems like an unlikely time to be launching a book called *Raw in a Cold Climate* ... the book is actually so full of warmth, encouraging anecdotes and a reconnection with nature, that it seems even more relevant at this time of year.

Nourishing ourselves with healthy food, a sense of accomplishment and a desire to share our bounty at our tables is in fact a very nurturing, warming and soothing suggestion.

Raw in a Cold Climate suggests the simple list of skills, ingredients and tools to create a new healthier way of living. It's a highly recommended read and kitchen companion for any cook who wants to learn to nourish body and soul

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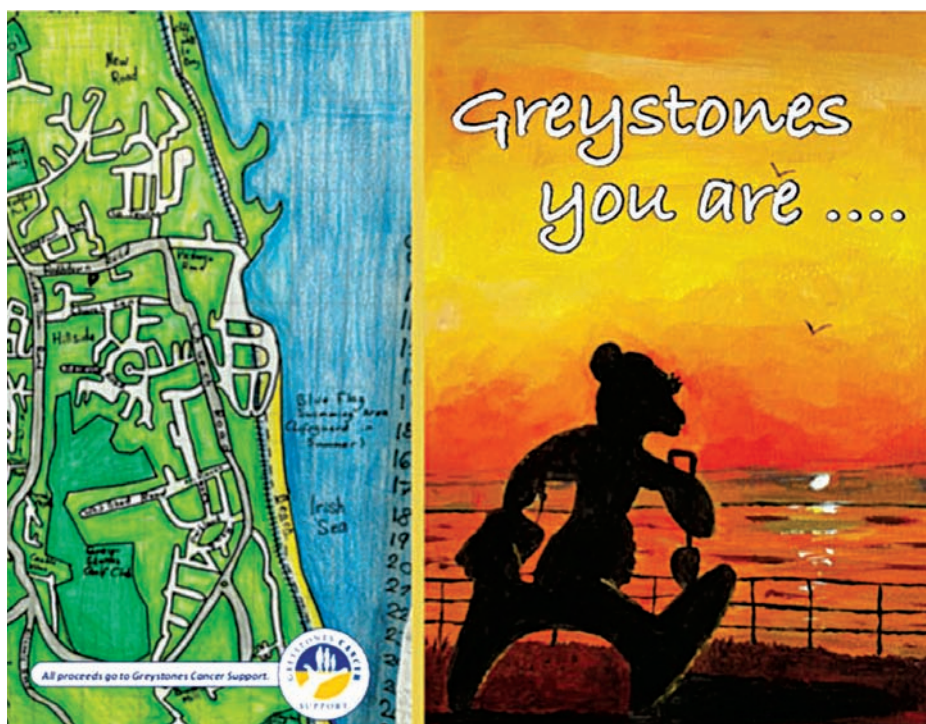
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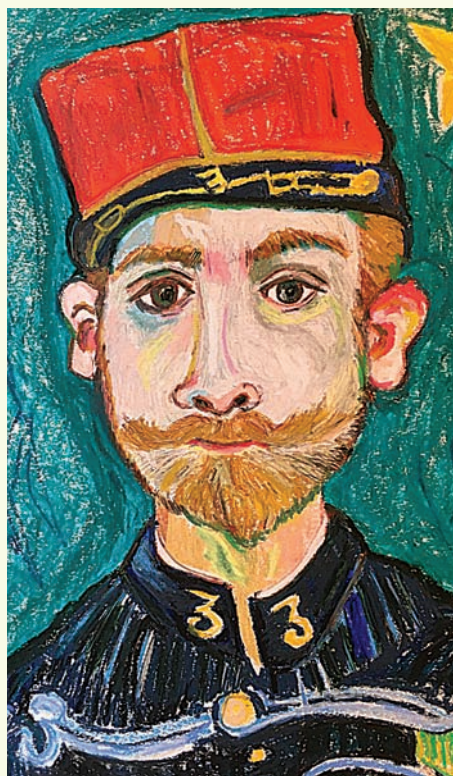
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Bollarney, The Murrough,
Wicklow Town



'Greystones, you are...' is a collection of poems about Greystones and the surrounding area, penned by its residents. Compiled by Frances Browner, local poet, the anthology features over 50 poems, some of which were included in Poets' Wall 2020, and Poetry Trail 2021. Proceeds from sales of the collection will go to Greystones Cancer Support. It's available for sale at their centre at La Touche Place, for €10 euros. It's also available from Village Bookstore, Halfway Up the Stairs, Roche's Pharmacy, Bear Paw, Whale Theatre and Fisher's of Newtownmountkenedy.

Coming to Signal Arts Centre...



Wall Flowers

By Karen Hickey

Monday, February 14th to Sunday, February 27th 2022

Karen Hickey is based in Celbridge, Co. Kildare. Throughout the last 16 years she has attended many workshops and courses mostly in portraiture, attending at NCAD studying Life Drawing and Painting in 2016/17. She has been working professionally since 2016.

Interested in people, their histories and back-stories, she endeavours to capture the essence of her subjects through the bold use of colour, shapes and lines. Her visual style is expressive and instinctive.

Karen's work featured at the Electric Picnic Festival in 2017 and at the Waterford Walls Festival in 2018 she also hosted a solo exhibition at the Signal Arts Centre in 2018. She has displayed work at Art Source in the RDS in 2018, 2019 and 2021. During the Covid pandemic Karen continued to work from her home studio where she produced many portrait commissions and also experimented with still life works.

The artist's new exhibition entitled "Wall Flowers" will run at the Signal Arts Centre from 14 February for two weeks. Wallflowers are the unnoticed personalities lingering on the fringes of gatherings.

They often have a lot to contribute but for many reasons don't. These mysterious characters often have more to say in the way that they don't speak. It could be through their facial expressions or clothing but they notice everything in the room. What are they hiding and can we get to know who they really are.

Karen also communicates with clients regarding commissions and sales online via her website and email.

Bray artist explores fluid art in debut exhibition 'Começo'

Bray abstract artist Adam Connors is having his first exhibition, 'Começo', to display a collection of works which he has been working on since the spring of 2020. The exhibition will take place this Thursday 9th December from 7pm to 9pm in Finnbees cafe on Bray seafront. The event will showcase a variety of different series of resin and acrylic works. There will also be finger foods and wine.

Adam began large scale painting and fluid painting in Lisbon in 2016 and has since returned to Ireland to pursue a career in art.

The art pieces should not only be seen as decoration but also as investments that will last through generations.

"I spent 4 years in Lisbon and was introduced to visual arts in the University of Lisbon," says Adam.

"Though I was not an enrolled student I spent some time in the university and tried out a lot of different mediums. I began taking friends back to the garage I was living in

after nights out and we would paint as a group. This spurred my interest in abstract art. I began teaching fluid art workshops in Porto where I spent a further year.

"The fast drying properties of acrylic paint lend themselves to my fast moving painting technique. I use washes and glazes to generate nuances of form and variations of hues through the semi transparent layers below.

"I build up layers of light and dark dragging vibrant highlights up from the beneath. I like to work with tetradic, split-complementary

and triadic colour combinations and pull contrast out from the lower layers for a dramatic and deep vibrancy.

"My interests include anthropology, travel, physics, history, architecture, photography, economics, natural world, and psychology. I like to express some of these interests through painting.

"My art has themes of the 4th dimension, motion and human connection. My art can be found with local and international art collectors and in local commercial spaces."



Artist Adam Connors with one of his works.

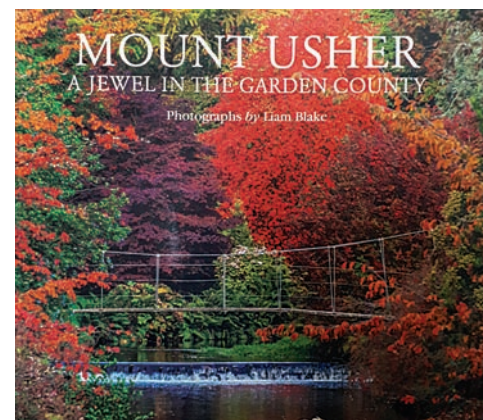
Mount Usher - a Jewel in the Garden County

A new photographic book shows off the beauty of Mount Usher Gardens and its flora and fauna through the different seasons.

'Mount Usher - A Jewel in the Garden County', features over 90 colour photographs by photographer Liam Blake with an introduction by Mount Usher's head gardener Sean Heffernan.

From the Riviera Walk in Spring to the Azalea Walk in the Winter, the splendour of Mount Usher is captured in this collection of beautiful photographs. Interspersed throughout the book are a number of Haikus by Dublin poet Tony Curtis.

"It seems the photographer of this book also fell under the 'Robinsonian' spell, Sean Heffernan writes in the introduction in reference to the garden writer William Robinsons. "The picture layout doesn't follow



Winter sunrise with blackbird at the herbaceous border

any formal chronological order season wise, and like the garden there are surprises at every turn".

Also in his Introduction, Sean details the history of Mount Usher from when businessman Edward Warpole first leased the site in 1868.

Liam Blake is a photographer best known for his colourful calendars and postcards of Ireland, and is the author of several photographic books.

Sean Heffernan has been head gardener at Mount Usher since 2006. He was nurseryman with Longs Nurseries in Rathgar and a gardener at the Airfield estate in Dundrum before moving to Wicklow.

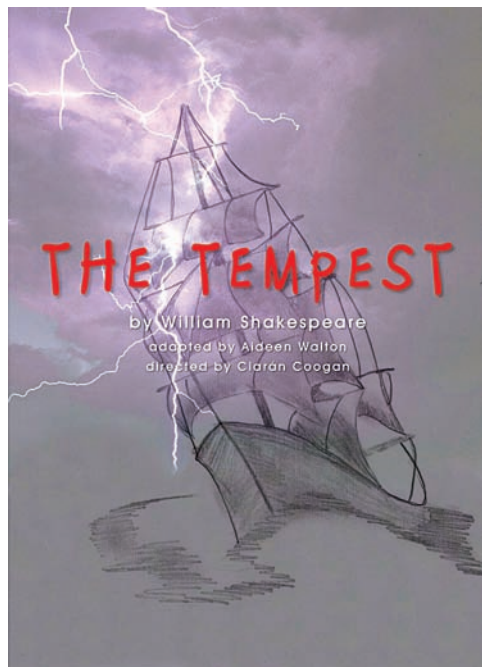
'Mount Usher - A Jewel in the Garden County', is out now and is available from the publisher at www.realireland.ie and from Bridge Street Books in Wicklow Town. The cost is €9.95.

Shakespeare's The Tempest coming to Whale Theatre

Adapted by Aideen Walton / Directed by Ciarán Coogan

Friday 17th and Saturday 18th December @ 8pm and Sunday 19th December 2021 @ 4pm. Tickets €15 and €12 at www.whaletheatre.ie or call the booking office on 01 2010550

Making Waves Youth Theatre is proud to present one of Shakespeare's last and strangest of plays. The Tempest is a comedy about magic, betrayal, revenge, reckoning, love and forgiveness.



The play is set on a mysterious and magical island where magician Prospero, once Duke of Milan, and his beautiful daughter, Miranda, live and are served by the sprite Ariel and the strange witch's son Caliban. Years before, Prospero was betrayed and usurped as Duke by his brother Antonio in a conspiracy with Alonso, the King of Naples, and he was cast away at sea with his daughter to die. However, they survived to reach this island, and Prospero, with Ariel's help, has created the tempest that brings his betrayers and their entourage to the island. The play begins with the storm, and as events unfold, under Prospero and Ariel's watchful eyes, conspiracy, comedy and romance ensue. Be prepared to be transported!

Making Waves Youth Theatre is a community initiative, founded in 2018, Making Waves Youth Theatre is generously supported by Ross McParland of Greystones Studios and The Whale Theatre, facilitated by Ciarán Coogan, Aoife Connolly and Aideen Walton, and administered by Joanne O'Shea. The group aims to provide teenagers between the ages of 14-18 years in Greystones and its environs with the opportunity and space to learn about and make great theatre, through workshops, productions and attending other theatrical productions.

Making Waves' previous productions at The Whale Theatre include Juliet of Verona by Ciarán Coogan and Lost In Transit by Ciarán Coogan. For more information contact youththeatre.greystones@gmail.com

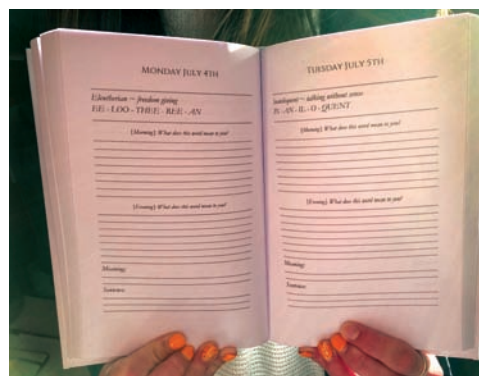
Bray teen's word journal provides journey of self improvement

Ben Mitchell, an 18-year-old from Bray, has recently published a book of rare and interesting words which aims to help people improve their vocabulary day by day.

The title is 'Logocracy', which means 'The rule or government by words', and the book takes the form of a 'Word Journal' intended for daily use throughout 2022. The goal of 'Logocracy' is to help people improve everyday through just one single word, Ben says.

About two years ago, Ben began learning one new word every day, words

that he found intriguing and were not colloquial, but that he felt deserved to be in everyday use. This collection grew with each week as Ben approached his Leaving Cert, and he kept on compiling words through and after the exams. Eventually he decided he had the makings of something that could really help other people. He subsequently took a gap



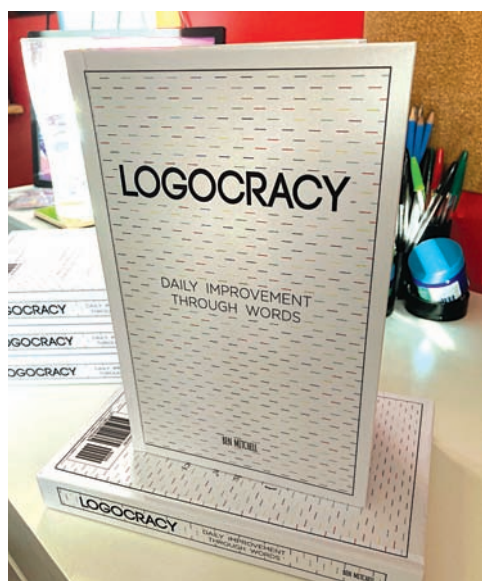
year and decided to work on the book that would eventually become 'Logocracy'.

"I can still remember that first word, it was 'gelid' which is a synonym for the word 'cold'," Ben explains. "Over time, this habit developed from a thought based one to a written one. I had my own A5 journal where I made these daily entries. The structure of the page began to develop to the point of including the date, the word, its definition, and an important question which is, 'What does this word mean to you?'. In this section, the reader writes down whatever they want; what the word makes them think of, what questions it makes them ask, how it makes them feel, etc.

think and write about each day using this 'What does this word mean to you?' prompt. This simple daily task allows the reader to develop by thinking about and learning a new word each day.

Words range from things we all did as children (Nephelococcygia - the act of finding shapes in clouds), to things we often experience but cannot quite find the word for (Petrichor - the smell after rain following a period of dry weather). From fears that we experience (Kainotophobia - the fear of change) to words that describe what we may aspire to (Encratty - the control of one's desires and actions).

Logocracy is available from Amazon in hardcover and is priced €18.72.



Logocracy by Ben Mitchell

December at Mermaid



TALK / FILM

Under Surveillance (THURSDAY 9th December | 8pm | €5)

Under Surveillance is a 30-minute film, performed by 8 residents from the Wicklow Grand Hotel, Direct Provision Centre and actors Kevin Olohan and Steve Hartland. This is the second project workshoped with the residents and writer Tina Noonan, following on from a stage production of The Linen Room, which was performed as part of The Abbey Theatre's 5 x 5 in 2020.

Under Surveillance consists of 10 short scenes covering a 24 hour period, centred around the entrance to the hotel and set during the first Covid lockdown. We see the transient flow of residents, camaraderie, homesickness, boredom and the mental anguish of awaiting a fate of asylum or deportation with strangers who become family.

A short panel discussion will follow with the performers and the writer, along with Bray-based visual artist Brigid O'Brien, whose exhibition HOME is currently showing in the Gallery at Mermaid. The panelists will discuss their approaches to their work, and the contexts and challenges of making it.

MUSIC

Anna Mieke (FRIDAY 10th December | 8pm | €15)

With Support From Rachael Lavelle

Anna Mieke is an Irish musician and songwriter, based in County Wicklow. Her debut album Idle Mind, described as a strikingly confident collection of songs, full of blue sky thinking and wide open horizons by the Irish Times, was released independently in April 2019.

Inspiration for her writing stems from a colourful background of experience: learning Maori songs at school in New Zealand, cycling through Europe, living in Granada, learning folk songs in Bulgaria and performing cello in the Cork-based experimental improv group, HEX.

Anna Mieke performs with percussionist Matthew Jacobson, Ryan Hargadon on saxophone, synth and Brian Mac Gloinn on fiddle and harmonium.



DANCE

Ballet Ireland's Nutcracker Sweeties (WEDNESDAY 22nd | 4pm & 8pm + THURSDAY 23rd December | 4pm) (€30/25 or €100 (Family of 4))

It's a magical Christmas Eve. Ciara and her brother Fionn are on a shopping trip to a famous department store in Dublin. They wander off from their parents and the magic of Nutcracker and Christmas begins...

The two are rescued by the Nutcracker doll who comes to life before Ciara shakes a snow globe creating a glorious blizzard of snowflakes. The Sugar Plum fairy greets them leading Ciara into the kingdom of the sweets where the beautiful Christmas windows come to life.

This holiday season, the curtain rises on Ballet Ireland's Nutcracker Sweeties, a new production of one of the world's favourite ballets. Choreographed by Morgann Runacre-Temple, this exciting new Irish presentation of the festive classic performed by a cast of world-class dancers will appeal to audiences of all ages with its fairy-tale magic, beautiful costumes and a re-imagined Tchaikovsky score. A tale of wondrous adventure that combines to form one of the most delectable Christmas confections imaginable. Gather with friends and family to experience the beauty and magic of ballet live on stage. After all, Christmas only begins once you've seen Ballet Ireland's Nutcracker Sweeties!





Pictured are the St. Gerard's Junior School pupils who won the award for Best Junior Film for their film 'The Party Crasher' in this year's FÍS Film Awards. The renowned event which celebrates the moviemaking abilities of primary school students took place virtually. In 'The Party Crasher', Hatty Potter learns a valuable lesson about the importance friendship after he uses his magic at a party to help him win all the prizes. 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.

Knocksink Wood announced as Community Engagement Project for 2021

The National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) at the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage and Leave No Trace Ireland (LNT) have announced that the 2021 Community Engagement Project is a bespoke project to undertake vital restoration work in the Special Area of Conservation at Knocksink Wood Nature Reserve.

The purpose of the Community Engagement Project is to educate people how to make responsible decisions when participating in outdoor activities, to promote a sense of stewardship for the natural world, and an understanding of how to reduce their carbon footprint.

This project is possible thanks to funding from The Community Foundation For Ireland.

Welcoming the selection of this year's project Tina Roche, Climate Change and Biodiversity lead at The Community Foundation For Ireland said:

"One of the big questions we face is how we manage to conserve and enhance the habitats of our declining biodiversity and yet allow people to enjoy nature. Leave No Trace, the national organisation dedicated to protecting the outdoors, is examining how this might

happen in Knocksink. We, at The Community Foundation for Ireland, look forward to the outcome and how it might be applied elsewhere."

The Community Engagement Project is an initiative designed to address areas impacted by outdoor activities and heavy use. Using Leave No Trace solutions, these areas can be restored and thrive again. The chosen location receives a unique, site-specific blend of training, education programmes, service projects, monitoring programmes and more. With site-specific Leave No Trace measures in place, along with the support of the local community, the area is equipped to bounce back from impacts and recover its natural qualities. The result is a sustainable outdoor area that is on the road to recovery.

Site Manager and

NPWS Conservation Ranger, Andrea Webb, said: "Knocksink Woods is a gem of a site, but it is under a lot of pressure. I am delighted that Leave No Trace Ireland are working with the National Parks and Wildlife Service to raise awareness of the conservation value of the woodland".

Knocksink Wood Nature Reserve is designated a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and Nature Reserve, but has unfortunately been severely impacted by littering, camping, and tree damage. Local community members and visitors to the wood will get involved in multi-day actions for biodiversity, working in collaboration with the NPWS, National Biodiversity Data Centre, and local councillor Melanie Corrigan to restore this area of natural beauty.

The Knocksink Wood

project will combine on-site working to reduce impacts currently affecting the site, increased awareness, and a sense of ownership through citizen science projects with the creation of several educational resources such as a podcast series, technical tips videos, and more.

The team, along with visitors to Knocksink will spend several days on-site working to undo damage to the site, clear access for recreation, and remove litter and waste. The team will also carry out a BioBlitz with the data being fed into the National Biodiversity Data Centre's Database. This will involve recording all species sightings and collating them into one database to complement the development of the biodiversity action plan.

Padraic Creedon, Ecologist with Leave No Trace Ireland said:

"Leave No Trace are very excited to be a part of this project. From a personal point of view Knocksink holds a special place in my heart. I grew up nearby and went there often as a child, and it is unlike anywhere else I've ever been. To be working with the NPWS and the local community now to help this wonderful woodland is such a pleasure and goes to the health of the Leave No Trace vision to protect and enhance our outdoor recreational spaces."

The Leave No Trace Ireland Community Restoration Project with the NPWS will take place from late 2021 - early 2022, with on-site Impact Days planned for January and February 2022.



Knocksink Wood Bridge

Remembering Archbishop Edward Byrne 1872-1941

In 1921 Wicklow man Rev Edward Byrne was consecrated as Archbishop of Dublin and Primate of Ireland's Roman Catholic community. Bishop Byrne's event filled life will be explored over the next six months in a series of rolling visual displays to be installed in Arklow's Church of St Mary and Peter on Parade Ground.

The Remembering Archbishop Edward Project is the committee behind the remembrance events. The centenary remembrance will culminate in August 2022 with a mass and homily on his life and the launch of a commemorative booklet on Archbishop Byrne and his time.

A public lecture on the Archbishops life will be given by historian Pat Power at a later date (on a reduction of Covid restrictions).

Bishop Byrne had many associations with Arklow. His father and two siblings brothers who died young are interred in the old section of St Gabriel's Cemetery.

Though born in Dublin, as a young child he lived at his father's farm residence in Kilahurler townland and attended his first schooling in an infant school run by the Sisters of Mercy in Arklow.

Edward Byrne's tenure as priest and later bishop covered a momentous period in Ireland history witnessing events from the Land War to the War of Independence and its Civil War aftermath and on to the outbreak of the Second World War. During his time as curate in Dublin's St Mary's Pro - Cathedral he witnessed the Lock Out of 1913 and the 1916 Rising.

As Dublin's Archbishop he was deeply involved in trying to heal the divisions caused by Ireland's



Archbishop Edward Byrne

Civil War and its aftermath. As Primate of Ireland Bishop Byrne was responsible for many improvements in schools, church construction and especially the expansion of Dublin's public hospitals including the National Children's hospital in Crumlin and the establishment of St Vincent's in Elm Park. He also fostered the establishment of health clinics throughout the diocese of Dublin and its contiguous parishes. Though often at loggerheads over lay control Bishop Byrne was a staunch advocate of organisations like St Vincent De Paul and the Legion of Mary in their charitable

works for Dublin's poor.

Archbishop Byrne as Primate of Ireland was the spiritual leader of the Irish Roman Catholics at the pinnacle of Roman Catholic influences throughout Irish society for over 20 years. During his episcopal offices he advocated and presided over the all too many social restrictions inflicted on Irish society through draconian censorship, social strictures on recreation, controlled public amusements and overbearing influences on the media of his time.

In 1929 and in 1932 Archbishop Byrne was the senior figure in organising the centenary of Catholic Emancipation ceremonies and the International Eucharistic Congress in Dublin. The Congress was looked upon as the zenith of Catholic piety in Ireland's religious evolution and is a reference point for many subsequent events in social history.

The Remembering Archbishop Edward Project is chaired by the Very Rev Padraig O'Coilain, PP Arklow Parish. The committee members are local historian Pat Power, representatives of each of the families descended from the Archbishop Byrne's family - Ted Fanning, Eddie Galvin, Caroline Buck and Marie Merrigan. Also Shelly Kavanagh, who has done a lot of research on the Byrne Clan diaspora.

Raising Voices Fellowship supports underrepresented children's artists

The Raising Voices fellowship is inviting aspiring writers and/or illustrators who make work for children and young adults to apply for their new fully-funded, career-altering programme.

Encompassing a host of creative and practical supports, the six selected fellows will be connected to a welcoming community of practice and supported in developing their careers.

The fellowship is led by a group of literature organisations including Children's Books Ireland, Illustrators Ireland, Publishing Ireland, the Dublin Book Festival and the Tyrone Guthrie Centre at Annaghmakerrig. Raising Voices aims to break down barriers to publication and progression, and to increase diversity and representation in the Irish literature sector for those whose voices have been underrepresented due to background or identity.

Elaina Ryan, CEO of Children's Books Ireland commented on the Raising Voices fellowship: 'The recent Diversity and Inclusion Survey published by Words Ireland indicates that there is still a long way to go in ensuring equality of access and progression for underrepresented groups in the Irish literature sector. Children's literature is, unfortunately, no exception.'

We know that there are authors and illustrators in Ireland whose work has not yet reached audiences and who have the talent, skill and tenacity to carve out incredible careers in children's books. Raising Voices is our chance to identify and provide support to some of these artists, to learn more about the barriers that must be broken down, and to connect them with networks that will help them flourish.'

The creative and practical supports included in the fellowship programme are as follows: Mentorship with an experienced writer or illustrator; A detailed

critique from an editor/art director suited to the fellow's practice; A week-long residency at the Tyrone Guthrie Centre at Annaghmakerrig; Access to a bespoke speaker series, bursary information clinic with the Arts Council, and various events and courses; Tools, information and guidance needed to finalise a manuscript or dummy, prepare work for submission, research the market, and apply for bursaries.

Entry requirements

The programme is designed for writers and illustrators that:

- Make work for children and young people including fiction, non-fiction and poetry
- Work in English or as Gaeilge
- Have a complete manuscript, picturebook or illustrated book outline
- Come from backgrounds or communities that are underrepresented in children's and young adult literature or whose identity is traditionally underrepresented
- Have not yet been published or secured a contract with a publisher or agent
- Live permanently in Ireland or Northern Ireland

Rather than list strict and exhaustive criteria, the Raising Voices fellowship is asking writers and illustrators who apply to self-identify as 'underrepresented'.

Six fellows will be selected, by representatives from the five partner organisations and three external readers. As fellows may face financial barriers, the initiative is fully funded by the Arts Council, therefore all mentoring and supports received will be free of charge.

The Raising Voices Fellowship commences in February 2022 and will run until November 2022. The application deadline is Thursday, January 6th 2022 at 3pm.

Rathdrum gets ready for new library

After 40 years of delivering a library service from 11 Gilbert's Row, Rathdrum, the current library has closed its door.



Librarian Margaret Byrne and Cllr Pat Kennedy with Rory Devlin at the old library on Gilbert's Row in Rathdrum.

Wicklow County Council library staff are now preparing for the opening of its new library in the new town centre development beside the Primary Care centre.

Book shelves and furniture are currently being assembled, with €50,000 of new stock due to be delivered to help fill those empty shelves.

The days from now until Christmas will see a lot of activity, with shelving of stock and installation of IT and furniture. The new library will open in early January.

Cathaoirleach of Wicklow County Council, Cllr Shay Cullen, said: "The new library will be a great addition to Rathdrum. There will be 12 study spaces, four dedicated public access pcs and a shelving stock of almost 10,000 items. There will also be a relaxation area, for reading of newspapers and magazines. I am particularly pleased to see that the opening hours will be more than double the current hours, as the service will be available from Tuesday-Saturday, inclusive."

Wicklow County Council Chief Executive, Frank Curran, added: "Wicklow County Council has shown great support and investment in its library network in recent years. The new library for Rathdrum will further enhance the overall service".

Cllr Pat Kennedy paid a nostalgic visit to the old library on its final day and was very enthusiastic about what the new library will have in store. "While it's been great to have this library in Rathdrum, which has been well used by the general public and schools, the new library will be four times the size of this building and will offer great opportunities to the community," he said.



County Librarian Brendan Martin and Cllr Pat Kennedy with Amber and Taylor O'Neill in the old Rathdrum library.

Light Up A Life with Wicklow Hospice

Sponsor a light to remember & show your support

Our Lady's Hospice & Care Services Wicklow Hospice is taking part in the Light Up A Life fundraiser for the second year.

People can get involved by sponsoring a light on the tree in Magheramore in memory of a loved one. Lights can be sponsored on www.lightupalife.ie or by phone (1850 66 06 06) throughout the Christmas period & into the new year.

Ms Eleanor Flew, Director of Fundraising and Communications, Our Lady's Hospice & Care Services, explained, "As we come up to our first anniversary providing palliative care across Wicklow, we invite you to join us online on www.lightupalife.ie at 5pm on 5th December to experience our virtual remembrance ceremony, which will feature Andrea Corr, Ian Dempsey and musical acts including the Dublin Gospel Choir. Light Up A Life has been an important part of Our Lady's

Hospice & Care Services for 29 years and is a time when our supporters show us how much they

value our work. Despite Covid challenges this year and last, we are continuing to develop our ser-

vices in line with the community's needs.

"We are also thankful to all the volunteers who will be in the Bridgewater Shopping Centre in the run up to Christmas selling our Christmas cards, decorations and gifts," she said.

Our Lady's Hospice & Care Services (OLH&CS) provides specialist care for a catchment of over one million people with a wide range of needs, from residential rehabilitation to end-of-life care, from its bases in Harold's Cross, Blackrock (est. 2003) and Wicklow (est. 2020). Last year, its 640 staff and 400 volunteers cared for more than 3,861 people. Staff made over 9,430 specialist palliative care visits to provide care for people in their homes across south Dublin and Wicklow.



Christmas Jumper Day

With Ireland having the highest rates of cystic fibrosis in the world and some of the most severe types of the disease-over 1,400 people are living with cystic fibrosis here currently-Cystic Fibrosis Ireland (CFI) has launched their Christmas Jumper Day 4 CF which takes place on Friday, 10th December.

The aim is to raise awareness and funds to help provide support and services for people with cystic fibrosis nationally. These include support grants for people with cystic fibrosis for exercise, transplant assessment, fertility treatment and counselling, as well as research and new healthcare facilities.

Cystic Fibrosis Ireland are providing everyone with a great reason to wear their Christmas Jumper to work.

- Ask your staff or colleagues to wear their Christmas Jumper to work on Christmas Jumper Day 4 CF, Friday 10th December in return for a €5 donation to support people with Cystic Fibrosis in Ireland
- Anyone not wearing a jumper gets a Bah Humbug badge in return for a €10 donation. It is all for a great cause!
- Ask your company to if they are willing to match funds raised on the day.
- Take lots of photos and share them on Social Media #CJD4CF!

This novel campaign is built around the growing craze of wearing Christmas Jumpers. Love them or hate them, they are here to stay! So are you in the 'Seasonal Christmas Jumper Club' or the 'Bah Humbug Brigade'. Either way, you can support people with Cystic Fibrosis in Ireland on Friday, December 10th - Christmas Jumper Day 4 CF!

To support Christmas Jumper Day 4 CF and help people with Cystic Fibrosis in Ireland, simply log onto www.cfiireland.ie for more details. You can also contact Cystic Fibrosis.



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WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL

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

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Application Forms and further details can be obtained from Enterprise & Corporate Services at 0404 20100 or by emailing recruitment@wicklowcoco.ie and on the Wicklow County Council website www.wicklow.ie.

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

Wicklow County Council is an Equal Opportunities Employer.

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

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



Ciara Hayes from Killaloe Co. Clare and working with Avondale Vets, Arklow, is the winner of the Veterinary Ireland Medal for highest marks at UCD Veterinary 2020. She was presented with her award at the 2021 Veterinary Ireland AGM & Conference in Trim, Co. Meath on 26th November.

Covid lockdown sees record breaking numbers take part in Irish Garden Bird survey

BirdWatch Ireland's survey is open to everyone in Ireland who wishes to take part and has charted the rise of species like Goldfinch and Great Spotted Woodpecker in gardens across Ireland, the dramatic decline of the Amber-listed Greenfinch, and the continued success of the Robin as Ireland's most common garden bird.

BirdWatch Ireland's Irish Garden Bird Survey returns this week, for the 33rd consecutive winter. The survey is very simple and asks people to spend a short amount of time each week watching their garden birds and recording what they see. It plays an important role in tracking the fortunes of some of Ireland's best-loved wildlife.

Numbers participating last year were the highest ever, partly due to the winter Covid-19 lockdown restrictions, but also the newfound appreciation for nature that many people gained during the pandemic.

"Not only were more people talking about birds and wildlife last year, but they were taking action too," said Brian Burke, who coordinates the survey for BirdWatch Ireland. "Over 2,500 households across the country took part last winter, which

was an increase of over a thousand from the year before! We got letters and emails from people telling us how the birds gave them some comfort and welcome distraction amidst the chaos of the pandemic, while others said how much their kids enjoyed it, and almost everyone commented on noticing birds that they had never seen before."

The results from last winter showed that Robins were the most common species in Irish gardens yet again (>99% of gardens), followed by Blackbird (99%) and Blue Tit (97%). Chaffinch fell two places to 6th, which is their lowest ranking in 14 years. Goldfinch dropped three places to 10th and Wren fell two to 11th, while birds such as Great Tit, Starling and Song Thrush all climbed up the table. "Last winter was cool and wet for the most part, but despite some occasional storms and short spells of snow, there was nothing particularly disastrous from a bird's point of view, and that's reflected in the small movements up and down the table we saw for most species," said Brian Burke. "However, we know that many birds struggled to nest during the cold spring and summer that followed, and we expect to see that reflected in gardens this coming winter."

The Coal Tit is a common bird in forested areas across Europe, but

in Ireland we have our own unique subspecies. The 'hibernicus' Coal Tit jumped three places up the rankings to 7th, occurring in 87% of Irish gardens last winter (9% increase). The other notable winner last year was the Siskin. This delicate yellow finch is usually absent from gardens until late January onwards, when their numbers start to rise. Last year though, they were frequently seen from the end of November, and they

Society for the Protection of Birds in Northern Ireland (RSPB NI) jointly published their list of 'Birds of Conservation Concern' for Ireland. A number of garden birds featured on both the amber list (medium concern) and red list (high concern). Most households will be familiar with Starling, House Sparrow, Goldcrest and Greenfinch, but these are all amber-listed now, either due to rapid recent declines in Ireland, or significant declines at European level. Fewer households are lucky enough to see our resident seed-eating Yellowhammers or migrant Redwings from Iceland visit their gardens, and both of these now feature on the red list.

The survey is once again sponsored by Ballymaloe. "Ballymaloe House, Ballymaloe Cookery School, and Ballymaloe Foods are delighted to again sponsor Birdwatch Ireland's annual Irish Garden Bird survey," said Fern Allen of Ballymaloe House. "It is a fitting tribute to my late father, Ivan Allen. He was a keen amateur Ornithologist & farmed the lands at Ballymaloe sensitively in order to preserve the wildlife. Thank you to Birdwatch Ireland for this great opportunity to support this invaluable wildlife preservation initiative."

The Irish Garden Bird Survey is the biggest and longest-running wildlife

survey of its kind in Ireland, and this year BirdWatch Ireland has acknowledged 77 individuals in 19 counties, who have taken part in the survey for over 20 years. "A lot has changed for Ireland's wildlife in recent decades, and we only know that because of these sorts of scientific surveys, which would be nothing without the people who feed into them. Their dedication to participating in the survey for so long is really inspiring and has been really important to help us track environmental change. Hopefully some people who get involved this year will still be doing it in 20 or 30 years' time," said Brian.



Luke 21:20-28 GOSPEL

Jesus said to his disciples: 'When you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, you must realise that she will soon be laid desolate. Then those in Judaea must escape to the mountains, those inside the city must leave it, and those in country districts must not take refuge in it. For this is the time of vengeance when all that scripture says must be fulfilled. Alas for those with child, or with babies at the breast, when those days come!

'For great misery will descend on the land and wrath on this people. They will fall by the edge of the sword and be led captive to every pagan country; and Jerusalem will be trampled down by the pagans until the age of the pagans is completely over.

'There will be signs in the sun and moon and stars; on earth nations in agony, bewildered by the clamour of the ocean and its waves; men dying of fear as they await what menaces the world, for the powers of heaven will be shaken. And then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. When these things begin to take place, stand erect, hold your heads high, because your liberation is near at hand.'

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.C.

PLANNING

WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL

We, A and J Doyle, intend to apply for planning permission for an attic conversion including 2 "Velux-type" roof windows in front roof slope and dormer structure to the rear at 2 Glenburgh Terrace, River Lane, Lower Dargle Road, Bray, Co. Wicklow. The planning application may be inspected or purchased at a fee not exceeding the reasonable cost of making a copy at the offices of Wicklow County Council, County Buildings, Wicklow 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



Wicklow Chamber launches 2021 Wicklow Business Awards

Wicklow Town & District Chamber has announced the launch of the Business Achievements Awards which recognises excellence in business in the Wicklow Town and District area.

Wicklow Town & District Chamber are calling for the public and all businesses in the following 4 Categories and that are within Wicklow Town and surrounding areas to get involved and participate in these Awards.

- 1) Best New Business Award - Sponsored by AIB
- 2) Best SME Award - Sponsored by Bank of Ireland
- 3) Best Eating/Hospitality/Pub Award - Sponsored by Wicklow Hire Ltd.
- 4) Best Retail Award - Sponsored by Wicklow County Council.

Nominations are now officially open - Public Voting is very simple; Just chose your Leading Business and let us know why you are nominating them. Get your entries in by voting online at www.wicklowchamber.ie by emailing susana@wicklowchamber.ie or by texting your nominated business to 086 089 7702 before 9am

on Monday 10th January 2022.

Wicklow Town and District Chamber are asking all businesses within Wicklow Town & District to take part as this provides an opportunity for you to promote their business.

Matt Forkin, Chamber President, said that the "award winners will automatically be promoted by extensive media exposure which will enable their business to gain a higher public profile."

Once the nominations forms are in, a shortlist will be announced on Tuesday 11th January 2022.

Wicklow Chamber would like to thank all our sponsors including: Wicklow County Council, AIB Wicklow Town, Wicklow Hire Ltd, Burke Oil, Herbst Software, Wicklow Enterprise Park and Bank of Ireland Wicklow Town.

The winners will be revealed at the Chamber Business Awards ceremony on Friday, 4th February. During the ceremony we will also be awarding the following awards which have been chosen by the Awards Committee.

- Honouring Excellence in the Community - Sponsored by Burke Oil
- Honouring Innovation & Entrepreneurship - Sponsored by Herbst Software
- Special Recognition Award - Sponsored by Wicklow Enterprise Park.



Fergal O'Dwyer from O'Dwyers Pharmacy presenting a cheque for €1645 to the Columban Missionary Sisters (raised by Running the Berlin Marathon in 3hr27min20sec)

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