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Tuesday 18th January 2022 First Floor, The Boulevard, Quinsborough Road, Bray, A98 R6D7. Tel: 01 - 2869111 E-mail: wicklowed@localtimes.ie www.wicklowtimes.net

# 'ROAD TO NOWHERE'

## 'A SLAP IN THE FACE FOR THE THOUSANDS OF HARD PRESSED COMMUTERS'

It was discovered last week that a decision was taken by the Government in December to suspend funding for the N11/M11 Improvement Scheme. Fine Gael councillor Derek Mitchell and Independent councillor Joe Behan have lashed out at the Green Party after learning of the decision, placing the blame on Green Party leader and Minister for Transport, Eamon Ryan.

Councillor Mitchell described it as a "major blow" for County Wicklow. "The recent road funding announcement showed no funding for this much needed scheme. I enquired and found out that it was decided in December to 'suspend' it but it wasn't announced. This scheme is vital to Wicklow residents and industry. When traffic returns to pre-Covid levels it will be chaotic as many more houses have been built in the past two years and Cherrywood will have many new residents," he said. "Also the bus priority scheme, which is to go as far South as the Glenview Junction on the N11 has been scaled back and will not exist around Bray. The Express Buses which were to provide public transport will get stuck in traffic. Journey times are already far too long. "I blame the Green



Pictured are students Victoria Tarnogorska, Zara Ledwidge-Plunkett and Faith Bowes from Glenart Community College, Arklow, who showcased their project 'Sugar Crystals' at the 58th BT Young Scientist & Technology Exhibition from 12th-14th January. In total, Co. Wicklow schools took home five medals from the competition. Pic: Fennell Photography



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**NO MIDDLE MAN, WE SELL, MANUFACTURE AND INSTALL**

Party Minister of Transport Eamon Ryan for cancelling this project. He is fortunate to live close to Dublin, and keeps promoting the '15 minute city' because he is close, but entirely forgets about those further out than 15 minutes. This is a major problem as the expansion of the Dublin Region has taken place on the periphery, not in the centre. Better transport must be provided for these further out areas. "The studies have been going on for at least 5 years and have cost many millions. The N11 was designed many years ago with defective, cheap, junctions which cause delays and safety problems. They urgently need sorting out. "I spent 22 years campaigning to get the DART to Greystones and in 2018 I wrote a Transport Plan for East

Wicklow. Part of that - the partial double tracking to Greystones to give increased frequency - has been included in the DART+ programme, but Irish Rail's recent submission confirms that Rosslare passengers will, in the medium term, have to change to the DART in Greystones. My plan was for direct trains. The submission does mention vague details of using battery trains to Kilcoole and Wicklow but no details." Independent councillor, Joe Behan said "The taxpayer has paid almost €3 million on the scheme to date! The devastating decision by the Green Party leader, Minister for Transport, Eamon Ryan, to discontinue funding the proposed improvement works on the M11/N11 is a slap in the face for the thousands of hard pressed commuters who

have to suffer the daily slog of unending traffic jams on their way to and from work in Dublin every day." He added, "It also

beggars belief that the two Wicklow Cabinet members believe that the... *Continued on page 3*



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# Ecotrail Wicklow 2022 registrations are open

The third edition of EcoTrail Wicklow, Ireland's largest trail running event, will take place on Saturday September 24th.

EcoTrail Wicklow is part of the eco-responsible international circuit of EcoTrail races in 13 destinations around the world with more planned. The core principle behind EcoTrail is to organise world-class trail running events while raising awareness of the importance of protecting natural environments.

EcoTrail Wicklow offers the option of four distances (19k, 30k, 46k or 80k) following trails that run through some of Wicklow's most scenic locations including Bray Seafront, Bray Head, Killruddery, the Great Sugarloaf, Powerscourt Waterfall, Djouce and the Wicklow Way, Lough Tay and Roundwood Reservoir.

In 2021 EcoTrail Wicklow was sold out with more than 1,500 participants registered and with entries selling quickly for the 2022 edition so early booking is advised.

Starting and finishing on Bray Promenade, the 2021 event was a great success when runners of all abilities crossed the finish line after achieving a great challenge around the spectacular Wicklow Mountains. EcoTrail Wicklow welcomed some of Ireland's best international mountain runners alongside runners of all levels and ages and nationalities.

EcoTrail Wicklow is looking forward to hopefully attracting more international trail runners in 2022 to participate and holiday in Wicklow and Ireland.

The Cathaoirleach of Wicklow County Council, Cllr Shay Cullen, said: "EcoTrail Wicklow is a fantastic promotional tool that showcases the amazing playground that is Wicklow. Through the network of EcoTrail races around Europe and beyond, and with the support of Fáilte Ireland and Tourism Ireland, the international reach of our event is tremendous. Wicklow is very much ready and looking forward to welcoming trail runners and outdoor enthusiasts from around the world."

For more info on EcoTrail Wicklow and registrations, go to <https://wicklow.ecotrail.com>



In 2021 EcoTrail Wicklow was sold out with more than 1,500 participants registered and with entries selling quickly for the 2022 edition so early booking is advised.



Sinéad Byrne, Audrey Hudson and Dean Dickenson from the Arklow Bay Hotel make a donation of €4,000 to Arklow Cancer Support from the funds raised from the Christmas Santa

## 5 minute Monologues

Square One Theatre Group from Bray released their latest project '5 Minute Monologues' on Sunday 16th January. The project consists of a number of small-budget films financed by the group. The films were shot at a number of different locations around Co. Wicklow. They star actors Grainne McGuinness, Ann Reynolds, David Butler, Sheena Griffin, Marie McCourt and Gavin Barrett, and are adapted from the writings of Cormac Megannety, Maeve Edwards, Roy Beatty, James Joyce and William Shakespeare. You can follow Square One Theatre Group on their Facebook page or email [squareonebray@gmail.com](mailto:squareonebray@gmail.com) for details on how to view the films.

## Meals on Wheels

Enniskerry and Kilmacanogue Meals on Wheels is inviting volunteer drivers to offer their services. Drivers who can spare just two or three hours twice a month can contact Maoiliosa Kelly on 0868322466. The service delivers hot meals to older people in their homes on Tuesdays and Thursdays. As well as delivering a hot meal, the service is also an important point of social contact for the older people.

## Wicklow Dementia Support

Wicklow Dementia Support are seeking volunteers for their activity group that meets on Wednesdays in Wicklow Town from 11am to 12:30pm. Volunteers will help participants who are taking part in activities. If you are interested in helping out, and also sharing a cuppa and a chat

with participants on the day, contact Maritta on 086 3032189.

## Roundwood walking group

The Roundwood Whizzers walking group resumed activities earlier this month. Walkers meet up and leave from outside Roundwood Parish Hall at 7pm on Wednesdays. Walks last for approximately one hour and all fitness levels are welcome. Bring a torch and hi-vis top if possible.

## Jack O'Rourke at The Courthouse

Cork singer Jack O'Rourke is set to play The Courthouse Arts Centre in Tinahely on Saturday 19th February. The popular singer will soon release his third album Wild Place, on which he explores folk and blues styles. See [courthouse-artscentre.ie](http://courthouse-artscentre.ie) for more details.

## Callan's Kicks at Whale Theatre

Impressionist Oliver Callan brings his award-winning Callan's Kicks comedy show to life on stage for the first time in five years, and he's bringing it to the Whale Theatre in Greystones on March 22nd. Aiken Promotions is excited to announce RTE's award-winning show Callan's Kicks Live for this very special "live rehearsal". Oliver Callan brings his huge cast of characters to the stage for the first time in the age of Boris and Trump. It's no Kylie concert, but heads a troupe of voices from the world of Irish politics, sport and entertainment. Callan deconstructs our political leaders and stars in a special night of comedy and satirical commentary. Oliver Callan brings his most ambitious live show yet, with dozens of impressions, sketches and voices kicking our leaders and legends into the next decade.

## Roundwood Historical Journal

The 2021 Roundwood & District Historical Journal is for sale in the following places: Roundwood Post Office, Keeleys Hardware, Grants Butchers, Centra, Sugar Mountain Café and Roundwood Stores. It's also available in Newtown in Fishers, Newtown Post Office, and Eugenes; in Wicklow Town in Bridge Street Books; and in Laragh in McCoys. The cost is €10.

## Laragh Clothes Bank

Give your unwanted clothes to the clothes bank at the Brockagh Resource Centre. It's located at the back of the building. All proceeds are in aid of the centre's maintenance.

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## Rathdrum Men's Shed

Rathdrum Men's Shed is welcoming new members from Tinahely and surrounding areas. The Men's Shed is open on Tuesdays and Saturdays from 10am to 1pm. For more information call 086 1040008 or email [tonylundberg3@gmail.com](mailto:tonylundberg3@gmail.com).

## Bray Coastcare

Bray Coastcare took the decision to cancel its scheduled cleanup for January due to poor weather. The next cleanup is planned for Saturday, 12th February from 12 pm to 2pm.

## Greystones Toastmasters

Greystones Toastmasters held their open evening last week on 13th January. The club is for those who wish to develop their public speaking skills. If you are interested in joining or finding out more, email [greystonestoastmasters@gmail.com](mailto:greystonestoastmasters@gmail.com).

## Ambulance tender bid

The HSE is seeking applications from Wicklow to provide ad-hoc services to transport low and medium acuity patients between healthcare facilities. The tender is valued at €42.5 million.

WICKLOW  
Times

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# Major boost for South Wicklow as greenway plans finalised

After 15 years in development, the route for the 33km Arklow to Shillelagh Greenway has been identified and the planning documents are ready to be submitted to An Bord Pleanala.

The project has been in development since 2007, with input from the local community and local landowners. Following extensive consultation, discussions, and feedback from the landowners, the route has now been identified. The consultants for the scheme have completed an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Screening Report, which concluded that the proposed development would not significantly affect the environment and therefore an Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) is not required.

A Natura Impact Statement (NIS) was however deemed necessary due to the Slaney River Valley being a Special Area of Conservation (SAC). The NIS and planning documents are now being finalised and will be submitted to ABP.

Construction is expected to start in early 2023 and will last for about 18-24 months, making the

estimated completion date late 2024.

An update on the project was given to councillors at last week's meeting of Wicklow County Council.

"The project has been received well locally and beyond, with the recognition of the social and the economic benefits to be brought to Wicklow and to the settlements along the route," said Margaret Hartnett, Senior Executive Engineer from the Council's Roads Department.

The new tourism and recreation facility will showcase the wealth of natural, manmade and cultural heritage of the area, Ms Hartnett explained. The greenway will connect the villages and communities along the route and will be accessible by public transport. It's hoped that the greenway will attract visitors from near and far and bring an economic benefit.

The greenway will bring opportunities for

business development, Ms Hartnett explained, with additional business for shops and pubs along the trail and the potential for farms to diversify and become B&Bs. There's scope for cycle hire and repair businesses along the route, Ms Hartnett said, as well as campsites.

The trail will commence at Shillelagh village and will mainly follow the disused Woodenbridge to Shillelagh railway line with modifications to the line where developments have occurred or as required. It lies adjacent to the banks of the Derry River, Aughrim River and Avoca River, and will run through the villages of Tinahely, Aughrim, and Woodenbridge before eventually connecting to Arklow town.

While there has been some development on the old railway line since its closure, the alignment is still more or less intact, Councillors were told.

The railway has many engineering features including three train stations, two railway goods buildings, ten masonry bridges, and it traverses along much of the scenic mountainous and river-side landscapes. There is also the potential to link it to The Wicklow Way.

One of those involved with the project since its inception is Cllr John Mullen, who hailed the finalising of the route as "a magnificent achievement". "It hasn't been easy, considering that we are talking about a glacial valley with over 60 landowners along the route," he said. "I think at this stage we now need to proceed with the project at speed. It would also be part of the proposed East Coast Greenway and connect to the Waterford Greenway. Before Covid there were meetings in all of the villages and the towns and the key recommendations from all was that it could not happen quickly enough."



Pictured is teacher Joanne English with students from St Mary's College Arklow who showcased projects at the 58th BT Young Scientist & Technology Exhibition from 12th to 14th January. The virtual exhibition had a spectacular line-up of performers and events.

## 'ROAD TO NOWHERE'

Continued from Page 1

Ministers, who are well aware of the extreme hardship being suffered daily by Wicklow commuters, would allow the Green Party to halt the work to improve the capacity of the M11/N11.

"Early mornings and late evenings have become the daily experience of hard pressed commuter families where children are brought to child minders or creches at ungodly hours and collected late in the evenings. These long hours of separation from their parents are as painful for the children as for their parents and yet there is no alternative.

"Thousands of Wicklow people are forced to live far away from their work places because of the impossibly expensive price of houses in County Wicklow. The recent savage increases in fuel costs being permitted by this

Government adds further financial pain and suffering to these hard-pressed families.

"The proposed improvements to the capacity of the M11/N11 were supposed to ease the traffic flows and reduce the delays along the route from Wicklow to Dublin. However, the Government has now decided to offer to put in a bus lane on the N11 instead! This will be a bus lane which will be of extremely limited value for the vast majority of commuters and will probably be another white elephant unless and until there is a vast increase in park and ride facilities all along the N11 as well as a mind boggling increase in the number and variety of buses to service Wicklow commuters. This will take many years, if it ever actually happens, and in the meantime the ordinary hard pressed

Wicklow commuters will have to continue to suffer.

"An enormous amount of public money has already been spent on preliminary studies on proposed improvements to the capacity of the N11/M11 and it appears that all of this money has now been poured down the drain. It is an insult to the people of this county that their hard-earned taxes can be so cynically wasted because of a Green Party anti motorist agenda. Worse still is the silence of the two Wicklow Cabinet Ministers who have apparently decided to abandon the thousands of families of County Wicklow commuters.

"This dreadful decision is yet another example of a Government out of touch with the reality of life for ordinary people and it should be challenged in Dáil Éireann by all of our TDs."



volunteer centre

Ionad d'Obair Dheonach Cill Mhantáin

WICKLOW

## HELP WANTED WE NEED YOU!

GREYSTONES CENTRALISED VACCINATION CENTRE VOLUNTEER MARSHALL

In the midst of the public health emergency caused by COVID-19, County Wicklow Volunteer Centre is assisting the HSE with the vaccine roll-out at the Greystones Centralised Vaccination Centre by recruiting volunteer marshals. This is your opportunity to support your community and make a real difference in a public health emergency.

The role of the volunteer is to:

- Greet those arriving for vaccination.
- Direct them through the vaccination centre, asking them to sanitise at the relevant stations.
- Work as part of the team to ensure a smooth, efficient and professional service.

As this is a standing role volunteers should wear comfortable clothing & shoes.

Please do not apply if you have older or high-risk people at home, or you consider yourself high risk. We mitigate against risks through the use of masks and hand sanitisation and following all HSE health and safety protocols.

### Time Commitment

Volunteering will take place Monday to Sunday inclusive between 8am and 8pm approximately, volunteers are asked to commit to a 3 to 5 hour shift on a day of their choosing.

### Screening

Applicants will have an informal interview phone/zoom call with a staff member from County Wicklow Volunteer Centre. Applicants will be asked to provide a form of photo identification.

Applicants will take part in one trial shift at the Vaccination Centre. Applicants must be willing to complete online training which is compulsory for the role which includes an Introduction to Children First e-learning programme and a Hand Hygiene tutorial.

### Skills / qualities necessary

- Aged 18 – 69 years (as per current HSE guidelines).
- Fit and healthy, comfortable standing for hours at a time.
- A good level of English.
- Good communication skills with a friendly & helpful disposition.
- You must be able to remain calm in a busy environment and interact with people who may be nervous or distressed.

For further information contact [fiona@volunteerwicklow.ie](mailto:fiona@volunteerwicklow.ie), [yvonne@volunteerwicklow.ie](mailto:yvonne@volunteerwicklow.ie) or [dean@volunteerwicklow.ie](mailto:dean@volunteerwicklow.ie) or call 086 325 8803.





Aughrim based artist Eoin O'Connor pictured with Vicky Christensen from Roundwood at the opening of his new shop in Gorey.

## Harris and Sinn Féin dominate social media

An analysis by Mulley Communications of the social media accounts of political parties has shown that Minister Simon Harris is the 'King of TikTok'.

While TikTok accounts couldn't be found for any party leader, Minister Harris has 89k followers on the platform which is more followers than the political parties.

The analysis also revealed that Sinn Féin has the biggest Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, TikTok and YouTube numbers. Sinn Féin also has the most YouTube views with 18.7M views. However Leo Varadkar has more Facebook,

Twitter and Instagram followers than all the political parties in Ireland.

Mary Lou McDonald has the next highest number of followers with 370,000 followers and Micheal Martin has 179k followers. Mary Lou McDonald has the greatest amount of Facebook followers.

Facebook has the oldest demographic where almost the majority of people are 40 or over. Instagram and TikTok



Minister Simon Harris.

have much younger demographics.

Commenting, Damien Mulley of Mulley

Communications said "There has not been any major shifts in followers of the political parties since the last general election. However during the pandemic the Twitter followers of Leo Varadkar rose by almost 200,000 and since becoming Taoiseach Micheal Martin has seen an increase in his followers on social media.

"As more people move to Instagram and TikTok, this has not been reflected in increasing numbers on these platforms by political parties, apart from strong growth on TikTok by Sinn Féin and Simon Harris."

## Record-level funding for animal welfare charities

Record funding of over €200,000 has been announced for Wicklow-based animal welfare charities by Green Party Minister Pippa Hackett and the Department of Agriculture.



Stephen Matthews TD.

Welcoming the news, Green Party TD Steven Matthews said, "The funding announcement of €208,500 that will be allocated to animal welfare charities across Wicklow in 2022 is extremely welcome. This is the largest amount of state funding that has ever been designated for animal welfare organisations

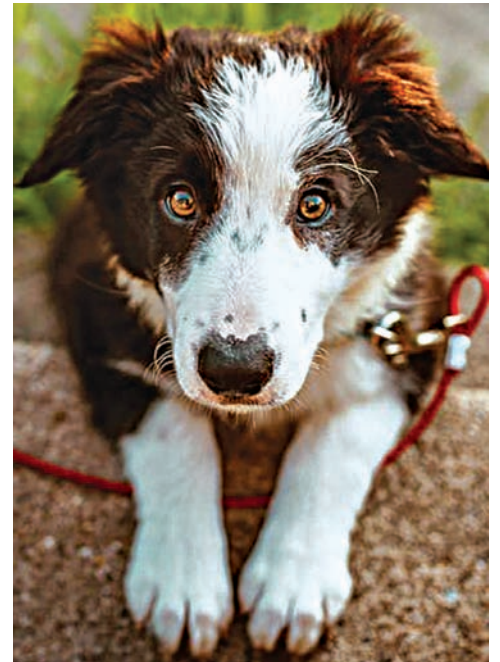
in the county and represents a 15.5% increase on 2021 funding levels and a 31% increase on 2020 funding levels."

The funding provisions are as follows:

- Wicklow SPCA, Rathdrum, €75,000
- Irish Horse Welfare Trust, Ballinamona, €94,000
- Arklow Cat Rescue, €2,500
- Ash Animal Rescue, Kiltegan, €37,000

"Both as a County Councillor and now as a TD, I have been fortunate enough to see the incredible work that these animal welfare organisations do on the ground and I know that this funding will be put to good use," Deputy Matthews continued.

"Animal welfare is a priority for the Green Party, and we have always led on this issue. I am delighted to see these significant increases in funding for animal welfare organisations since we



entered Government in the summer of 2020, in addition to other reforms such as the passage of legislation to phase out fur-farming.

"The Green Party will continue to implement the animal welfare commitments of the Programme for

Government. I look forward to working alongside my colleague, Minister Pippa Hackett and engaging closely with animal welfare organisations as we strive to improve Ireland's record on animal welfare in the coming years," Deputy Matthews concluded.

## Deadline approaching for Community Monument Fund applications

The core aim of the Community Monument Fund is the conservation, maintenance, protection and promotion of local monuments and archaeological sites. The scheme is administered by the Heritage Office of Wicklow County Council on behalf of National Monuments Service of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage. Local authorities, private owners, community groups and custodians of monuments are eligible to apply under the following 3 streams;

1. Stream 1 will offer grants up to €85,000 aimed at essential repairs and capital works for the conservation and repair of archae-

ological monuments.

2. Stream 2 will offer grants of up to €30,000 for development of Conservation Management Plans/Reports that are aimed at identifying measures for conservation of archaeological monuments and improving public access.

3. Stream 3 will offer grants of up to €30,000 for enhancement of access infrastructure and interpretation (including virtual/online) at archaeological monuments (including COVID 19 public health measures).

Application forms and further information is available at [www.wicklow.ie/latest\\_news](http://www.wicklow.ie/latest_news). Applicants should read the CMF

guidance circular carefully and ensure that method statements and consents are included with the application as relevant. Applications should be returned by e mail to [wicklowheritage@wicklowcoco.ie](mailto:wicklowheritage@wicklowcoco.ie) or by post, clearly marked 'Community Monument Fund Application' c/o Planning Section, Wicklow County Council, County Buildings, Wicklow Town by no later than 5 pm on 15th February 2022. Hard copy application forms are available by request to above e mail or by Tel: 0404 20100. Queries to Deirdre Burns, Heritage Officer, Wicklow County Council via [dburns@wicklowcoco.ie](mailto:dburns@wicklowcoco.ie)

## Community wealth building in Wicklow

Independent Councillor Mags Crean put forward a Notice of Motion at last week's meeting of Wicklow County Council asking that the Council establish an internal working group committed to advancing community wealth building beginning with an increased priority on the inclusion of green and social clauses in procurement criteria for goods and services.

The motion was also put forward in the names of councillors Joe Behan, Peir Leonard, Tom Fortune, Rory O'Connor and Mary Kavanagh, and it received overall support from other councillors and the Council Executive.

Speaking about the motion, Cllr Crean said "This is about linking sus-

tainable procurement to a wider more strategic link as to how we as county council can play a role generating wealth locally, using community wealth building is a model. It's about linking sustainable procurement to economic development.

"Other councils across the UK have done this, Scotland are now looking



Cllr. Mags Crean.

at it. I know there are some councils throughout Ireland starting to look at it. It's timely coming out of this pandemic to look

at how we generate more wealth locally and link green and social approaches to procurement to something more strategic in our county."

Cllr Pat Kennedy also supported the motion, saying, "I want to commend Cllr Mags Crean on this. When you're looking at big projects happening locally, I see materials being imported from China, you see companies that are coming in from the outside with no local input, and when you compare that to the bridge built 200 years ago and flagstones on the quayside in Arklow that the local people manufactured themselves this is

what we're talking about." Director of Services Lorraine Gallagher said "This seeks to maximise the use of local amenities, facilities and operations for local residents and business, and I think we're approaching a great window. This is the way to go."

Cllr Mary Kavanagh said "It has so many benefits attached to it for communities. Wicklow would be seen as a trail-blazer. I think this is probably coming anyway, but it would be great to be there at the start, and it would be a great example for other counties to follow."

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# Councillors welcome 'groundbreaking' Tree Management Policy

Wicklow County Council last week passed a Tree Management Policy that will seek to manage, protect and expand Co. Wicklow's tree covering. The policy will also focus on education, awareness and community engagement.

A presentation on the policy was given to councillors at last week's meeting of Wicklow County Council by the Council's Climate Action Officer Mary Cahill.

The policy was put together by members of the Climate and Biodiversity Action SPC Chaired by Cllr Rory O'Connor, Wicklow PPN (Public Participation Network), Sophia Meers from UCD, the five Municipal Districts and the Council's Climate Action Team.

The policy is necessary, Ms Cahill explained; to establish consistent, practical and effective management practices throughout the county; develop an agreed vision for the long-term protection and development of tree resources; promote education and awareness of trees; engage with communities and groups on partnership opportunities to further enhance sustainable tree cover in Co. Wicklow.

The Policy sets out a Five-Year Action Plan that will see the completion of a County Tree cover inventory; the enhancement of tree management through the agreement and implementation of a consistent council protocol; the increase of public awareness about trees and appreciation of trees, woodlands and hedgerows; the management of mature trees in Council ownership; the expansion of native tree cover

for biodiversity enhancement; the expansion of Wicklow's 'urban forest'.

Ms Cahill said that the Policy would establish the extent of tree, woodland and hedge cover throughout the county through a digital survey, and evaluate the purchase or development of a (mobile) tree management system that's linked to the GIS database. There will be surveys of all council owned and managed trees and woodlands, as well as a spatial audit of the overall situation concerning mature trees in all urban areas, looking at the species, condition and location. Significant trees, woodland patches, groups, riparian vegetation, and hedgerows will be identified with particular attention paid to land zoned for development.

"A significant action is to review and amend the preplanning and planning and post-planning process to ensure that all trees, both existing and proposed are properly taken into the account within the process," said Ms Cahill. "For this we need greater input by the environment sections and in dealing with the developers, we need to deal with them from day one to protect trees or hedgerows on the site. If they must be removed, trees or the hedgerows should be put into another part of the site in place of

them."

A section on the Council's website (wicklow.ie) will be created dedicated to trees, and there will be a community engagement programme including talks, workshops, promoting of tree planting and participation in tree events. Opportunities for the planting of woodlands will also be promoted.

Welcoming the policy, Green Party councillor Lourda Scott said "the policy signals the council's commitment to look after and to enhance our natural resources. Trees must be protected. The policy allows for a coordinated approach across the Municipal Districts to manage the tree assets and to create a greater appreciation for the resource within the council, among the public and also, I hope, among the elected representatives. It is a ground-breaking policy, as not many other councils have policies like this. It took a lot of hard work to get this far. On the Climate SPC we work as a team and Party politics are put to one side. Working with the PPN, it helped to shape the policy into the best policy it could be. I urge everyone to read it, to take note and keep it to hand as a reference document. It is a good read with a lovely section on the history and then also the actions that should be taken. I have no hes-



itation in recommending the policy."

Cathaoirelach, Cllr Shay Cullen, said he's very supportive of the policy but he also expressed some concerns. "We need to ensure that when housing estates are built that the correct trees are planted," he said. "The wrong types of trees are being planted in housing estates. There are many trees, the roots of which are forcing up the roads, and we are having to replace draining because of it. Also, when Wicklow County Council take estates in charge, what is the legal responsibility and the legal situation if a tree falls on a house? The fact that we have taken an estate in charge, is it the responsibility of Wicklow County Council? So, there are some very, very serious issues still to be addressed."

Cllr Peir Leonard said that the policy is 'a work in progress'. "The tree policy needs to be living, to be reviewed, yearly, and to change as

we change directions in society," she said. "Overall it's a brilliant policy".

Cllr Mary Kavanagh said "We have lost a devastating amount of natural hedgerows and trees due to the development of housing estates. And the problem with this is that not only does it deprive people of the benefits of wildlife and trees and everything that goes with it - mental health, physical health and wellbeing - but the concreting of huge amounts of areas is leading to terrible flooding throughout the county as was seen a few weeks ago with the heavy rain falls that are common now. So Green Corridors are something that are a must. People talk about replacing a tree that has been removed as if one will quickly replace the other and make up for it. But the reality is that it will take 30 years before that tree is doing the job it was meant to do, to purify the air and to rid the atmosphere of poisons so we have to think long and

hard before removing trees."

Cllr Gerry O'Neill said "I notice Coillte haven't been mentioned on the report and they're the biggest planter of trees in the county and, I still notice in rural parts here in west Wicklow where trees are planted near roadways still; I'd imagine that lesson would have been learnt a long time ago because of the problems they cause with falling. I see in the UK they're using very expensive lookalike artificial trees in new estates, but with the proper experts in place, we can still plant real trees that don't cause damage."

"When estates are taken in charge by the council, the trees in the estate are also taken in charge," explained Ms Cahill. "This is one of the things we want to put across - that the municipal districts would receive a report before any trees are pruned or knocked down if they're the wrong place. We also have a list of suitable trees that could be planted in estates."

## 'Benefit fund should be directed at those who can see the wind farms'

Supporting calls for the Community Benefit Fund from offshore wind farms to be kept locally in Co. Wicklow rather than going into a central national fund, Cllr Derek Mitchell has said that the benefit fund should also "Be very much directed at those who can see the wind farms".

"The immediate community around much of the coast of County Wicklow will be covered by wind turbines and it is those people that need to be convinced that this is a good idea and that it is of benefit to the country and a benefit to reducing climate change," said Cllr Mitchell at last week's meeting of Wicklow County Council.

"Public education about the project should start

early and should show what the project will be doing. There should be visitor centres, there should maybe be visits out to it to view the construction. The community should be involved as much as possible. It should be shown that this can be part of the community rather than something that's being imposed on the community. While I know it is a national decision, I think that we should be lobbying for something like that."

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Zara Elkinson and Florike Sheehan at the "Field of Dreams" Streets of Wicklow 5km run.



# 'A farcical situation'

Cathaoirleach of Wicklow County Council Shay Cullen has described as "farcical" a situation where a road is being dug up twice in quick succession for works to be carried out, affecting the communities of Bardarrig and Redcross.

Irish Water carried out works in November to link the Redcross Treatment Plant to the Bardarrig water supply. Now, Irish Water plans to upgrade the sewer pipes between the villages requiring the road to be dug up again.

"It is a farcical situation spending weeks to put town a water pipe to Bardarrig and now again to put in a sewage pipe beside it. It is farcical, it is why the public are so annoyed and concerned about the lack of consultation in terms of one company knowing what another is doing," said Cllr Cullen. "To me it is crazy. I want to put it on record it should not have happened, it's an inconvenience and a waste of money."

Cllr Sylvester Bourke said, "We got notification from Irish Water that they're going to run a separate sewerage connection between Red Cross and Bardarrig. We didn't ask for this or expect this, it is a welcome surprise, but I want to know the rationale. It is a bit unsatisfactory that when we ask for things, we don't get them and when we don't ask for something, we get it."

The new sewer pipeline is an additional programme to the overall pipelaying works between the two villages, and the works are being undertaken because of the new water main



Cllr. Shay Cullen, Cathaoirleach, Wicklow County Council.

that's being progressed.

It's understood that the R754 road between the two villages will remain closed until early February and alternative routes are in place in the meantime.

In a statement about the works, Irish Water said it is "Working in partnership with Wicklow County Council to deliver a significant upgrade to the water supply in Bardarrig. The project, which began in November 2021, will help to provide a safer and more secure water supply for customers in Bardarrig now and for future generations."

"Works involve the construction of over 3km of new water mains and ancillary works linking Bardarrig to Redcross Water Treatment Plant,

replacing the local water supply in the area and providing the community of Bardarrig with a safer and more secure water supply. To minimise the impact on the local community, the project is being carried out in phases and is progressing well, with Phase 1 already completed and included the construction of almost 1.5km of new water mains on the R754 exiting Bardarrig.

"Irish Water is progressing with phase 2 of the project with works due to get underway in the coming days. To facilitate the safe delivery of these works, traffic management will be in place and the R754 road between Redcross and Bardarrig will be closed until early February. Route diversions will be communicated locally. Irish Water and Wicklow County Council regrets any inconvenience these essential works may cause."

Joe Carroll, Water Network Programme Lead with Irish Water, said: "Irish Water is delighted to undertake this important project for the people of Bardarrig and works are progressing well. The new scheme will see the construction and commissioning of over 3km of new water mains from Bardarrig to Redcross Water Treatment Plant, providing the local com-

munity with a safe and reliable water supply now and into the future".

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

The upgrading of the wastewater network involves the construction of almost 2.5km of new sewer pipeline from Bardarrig to Redcross.

"A sewer network that is fit for purpose is essential in order to support business and social development in the community," Irish Water said. "These works will support existing and future growth and development while also improving the overall performance of the sewer network, helping to safeguard the environment."

"Irish Water and Wicklow County Council understand that this type of work may be inconvenient and work crews will make every effort to minimise any disruption these necessary works may cause. The project is being carried out on behalf of Irish Water by Ward & Burke and is expected to be completed in Q2 2022."



## 'It's a great privilege to be interim Chief Executive'

Wicklow County Council's Head of Finance Brian Gleeson took charge of his first meeting as interim Chief Executive of Wicklow County Council at last week's January meeting.

Breda McCarthy will take over as Head of Finance for the Council and will also be District Manager of Wicklow Municipal District.

Mr Gleeson takes over the role following the departure of Frank Curran who has taken the position of Chief Executive of Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council.

Addressing councillors, Mr Gleeson said the appointment was a 'great privilege' and that he looked forward to the challenge over the coming year.

"County Wicklow has made a great progress, with a number of achieve-

ments under Frank Curran. While the leadership has now changed, the staff are still here. We have a great team and management in place with talented and committed outdoor and indoor staff, so we have the confidence to continue with the progress we have made to date over the coming months," said Mr Gleeson.

"We have a number of exciting challenges and initiatives planned for the year, including the implementation of Housing for All, the County Development Plan, the Urban Regeneration and Development Fund

(URDF), the Greenway projects and the LED public lighting programme. So, I'm really looking forward to the challenges and to working with all of the councillors on the projects and the initiatives."

Welcoming Mr Gleeson into his new role, Cathaoirleach Shay Cullen said "No doubt Brian will do a superb job as the Chief Executive. He's always been accessible in the past as the Head of Finance, and I see that continuing now that he's the Chief Executive. It's an exciting time to be the Chief Executive of Wicklow County Council with important projects



Brian Gleeson, interim Chief Executive of Wicklow County Council

## Council applies for funding to address flood risk at the Breaches

Wicklow County Council has co-ordinated an application to the OPW for works to be undertaken to mitigate the flood risk at The Breaches between Kilcoole and Newcastle.

Irish Rail had traditionally kept the Breaches clear of debris, however their responsibility for this shifted to the local authority and the National Parks and Wildlife Service in recent years.

Independent councillor Tom Fortune raised the issue at last week's meeting of Wicklow County Council, saying "there's four different entities involved and there needs to be a coordinated approach if we want to get a positive outcome".

Director of Services Breege Kilkenny said the Council made an application through the NPWS to the OPW just before Christmas for works to be carried out and is hopeful that the works will be carried out this year.

Speaking in December, Minister Simon Harris said "I am very grateful for the support that Irish Rail has provided the community to date, but it is unfair that the community must rely on

off discretionary assistance of Irish Rail to clear blockages and I have urged the council to finally resolve the matter by applying to the Minor Flood Mitigation Works and Coastal Protection Scheme."

Responding to a parliamentary question from Social Democrats TD Jennifer Whitmore in the Dail in December, Minister Donovan said "Iarnród Éireann, in partnership with Wicklow County Council, commissioned consultants to undertake the East Coast Erosion Study, including a feasibility assessment at The Breaches where the Breaches river is being blocked as it passes under a railway and pedestrian bridge (the Breaches bridge) by beach sediment. Historically, Iarnród Éireann removed blockages several times per year with an excavator to mitigate the risk of flooding. "Kilcoole was designat-



Independent councillor Tom Fortune

ed as an area of potentially significant flood risk through the national Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment, and the flood risk in the area was then assessed through the OPW's National Catchment-based Flood Risk Assessment and Management (CFRAM) Study, with potential flood risk reduction and protection measures investigated. The CFRAM Study did not identify an economically viable flood protection measure for Kilcoole. However, it was decided that more detailed exami-

nation was warranted, and that a further assessment (referred to as the Scheme Viability Reviews, or 'SVR') should be undertaken to review the costs and benefits to determine if there would be sufficient confidence to take a proposed measure forward to detailed development and design.

"In parallel to the work commissioned by Iarnród Éireann, consultants were appointed by the OPW to undertake the SVR for Kilcoole and for the neighbouring community of Newcastle, and options for flood protection have been reviewed for each community individually, and also as a joint scheme for both communities. The results of the review indicate that potential permanent technical solutions are not cost effective. However, the OPW is planning to further assess the benefit to cost ratio of the potential technical solutions to reflect foreseen changes to the project appraisal process identified through a review of the approaches to project appraisal undertaken by the OPW in 2021."



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](http://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](mailto:cep@wicklowcoco.ie)



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

Ár dTodhchaí  
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Future



WICKLOW  
ENDLESS OPPORTUNITIES





Starting and finishing on Bray Promenade, the 2021 Wicklow EcoTrail event was a great success when runners of all abilities crossed the finish line after achieving a great challenge around the spectacular Wicklow Mountains. For details on the 2022 event and how to enter, see page 2.

## Behan asks for return to in-person meetings

Independent councillor Joe Behan has urged the Council to return to in-person physical meetings in the Council chamber at County buildings as quickly as possible, preferably as soon as next month.

Since Covid restrictions were introduced, County Council meetings have been taking place virtually, first via Zoom and more recently Microsoft Teams.

Speaking at last week's meeting, Cllr Behan said "The resulting difficulties from Omicron have clearly not significantly added to the hospitalisations, people are triple vaccinated, and I think it is essential to get back to normal as quickly as possible. Secondly, I am not happy with the Teams format. It is not satisfactory. We were not told why it was changed from Zoom to Teams. We are operating via Zoom for the Municipal District meetings and it's fine. I think it is far more user friendly than Microsoft Teams."

Responding, the Cathaoirleach Shay Cullen said normal meetings would resume as soon as possible. "The sooner we get back to a full chamber situation, the better," he said. "We will assess that, but it is guidelines from the relevant Government departments that we are working from. I don't like the virtual format myself, but unfortunately, I have to continue as best as I can with it."

Agreeing with Cllr Behan, Cllr Gail Dunne said that discussions on the County Development Plan would be "impossible" to do over a Zoom or Teams meeting.



COMHAIRLE CONTAE CHILL MHANTÁIN  
WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL

### WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL MOTOR TAX

Motor tax can be renewed online at [www.motortax.ie](http://www.motortax.ie)

In order to mitigate exposure to COVID-19 with the recent rise of the Omicron variant in person Motor tax public counter will be open as follows commencing Monday the 17th January to Friday the 28th of January, both dates inclusive.

#### Wicklow Motor Tax Counter Opening Times

Monday to Friday	09.30 to 12.30
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#### Bray Motor Tax Office Counter Opening Times

Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday	10.00 to 12.00 and 14.00 to 15.00
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#### Blessington Motor tax Office Counter Opening Times

Tuesdays	09.30 to 12.30 and 14.00 to 15.30
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This schedule will be kept under review and members of the public will be kept informed. Wicklow County Council regrets any inconvenience caused. For more information please see our website [www.wicklow.ie](http://www.wicklow.ie) or call us on 0404-20100 and email us at [customerservice@wicklowcoco.ie](mailto:customerservice@wicklowcoco.ie) or [motortax@wicklowcoco.ie](mailto:motortax@wicklowcoco.ie)

# 'Assessment of Needs waiting list must be addressed'

Sinn Féin TD John Brady has called on the Government to urgently address the backlog for assessment of needs after it was confirmed that a backlog of approximately 4000 has developed.

The assessment identifies the health needs of children and what services are needed to meet their needs. Deputy Brady said: "I was alarmed to hear the Minister of State with responsibility for Disability, Anne Rabbitte, reveal in the Seanad that the current backlog for assessment of needs stands at just under 4000. This is a massive increase from just 500 in the summer of 2021. Data from the HSE indicates that there are a total of 2,720 applications overdue for completion and a further 1254 applications overdue to commence second stage. Since the start of the summer there are over 280 cases in West Wicklow alone where applications were overdue for completion. "68% of the applications overdue for completion are more than 3 months outside of the statutory deadline of 6 months and this does not include any



John Brady TD

assessments that have been put on hold.

"The Minister of State has serious questions to answer in relation to this matter. She needs to explain how this backlog has arisen and the measures that will be taken to address it. A survey from As I Am in the summer of this year of parents of children with Autism stated that 80% were waiting for more than 1 year for an assessment of needs. On top of the issues in relation to waiting lists, I am informed that children are having difficulties in accessing supports as they are not receiving official diagnosis, which is often required to access these supports. "I am calling on the Minister of State to urgently address the current waiting list for assessment of needs and ensure that the process is reformed so that all information required to ensure children can access supports is provided in a timely manner."

## Parkrun to help people build healthy habits into the New Year and beyond

Broadcaster Lottie Ryan and former Olympian and sports commentator David Gillick last week joined the 'Start with...parkrun' campaign at St. Anne's Park, Dublin. The campaign is aimed at anyone thinking about taking their first steps to being more active and explains how they can include parkrun community events into their weekend routine.

Parkrun in partnership with Vhi is the biggest community-led physical activity movement in Ireland and participation does not have to involve running the 5km in full. Start with ...parkrun has been created to encourage people of all fitness levels to come along as walkers, joggers, runners, and volunteers or to support a family member or friend taking part.

It takes place each Saturday in more than 100 locations across the country and are free to take part in. In Ireland, more than 8,000 people take part in these events every weekend, as walkers, joggers, runners and volunteers. These events are open to everyone no matter their fitness level and this year Park Walk has been launched as part of the weekly events. Participants only need to register once on the parkrun website, bring their personal barcode which records their activity, and then turn up at any event.

To add extra support for this campaign Vhi parkrun Rewards are also giving double points throughout the month of January. Vhi customers who take part in any parkrun, including volunteering, can claim a bonus parkrun reward on the Vhi app after each parkrun in January. To register for a parkrun near you visit [www.parkrun.ie](http://www.parkrun.ie).

Brigid Smyth, Head of Corporate Communications in Vhi said, "Its great to

do something healthy for myself. I'm so excited to join the parkrun community as part of my New Year routine".

Vhi ambassador David Gillick said, "It can be hard to get back into a

routine after the Christmas break and parkrun is a great way to get back to physical activity with a supportive community by your side every step of the way. What's so great about parkrun is that it is so

inclusive with Junior parkrun events happening each weekend and the newly launched Park Walk, which means people of all fitness abilities and ages can get involved".



Pictured are Broadcaster Lottie Ryan and Olympian David Gillick supporting Vhi's sponsorship of the Start With parkrun campaign. Both ambassadors are calling on people to start their new year with parkrun, by either walking, jogging, running or volunteering. Parkruns take place over a 5km course weekly, are free to enter and are open to all ages and abilities, providing a fun and safe environment to enjoy exercise. To register for a parkrun near you visit [www.parkrun.ie](http://www.parkrun.ie).



# College Choice – The BIFE Route

Over recent years many new avenues have opened up to students in pursuit of their dream career. According to Gabriel Allen, deputy principal Bray Institute (BIFE), “Further Education offers a learner the opportunity to gain advanced entry onto honours degree programmes, both in Ireland and abroad.

For the first time, students will be able to choose between university and further education courses through the CAO. When students log onto the CAO website they will not only see the traditional CAO options, they will also see options for Further Education.

“The comprehensive range of courses available at BIFE provides an excellent opportunity to anyone who wants to advance their qualifications, enhance their employment potential or progress their career,” he added.

For mature students there are many opportunities to study and progress at Bray Institute of Further Education.

“Over recent years our graduates have achieved honours degrees in graphic design, fashion design, TV & Film (moving image), Acting, Dance, Fine Arts, Psychology, Applied Health & Social Care and Music produc-



Gabriel Allen, Deputy Principal of BIFE

tion,” Allen explained.

“These courses are at Higher National Diploma level and on completion, many of last year’s graduating students proceeded to the final year of an honours Degree Programme in Ireland or Britain.”

BIFE students can gain advanced entry onto higher education courses. For example, BIFE run an Accounting Technician course. On completion of this two-year course students can proceed to the

3rd year of the Bachelor of Business in Accounting & Finance course (TU911) in TU Dublin.

Students can also progress into the 3rd year of the Bachelor of Science in Culinary Arts (TU742) on completion of their Level 6 course in BIFE at TU Dublin.

Work Experience is a vital part of the BIFE courses and now all students in the College have the opportunity to complete a 3-week work placement abroad in countries such as Spain, Portugal, Poland, Italy, Finland, Malta or Czechia under the Erasmus+ Programme which is sponsored by the European Union.

This is a terrific opportunity for our students, not only to gain valuable work experience in a European country, but also to experience a different culture and to broaden their horizons. BIFE constantly update

and introduce new programmes in response to demand, needs and workplace opportunities. This year they have introduced the following new courses:

- Special Needs Assistant (Primary & Post-Primary)
- Professional Make-Up & Hairdressing
- Film Special Effects
- Tourism with Airline Studies
- Security & Pre-Garda
- Applied Ecology & Biodiversity Studies
- Occupational Therapy Assistant
- Equine Studies,
- Barista, Pastry & Baking,
- Brewing & Distilling Technology,
- Applied Ecology & Biodiversity Studies

Applications for September 2022 are now open. You can call the Institute any day during office hours on 01-2829668 to discuss your needs or log on to [www.bife.ie](http://www.bife.ie) for more information.



Pictured is Megan O'Doherty Roche, who's studying Nursing/Midwifery at BIFE, receiving her 'Student of the Year' award from Gabriel Allen, Deputy Principal of BIFE.

## National Learning Network - Bray: Free Training for Education and Employment

If you left school early, or needed extra support in school and now want to get further qualifications or a job, then the free training courses in National Learning Network Bray (Beechwood Close, Boghall Road) may be the next step for you. No CAO points are needed.

According to National Learning Network's local manager Deborah Coughlan “there has been an increase in young people applying to their programmes who have dropped out of school because of anxiety”

She sees re-engaging in education as critical. “The school environment may not be for everyone, some young people just want to leave it behind. But they struggle with their anxiety, lack of learning or confidence and that's where we can help. Students who come to us get the support of staff trained to help them reach their potential. - either their educational goals or to get a job.

Flexibility is the key. We offer smaller class sizes, flexible start dates, longer course durations and a quieter environment, and there are no registration, exam or other outlays. We also offer support our students as they progress onto further education or employment”

National Learning Network is funded by the KWETB to provide training and education to people who live with physical or mental health difficulties, or who needed extra support in school because of a learning difficulty or autism

For more information, see their ad on this page and please contact 282 9643 or email [bray@nlm.ie](mailto:bray@nlm.ie) to make an appointment to visit the Centre and meet the training and support team.

## Harris commits €3 million to improve literacy among adults

Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science Simon Harris TD has chaired the first meeting of The Adult Literacy for Life (ALL) Strategy Implementation Group - a group tasked with driving literacy reforms.

The new strategy aims to ensure that every adult has the necessary literacy, numeracy and digital literacy to fully engage in society and realise their potential.

Minister Harris said: "In 2022 we plan to build on and accelerate the implementation of the Strategy.

"We know there are too many people who cannot read, who cannot write, who cannot write an email or make a bank transfer. This is not a failure of the person, but a failure by the State. We want to do better.

"This year €3 million will be allocated for the implementation of the ALL Strategy in Budget 2022,

which is very welcome.

"This will include the recruitment of regional literacy co-ordinators, a national programme office, the establishment of a new collaboration and innovation fund and the continued roll out of the Adult Literacy Awareness campaign."

Minister Harris also welcomed a report, and accompanying guidelines, looking at assessment of literacy practices across FET programme delivery at NFQ Levels 4, 5 and 6. The Assessing Literacy and Numeracy at NFQ Levels 4-6 in ETBs: Background Report, is accompanied by a handbook of national guidelines for initial and on-going assessment of literacy and numeracy of learners following FET programmes in ETBs.

Assessing Literacy and Numeracy at NFQ Levels 4-6 in ETBs: Background Report, as well as the guidelines, are available at: [www.solas.ie](http://www.solas.ie).

National Learning Network  
*Learn to change your story*

## Skills for Education and Employment

Open Day

NLN, Beechwood Close, Boghall Road, Bray, Co. Wicklow

EVERY WEDNESDAY

11am - 1pm



Contact Claire or Donagh at:

☎ 01-282 9643

🌐 [www.nlm.ie](http://www.nlm.ie)

✉ [bray@nlm.ie](mailto:bray@nlm.ie)

📘 [facebook.com/NLNWicklow](https://facebook.com/NLNWicklow)

**Are you looking for a training course?**  
One that will give you a nationally recognised QQI qualification as well as the skills to get a job? All this delivered in a supportive environment which promotes Wellness and increases your confidence?

**Skills for Education and Employment** may be the course for you! This QQI Level 4 course is designed to help you progress to further education or enter the workforce in an area of your choice.

**Who is it for?**  
Anyone over the age of 16 who is out of work or education through accident, illness, mental health difficulties, a personal setback or disability.

*The course is funded by the Kildare and Wicklow Education and Training Board. Eligibility criteria apply.*

**Free** life-changing courses  
and supported **training**








**A Pride of Lions:** *Togetherness is the motto for Wicklow & District Lions Club going into the new year. With new members and new volunteers always welcome the ladies and gentlemen in the club are looking forward to another busy year ahead with major involvement in the local and surrounding communities. Anyone interested in joining a wonderful and exciting charity organisation and help make a difference please contact any member of Wicklow Lions - you will be glad you did.*

## New Local Authority Home Loan Scheme

The Local Authority Home Loan (LAHL) Scheme is for the purchase of new or second-hand residential properties and for self-builds. It also includes the purchase of homes through State schemes such as the Tenant Purchase Scheme and Affordable Purchase Schemes, with the exception of the First Home Scheme (Shared Equity).

It is available nationwide and replaces the Rebuilding Ireland Home Loan scheme, from this month.

The Local Authority Home Loan can be used for: Private purchase (including self-build); Local Authority Tenant Incremental Purchase; Affordable Purchase Scheme.

There is a cap on the value of the home you can buy. In the Greater Dublin Area, Cork and Galway, the maximum market value is €320,000. In the rest of the country, it is €250,000.

The main changes to the Scheme are the Fresh Start principle (This will apply meaning people who are divorced, legally separated/separated or the relationship has ended and have no financial interest in respect of the family home are eligible to apply under this scheme); and People who have undergone personal insolvency/bankruptcy proceedings will also be eligible to apply.

For counties where the scheme's house price limit is €320,000 (Cork, Dublin, Galway, Kildare, Louth, Meath and Wicklow), the income ceiling for a single applicant will be €65,000 - an increase on the €50,000 income ceiling.

Eligibility is subject to submission of a complete Local Authority Home Loan application form and confirmation by the relevant local authority.

To be eligible a single applicant from Co. Wicklow must earn not more than €65,000.

For more details of eligibility, see [www.localauthorityhomeloan.ie](http://www.localauthorityhomeloan.ie).



COMHAIRLE CONTAE CHILL MHANTÁIN  
WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL

### WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL OPENING TIMES PUBLIC COUNTERS

In order to mitigate exposure to COVID-19 with the recent rise of the Omicron variant in person public counters at County Buildings Wicklow and the Municipal Districts of Arklow, Blessington, Greystones and Wicklow will be open as follows commencing Monday the 17th January to Friday the 28th of January, both dates inclusive.

Wicklow County Buildings, Arklow, Blessington,  
Greystones and Wicklow Municipal District Offices

Monday to Friday	09.30 to 12.30
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Bray Municipal District Office

Monday to Friday	10.00 to 12.00 and 14.00 to 15.00
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This schedule will be kept under review and members of the public will be kept informed. Wicklow County Council regrets any inconvenience caused.

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# Sinn Féin launch legislation to tackle housing crisis by reforming derelict sites rules

Sinn Féin last week launched legislation aiming to tackle the housing crisis by addressing the failure to collect levies applied under the Derelict Sites Levy. Sinn Féin TD John Brady has urged the government to back the legislation to ensure it delivers much-needed change for people priced out of affordable housing.

Speaking last Friday, Deputy Brady said "Right across this state, there are thousands of potential homes falling further and further into disrepair. Many of these are in within our own county of Wicklow and are being left idle and rotting in the middle of a housing crisis by land hoarders.

"The Derelict Sites Levy was introduced as one of a number of tools available to local authorities to tackle dereliction.

"This has failed, and it is time for the Minister, the government and local authorities to be held to account for this failure. Sinn Féin's legislation would impose transparency and accountability across local and national government where there are failures to collect the Derelict Sites Levy.

"It would create a requirement for a local authority who has collected less than 75% of the Derelict Sites Levy to publish a report outlining the reason why it was not collected, the

reasons for the failure to collect the amount and the level of engagement they have undertaken with the property owners. This would include a requirement to outline any concerns the local authority has in relation to resourcing, staffing or other issues preventing them from collecting levies.

"The Minister would then be required to publish a reply, addressing the issues raised. What we want to see is a situation whereby local authorities are applying levies on all eligible properties and collecting these levies. Not only will this act as a deterrent and ultimately reduce levels of dereliction but in the meantime, the additional funding will support local authorities to build houses and resource communities.

"We are talking about over €12million in untapped potential revenue. When local authorities are struggling year-on-year to balance budgets, why should those hoarding potential homes



John Brady TD

walk away scot-free?

"Every derelict property in this state is an insult to those trapped in the Housing Crisis. Here in Wicklow, far too many people who are losing hope of ever having their own home are being forced to walk past empty rotting houses daily.

"It is so frustrating that in the middle of a housing crisis we are

surrounded by homes that are falling apart - these homes should be repaired and made available for families who will cherish them. These walls should be full of laughter and memories, not mould and mildew.

"Sinn Féin's legislation would make it harder for land hoarders to justify allowing these homes to rot. "Land inflation means that people are actually making a profit off dereliction. We need to increase the financial penalties and apply them across the board so that there is no financial incentive to dereliction.

"The Minister has admitted that this is a problem but essentially shrugged his shoulders. The legislation to tackle dereliction exists, it's time we started to enforce it.

"Sinn Féin in government would tackle the housing crisis and stand up for ordinary workers and families by delivering affordable homes. We have the policies and solutions to deliver the change that people need."

## Rathnew teenager releases new song

17 year-old Katie Forsyth from Rathnew released her new song " 5 days" last Friday on Spotify.

Katie had the opportunity to perform the soon-to-be released track in front of music tycoon Louis Walsh, during auditions as he searches for a new girl band.

The sixth year student in Coláiste Chill Mhantáin, Wicklow wrote the song last summer and recorded the it at Darklands Studios in Dublin under the watchful eye of producer Daniel Docherty.

"The teenager said: "I took a bit of a gamble using this song that I wrote, as opposed to a cover. It was a great opportunity to perform it live, he seemed to enjoy the song as he complimented it by listening to the whole song, which he did not do for very many acts. I have not heard anything back as of yet, however as far as I'm aware nobody has, so all hope is not lost at this stage!"

The sixth year student in Coláiste Chill Mhantáin, Wicklow wrote the song last summer and recorded it at the Darklands Studios in Dublin under the watchful eye of producer Daniel Docherty.

Katie lists Dermot Kennedy, JC Stewart, Tate McRae, Sabrina Carpenter and Picture This among her influences .Visit Spotify to listen to Katie's new release



Katie Forsyth from Rathnew

## Neurodiversity projects for young people

All Abilities Ireland has launched National Neurodiversity programmes for all ages including free regional Social Groups for young people in Co. Wicklow.

The organisation has been developing and delivering initiatives focusing on nurturing all abilities through creative arts since 2018.

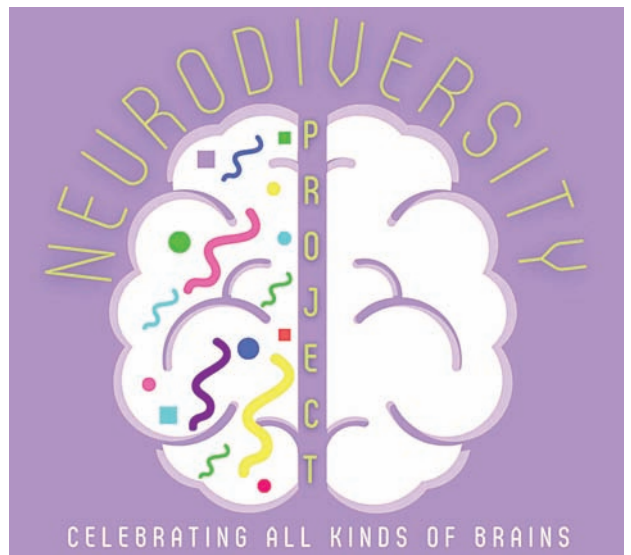
In the past year, they expanded their neurodiversity inclusive programmes range to include mindfulness, hip-hop dance, fluid art, drama, and public speaking along with social interaction groups for neurodivergent individuals.

The aim of All Abilities Ireland programmes is to provide a safe and positive space for kids, youth, and adults to grow, improve their self-esteem and mental health while also building new friendships.

This year the focus will be on developing Neurodiversity Social clubs for young people in specific locations to create an inclusive community in Co. Cork, Laois, Wicklow, Kildare, Kilkenny to start. The classes aim to improve social skills, confidence, self-awareness and teach them life skills.

The programme is created on the evidence-based course Belonging + which has helped children around the world improve their social life and feel better about themselves. Currently, they are inviting parents to enroll their children and adults for virtual classes as they are starting at the end of January. It is great to try new things and be part of a fun, supportive community which is key for inclusion and progression.

For their current events, please visit: [allabilities.eventbrite.com/](http://allabilities.eventbrite.com/)





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# Community air ambulance tasked over 500 times in 2021

Call for Government support as more than €2 million needed to run charity service this year

The Irish Community Air Ambulance was tasked to 512 missions in 14 counties during 2021, its busiest year since the Helicopter Emergency Medical Service (HEMS) Air Ambulance launched in July 2019. There were 490 taskings in 2020.

The organisation is Ireland's only charity-funded HEMS Air Ambulance. It works in partnership with the National Ambulance Service and responds to serious incidents and medical emergencies from its base in Rathcool, Co. Cork. Each helicopter mission costs an average of €3,500, all of which has to be raised or donated.

The CEO of the Irish Community Air Ambulance, Micheal Sheridan said that they engaged with the Government and regional political leaders throughout 2021 to secure some State support for the vital service.

Micheal Sheridan said, "The HSE is releasing funding to private Ambulance firms to provide support during the continuing crisis yet the Irish Community Air Ambulance is still entirely funded by public donations. The increased number of taskings during 2021 show that we provide a vital service. The cost to run the charity



Pictured is CEO of the Irish Community Air Ambulance Micheal Sheridan. The charity HEMS Air Ambulance was tasked 512 times during 2021, its busiest year ever.

during 2022 is expected to be "€2.1 million which is a significant amount of money to raise. We are so grateful to all our supporters who help us to bring hope to those in emergency situations but we will continue to engage with the Government to provide funding during these uncertain times."

There were more calls to cardiac arrests, farming-related incidents and falls from heights during 2021. Cardiac arrests accounted for one in five calls with 103 taskings last year, that's up from 81 during 2020.

Amongst the incidents responded to were:

- 89 Road traffic collisions
- 64 Farming incidents
- 64 Cardiovascular (Heart attacks and strokes)
- 63 General trauma calls
- 61 General medical calls
- 48 Falls from heights
- 20 Equestrian incidents

July and April were the busiest months of the year for the service with 57 missions completed each month. Cork, Kerry and Tipperary accounted for the majority of taskings. The Irish Community Air Ambulance was also tasked to Clare, Limerick, Waterford, Wexford, Kilkenny, Mayo, Galway, Offaly, Laois, Wicklow and Kildare.

One in every three taskings required an air-

lift to hospital. There were 111 transfers to Cork University Hospital during 2021 which equates to 66% of all transfers. University Hospital Limerick accounts for 20%.

Micheal Sheridan added, "There were also transfers to hospitals in Kerry, Tallaght, Galway, Temple Street, Crumlin and The Mater as we saw an increase in the number of times we were required to transfer children and young people to specialist paediatric hospitals in Dublin. We cover an area of 25,000 square kilometres and treat some of the most critically ill and injured patients, bringing them to the hospital that is best suited to their life-saving needs, not just the closest hospital geographically."

Diarmuid O'Donovan from Cork was seriously injured when he was thrown over the handlebars of his bike while cycling around Sleah Head, Co Kerry in May 2021. He said he needed to be brought to a dedicated Trauma Centre quickly, "A moment of carelessness saw me hit the road. I was on my own but thankfully it wasn't long before I was



Diarmuid O'Donovan from Cork was airlifted to hospital after sustaining serious injuries while cycling in Kerry in May 2021. He is pictured visiting the Irish Community Air Ambulance base in Rathcool, Co Cork, also included is Key Relationships Manager, Lorraine Toner.

found. Paramedics, a local doctor, the local Fire Service and Gardai all responded. I was drifting in and out of consciousness and it quickly emerged that I needed to be at Cork University Hospital as soon as possible. I wasn't in a suitable state for a two-and-a-half-hour journey by road so the

Irish Community Air Ambulance was tasked and landed in Ventry. The journey to CUH by helicopter took just 30 minutes. I had 28 different bone breaks including my spine, shoulder and ribs as well as a punctured lung. I underwent several procedures that evening and spent 12 days in hospital. I believe it could

have been far worse if I had not been transported to CUH so quickly and that my recovery has been much faster as a result."

The organisation also funds a fleet of Rapid Response Vehicles on the ground in counties like Mayo, Donegal and Dublin. These vehicles are staffed by Volunteer

Critical Care Doctors and also by Community-based GPs. They are tasked by the National Ambulance Service to treat trauma and medical emergencies within a 40-50km range. The fleet of doctors was tasked 809 times in 2021 bringing the total number of missions across the organisation to more than 1300.

## 'Resignation of entire Disabled Drivers Medical Scheme Appeals Board gravely concerning'

Sinn Fein TD John Brady said he is deeply worried by news that the entire Disabled Drivers Medical Scheme Appeals Board has resigned after expressing concerns that the criteria for obtaining a Primary Medical Cert is too stringent.

Deputy Brady said: "Many disabled people are effectively being denied the ability to travel due to the stringent criteria for obtaining a Primary Medical Certificate. This is denying disabled people their rights under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) to live fully independent lives.

"An immediate review of this scheme and the criteria it sets needs to take place; with input from Disabled Persons Organisations and other relevant stakeholders taken on board. This must include detailed actions to widen eligibility to the scheme and improve its administration.

"Disabled people should have the ability to travel. Lack of transport can be devastating for people's ability to work, to socialise and to complete everyday tasks which enable them to live full and independent lives. The impact that loss of transport has on disabled people's lives is difficult to overstate and carries a huge practical and emotional toll. The government must recognise this, listen to disabled people and prioritise this issue.

"That the criteria for obtaining a Primary Medical Certificate was overly stringent was, in effect, confirmed by the Supreme Court ruling in June 2020 which overturned the Board's deci-



Cllr. John Brady

sion to deny two families a Primary

Medical Certificate. This ruling led to the suspension of the scheme which was only reopened in January 2021 after an amendment to the Finance Bill. This was supposed to be an interim measure and a review of the scheme was promised by the Minister for Finance in September 2021 to be carried out by his Department whose remit

it comes under, but this was never delivered.

"The Department of Finance statement reported by RTE News instead stated that 'a working group' led by the Department of Children, Equality, and Disability will review the Disabled Drivers and Passengers Scheme.

"This only confirms that the Minister for Finance and his Department has not carried out the review he had undertaken to do 5 months ago and 18 months after the Supreme Court ruling.

"An immediate review of this scheme and the criteria it sets out needs to take place with input from Disabled Persons Organisations and other relevant stakeholders taken on board and must include detailed actions to widen eligibility to the scheme and improve its administration."

## Five callouts in 2022 for Mountain Rescue Teams

Wicklow Mountain Rescue Teams have responded to five callouts so far this year (at the time of going to press).

Two of the callouts came in consecutive days. On New Year's Day, Wicklow Mountain Rescue Team and Glen of Imaal Red Cross Mountain Rescue were tasked by the National Ambulance to assist with a collapsed male in Glendalough at the grave yard. The patient was packaged and then evacuated by stretcher to a waiting NAS ambulance and crew.

On 2nd January the teams were then tasked by An Garda Síochána to a report of a 65 year old female who was out hiking and sustained a dislocated ankle.

Mountain Rescue Personnel made their way to the location of the patient, who was then assessed. Once treated, the casualty was evacuated by stretcher off the hill to a waiting NAS ambulance and crew.

The latest callout came on 9th January when Wicklow Mountain Rescue Team and Glen of Imaal Red Cross Mountain Rescue were tasked by the National Ambulance to assist with the evacuation of a person who had sustained injuries from a fall from a mountain bike in the vicinity of Ballymoyle Forest.



Fettle, an online therapy-on-demand platform that connects those seeking counselling with qualified therapists, is aiming to turn Blue Monday Yellow (the colour of positivity) this 17th January. After a tumultuous year and uncertainty ahead, Yellow Monday encourages the Irish population to open up and break the stigma around mental health in Ireland on what is traditionally the saddest day of the year. Celebrities will take to the streets in Dublin, Limerick and Cork on Yellow Monday dressed as a beacon of light. They will encourage members of the public to write a confidential note about what's weighing on their mind, the note will be locked away in a box and the person will be given a positive and uplifting message in return which they can pass on to others. Kate Reid and Ian Molloy are pictured at the launch last week.



# 'Lack of enforcement by authorities leaves sheep flocks vulnerable to attacks'

Reacting to the recent sheep kills reported throughout the country over the Christmas period, IFA Sheep Chairman Sean Dennehy said the Government and the various state agencies with responsibility in this area continue to sit on their hands on the matter.

IFA has met with Ministers Charlie McConalogue and Malcolm Noonan on the issue over the past year to have meaningful measures put in place to protect sheep farmers from the irresponsible behaviour of some dog owners.

IFA launched a 'No Dogs Allowed' campaign in early 2021. This campaign will continue until action is taken by Government to address this persistent problem.

Sean Dennehy said the numbers of dog attacks on sheep is grossly under reported, due to the lack of action from authorities when sheep kills and sheep worrying are reported by farmers.

"There are very few sheep farmers in the country who have not had the horrendous experience of finding their flock savaged by dogs, yet the official figures recorded only 241 such incidents in 2020," he said.

"It's not acceptable to farmers, who provide full traceability for seven million cattle and three million breeding sheep - where every animal is individually tagged and traceable to the person responsible for them - that a similar system is not in place for dog owners."

There's an estimated 800,000 dogs in the country, with only 207,866 licences issued in 2020. This leaves almost 600,000 without identification, or association to a responsible keeper.

Local authorities are responsible for the control of

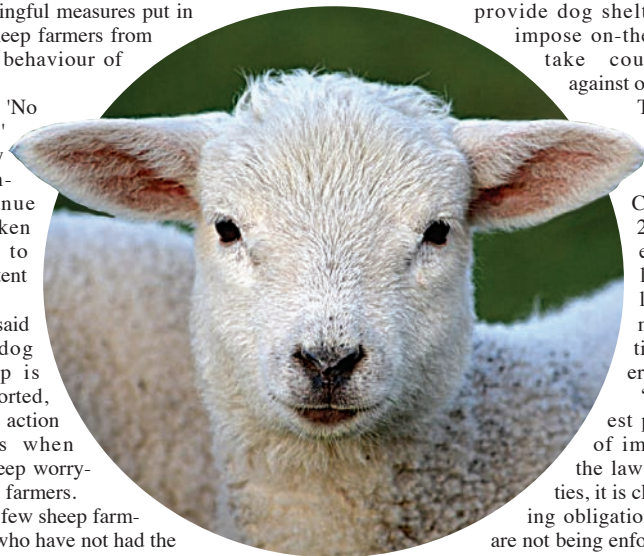
dogs under the Control of Dogs Act 1986. This act gives them the power to appoint dog wardens; provide dog shelters; seize dogs; impose on-the-spot fines; and take court proceedings against owners.

The most recent figures published by the Local Authorities for Control of Dogs for 2020 highlight the extent of the problem and severe lack of enforcement of the obligations on dog owners.

"Based on the latest published figures of implementation of the law by local authorities, it is clear even the existing obligations of dog owners are not being enforced, with only 82 prosecutions initiated in 2020 and only 198 dogs seized," Mr Dennehy continued.

- Dog owners are required to have a dog licence and to have the dog microchipped.
- Dogs must be under the control of a responsible person, if it is outside a home or premises, or the home or premises of the person in charge of it.
- Owners are liable for injury or damage caused by their dog to people or livestock.

"There is an urgent need to strengthen the legislation, include appropriate sanctions and develop a single national database identifying dogs and their owners, similar to that in other jurisdictions," he



Niamh O'Sullivan, All Ireland senior football championship winner with Meath in 2021 and member of the Dunshaughlin & Royal Gaels club, is pictured at the launch of the GAA Healthy Clubs programme. Since launching as a small pilot involving just 16 clubs in 2013, Irish Life GAA Healthy Clubs has to-date engaged 300 clubs and tens of thousands of participants. Irish Life GAA Healthy Clubs work with their members and communities to identify priority activities to deliver. The most common themes include physical activity and social Gaelic Games; mental health; healthy eating; diversity and inclusion; working with older members of the community; youth leadership; gambling, drug and alcohol awareness; becoming smoke-free clubs; and sustainability (Green Clubs).

said. "The key areas that must be addressed include:

1. A single national database for all dogs in the country that identifies the person responsible for the dog.
2. More appropriate sanctions for those found in non-compliance of the microchipping obligations of dog owners.
3. More appropriate sanctions for those who fail to

have their dog under their control at all times and for those whose dogs are identified worrying/attacking livestock.

4. Additional resources to enforce and ensure compliance with the obligations of dog owners.

"IFA launched our 'No Dogs Allowed' campaign to highlight this issue. We will continue this campaign until the issue is resolved satisfactorily," concluded Mr Dennehy.

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# New app to report badger activity on farms launched

A new App to report badger activity has been launched by Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine with the bovine TB Stakeholder Forum,

Implementation of the Working Group (IWG), Chaired by Dr. Sean Brady. The new App called 'Badger Activity' is available to download from the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine's website at [www.bovinetb.ie](http://www.bovinetb.ie). Badgers are known to spread TB to cattle and this App, developed as a further enhancement to the Department's wildlife programme, will allow farmers to immediately report, to the Department, signs of badger activity on their farms. Commenting on the launch of the new app, Minister McConalogue commended the IWG as well as the Scientific and Financial Working Groups and the overall TB Forum in working to reduce TB rates in cattle. "Since being appointed

Minister, I have been committed to tackling bovine TB rates. I am acutely aware of the emotional and financial burden of a TB breakdown in a herd. Only by working together can we see TB rates reduce. It is exciting to see the Badger Activity app come to fruition and I commend the work of the IWG chaired by Dr Sean Brady. Each of the individual TB working groups as well as the TB Forum are committed to reducing TB rates in cattle. "In Budget 2022, I secured a further €1m for the Wildlife Programme which is an integral element of the overall TB programme. There is an energy and focus from me and my Department as well as the TB Forum and its working groups in driving down TB rates."

Members of the IWG, including the Irish Farmers Association, Irish Creamery Milk Suppliers Association, Irish Cattle and Sheep Farmers Association, Animal Health Ireland, National Parks and Wildlife Service and the Department itself, have also welcomed this important development. Farmers using this App will help the Department build its knowledge of the range and location of badger activity throughout the country, facilitating the enhanced implementation of the wildlife control programme. The IWG is encouraging all farmers to download the App and to walk their lands looking for signs of badger activity. An information video and leaflet on identifying signs of badger activity

and advice on how to reduce the risk of TB from badgers to cattle is available on [www.bovinetb.ie](http://www.bovinetb.ie). The manual accompanying the App on [www.bovinetb.ie](http://www.bovinetb.ie) contains photographic examples of badger setts, latrines, pathways, snuffle holes and paw prints. It is much easier to spot activity at this time of year when vegetation is dying back. IWG Chair, Dr. Sean Brady and Chair of the bovine TB Stakeholder Forum, Michael Cronin thanked the group and the wider Forum membership for their continued hard work, collaboration, commitment and progress in their efforts to reduce the impact of bovine TB across the country and look forward to continuing with this progress.



## Red squirrel conservation strategies likely to undermine species survival in future

New research has shown how current red squirrel conservation strategies in the UK and Ireland, that favour non-native conifer plantations, are likely to negatively impact red squirrels.

The research shows that native predators in native woodland, and not conifer plantations, are the key ingredients for red squirrel survival in Britain and Ireland. This contradicts existing red squirrel conservation strategies that promote non-native conifer planting and instead highlights the value native predators can deliver (to native biodiversity).

Current conifer plantation focused afforestation strategies in the UK and Ireland are sold as a nature-based solution for tackling climate change and the biodiversity crisis, particularly that of the threatened flagship species the red squirrel.

However, new research from Queen's University Belfast and the University of St Andrew's challenges this approach. Together with Ulster Wildlife and citizen scientists, they used camera traps to survey over 700 sites across Northern Ireland over a five-year period for red squirrels, grey squirrels and pine martens. The results show that with the recovery of the pine marten, conifer plantations planted under the guise of protecting the red squirrel, are likely to have a damaging impact on the species survival.

Co. Wicklow is now considered to be part of the Pine Marten's core range, while the red squirrel has been making a comeback in these parts in recent years.

Until recently, the pine marten was a little-known elusive member of the weasel family, restricted to the northern reaches of the Scottish Highlands, and the western counties of Ireland. Following its protection in the 70s and 80s, this native predator has made an astounding recovery. Previous research has shown how the pine marten benefits the red squirrel by providing natural biological control of the invasive grey squirrel, which has replaced the red squirrel throughout much of Ireland and Britain.

New research, published last Wednesday in the Proceedings of the Royal Society B and funded by the British Ecological Society, has shown that the presence of pine marten increases red squirrel occurrence across the landscape, especially in native broadleaf woodlands. This is because the pine marten suppresses the grey squirrel regardless of habitat. However, this effect is reversed in large non-native conifer plantations, where the pine marten reduces the occurrence of red squirrel. This could be due to the lack of alternate prey, and the lack of refuges

for red squirrels in highly simplified landscapes. However, it is likely linked to the fact grey squirrels don't do well in these habitats, and thus following pine marten recovery, red squirrels do not get the benefits of release from their nemesis as they do elsewhere in the landscape.

Dr. Joshua P. Twining, lead author from Queen's University Belfast, explains: "Restoration of native predators is a critical conservation tool to combat the on-going biodiversity crisis, but this must be in conjunction with maintenance and protection of natural, structurally complex habitats. This has global implications given the on-going recovery of predators in certain locations such as mainland Europe. It also shows that the current national red squirrel conservation strategies that favor non-native conifer plantations are likely to have the opposite impact to what is intended. Timber plantations are often promoted as being beneficial to red squirrel conservation, but our results show that they will have a detrimental effect on the species in the future."

Dr Chris Sutherland, from the University of St Andrews, added: "This research demonstrates the enormous value of large-scale data collected through public participation. Combining this data with state-of-the-art analytical techniques has generated important conservation insights that until now have been overlooked."

The UK and Ireland has some of the lowest forest cover in Europe and over 75% of it is made up of non-native timber plantations.

Dr Twining concludes: "This work shows that we need to develop an alternative national conservation strategy for the red squirrel, focused on planting native woodlands alongside continued pine marten recovery."



Co. Wicklow is considered to be part of the Pine Marten's core range

## Year 6 of the Sheep Welfare Scheme to open in February

The Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Charlie McConalogue T.D., last week announced that the sixth year of the Sheep Welfare Scheme will commence on the 1st February 2022.

As in previous years, all existing participants in the scheme will be automatically enrolled in year 6 and do not need to take any action should they wish to remain in the scheme.

The Minister stated: "I was very pleased to be able to secure additional funding for the scheme in Budget 2022 and it underlines my commitment to the sheep sector. The allo-

cation for Sheep Welfare Scheme has increased from €17m in 2021 to €19.5m in 2022 to cover the continuation of the scheme in 2022 and the change to reference year. The Sheep Welfare Scheme provides a valuable support to sheep farmers for undertaking actions which make a positive contribution to flock welfare."

The Minister urged all eligible new entrants to the sheep sector who wish to apply to participate in the scheme to return their forms by 1st February 2022. For the purposes of the scheme, a new entrant to sheep farming is defined as an applicant who has applied for a new herd number in the period 1st January to the 31st December in the year pre-

ceding the scheme year, or an applicant with an existing herd number who has not held or traded in sheep for a two-year period up to 31st October preceding the scheme year.

Application forms are available by contacting the Sheep Welfare Scheme section of the Department by email at [sheep-scheme@agriculture.gov.ie](mailto:sheep-scheme@agriculture.gov.ie) by phone on 057-8674422.



Pictured is Mary Kelly from St Mary's College, Arklow who was showcasing her project 'A biological solution to local pollution' at the 58th BT Young Scientist & Technology Exhibition.



# LEO Wicklow Launch Training Courses for 2022

Local Enterprise Office Wicklow provides an extensive range of supports to local business communities.

"Our confidential advisory service is open to anyone exploring self employment as an option or for those who are currently operating a business," says Vibeke Delahunt, Head of Enterprise. "To assist the small business community in meeting the challenges of the business world, we provide a wide range of high-quality training supports which are tailored to meet specific business requirements. Whether it is starting a business or growing a business there is something suitable for everyone." Upcoming courses for January and February are:

**18th January**

**Start Your Own Business Course**

€95 - 10 week programme to assist participants in assessing the viability of business ideas and understand the essential elements required to start up and run their own business.

**20th January**

**Trading Online Voucher Seminar**

FREE - The 'Trading Online Voucher' scheme, aims to encourage small businesses to develop their online presence through a website or digital marketing strategy by availing of a Trading Online Voucher.

**26th January**

**Increasing Traffic to Your Website: SEO for Beginners**

€50 - provides participants with the skills, tools and knowledge to be able to plan and implement their website Search Engine Optimisation.

**8th February**

**Bookkeeping for Small Businesses**

€120 - 2-day course equips start-up businesses and SMEs with the tools and knowledge to maintain and understand their books and records.

**9th February Maximising Sales on your Website & Social Media**

€20 - gives the participants the skills, tools and knowledge to be able to increase their sales and lead from their social media channels and website.

**9th February**

**Start Your Own Food Business: The Essentials**

€20 - aimed at those interested in starting a local artisan food business in Wicklow, the course caters for those exploring the possibility of operating a cafe, food trailer, or manufacturing local food product.

**17th February**

**Cashflow Management**

€60 - provides a deeper understanding of the differences between cash and profit, cash flow forecasting and managing debtors and debtors.

**2nd March**

**Essential Idea Exploration: Proven Tools & Techniques to Test the Market**

€30 - brings participants through a

multi-layered innovation model to understand the principles behind design strategy, ideation, validation and commercialisation.

**7th March Digital Marketing Clinics**

€30 - 7 1 Hour Sessions Available - analyse your digital assets for best performance with digital marketing scientist Aisling Hurley MSc. Ask any question on any platform, or keep it website specific. A unique opportunity to fix an issue unique to your business.

**10th March Future Proofing Your Business Using Smart Tech Tools**

€50 - 2 day workshop aims to help small business owners, assess if they are using enough, easily available, smart tools to save time and work more efficiently.

**11th March Video Production: Tools, Techniques & Tactics: Beginners Level**

€25 - designed to enable local micro businesses and SME's to: Gain practical insights and tips on how to create and use video content as part of their entrepreneurial skill set, market their business online, maximise their opportunities to win business using self-created digital content and communicate the story of their brand/business to new and existing customers using video content.

**22nd March**

**Public Procurement for SMEs: Introduction to Tendering**

€25 - participants will learn how to use the eTender website to understand how to find useful information that can help them understand where opportunities lie and what they need to do to start targeting the right opportunities.

**24th March**

**Effective Use of Social Media for Your Business: Beginners**

€50 - offers participants the skills, tools and knowledge to create their own social media channels and use them effectively for business.

**7th April**

**Bookkeeping Using Excel**

€60 - one-day course that will cover all the working elements of setting up a simple bookkeeping system on Microsoft Excel.

**27th April**

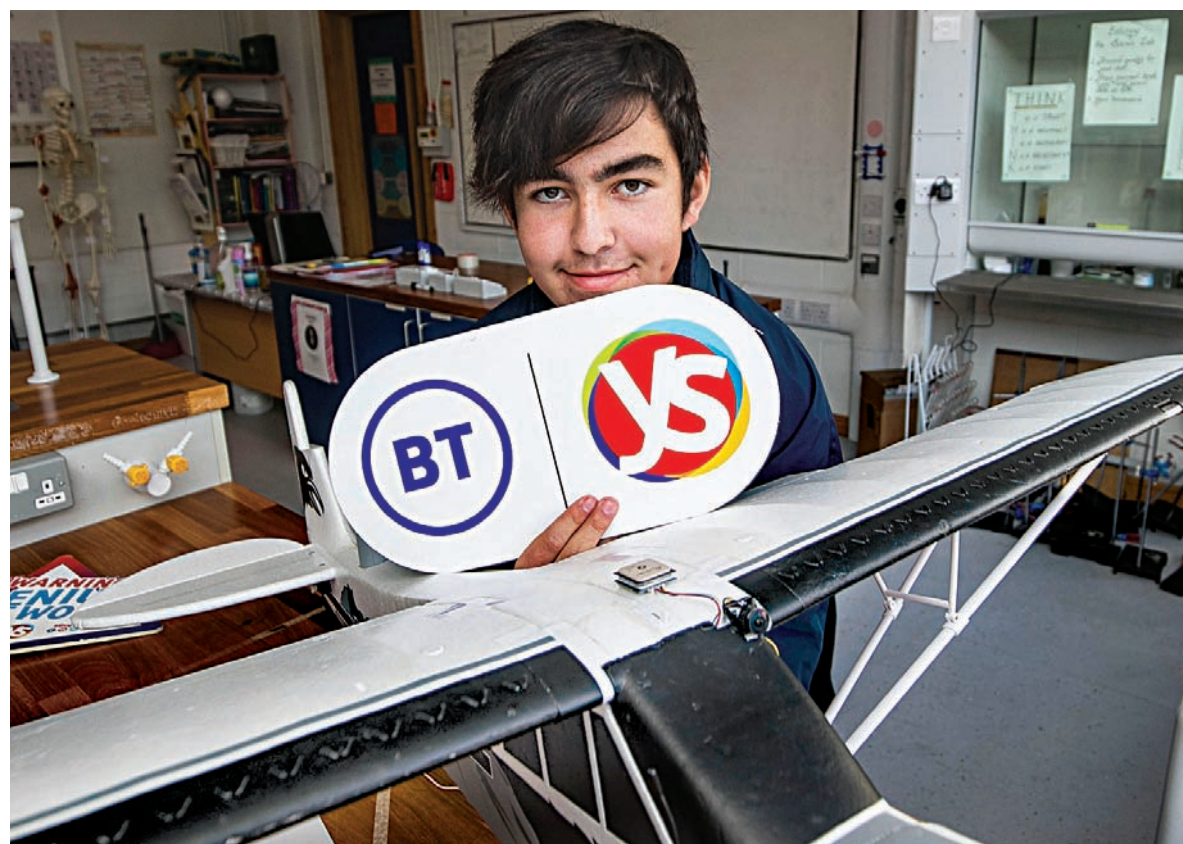
**Effective Use of Social Media for Your Business: Intermediate**

€50 - offers participants the skills, tools and knowledge to take their social media activity and success rate to a higher level.

**10th May**

**Driving Your Own Public Relations Campaign**

€70 - offers participants the skills, tools and knowledge to take their social media activity and success rate to a higher level.



Pictured is Eoin Scanlon from Glenart Community College, Arklow, who, with Ryan Kelly (absent) was showcasing their project 'Semi autonomous solar powered model plane' at the 58th BT Young Scientist & Technology Exhibition last week.

## New online platform launched to assist second level students with academic and career paths

**Pathway, a new online career planning tool - developed by the Irish consultancy firm Ingenium - for secondary school students to aid them in the decision-making process when choosing further education options and potential future careers, has launched in the Irish market.**

The new Pathway survey is an academically validated tool that will assist Leaving Certificate students in choosing the best options for their CAO application, as well as assisting TY students to select subjects that align with their ideal career path. The service was trialled in a pilot programme between 2018 and 2020 with 412 participants, with 98% of the students involved rating the platform as extremely useful.

The service involves a comprehensive survey, which can be completed by the student in less than 15 minutes. Designed around what the student enjoys, Pathway's algorithm considers several key variables unique to each person, including the student's favourite sub-

jects in school, their hobbies, interests, passions and personality, assessed through their unique decision-making style. Based on their survey answers, students are provided with a detailed report with an analysis of their unique decision-making style and personality traits as they relate to their career path, as well as a ranked list of twelve suggested courses that would best suit them at third level education. From there, students can research relevant courses in Irish and international universities using the sug-

gested career paths provided in the report. Pathway also provides students at graduate-level with assistance and support, to better focus their academic decisions and help set them up as future professionals passionate about their careers. Janna Gasanova, one of Ingenium's organisational psychology leads and part of the research development team for Pathway, said "The lead up to the Leaving Certificate, when students begin considering what path to take next, can be an incredibly uncertain and anxious time. Our ambition with launching Pathway is to provide a resource to make this difficult decision-making period easier, less stressful and more exciting. We also wanted to create an engaging

report that facilitated new conversations, between students, parents and career guidance counsellors. Pathway also serves as an opportunity for corporate organisations and universities to engage with their communities by providing employees and community groups with the option of introducing Pathway to their family and community members, encouraging more informed discussions and opportunities for third level education in households.

Pathway has a free and premium version of their survey and report, both available through their website. Pathway also provides a number of additional resources including free articles and webinars, which are available at: <https://mypathwayjourney.com/>

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### Seven Wicklow Community Education providers to receive funding

**Seven Wicklow Community Education Providers have received funding under the Mitigating Against Educational Disadvantage Fund (MAEDF).**

Minister Simon Harris said "As Minister for Further and Higher Education I am passionate in ensuring there are as many different routes to learning to facilitate as wider a cohort of learners access the opportunity that education provides. "In light of the great successes of the Mitigating Against Educational Disadvantage Fund in 2020, where €5.8m was allocated to support community education, and in recognition of the continuing challenges in relation to the ongoing Covid-19 restrictions, I am delighted to announce that a further €6.85 million has been granted under this Fund again this year, comprising over 1,000 initiatives. "This Fund is specifically designed to tackle educational inequalities which continue to be highlighted by the COVID-19 pandemic, and support access to community education. I would like to thank all the



Minister Simon Harris

education providers and learners who have engaged with the system - you continue to make a great difference in your communities and your positive work in changing Irish society is to be commended." The following seven Wicklow Community Education providers are to receive support from the fund: Tiglin in Ashford; The National Learning Network Bray; The Blessington Woman's Shed; The Vale of Avoca Men's Shed; The Signal Arts Centre; The Bray Family Resource Project; The Kildare/Wicklow ETB Learner Assistance Fund.

"These funds will provide much needed Digital for learners, support for Outreach, Engagement and Mentoring and provide other exceptional supports required for learners impacted by the pandemic. These Wicklow Community Organisations provide excellent support in encouraging learners to re-engage with further education and training and they can count on my wholehearted support as Minister to deliver Community Education," Minister Harris concluded.

## Students Union says State Exams cannot go ahead as planned

The Irish Second-Level Students' Union (ISSU) has said that the State Examinations 2022 cannot go ahead as planned. Under current plans, students sitting the 2022 State Exams would see adjustments and more choice on their exam papers. The union representing second-level students have called this a "complete disregard for students' best interests".

Speaking on the matter, ISSU Uachtarin, Emer Neville said "The State Exams cannot go ahead as planned, that much is clear. This year's cohort of exam students have been very vocal about the disruption they are facing in and out of the classroom. There is no online tuition provided to those isolating, and students have missed class time throughout 2021 and 2020, as a result of school closures. There is no way we can stand over assessing these students with the traditional Leaving Certificate. We are calling on the Minister of Education to take students' voices into account and revise the decision about State Exams for 2022."

Further to this, Jack McGinn, ISSU Education Officer, added "We have heard concerns about some students in this year's Leaving Certificate cohort not having a Junior Cycle certificate to use for standardisation. However, in light of the circumstances, we must put students first as it is their future that will be impacted."

The ISSU surveyed second-level students on the matter, with provisional results, at the time of going to press, showing a clear favour towards a hybrid model. The survey closed on Friday, January 14th with the highly anticipated survey results expected to be revealed early this week.



## On The Road: A Travelogue in Pictures by Shane Harrison

Signal Arts Centre, 17th-30th January 2022

The sixteen paintings featured in this exhibition focus on the many roads the artist has travelled. There are all sorts of journeys involved: foreign holidays, city breaks, the journey to work, or play, and the journey home.

Travel might only take Shane Harrison a few steps from home but the landscape, though familiar, is never the same. What he likes to capture is the magic of light whether in daytime or at night. Streetlamps shimmering in the rain at the end of a long walk home, the seductive lights of a beating city, or the sun emerging from rain-clouds giving a sudden

hint of magic on an everyday scene. Each painting is a narrative in itself and each is linked to the broader narrative of the exhibi-

tion. On the Road is a partial pictorial diary that is being added to all the time. As a writer, the artist's travels and experiences have always contributed to his prose, whether in the fiction of his short stories and novels, or in the accounts he has written of the places, local and foreign that he has visited. These paintings are another way of describing things. Free of words but rich in detail, it is the artists profound hope that the viewer will feel part of the scenes he has created here.



Yvonne and Douglas Campbell at the launch of Stan O'Reilly's book "Tall Tales and True Stories" which was held in St. Brigid's hall, Rathnew



Aughrim based artist Eoin O'Connor pictured with Vicky Christensen from Roundwood at the opening of his new shop in Gorey

## Challenge stigma, tackle stereotypes: Walk in My Shoes competition calls on students and aspiring filmmakers to enter our 2021-22 Frame of Mind competition.

Walk in My Shoes, the flagship awareness-raising campaign of St Patrick's Mental Health Services, is calling on students and budding filmmakers across Ireland to submit short films or TikTok videos that promote a positive mental health message, tackle mental health stereotypes or challenge stigma.

First launched in 2014, the Frame of Mind short-film competition returns for its seventh year with a brand new category that asks hopeful entrants to create an inspiring mental health film in 60 seconds or less. Entrants can also submit short films of up to three minutes or less. The prize - €1,000.

With data showing a massive rise in the number of people using social media apps such as TikTok on a daily basis across the nation, the contest hopes to use the influence and reach of such platforms to shine a light on mental health through short, shareable and inspiring film content.

The categories for this year's competition are:

- Secondary School / TikTok
- Secondary School / Short-Film
- General / TikTok
- General / Short-Film

All entries will be judged on originality, artistic vision and message interpretation, with shortlisted films to be reviewed by an expert judging panel who will select the overall winners. If there are insufficient entries, the judging panel reserves the right to decline to make an award. The panel reserves the right to disqualify any entry that does not fit the criteria of these terms and conditions, and its decision is final.

This year's judging panel comprises: RTÉ Guide Movies Editor, Michael Doherty; former service user of St Patrick's Mental Health

Services and film fanatic, Sean Fitzpatrick; Director of Services at St Patrick's Mental Health Services, Tom Maher; and Director of Communications and Advocacy at St Patrick's Mental Health Services, Tamara Nolan.

Speaking about this year's contest, returning judge, Sean Fitzpatrick said: "I am delighted to be on the judging panel again for this year's Frame of Mind competition. Having acted as a Frame of Mind judge for the past number of years, it's always amazing to see the high calibre of entries, which tackle many important issues and raise awareness of the importance of good mental health. As someone who has experienced mental health difficulties, films and cinema became a vital part of my recovery strategy and form part of something I like to call the three Fs - Film, Football and Friends - all of which I rely on as a way to look after my own mental health. Cinema and film have proven to be a lifeline for me in times of difficulty and I hope that, through this competition, others will take time to discover the power of film and its ability to highlight pertinent issues, while also bringing joy and hopefulness."

With everyone's safety in mind, participants are encouraged to make their entries in line with the ever-evolving public health guidance: from filming people remotely to using animation or simple stop-

motion, all innovative ways you want to make your creations are welcome.

This competition isn't about using pricey equipment either. You can use any type of video recording device you feel comfortable with - smartphones, digital cameras, film - and there are lots of free-to-use video editing programmes available online, such as Clip Champ, to help you get the finished version you're happy with.

How to Enter? After completing your TikTok or short film, you can enter the competition by filling out the online entry form (via [www.walkinmyshoes.ie](http://www.walkinmyshoes.ie)) and confirming the permissions within it, which allow us to screen and share your creations.

Please note that only YouTube, Vimeo or TikTok links will be accepted for competition applications. If you are shortlisted in your category, you will be asked to share an MP4 file of your entry at that time.

Submissions are now open and must be sent in by 5pm on Friday, 4th February. Each category will have a first-place winner who will receive a cash prize of €1,000 and a second-place winner who will receive €500. In the secondary school categories, first and second place prizes will be made payable to the school, with each participating student also receiving a small prize. An awards ceremony announcing the winners will be held towards the end of February 2022.

For more details and terms and conditions for this year's competition, see [www.walkinmyshoes.ie/campaigns/frame-of-mind](http://www.walkinmyshoes.ie/campaigns/frame-of-mind).

## Lisne Art Group 2022 Exhibition

Signal Arts Centre, 14th-27th March

The Lisne Art Group is a unique style of class that began 9 years ago in the Lisne centre in Kilcoole (meaning first blush of light before dawn.) All those participating are encouraged in their freedom to engage with a variety of sources of inspiration and mixed media.

The style of teaching is more of facilitation and calling forth - as opposed to demonstrating methods. In this way each individual has the opportunity to explore and discover what fits their own niche of self-expression. This original approach allows for people being at different levels of fluency with forms. In this

way participants also serve to support the unfolding creativity of others in the group.

Visits to different art galleries and exhibitions, both locally and in Dublin, bring a social aspect to the group. The impact of including those events not only supports learning and development, it also gives an added bonus of building a sense of community among the group with humour, light-heartedness and inclusivity.

Since 2017 the class has submitted artwork for the "Incognito" Jack & Jill Foundation fundraiser each year. In the last two years the Greystones Library has held an exhibition of work created by the group.



# Hypnagogia - Second Set

Mermaid Arts Centre, 21st January - 5th March

Mermaid Arts Centre welcomes the second iteration of this body of new work from Ann Maria Healy, first shown at The LAB Gallery in Dublin and curated by Sheena Barrett.



Hypnagogia is a common dream where various states of wakefulness intertwine into a surreal narrative, and screens flatten reality into an ever-erupting collage. The pineal gland, located deep in the brain's epithalamus, is a site of melatonin production, a hormone that regulates our sleep wake cycle. When this is off kilter, heightened sensations recall past and future traumas.

Healy's work expresses itself through video, sculptural and textual form. Her practice is concerned with reoccurrence and the power of history and narratives embedded within the human psyche.

She seeks to co-opt the embodied meaning of material in order to unpack and subvert it. Drawn to narrative that is connected to place and object, often acting in an absurd manner, the work seeks to employ mysticism as a device to reconsider our present moment.

The centrepiece of Hypnagogia - Second Set is twofold. Monumental sculptural forms bring to mind the standing stones of Stonehenge or Avebury, while the artist's new film, 'My dreams won't resist', features a self-driving car as its protagonist.

The large forms stand strong, perhaps in dialogue, maintaining a confident but ambiguous presence. They are both mysterious and mystical.



The bright discs at their centre appear like pupils as the forms begin to take the form of an eye, perhaps the Third Eye.

Meanwhile, the self-driving car has forgotten its destination, but through various breathing exercises is finally finding its way home. In this landscape, spiritual awakenings abound but perhaps we are inside the ultimate trance machine, one that we are perpetually awaiting release from.

"Sometimes I feel the

works collapse into each other and other times they're way too different," Healy explains. "For 'Hypnagogia', everything is channelled through the eye sculptures. For this exhibition I kind of infected the space with sculptural works coming out of the environment."

Throughout the exhibition, familiar forms of materials take on new meanings. Used yoga mats hold quivering peacock feathers in silent chorus, referencing the bird's hyp-

notic mating ritual. There are references to mystic practices, transient states, pharmaceuticals, sleep cycles, all woven together through drawing, sculpture and film.

A new publication accompanies the exhibition, and includes an essay by Dutch critic and writer Jan Verwoert, specially commissioned by the LAB Gallery in response to the exhibition. The publication is available to buy from Mermaid's Box Office.

For Hypnagogia, Healy has collaborated with artists Karl Burke, Jane Deasy and Christopher Steenson, as well as visual effects experts Enter Yes Ltd.

**The official opening of the exhibition will take place on Thursday 20th January from 6pm to 8pm in Mermaid's Gallery. A valid COVID-19 certificate & ID are required for access to the gallery.**

## Outreach programme returns for second year

Following a successful programme in 2021, the National Gallery of Ireland will bring art to classrooms across the country again this year with Your Gallery at School, an innovative education initiative supported by SMBC Aviation Capital.

The Gallery is committed to breaking down barriers that prevent young people from engaging with art in Ireland. Your Gallery at School provides an opportunity for students to take part in a series of informative workshops that are designed to teach through art and spark an interest in culture. These workshops are of particular benefit to students who may not be in a position to visit the Gallery itself and they can be carried out in schools or online.

Thanks to the continued support of SMBC Aviation Capital, the Your Gallery at School project will once again develop new partnerships outside the Gallery walls and work with four primary and four post-primary schools over the course of 2022.

Your Gallery at School began in January 2021, running workshops, sensory sessions and a Creative Careers programme, where students had

the opportunity to learn about a variety of arts careers. These workshops ran in primary schools in Dublin, Sligo and Donegal and post-primary schools in Limerick, Clare and Kildare.

Sean Rainbird, Director of the National Gallery of Ireland, commented: "We're thrilled that Your Gallery at School will return this year. Without the renewed support of SMBC Aviation Capital, this wonderful project would not be possible. Our hope is that this opportunity to learn through art will encourage creativity and curiosity amongst our participants in the future."

Peter Barrett, Chief Executive of SMBC Aviation Capital, added: "After the success of the most recent programme, SMBC Aviation Capital is delighted to continue its support of the National Gallery of Ireland and Your Gallery at Schools. We understand the importance of bringing the National Gallery to

children who otherwise would not have the opportunity to access it and we are looking forward to seeing the continued positive impact of Your Gallery at School across the country."

Once schools have been selected for participation, facilitators will then tailor a programme of activities for each school. The programme will emphasise the importance of art education, creativity and innovation and will be appropriate to the ages and school levels of students.

Schools across the country are invited to participate via the National Gallery of Ireland website. There will be two windows of opportunity for primary and post-primary schools to apply, (24 January - 8 February 2022 and 29 August - 15 September 2022), giving schools the option to choose what time of year suits them best to take part.

For further details, please visit [www.nationalgallery.ie](http://www.nationalgallery.ie).

## Search to find 2022 Texaco children's art competition winners launched

The search to find the young artists who will excel in this year's Texaco Children's Art Competition has begun.

acknowledged as the longest running arts sponsorship in the history of arts sponsoring in Ireland, the Competition has been in existence since 1955 and has enjoyed an unbroken history of success.

Last year six students from Co. Wicklow won prizes in the Competition which is now in its 68th year and widely acknowledged as the longest running arts sponsorship in Ireland. The closing date for entries is Monday, 28th February. Judging will take place in April with winners to be announced in May.

There are six age categories for the competition as well as a category for young adults and children with special needs.

Details are available at [www.texacochildrensart.com](http://www.texacochildrensart.com) or at Texaco service stations throughout the country.



Gail Soden, Walter Merry and artist Pauline Merry at the launch of the Arklow Visual Arts Gallery Art Expo 2021 in Adrian O'Brien's, Main Street, Arklow



## Wicklow house prices expected to rise 5% in 2022

The price of the average second-hand three-bed semi in County Wicklow is expected to rise by 5% in the next 12 months, according to a survey by Real Estate Alliance.

Three-bed semi-detached homes in the county now cost an average of €342,000, up 3.3% in the final quarter of the year and a rise of 17% on the December 2020 average of €293,000, the REA Average House Price Index shows. The survey

concentrates on the actual sale price of Ireland's typical stock home, the three-bed semi, giving an up-to-date picture of the second-hand property market in towns and cities countrywide. Landlords exiting the market have accounted for almost one in four home sales over the past three months, the data shows. Average prices in Bray rose 2.6% in the past three months to €395,000, with North East Wicklow prices rising by 2.9% in the same period to €360,000.

The final quarter of 2021 saw prices in Wicklow town rise 5.71% to €370,000 - an annual increase of 16%. "We are seeing a huge demand for quality houses in Wicklow town and surrounding areas, and an increase in demand

from buyers commuting to Dublin," said Matt Forkin of REA Forkin, Wicklow.

"Houses that are modern and ready to move in to are agreeing within 10 days from initial marketing." Average prices in Blessington increased 2.9% to €350,000 while Baltinglass rose 2.2% to €235,000 - an increase of 27% from their December 2020 average price of €185,000.

"It is anticipated that Q1 2022 may show a levelling off of prices for mainstream properties in the areas further out from Dublin City and the main employment centres," said Simon Murphy of REA Murphy in Baltinglass and Blessington.

"However, the appeal of north-west Wicklow is expected to experience a continued surplus of demand over supply and prices, and competition for property."

The price of a three-

bedroomed semi-detached house across the country rose by €5,900 in the final quarter of 2021, to €269,963 - representing an annual increase of 13%. Selling prices rose in commuter areas (3.34%) and the country's large towns (2.57%) as buyers continue to move out further from the capital in anticipation of long-term remote and hybrid working situations. The commuter area increases are treble those in Ireland's major cities, with Dublin increasing by 1% and Cork Limerick and Galway by an average of 0.8% as agents reported a quieter quarter. In Dublin city, house prices rose by over €4,000 in Q4, compared to more than €10,000 in Q3, increasing from €467,000 in September to a present rate of €471,667. Three bed semis in commuter counties rose 3.34% by over €9,000 in the past three months to an average of €291,944 - with the average home selling in just three weeks.

## Celebrating the 'Year of Youth'

ECO-UNESCO, Ireland's leading environmental youth organisation, is celebrating the European Union's declaration of 2022 as the 'European Year of Youth'.

The 2022 European Year of Youth will focus on young people and re-establishing them as active and engaged citizens, following the negative impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. Increased efforts will be made to include youth priorities in relevant EU policy areas and to engage young people at every level of the EU's decision-making process. The European Year of Youth will host conferences and initiatives promoting youth participation in policy making and awareness campaigns for a more inclusive, green and digital EU.

ECO-UNESCO welcomes this initiative following the results of their 2020 Youth Climate Justice Survey in which 55% of young people feel nobody listens to their concerns with 38%

of young people feeling more changes in government policy is needed to tackle climate change.

National Director of ECO-UNESCO, Elaine Nevin commented "Young people are the future generation of leaders and will be the ones most affected by the decisions of our current policy-makers. It is essential that young people are given the opportunities to participate in these processes and have their voices heard. It is our responsibility to give them the support, confidence and skills to make a positive difference and it is their right to influ-

ence their future. We warmly welcome 2022 as the European Year of Youth.

"At ECO-UNESCO, we see just how passionate young people are in tackling the issues that affect them most, particularly around climate change. We found through our 2021 Youth Climate Justice Survey, 88% of young people are either involved or want to get involved with climate actions. This European Year of Youth will provide incredible opportunities for young people to get involved and make a positive difference."

ECO-UNESCO will host a number of events and programmes throughout the year in line with the objectives of the European Year of Youth that will bridge the gap between young people in Ireland and key decision makers at both local and national level as well as continuing to empower young people to take climate action through to their Young Environmentalist Awards programme and Youth for Sustainable Development Programmes.

To get involved or to hear more about ECO-UNESCO's programmes, please go to [Ecounesco.ie](http://Ecounesco.ie)



Novaerus by McGreals Health, based in Wicklow, has partnered with TradFest Temple Bar to support the return of the live music festival on 26th-30th January, welcoming audiences safely with the use of the medical grade and Irish designed Novaerus air-disinfection devices. In addition to existing safety measures of reduced capacity across multiple venues, mask wearing, social distancing and covid digital certification requirements, the devices will provide added protection for artists, guests and venue staff throughout the event. This is the second year that Novaerus by McGreals has supported the event, having enabled the safe recording of the TradFest live performances in 2021. Festival tickets are on sale at [tradfest-templebar.com](http://tradfest-templebar.com). Pictured at the TradFest Temple Bar launch are (l to r): Nicola Perrin, Head of Marketing & Communications at Novaerus by McGreals Health, musicians Sasha Terfous, Kila's Rónán Ó Snodaigh and Harpist Brídín, and Temple Bar Company CEO, Martin Harte.

### THE MIRACULOUS PRAYER

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

CLASSIFIEDS

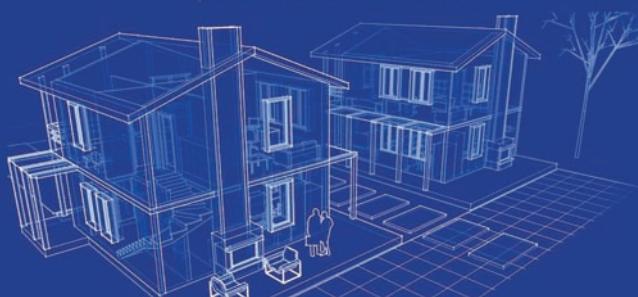
### John 2:1-11 GOSPEL

There was a wedding at Cana in Galilee. The mother of Jesus was there, and Jesus and his disciples had also been invited. When they ran out of wine, since the wine provided for the wedding was all finished, the mother of Jesus said to him, 'They have no wine.' Jesus said, 'Woman, why turn to me? My hour has not come yet.' His mother said to the servants, 'Do whatever he tells you.' There were six stone water jars standing there, meant for the ablutions that are customary among the Jews, each could hold twenty or thirty gallons. Jesus said to the servants, 'Fill the jars with water,' and they filled them to the brim. 'Draw some out now' he told them 'and take it to the steward.' They did this; the steward tasted the water, and it had turned into wine. Having no idea where it came from - only the servants who had drawn the water knew - the steward called the bridegroom and said 'People generally serve the best wine first, and keep the cheaper sort till the guests have had plenty to drink; but you have kept the best wine till now.' This was the first of the signs given by Jesus: it was given at Cana in Galilee. He let his glory be seen and his disciples believed in him.

C.J.

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Please send your CV to: [darglevalleynh@gmail.com](mailto:darglevalleynh@gmail.com)  
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Email: [recruitment@wicklowcoco.ie](mailto:recruitment@wicklowcoco.ie)



# Clr Doyle welcomes increase in charges for dangerous parking

Green Party Councillor Erika Doyle has welcomed the introduction of new regulations increasing the fixed charge penalty for parking on footpaths, cycle tracks and bus lanes, describing this type of parking as a 'huge issue' in Bray.

The new regulations, which come into effect on February 1st, will increase the charge to motorists caught parking illegally from €40 to €80.

Councillor Doyle said, "It is hoped these increases will act as a deterrent to this type of parking, which is not only inconsiderate but dangerous for other motorists and for vulnerable road users such as pedestrians and cyclists."



Clr Erika Doyle

for health and environmental reasons, and are keen to do so, but they should not have to take their lives in their hands while cycling.

"I encourage our local gardai to enforce these regulations, particularly in areas around schools. I have raised the issue of parking on cycle lanes and footpaths at our joint policing committee meetings and was assured by the Superintendent that he would raise it with his members. Recent accidents in the city centre causing life changing injuries and in some instances deaths to cyclists show that this type of parking should be viewed as more than a minor inconvenience, it creates a very real danger to life."

"I hope that this increase in fixed penalty charge will have a deterrent effect and help make Bray and other towns in Wicklow safer, more family friendly areas to walk and cycle," concluded Clr Doyle.

## Anam Cara Parental & Sibling Bereavement Support Group meeting in Wicklow

Anam Cara will begin their support services in 2022 with a face to face group meeting in Wicklow. The national organisation will hold their first meeting in Wicklow on the 17th January and would like to extend a warm welcome to any bereaved parent in the area.

On Monday 17th January, Anam Cara will hold their meeting in The Parkview Hotel, Newtownmountkennedy @ 7:15pm. Regardless of the age of the child or circumstances of death, Anam Cara offers these peer support meetings monthly, free of charge.

Registration is required to attend the meeting on Monday 17th January. Anam Cara would welcome any bereaved parent in the Wicklow area and surrounds to contact them to register for this free event. Anam Cara can be contacted on 01 4045378 or by email [info@anamcara.ie](mailto:info@anamcara.ie)

# Bray Camera Club Celebrating 50 Years Exhibition



Bray Camera Club celebrated their 50th anniversary in 2021 and are delighted to announce an exhibition of their members' photographs in the Signal Arts Centre running for two weeks beginning on January 31st, 2022.

Since their humble beginning on the steps of "An Lár" on the Lower Dargle Road, BCC has provided the local community with a welcoming forum for photographers of every ability and throughout the Covid-19 pandemic restrictions, they have remained stalwart in their drive to celebrate and share their passion for photography with a busy schedule of online activities and social interaction.

The members comprise of an eclectic mix of amateurs, competition winners and professionals

and it is the mission of BCC to learn from and support one another in improving each member's photographic creativity and skills in the use of all sorts of cameras.

BCC's work features all mainstream photographic genres including landscape, wildlife, abstract, street, macro and studio photography. Thus, when the Club presents its work to the public, a wide variety of photographic styles is guaranteed.

This exhibition will be sure to appeal to anyone with a curious eye, an interest in photography or who may have a view to joining the club for the simple pleasure of taking and sharing photographs. Opening Reception: Friday, February 4th 2022 7pm - 9pm. Gallery Opening Hours: Monday to Friday: 10am - 1pm/2pm - 5pm. Saturday/Sunday: 10am - 5pm

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