

LOCAL Wicklow Times

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ANDY'S ROW
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ASHLING MURPHY
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TOURISM STRATEGY
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Tuesday 25th January 2022 First Floor, The Boulevard, Quinsborough Road, Bray. A98 R6D7. Tel: 01 - 2869111 E-mail: wicklowed@localtimes.ie www.wicklowtimes.net

'PAY US ALL'

Independent councillor Joe Behan is calling on the Government to extend the Covid Bonus payment to every citizen and not just frontline healthcare workers.

"The people of Ireland have suffered bereavement, serious illness, depression, financial loss, educational devastation and painful separation from family and friends all because of Covid 19. I firmly believe that, as we emerge from this once in a life time pandemic, every person, from the youngest to the oldest, should receive a cash payment to compensate them for all they have gone through," Cllr Behan declared last week.

He added "I welcome the decision to pay frontline health care workers €1,000 but this ignores the sacrifices made by every person in Ireland during the pandemic.

"The recent exchequer figures indicate that the tax take in 2021 was €11 billion higher than in 2020 and the budget deficit was €5.5 billion when it had been expected to be €20 billion. Therefore, I believe it is possible to raise the money required to make this universal

Covid payment from the exchequer this year.

"In the USA, every U.S. citizen has been offered three Covid stimulus cheques which amount to over \$2,000. The Japanese Government has offered every person almost \$1,000. Why can't we do the same?

"Delayed assessments of need for young children, undiagnosed cancers, cancelled weddings, banned hospital visitors, limits on funeral attendance, loneliness, isolation and



Naoise and Doireann Foley with Jack Lawrence at the Leinster Camogie Semi-Final in Knockanna. Knockanna beat Louth Champions St. Brigid's to claim a place in the final.

Pic: Michael Kelly



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depression are only some examples of the damage Covid has done to us and although money will never compensate for the suffering so many have endured it would surely be a help. This is especially true because of the rapid rise in the cost of food, petrol, diesel, gas, electricity, refuse collection, property tax, rents, and many services which we need in our everyday lives.

"If this Government really understood the pain many people are feeling right now, they would do something to lighten that burden. A Universal Covid Payment of €1,500 is achievable and would help many people to begin the process of picking up the pieces after this dreadful pandemic. If it can be done in the USA and Japan, it can and must be done here."

The Government payment will encompass staff in private and voluntary nursing homes; however, Family Carers Ireland has called on the Government to also recognise the vital role family carers have played throughout the pandemic in helping to keep loved ones safe. "An extra bank holiday will be of no help to them," the organisation stated.

Aisling Harman, a family carer in Ashford who cares for her 82-year-old mother who has dementia and Parkinson's, told *Wicklow Times* that the exclusion of family carers from the Covid bonus is "a kick in the teeth".

"We've been the invisible frontline," she said. "When the pandemic hit, overnight we lost essential supports and services, such as

access to daycare, physios, and care workers who couldn't meet with

us anymore due to the Covid risk. We got no extra help and were

working hard to keep the healthcare system *Continued on page 11*

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Avonmore Musical Society members Patrick Bracken, Thomas Byrne, Colm Moules and Colin Moore are pictured with Denis Carter of Avon Motors, Rathdrum, at the Avonmore Musical Society's Car Draw which was won by Cathy Quirke from Gorey.

Community Activities Fund

A Special fund of €282,686 is available to support community groups impacted by COVID-19. This fund is for small-scale capital projects that must comply with the objectives of Wicklow County Council's Local Economic and Community Plan. There are two parts to the funding scheme: over €1,000 and under €1,000. Application forms are available at www.wicklow.ie. Closing date is 31 January 2022 at 4 pm.

Tinahely Times Past

Tinahely Times Past, a book of reminiscences and recollections of Tinahely's past compiled by Marie Cleary, has now been reprinted after being sold out last year. The book is now again on sale and is available from The Farm Shop in Tinahely, the Tinahely Post Office, or by calling 0402 38146 or 0402 38152.

West Wicklow Historical Society Journal

The 11th West Wicklow Historical Society Journal is available to purchase at Burke's in Baltinglass, Dermot Hughes's in Dunlavin, and Crafty Craic in Knockanarrigan. The book is a great read with many local contributors. It is priced at €15.

First Saturday Book Sale

The February First Saturday Book Sale,

in aid of Shankill Old Folks Association, will take place on 5th February from 10am to 1pm in the Shankill Old Folks Association Day Centre on Lower Road, Shankill. The First Saturday Book Sale adheres to strict public health guidelines, and only a few people will be admitted at a time and will be given 20 mins to browse for the books they want.

Climate workshop

A new eight-week training programme delivered by Sustineo to help local communities be more environmentally sustainable will commence next month. The course aims to help participants understand what projects can make meaningful contributions to reduce their carbon footprint. The training is organised by County Wicklow Partnership, with funding from LEADER. The workshops will take place on Tuesday evenings from 1st February at 7pm. See <https://forms.office.com/r/jksDtfZfZ> to register your interest

Bray Camera Club

Bray Camera Club welcomes anyone over the age of 18 who has an interest in photography. Whether you use a phone or a digital SLR camera, the club would love to welcome you. The club meets online on Monday evenings. If you are interested in joining or finding out more, email info@braycameraclub.ie.

New employment initiative for people with disabilities

Bray Area Partnership's new IMPACT

employment initiative for people with disabilities in the Bray and North Wicklow Area will be starting to deliver services from early this year. A co-ordinator is in place and a further three workers are being recruited. IMPACT will work with people with disabilities to support them to achieve sustainable employment, become self-employed or progress in their careers - providing person-centred supports such as training, competency-building, mentoring and in-work supports - and working in collaboration with local employers.

Bray to Greystones Cliff Walk

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

Re-opening Business

Outdoor tables and chairs licensing under Section 254, to support social distancing for business to re-open, has been extended to 30th June 2022 and valid Section 254 licenses will need to be applied for to cover this extended period.

Bray rower Andy completes his row accross Atlantic

On Saturday 15th January, after 41 days, 4 hours and 18 minutes at sea, Bray rower Andy O'Reilly and the crew of the Roxy completed their incredible feat of rowing across the Atlantic ocean.

Proud Bray man Andy took part in this once-in-a-lifetime adventure to help raise funds for Bray Rowing Club and Purple House Cancer Support and his fundraiser has raised over €8,000 of it's €10,000 goal.

Andy had this to say about the experience in his last week at sea: "I've got to live the dream I had on my bucket list. Thinking of my dad and family, especially my beautiful wife, who made this very doable for me. I even cooked for the two teenagers in this very tight space every day (don't tell Mandy). Watching the power of the Atlantic and it showing you who is the boss. Laughing and talking with 11 other people from different walks of life, I loved talking to the three guys we swap with every three hours. Laughing until I cried watching Nick clean the underneath of the boat and seeing the monsters coming up from the deep. And watching him kick his legs frantically to get back in the boat. And the little face with the goggles. The crazy 30ft waves that breached the boat and I was on the bucket. I was impressed by the way the boat handled itself. Final word, it is tough but if you train hard you will enjoy it. Remember you have to row. The world's toughest row, ten great people, one great skipper and just Ireland's oldest ocean rower."

All of Andy's family, friends and Bray Rowing Club members are so incredibly proud of Andy and his achievement. If you want to help Andy reach his €10,000 target you can donate at www.gofundme.com/f/andys-atlantic-rowing-challenge



Andy O'Reilly at Antigua Yacht Club



COMHAIRLE CONTAE CHILL MHANTÁIN
WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL

SECTION 75 - ROADS ACT, 1993 PROVISION FOR TEMPORARY CLOSURE OF PUBLIC ROAD

Wicklow County Council hereby gives notice that it proposes the temporary closure of the following public roads:

Road to be closed

R747 (between Woodenbridge and Arklow from the junction with the R752 and the Woodenbridge Hotel & Lodge)

Period of closure

21st February, 2022 to the 26th February, 2022 inclusive

*Local Access will be maintained on the Vale Road to the junction with the L6186 (Kilcara) permitting access to Kilcara.

*Local Access will be permitted to Delaneys Emo Oil.

Alternative Routes

Traffic will be diverted north on the R752 to Avoca, turning right onto the R754 (Avoca Bridge) and following the L2180 (Beech Road) to Arklow, proceeding onto the R772 (Dublin Road Arklow) onto Ferrybank and Main Street Arklow. The detour ends at the junction with Vale Road, and vice-versa.

Reason for Closure

This road closure is necessary in order to facilitate the safe removal of trees

Any person wishing to object to the proposed road closure must lodge their objection in writing with the undersigned not later than 12.00 noon on Tuesday the 1st February, 2022.

Transportation and Roads,
Wicklow County Council,
County Buildings,
Wicklow

Coniferous tree walk

Join a National Parks & Wildlife Service guide and discover how to identify some of the non-native coniferous trees growing in the Upper Lake area of Glendalough. There will be an option at the end to see what is currently said to be Ireland's tallest tree.

At 11am, Thursday 27th and Saturday 29th January 2022, duration is between 60 and 90 minutes for the main walk and an additional 20 minutes to see Ireland's tallest tree.

Meet at the National Park Information Office

park. Participants are required to complete a COVID-19 screening questionnaire prior to this event. Booking for this event is essential. To book email the National Park Education Centre wickloweducationcentre@housing.gov.ie.

WICKLOW
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Contacts:

Shay Fitzmaurice, Managing Editor - shay@localtimes.ie
Ian Colgan, News Editor - ian@localtimes.ie
General enquiries - info@localtimes.ie

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Council opens online book of condolences for Ashling Murphy

Cllr Shay Cullen, Cathaoirleach of Wicklow County Council, has opened an online Book of Condolences to give the people of Co. Wicklow an opportunity to express their condolences to the family of Ashling Murphy, the 23-year-old primary school teacher who was murdered on 12th January in Tullamore, Co. Offaly.

Cllr Cullen stated "As Cathaoirleach of Wicklow County Council I wish to express my sincerest sympathies and condolences to the family, friends, colleagues and pupils of the late Ashling Murphy following her death."

Brian Gleeson, Chief Executive added "On behalf of Wicklow County Council I wish to extend our sympathies to the Murphy family at this very difficult time, the thoughts

and prayers of the community of Wicklow are with you. Ar dheis Dé go raibh a h-anam."

All messages of sympathy expressed on this Book of Condolence will be forwarded to the Murphy family. To sign, go to www.wicklow.ie/Living/Your-Council/Customers-Care/Books-of-Condolence. The book will remain open to sign until 31st January.

Vigils were recently held

in Bray, Greystones and Arklow in memory of Ashling Murphy, with thousands of people attending. A walk was organised in Greystones with approximately 2,000 people walking along the coastline before arranging and lighting candles in the shape of a heart at the beach.

Welcoming the opening of the book of condolences, Cllr Jodie Neary said, "After over 2,000 people attended a walk/run I

organised in Greystones in honour of Ashling Murphy last Sunday, there was a real need for people to have a platform to express their condolences. Due to the queuing, many people didn't have the opportunity to sign the Book of Condolences. In response, I requested Wicklow County Council to provide an online Book of Condolences which could then be passed on to the family."

"I want to thank Cllr. Shay Cullen, Cathaoirleach of Wicklow County Council for acting on this and facilitating an online Book of Condolences, as many people will now have the opportunity to express their condolences."

Another gathering took place last Wednesday at the Bandstand on Bray Seafront, where people came together on the one-week anniversary of Ashling Murphy's murder to call for harsher punishments for violent crimes against women.



Connie, Roberta, and Violet Wilkin with Liam and Laura Brady, Daniel, Lucas, and Max at Bray Bandstand calling for harsher sentences for violent and sexual crimes against women.



The vigils in Bray (above) and Arklow (below) in memory of Ashling Murphy

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Jessie and Niamh Smith.

Wicklow siblings shine in Performing Arts International Cup

Jesse and Niamh Smith, siblings living in Annamoe and going to school in Bray (Niamh, 11, going to school at St Patrick's and Jesse, 14, going to Woodbrook College) received National Colours for Performing Arts this year and represented both Ireland and South Africa at the Performing Arts International Cup hosted by Talent Africa - Stars of the Universe.

Niamh received a first place in the overall drama junior category and 7 first places in the 9 - 11 year old group for Broadway, open, jazz, pop and drama solos, while Jesse received a second place in the overall Solo junior category and 5 first places in the 12 - 14 year old group for Broadway, open and drama solos. Both children attend Take2 Performing Arts Academy.

Judges were from USA, South Africa, Poland and Russia and participating countries included South Africa, Ireland, Portugal, Romania, Malta, Uzbekistan, Germany, Belarus, Poland, Moldova, Lithuania, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Russia, Greece, UAE, USA, Macedonia, Kuwait, Latvia, Kazakhstan, Namibia, DRC and Serbia.

Gerrida Dickason from South Africa provided voice coaching and a wealth of encouragement from across the water.

Grant allocations for national roads announced

Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) has issued details of 2022 grant allocations for national roads to Wicklow County Council.

The total allocated funding for 2022 maintenance and improvement works on national roads in County Wicklow amounts to €2,958,526.

Wicklow County Council having reviewed the TII grant allocations note a considerable reduction in funding when compared to the 2021 grant allocation of €6.85m but welcomes the funding for N81 improvement works and the N11M11 Bus Priority Interim Scheme, N81 improvement works and smaller schemes under both Improvement and maintenance. However, Wicklow County Council notes that no fund-

ing is provided to progress the N11M11 Junction 4 to Junction 14 Main Improvement Scheme in 2022.

The N11M11 Junction 4 to Junction 14 Improvement Scheme concluded Phase 2 Options Selection in 2021 and was due to proceed with Phase 3 Design and Environmental Evaluation in 2022. Progress to Phase 4 Statutory Processes was anticipated in early 2023. A grant allocation in the region of €3m has been spent on N11M11 Junction 4 to Junction 14 Main Improvement Scheme to date.

TII advised that the 2022 grant allocations

to Local Authorities for National Roads were made having regard to the priorities set out in the new National Development Plan 2021-2030 (published on 4 October 2021), other national policies, the views of the Minister of Transport and in the context of the Exchequer Capital Allocations being made available for national roads.

In addition, Transport Infrastructure Ireland became the Approving Authority for Greenways as of 20 September 2021, a role previously performed by the Department of Transport. Accordingly, a separate allocation is being provided by TII for funding of Greenways in 2022 in the amount €5.35m specifically for Blessington and Greystones to Wicklow Greenways projects.

Reminder of closing date for built heritage grant schemes

Wicklow County Council would like to remind owners and custodians of protected structures that there are currently two built heritage grant schemes open for application: the Built Heritage Investment Scheme (BHIS) and the Historic Structures Funds (HSF).

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

The schemes are administered by Wicklow County Council on behalf of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, and aim to support labour-intensive projects to repair and conserve

our historic built environment. The funding will also provide vital support for local jobs in conservation, traditional skills and construction.

Owners or custodians of historic properties are eligible to apply, whether these are community groups, public authorities or private individuals. Under the BHIS, grants of between €2500-€15,000 may

be allocated to eligible projects. There is also scope under the BHIS to apply for a smaller maintenance grant for works of upkeep and essential maintenance.

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

the Record of Protected Structures.

Full details and application forms are available on www.wicklow.ie/latest news, please read carefully.

For paper copies (and to return completed applications) please e mail plandev@wicklowcoco.ie. Postal applications are also accepted to 'HSF/BHIS' Planning Section, Wicklow County Council, County Buildings, Wicklow Town.

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

First callout for new Wicklow RNLI Helm

Wicklow RNLI Inshore lifeboat was launched at 10:30am on Sunday 16th January after a concerned member of the public contacted the Coast Guard to report a lone kayaker in difficulties south of Wicklow harbour.

The Inshore lifeboat crew proceeded south towards Wicklow Head and began an immediate search of the area. Weather conditions at the scene were sea state moderate with wind north easterly force four with good visibility.

At 10:55am the crew located a kayaker about two miles off the Silver Strand beach. He was not in any difficulty and required no further assistance.

Speaking after his first callout as a Helm, Paul

Sillery said: 'We were alongside the kayaker just before 11am and carried out a quick assessment. The kayak was well kitted out with safety equipment including a marine VHF radio. The man said he was on a training exercise and did not require any assistance, so we contacted the Coast Guard to say he was ok and wished to continue his passage south.'

The lifeboat crew were stood down and returned to station.

"While the kayaker was well equipped for the jour-

ney today, It is essential to carry a communications device, such as a VHF radio, Personal Locator Beacon (PLB) or a mobile phone every time you go out on the water," said the RNLI.

"Carry it on your person and in a waterproof pouch on a lanyard, so you can't drop it if your hands get cold. Always tell someone where you are going and when you will return."

The crew on the callout were: Helm Paul Sillery, Alan Goucher, Peter Byrne, and Stephen Kenny.



The Wicklow RNLI Inshore Lifeboat. Photo courtesy of Wicklow RNLI



New Wicklow RNLI Helm Paul Sillery

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Update given on progress of tourism marketing strategy

Councillors were updated on the progress made with Wicklow's Tourism Strategy at this month's January meeting of Wicklow County Council.

A presentation was given by Fred Verdier from Wicklow Tourism about the strategy, which covers the period 2018-2023. Put together in 2017, its key priorities are to develop new accommodation, designate key towns as visitor hubs, develop a Masterplan for Glendalough, grow the thematic experience, and market the county under a narrative.

In terms of accommodation, the strategy seeks to develop the hostel and hybrid accommodation sector, however Mr Verdier said that the hospitality sector has been so badly impacted by Covid over the last two years that it's difficult to ascertain the progress that's been made.

Accommodation

Daily spend by tourists visiting Co. Wicklow is below the national average and this is due to a disproportionate number of day visitors compared to overnight visitors.

Cllr Edward Timmins suggested that Air BnBs could be a solution to this, however Cllr Erika Doyle cautioned against a reliance on Air BnBs, saying "We don't want to encourage tourism at the loss of people within our own communities being able to find somewhere to live or rent. There are reasons for there being strict regulations around that sector and I think that's important."

Cllr Doyle however agreed that lack of accommodation in the county is an issue: "People visiting often ask me where there is to stay in my home town of Bray, and it's difficult to come up with a response for the type of family-friendly hotel and facilities that we see in other areas of the country. There is no caravan park in Bray either, and tourists are often dismayed to find there is not."

Visitor Hubs

Regarding the second objective of the strategy, developing towns as visitor hubs, Mr Verdier pointed to the €500,000 in funding to develop the Abbey Grounds as a major step in bringing tourists to Wicklow Town.

"Procurement of a contractor has commenced with a view to completing the work this year, which will give us a great new centre for Wicklow Town," he said. "Another good project that was launched in August is the Wicklow Heritage Trail. It is a good

example of how the Council working with the Town Team and with the support of LEADER funding came up with a brilliant heritage trail in the town.

"Covid has forced us into development places outdoors for people to sit and enjoy themselves," Mr Verdier continued. "There was €200,000 given to Wicklow and Arklow to develop outdoor public seating spaces. With our outdoor seating grant we distributed up to €400,000 to about 130 businesses to develop their outdoor seating spaces. With the Shopfront Scheme there was €320,000 to enhance shopfronts in six towns or villages and then recently a grant was given for an outdoor performance space at Bray seafont, which is a great enhancement of outdoor space in the county."

at off peak times.

It's proposed to have better facilities at the Upper Lake, to create a coffee dock in place of the food trucks, and new toilets. Overall 1,000 spaces are required during high season when there are an average of 4,000 visitors to the site per day. There's also the possibility of additional parking near Pier Gates and Luggala, as well as the possibility for Park n Ride.

The next steps are to carry out a Strategic Environmental Assessment, economic appraisal and consultation.

Thematic experiences

"Co. Wicklow's biggest selling point is the outdoors so the objective here is to help brand Wicklow as the outdoor destination for the domestic and the international markets, with

trail equivalent for golf in Wicklow that would give us an international exposure so we're going to work on that as well," said Mr Verdier.

The other two main thematic experiences the strategy focuses on are food and the film industry. "The tourism objective is to develop and promote Wicklow as a food destination. October feast is a month-long event, related to food, and worked really well in 2021."

In terms of the film industry, Mr Verdier said "We're looking at opportunities to maximise the potential of it, to develop film tours and promotional campaigns for productions that are being shot in Wicklow, similar to what was done around Star Wars or Game of Thrones in the north."

Wicklow Passport is another thematic experience, which enables people to develop their own tours and itineraries in different areas of the county. 2,500 passports have been sold, and more than 10,000 distributed. The focus here has been on attracting tourists from the domestic market.

Common narratives

In terms of common narratives, Mr Verdier mentioned the Celtic Routes Project, an established relationship between Wexford, Waterford and Wicklow, with three counties in the west of Wales. "It's an extensive marketing plan but has been tremendously slow to take off due to Covid-19," he said. "But it has a decent budget and has been extended to 2023, so there's a lot of potential there."

Wicklow's appearance on TV programmes such as Ireland County by County in 2020 and Ireland in Music last year helped showcase Wicklow to international audiences, with both also being broadcast to US markets.

Mr Verdier also spoke of the support from Fáilte Ireland, with the setting up of the Tourism Resilience Task Force, and the financial support they've given to Wicklow Passport and the Influencers Project.

The Influencers Project will deliver 10 experiences run by top Irish influencers, which they'll showcase on their own channels and media.



Melissa Byrne and Julia Dobernig out for a swim in Arklow, to raise funds for the St. Vincent's Foundation.

Three more callouts for Mountain Rescue Teams

Mountain Rescue Teams responded three further callouts recently, including two on the same day.

On Saturday 15th January, Dublin / Wicklow Mountain Rescue Team and Glen of Imaal Red Cross Mountain Rescue were tasked by An Garda Síochána to a report of two persons who had climbed Lugnaquilla earlier in the day. On their descent, the two walkers became disoriented in the mist and subsequently found themselves now in the approaching darkness and lost. Although communications with the lost party were difficult the team were able to locate their position using SARLOC technology. With their location positioning them close to a track, a Mountain Rescue Response vehicle made its way to the walkers and then returned them back to their cars.

That evening, the Mountain Rescue Teams were again tasked by An Garda Síochána to assist in the search for a missing female. While information was being gathered the missing person was located, and the teams were stood down shortly afterwards.

On Monday 17th January the Mountain Rescue Teams were tasked by An Garda Síochána to a report of a female mountain runner who had sustained a lower leg injury while out running. SARLOC technology was used to locate the casualty and once their position was known our Stretcher capable MR3 was able to drive from Rescue Base to within a few hundred meters from the Casualty Site.

As soon as Mountain Rescue Personnel reached the patient, she was packaged and stretchered back to MR3 and down to the National Ambulance Service and crew.



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Glendalough

Glendalough Master Plan

The Draft Report for the Glendalough Masterplan has been completed and has been presented to the Steering Committee, the Working Group, the Council and the Local Advisory Group. An off-road, all ability route from Laragh to the Upper Lake via the Monastic Site has been identified and landowners have been contacted. Some concerns have been raised by the OPW and National Monuments Service about the proposed route, however it's hoped that solutions can be found to resolve this. Plans provide for the upgrading of the current visitor centre to provide information on all aspects of the site.

The proposal is to create an additional car park in Laragh as the main starting point for Glendalough with toilets, integrated signage, interpretation and information points. It's envisioned that the Upper Lake car park will have restricted access during peak season but will be fully accessible

a focus on attracting visitors from the UK, France, Germany and the Nordic countries," said Mr Verdier.

The strategy is trying to sell Wicklow as an outdoors destination to the overseas market and highlight activities such as walking, cycling, trail running, and water-based sports.

Mr Verdier highlighted last year's Wicklow EcoTrail event as a success in attracting visitors from overseas. "The imagery we're producing for the event showcases Wicklow as a fantastic playground to the international audience," he said.

The plan is to use the EcoTrail Network to engage with Tourism Ireland around the world and to attract influencers.

The strategy also has a particular focus on golf tourism. "We have a great destination here for golf, and we need to do more work on getting golf packages and imagery, we'd love to have an eco-

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CAO Deadline: 1st Feb 2022



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Chloe Kinsella and Aoife Canna pictured at the Leinster Camogie Semi-Final between Knockanna and St. Brigid's from Laois.

'Pool for West Wicklow must be prioritised in 2022'

Social Democrats TD Jennifer Whitmore has called for the Pool for West Wicklow campaign to be prioritised in 2022. Deputy Whitmore made the call in light of the recent change of the CEO position at Wicklow County Council.

Deputy Whitmore wrote to the new CEO, Brian Gleeson to reiterate the need to prioritise the Pool for West Wicklow campaign this year.

Speaking on the project, Deputy Whitmore says, "While there has been a lot of support for a recreational facility including a pool to facilitate residents in West Wicklow, it's important that the momentum of that support continues into this year. If the eye is not kept on the ball we risk losing opportunities to turn this project into a reality for people."

"There is a lot going for Blessington at the moment, including a town centre Masterplan and upgrades to the Wastewater Treatment Plant. Maintaining a focus on getting a pool for this part of the county should continue to fit into the development plan of Blessington."

"I have regularly been in touch with the Campaign and residents in the area who look forward to the project being progressed under the new acting CEO of Wicklow



Deputy Whitmore meeting with Pool for West Wicklow Campaigners at a Fun Run

County Council. We look forward to working with Mr. Gleeson and hope that this remains a priority under his tenure.

"Furthermore, a Steering Group is currently in the process of being established to progress the project further involving members of the Pool for West Wicklow campaign, Wicklow County Council and other stakeholders. Hopefully, this will give a renewed focus on addressing the recreational deficit of West Wicklow and keep the campaign going as strong as it has been. I hope to engage with the Council further on this in response to my letter to Mr. Gleeson."

Snell repeats calls for Kilmullen Lane issue to be resolved

Cllr John Snell has repeated his calls for the issue at Kilmullen Lane in Newtownmounckennedy to be resolved and the road opened. Cllr Snell previously raised the issue at the November Council meeting and raised it again at this month's meeting due to a lack of progress.

The lane services St. Catherine's Special Needs School and its closure is inconveniencing parents and staff. A leakage of heating oil from Newcastle Hospital's storage tanks in early 2021 resulted in the road's closure, as it required the road to be dug up and any diesel that was underneath the surface to be extracted.



Cllr John Snell

"We had assurances that works would be completed in December," said Cllr Snell last week. "The incident happened in the first quarter of 2021 and we're now in 2022. It's an 800-metre stretch of road, and now to get these children from the main road in Newtownmounckennedy up to the school the students and teachers must

commute an extra 8-10 kilometres a day to get to school.

"The tendering supposedly went out a number of months ago for contractors to come in and rectify this problem. We're putting out an awful lot of staff, parents, and most importantly children who have disabilities. We're not allowing them to get on with their daily lives the way they should be."

Cllr Gerry Walsh said, "This was raised at the Greystones Municipal meeting on December 14th last, the update at that time was that the contractor assigned to the project was finishing off other works in the general Kilcoole area and would then commence and complete works at Kilmullen lane in January."



Kilmullen Lane

Calls for Council to introduce 'game-changing' parking app for disabled drivers

Finding a vacant accessible parking space would only be a click away for disabled drivers and passengers in Wicklow if the county council introduced the DDAI Spacefinder app service, said Wicklow resident Ita McGrath, a member of the Disabled Drivers Association of Ireland (DDAI).

Ita, who lives in Ashford and works in Bray, said "For me and many others, driving means independence and equal opportunity but finding a vacant accessible parking space is often time-consuming and stressful. In some cases, you could be forced to return home and try again later but with no guarantee of finding one even then."

If the DDAI Spacefinder App service was available in our county, everyday life would be far easier as you'd know exactly where to find a spot to park," she added.

Developed by Limerick company ParkMagic and supported by the Disabled Drivers Association, the DDAI Spacefinder app gives real-time information on whether an accessible parking space is occupied or not, using sensors installed by the participating local authority.

Limerick City & County Council was the first local authority to begin using the DDAI Spacefinder App service. The Council's traffic department installed small sensors at accessible parking bays in its city centre business district, delivering real-time updates to users of the app on Apple and Android. In addition, navigation to the nearest available accessible space is now on Apple CarPlay with Android Auto following shortly.

Richard Ryder, communications manager with the Disabled Drivers Association of Ireland, said, "Having the DDAI Spacefinder App service available in every county would take away the fear and stress out of everyday travelling and trying to find suitable parking. We are urging Wicklow County Council to introduce it as it would literally be a 'game-changer' for disabled drivers and passengers in their area."

The DDAI SpaceFinder service is available from Limerick firm ParkMagic and following its successful launch, other authorities have also expressed a strong interest in the service. ParkMagic chief executive Paul Fitzgerald said, "Local authorities, for the first time ever, will be able to collect real time information on accessible bay usage and turnover. This would be extremely useful to Wicklow County Council in analysing and planning the provision and location of accessible spaces."



Richard Ryder from the Disabled Drivers Association of Ireland, launching SpaceFinder.

Wicklow farmers invited to take part in survey

Ifac, the farming, food and agribusiness professional services firm, is encouraging Wicklow farmers to complete its Farm Survey and have their say about what's important to them, their families and their farm businesses.

The online survey takes approximately four minutes to complete and closes on the 28th of January 2022. Additionally, all participants who complete ifac's survey will be entered into a draw for a €500 One4All voucher.

The findings of ifac's nationwide survey will be published in its Irish Farm Report 2022 - it is one of the most comprehensive farm surveys undertaken in the state. The Irish Farm Report 2022 will combine the results of this comprehensive farmer survey (1,700 farmers across the country participated in the survey in 2021) with emerging trends across all sectors. Ifac's Irish Farm Report 2021 revealed the true impact of COVID-19 on the farming community, from the accelerated adoption of technology on the farm to the rise in social isolation and loss of community engagement (read the full 2021 report here).

Tom Doyle, Partner at ifac's Wicklow office said, "Our annual Farm Survey uncovers invaluable insights about farming in Ireland today. The findings help our clients to make well-informed and positive

financial decisions, and they inform our business strategy and the products and services our financial experts offer all our Wicklow clients to support their business goals, from budgeting and succession planning to structure reviews and looking after their farm team."

"Last year's Irish Farm Report (2021), containing our survey findings, highlighted the acceleration of technology usage across the farming community, prompted by the global pandemic. It also confirmed the sustained lack of succession planning for the third year in a row and revealed the true impact of the pandemic on farmer wellbeing across the country. It also provided evidence of the positivity and resilience still in Irish farming. We repeat our survey each year to ensure we can continue to support and meet the evolving needs of our farming clients, and help them with planning to enhance their profitability and secure their futures."

Participants can take ifac's online survey at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/farmsurvey22>

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Harris meets 6th year students at Loreto Bray

Minister Simon Harris TD met with 5th and 6th year students in Loreto Bray on Friday to discuss their options for apprenticeships, further and higher education after they complete their Leaving Certificate this summer.

Minister Harris also met with the students of Ms Walsh's leaving certificate politics and society class where he took their questions and outlined his role as local TD and Minister.

Minister Harris said "I am grateful to Ms Raughter and Loreto Bray for giving me the opportunity to meet Leaving Cert students to discuss the wider range of options available to them on the CAO this year including Further and Higher Education, Apprenticeships and Traineeships.

"For far too long we have been narrowing the conversation to 'Which college will our students attend?', rather than, 'What do we want to do?' and, 'What suits us best?'.

"I know Loreto places a strong emphasis on students examining these questions and Principal Ms Raughter as a former guidance counsellor herself has prioritised the importance of examining all these options with her students. As Minister for Further and Higher Education I am anxious to ensure as many students as possible know the variety of opportunities available to them."

Minister Harris added: "I also met with Ms Walsh's Leaving Certificate Politics and Society Class to answer their questions on the role of a TD, Minister and the work a public representative undertakes.

"I found the students very engaged with a wide range of issues including climate change, social reform, the future of work and leaving certificate reform.

"Loreto Bray has a long and distinguished history of service to the community, and I am delighted to see the progress over recent months on the new school buildings project.

"The Department of Education has now agreed with the school the extent of the extension and rebuilding of the school to be undertaken and it is expected that a planning application to rebuild the school as a modern 21st century campus will be lodged with the County Council during the summer months".

Minister Harris concluded: "I look forward to working with the school concerning their redevelopment and the school community at Loreto Bray can count on my continued whole-hearted support."



**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.

For more information please see our website www.wicklow.ie or follow us on facebook, twitter or Instagram @wicklowcoco or email us at customerservice@wicklowcoco.ie or telephone 0404-20100.

CAO applications to IT Carlow on the cusp of making history

Leaving Certificate students who choose IT Carlow on this month's CAO application will make history by becoming the very first intake of first years to the south east's technological university (TU), due to be established by 1st May.

It is a momentous and exciting time for students from across the region who will soon be in a position to achieve a university degree while living at, or near, home following the imminent transformation of IT Carlow and WIT into a unitary multi-campus university. "Our new university has strong foundations developed over five decades and we look forward to the new national and international opportunities that lie ahead for us as a unitary multi-campus university and to welcoming the first cohort of first year students to our university in September", commented Dr Patricia Mulcahy, the president of IT Carlow. IT Carlow is no stranger to achieving milestones.

The institute received an international vote of confidence last year when it was ranked in the top five of sixteen Irish universities under the 2021 U-Multirank World University Rankings - the only institute of technology ranked in the top five. This followed a benchmarking process across almost 2,000 universities from almost 100 countries. Such an endorsement reflects the incredible choice of courses at IT Carlow, coupled with its modern facilities.

The college offers a huge choice of courses for third-level students, with more than 80 full-time programmes of study to honours degree level, and over 30 taught postgraduate programmes to masters degree level, accessible across its three campuses in Carlow, Wexford and Wicklow.

New courses introduced by IT Carlow this year include ordinary and honours degree courses in robotics and automated systems, biomedical electronics, design, early childhood education and care, and sports management and coaching.

They join a roster of renowned niche degree courses in areas such as brewing and distilling, cybercrime and IT security, digital marketing with analytics, sustainable farm management and agribusiness, and computing in interactive digital art and design. These modern, industry-ready programmes of study sit alongside reputable traditional courses at IT Carlow across engineering, science, humanities and computing.



It is light of this, it is hardly surprising that graduates of IT Carlow enjoy an employment rate of 93% at graduation, rising to 96% within six months of graduating - well above the national average.

Over the last six years, IT Carlow has carried out a €150million capital investment programme that has delivered first-class lecture facilities, technology support, sports amenities, student services, a dedicated research & development facility and an aerospace centre to ensure an outstanding learning experience for students.

The institute continues to deliver on this physical master plan with the recent completion of a new sports pavilion to complement its 31-acre South Sports Campus. A four-story 6,100m² advanced science building has been granted planning on the seven-acre former VEC school site to the north end of its Carlow campus.

Students who choose IT Carlow also receive the best student support and services available, are afforded the opportunity to receive academic and or sports scholarships, and enjoy a sense of community where lecturers know them by name.

Molly Scott, a high-performance Irish international athlete, completed her honours degree in Law at IT Carlow while receiving support with training and rehabilitation as an

elite scholar. Speaking about her experience, Molly commented, "I loved my time at IT Carlow. Balancing study and sport was made easier because of the support and understanding I received from the staff. They were a great source of encouragement and made me believe in my potential career wise, and facilitated me continuing with my athletics. I made lifelong friends and really felt at home there. I am delighted to be an IT Carlow alumnus and would like to support others who are interested in competing in sport professionally while studying."

Following her studies at IT Carlow, Molly passed the Barrister-at-Law entrance examination and is currently studying at King's Inns.

Visit www.itcarlow.ie

Update on Greystones Community College planning application

Minister Simon Harris TD updated the Greystones Community College (GCC) school community on the progress of the development of the school's permanent campus in Charlesland.

Minister Harris said: "The school community at GCC are eagerly anticipating the submission of a planning application for the school's permanent buildings in Charlesland. We had been advised before Christmas that an application to Wicklow County Council was due within a few weeks. Today I received a further update on

the project".

Minister Harris was advised by the Department of Education's Building Unit that the project for Greystones Community College is in the early architectural planning stage which involves site surveys, school design stages and the preparation of Planning Permission.

As part of the conditions of sale, the lodgement of planning permission for the project is under the remit of the vendor.

The Department has been working closely with the vendor to expedite a planning application for the new school.

In advance of lodging the planning application, the vendor's Design Team presented the design to the Patron body on 14th January and it is anticipated that planning will be lodged in the coming weeks.

'N11 Junction 4 to 14 upgrade is fully funded'



Minister Simon Harris

Minister Simon Harris TD has confirmed that the Junction 4 to 14 scheme to upgrade the N11/M11 is fully funded within the National Development Plan.

Minister Harris said: "I can confirm that the N11/M11 Junction 4 to 14 scheme remains fully funded as part of the current National Development Plan. This year Transport Infrastructure Ireland has allocated funding for the interim bus priority measures for the section of the N11/M11 south of Junction 3 (Loughlinstown Hospital). These bus priority measures are to come into effect before the larger project to upgrade the N11/M11 between junctions 4 to 14 are built.

"The Junction 4 to 14 upgrade project between the M11/M50 merge and Coyne's Cross on the N11/M11 will see the redesign of a number of junctions to improve traffic flow, parallel local roads to take local short journey traffic off the

main line of the N11/M11 and new public transport facilities such as Park and Ride".

Minister Harris concluded: "I am to meet with the Chief Executive of Transport Infrastructure Ireland to secure the necessary assurances for the funding of the next phase of the M11/N11 project team's work. A major concern I will also be discussing with the CEO of TII is the retention of Junction 10 Delgany/Greystones. This was highlighted by the community in the most recent round of consultation undertaken about the N11/M11 upgrade and I will be demanding an exit at Junction 10 be retained in the upgrade of the N11/M11"

Whitmore calls for Irish Water to urgently address traffic management issues at Redcross

Social Democrats TD Jennifer Whitmore has called on Irish Water to urgently address traffic management issues at Redcross.

Irish Water is progressing with phase 2 of the Barnarrig Water Upgrade Scheme which will see the construction of the remaining 1.5km of new water mains linking the recently installed water mains to Redcross Water Treatment Plant. To facilitate this and associated works, Irish Water have fully closed the road R754 (both ways) for the duration of the project.

Speaking on the matter, Deputy Whitmore said "I have been in touch with Irish Water following concerns from local residents in the Redcross area about the closure. Despite previously indicating to me that a full closure would not be needed to undertake these works, Irish Water have now stated that a full closure was required due to health and safety issues but that traffic marshals are positioned through the working day to direct traffic.

"However, this traffic management plan has not been fit for purpose. Recently a woman contacted me to say her emergency call for an ambulance resulted in the medics being 20 minutes late as there was no clear diversion route and the ambulance got lost along the way. Thankfully, nothing tragic happened but it really scared this woman and residents in the area.

"Residents are also frustrated about the lack of clear diversion signs, about the road being closed even when there is no work being undertaken and the condition of the roads that traffic is being diverted to.

"To prevent any further escalation of traffic issues at this section of the road I



Jennifer Whitmore TD in Barnarrig

have written to Irish Water asking for a clear indication of an improvement traffic management and traffic diversion plan. This must include ensuring emergency vehicles have access at all times, improved communications about the road closure, proper storage of machinery off the road, a Stop and Go system, and a community liaison person to manage locals' concerns in the area.

"As this project is expected to be completed in Quarter 2 of 2022, this is a long time for such an inconvenience. I have

asked that this issue be a priority going ahead for Irish Water," concluded Deputy Whitmore.

Some frustrated local residents have also written to councillors asking that convenient arrangements be made.

"It's about time the Barnarrig water issue was resolved, but it has been going on for far longer than we were lead to believe and is causing too much disruption," they write. "We have been frustrated and inconvenienced for months now, and it's just unacceptable."

workers that they are.

"Family carers were overlooked when it came to the provision of PPE, priority testing and vaccination. They continue to suffer burnout and serious ill-health caused by the stress and strain of their care work. The role they've played in keeping their loved ones safe and the impact on their own mental and financial wellbeing continues to be ignored.

"As the country begins to emerge from the Covid-19 crisis, there is now an opportu-

ty for Government to make a meaningful impact and demonstrate that they recognise family carers and value their contribution. Family Carers Ireland is calling on the Government to extend the Covid bonus to family carers in receipt of the Carer's Support Grant, which is a non-means tested payment for full time family carers, at a cost of approximately €120 million bearing in mind the savings to the state of €20 billion that family carers contribute each year."



Grace O'Neill and Roisin Byrne at the Leinster Camogie Semi-Final in Knockananna

Drug & Alcohol Task Force to get full-time coordinator

The HSE is to commence a recruitment process for a full-time coordinator for the Bray Local Drug and Alcohol Task Force (LDATF).

The Task Force was developed in Bray to bring about a more effective response to the drug crisis that was affecting the local community.

Social Democrats TD Jennifer Whitmore received the response after enquiring with the HSE on the need for a full-time coordinator post which has been without a coordinator for the past three and half years out of the past five years.

"Members of the Bray Municipal District brought to my attention the fact that the Bray Drug & Alcohol Task Force has been without a full-time coordinator for quite some time" says Deputy Whitmore. "I asked the HSE and the Minister for Health a Parliamentary Question and was told that it was agreed by the Task Force to employ their in-situ Administrator as Interim Co-ordinator, an arrangement which has been in place since the Co-ordinate vacancy occurred. However, I wanted to know what efforts were being made to fill this post in a permanent capacity.

"Taskforces are important in developing and implementing a local drugs strategy for their areas by co-ordinating all relevant programmes and working to address gaps in services so it is essential that they are adequately resourced and well-staffed.

"I welcome the response that a recruitment process is ongoing and it is anticipated that the full time role will be filled by 2nd Quarter of 2022. This will surely increase the capacity of the Task Force as well as offer members some assurance and certainty over their future work. I want to thank Bray Municipal District for bringing this important issue to my attention," said Deputy Whitmore.



COMHAIRLE CONTAE CHILL MHANTÁIN
WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL

WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL MOTOR TAX

Motor tax can be renewed online at 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 or call us on 0404-20100 and email us at customerservice@wicklowcoco.ie or motortax@wicklowcoco.ie

'PAY US ALL'

Continued from page 1

running. To not be included in the payment feels like a highly insulting snub."

Aisling said the Covid bonus payment should be extended to anyone receiving Carer's Allowance.

Catherine Cox, Head of Communications and Policy, Family Carers Ireland said: "Our frontline workers have

worked incredibly hard under severe pressure from covid and emergency care and they deserve this recognition.

"What strikes me most is that this is yet again another missed opportunity to show family carers, once and for all, that the Government recognises their value and contribution in society and acknowledge them as the forgotten frontline



Adele Imbert and Shauna Gaffney pictured at the vigil in Arklow in memory of Ashling Murphy.

Bank of Ireland asked to reconsider decision in relation to former branch building in Carnew

Sinn Féin TD John Brady has made a direct appeal to the management of the Bank of Ireland to reverse their decision to refuse to allow one of their branch buildings, situated in Carnew, to be used by the community.

Deputy Brady said "We have already witnessed how the decision by the Bank of Ireland to close 88 of its branches around the country has contributed to the ongoing erosion of the fabric of our local communities. Three of which were in County Wicklow; in Carnew, Rathdrum, and Tinahely.

"I have made representations to the Bank of Ireland at the behest of the community in Carnew that the former branch building in the town be allowed to be used by the local community.

"The Bank responded by stating that it has no intention of engaging in short term leases or handing it over to the community and they intend to prepare the building to be put on the market in the second quarter of 2022.

"This is not only deeply disap-

pointing; it is a snub to the local community.

"The decision to close the branches in Carnew, Tinahely and Rathdrum has hit the community hard. I believe the very least Bank of Ireland could do now is give something back to the community that they have now turned their back on.

"The bank that we bailed out is now making huge profits, 2021 saw a 17% year on year rise in operating profit for Bank of Ireland. The bank also had an underlying profit before tax of €465m for the first six months of 2021."

Local Sinn Féin representative Aidan Kinsella said: "It was local communities like our own here in Carnew that were called upon to bail out the Banks, after they took this country to its knees.

"The Irish taxpayer funded the Bank of Ireland to the tune of €4.7 billion in order to bail it out. It is a bank in which the Irish government remains a substantial shareholder.

"And now we have a situation where the leading Bank in the country is again looking to maximise the profits of shareholders over that of a local community."

Deputy Brady continued, "I want to make a direct appeal to the management of the Bank of Ireland to reconsider their decision. A decision to allow this building to be used by the community has the potential to make a real contribution to the area.

"A failure to do so, will be seen for what it is. A failure by the Banks to learn anything from the lessons of the past, as they continue to pursue their massive profits at the expense of ordinary communities."



John Brady TD and Sinn Féin Representative Aidan Kinsella outside the closed Bank of Ireland branch in Carnew

Outrage in Delgany over plans to demolish Honeybrook Cottage

A planning application was lodged on 23rd December to demolish the historic Honeybrook Cottage in Delgany in order to build a four-storey block of apartments and offices. Delgany Community Council is appealing to local residents to make submissions objecting to the development.

The cottage, situated between O'Keeffe's and Ludlow's house, near Patterson's Garage, is within the Architectural Conservation Area of the village, and is considered locally to be one of the most picturesque cottages in the area as well as one of the oldest. It is part of a terrace of three houses which includes Malvern House (a protected structure) and Westgate.

"The cottage dates from the 1700s and is one of the

oldest buildings in the village," explains Alice O'Donnell from Delgany Community Council. "For most of their history the three buildings were a unit. Malvern House was built c.1800 as a dower house for the La Touche family, but converted and extended to become a hydropathic establishment in the mid 19th-century."

The development would see the demolition of Honeybrook Cottage, as well as its garage and

sheds, and also the removal of tress and old stone wall at the front of the property.

"In our view the streetscape would be altered in a way that is completely unacceptable," Delgany Community Council say.

"Delgany Community Council will be objecting and we will also circulate some points of information for anyone else who would like to object. Delgany is a heritage village and has

unique character as a result of its older buildings.

"The site in question is in an Architectural Conservation Area and deserves extra scrutiny as a result. As well as the loss of heritage we also have grave concerns regarding the impact of a large development like this on roads and traffic as well as the damage to habitat with felling of mature trees."

The deadline for submissions is 4th February.



Honeybrook Cottage in Delgany

Moylisha Hill residents campaign against Lithium exploration

Concerned residents living near Moylisha Hill, Shillelagh, have established the 'Protect Moylisha Hill' campaign group and a GoFundMe page in response to Blackstairs Lithium Company prospecting for Lithium in the area.

The residents fear that the exploration will lead to mining and more than 60 of them staged a protest at Moylisha Hill on Sunday 9th January.

The company has applied to the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications to renew its prospecting licence for its 'Avalonia Project', which involves the exploration of over 150 townlands over a 50km area along the border between the two counties, from Stranakelly in Co. Wicklow to Borris in Co. Carlow, with parts of the Wicklow Way included.

There's increasing global demand for Lithium, which is used in rechargeable batteries for mobile phones, laptops, digital cameras and electric vehicles. It's also used for heart pacemakers.

"Since 1970 Moylisha Hill has been subject to prospecting for rare earth minerals and metals. Our community has been afforded little or no consultation or indeed regard as to how we feel about prospecting here or its potential outcome - mining," the campaigners say.

"Voiceless, the community have wondered what fate will befall our landscape. Our committee has been formed to at last give this united community a voice to say: 'Enough, we do not want our beautiful landscape destroyed, our wildlife and our farmlands affected, our rivers and drinking waters at risk, our tourism and the Wicklow Way walkers frightened off by the industrialisation of our countryside'."

The campaigners say they are "determined to give our community a voice and state that we do not want any more prospecting on our hills. While we may not be able to stop the prospecting licence from going ahead, our group will continue to ensure that the mining of this landscape does not proceed. This campaign could continue for at least the next five years and a significant amount of money will be needed to raise awareness and for professional and legal fees."

The prospecting licence for Moylisha Hill, which Blackstairs Lithium Company has held since 2009, allows for exploration for mineral deposits but not mining. The licence was renewed in 2015 for a six-year period and the latest application seeks to renew the licence for a further two years.

Blackstairs Lithium Company is a subsidiary of Chinese company Ganfeng Lithium, the world's largest lithium metal producer.



Caring in the Community

Did you know that County Wicklow has a number of different services with dedicated staff and volunteers who are there when people in the community need them?

Often times, people can come to a crossroads in life. Whatever the case may be, whether it's to do with caring for the more vulnerable people in a community or helping someone find a new career path, the help is there.

If you or someone you know in your local community is in need of a helping hand, take a look at the services listed in this feature and remember, you are not alone.

We're all only human and at times it is all too easy to get bogged down with life.

It is often difficult to avoid feeling overwhelmed, in need of a helping hand, some sound advice or guidance

or even just a friendly ear to talk into or a shoulder to lean on.

Fortunately, Co. Wicklow is full of amazing services with dedicated staff and volunteers who are there when you need them.

There are a number of options available to people looking for a little extra care, whether for the elderly, the young, or people who just need a little extra help with certain life skills. Help is at hand from a number of local organisations who can assist you with a range of different requirements.



Residential rehabilitation at Tiglin

For over 10 years Tiglin has been offering both residential and non residential supports for those seeking to exit addiction and discover their true potential. Tiglin provides a wide range of supports within their services and works closely with other service providers in the county to ensure that each person is engaged with the relevant services within their community.

Tiglin provide Long term (16 month) Residential rehabilitation for men and women. There are 30 beds for men and 13 for women. Ten months of this programme are completed in the residential rehabs and the final 6 months are completed in after care/housing. Once the programme is complete (16 months) they offer transitional housing. Tiglin is also an Approved Housing Body and currently has 37 units for those exiting our programmes.

Tiglin are also a community employment sponsor and offer 43 places to those in recovery from addiction, and also run a family support group for family members and loved ones of those in our services.

Arklow Cancer Support

Arklow Cancer Support were forced to close their doors with the sudden lockdown restrictions in March 2020 and say they will re-open when it is safe to do so.

"We had clients who had commenced their treatment and our main concern was to continue to provide support and transport for them, as they were among some of the most vulnerable in our community. We adapted our vehicles with sneeze screens and the appropriate PPE for the safety of both client and driver. This allowed us to continue to provide our transport service throughout the pandemic and we owe a huge gratitude to our many drivers who gave their free time to undertake these journeys, making sure that our clients arrived safely for their treatment. If you feel you would like to become a volunteer driver please do not hesitate to contact our office.

"Another of our vital services we continued to provide was our Counselling and Psychotherapy. Our counsellors quickly adapted to provide one on one sessions via Zoom and phone consultations for adults, adolescence and children, which we are very grateful for. We reached out to our clients who may not have been particularly tech savvy with help setting up their online presence to ensure that no one was left without the support they needed. We also checked in on our clients via text and phone calls to make sure that they were doing okay during this strange time.

"Art, Sound Meditation, Creative Writing and

Friday Morning Drop on are all still available online. We also set up a Women's Group which is running very successfully. All of this was done via Zoom and we are now in the process of developing further online supports for the near future.

"Like all other local groups, our fundraising events were all cancelled initially, but with the help and support of local businesses and our community we have managed to keep our day to day services in operation. We are very thankful to the people of Arklow and surrounding areas for continuing to support us throughout this very difficult time and for the many beautiful cards, letters, good wishes and donations we receive weekly to our office.

"If you have been recently diagnosed with cancer or are bereaved, and would like find out more about our supports we can gladly arrange an appointment safely for you at our Centre. For further information, please do not hesitate to contact us on 0402-23590 or 085-1100066. Once you make that first call, we will always be here to help wherever possible. Keep well and stay safe!"



Lynk Taxis

Established in 1997, Lynk Taxis (formerly MT Cabs) is a family-run business based in Bray, with Lee Moloney now the director and owner having taken over the business from his father Jerry in June of last year.

Lynk Taxis provide an invaluable service, operating 24/7 to transport people from Wicklow to Dublin's Hospitals in their wheelchair-friendly vehicles.

Lynk Taxis service local nursing homes, Sunbeam House Services, HSE disability services and the general community.

Their vehicles now also have protective screens as part of Covid safety protocols and they also transport passengers to Covid test centres.

During times of crisis, Lynk Taxis provide not just a transport service but also peace of mind, as the knowledge that their service is there and can be relied upon is a great reassurance during what can be very stressful times.



Rehabilitation Services Offering:

- Day programme/out patient addiction recovery options in Arklow
- Long-term residential rehabilitation for men and women
- Post rehabilitation supported housing
- Homeless outreach services

www.tiglin.ie

085 869 5964/0402 33898. Day Service

Email: cescheme@tiglin.ie

Tel: 0404 400 10 Residential

ARKLOW CANCER SUPPORT GROUP

Arklow Cancer Support offer practical & emotional support for patients and families on their Cancer journey



8 St. MARY'S RD, ARKLOW, CO. WICKLOW

Phone: 0402-23590 / 085-1100066 Email: arklowcancersupport@gmail.com

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BRAY: 01 28 63 633

Dublin Southside: 01 29 57 777



Pictured is the Avondale Community College basketball team that won the Basketball Ireland East Final by beating Kishoge Community School from Lucan, 40-30. The final was held in the Oblate Centre in Inchicore.

New training opportunities for local food & beverage enthusiasts

Co. Wicklow has seen an increased amount of activity on its food prospect in the past number of years.

In spite of the turbulent trading conditions of the last 2 years, the food and beverage sector has shown remarkable resilience: Producer numbers have grown, new food and beverage categories have emerged, and there is a robust food calendar. To support this growth Local Enterprise Office Wicklow has launched two new training programmes aimed at food enthusiasts in Co. Wicklow to support individuals starting their food & beverage journey or established businesses looking to explore new routes to market.

Start Your Own Food Business takes place on the 9th February 2022 at a cost of €20. This is an essential course for those interested in starting a local artisan food business in Wicklow. The course caters for those exploring the possibility of operating a café, food trailer, or manufacturing local food product.

Pathways to Growth for your Food or Beverage Business: Workshops commences on the 8th February at a cost of €100. Four workshops will take place in

total covering the following:

1. 8th February: Programme launch and Overview of food and beverage sector.
2. 1st March: Food Service Sector re-emerging opportunities.
3. 22nd March: Making online selling for Food and Drink Work.
4. 12th April: Exploring Discounter Route to market.

Food & Beverage Business Advisor, Annette Rowsome is encouraging food & beverage enthusiasts to participate in these upcoming courses. "In 2022 the Local Enterprise Office is focused on enabling Wicklow's food or beverage entrepreneurs to take the next important step forward on their business journey. Whether it is a tentative first step to setting up a food and beverage operation or a bold leap by established brands into new markets, we have a comprehensive suite of training programmes and workshops led by sectoral experts to provide practical guidance and support."

Both courses can be booked through Local Enterprise Office Wicklow's website: www.localenterprise.ie/Wicklow/Training-Events/Online-Bookings/

Job opportunities grow by 17%

Wicklow saw a 17% rise in the number of job opportunities offered 2021 and further growth is expected in the coming year, according to new figures released by leading Irish recruitment company, FRS Recruitment.

The recovery in employment was felt throughout the economy last year, with Wicklow being among the counties to benefit. Nationally FRS Recruitment saw the total number of job postings handled grow by 12%, reaching 81,528 in total for 2021.

Across the economy, the rise in openings was cross sectoral with significant growth experienced in the commercial, IT, healthcare, construction, life sciences and engineering, agricultural sectors as well as temporary industrial and commercial positions.

Among the career areas where FRS Recruitment recorded the largest rises in activity during 2021 were retail (up 117%), transport and logistics (up 82%), pharmacy - retail (up 69%), professional services (up 68%) and banking and financial services (up 58%).

While nationally there was a broad increase in the number of roles handled, there were some significant regional variations experienced. In total 20 of the Republic's 26 counties saw the number of job postings rise with the most significant increases coming in Longford (up 158%), Carlow (up 117%), Kilkenny (up 79%), Meath (up 76%), Louth (up 72%) and Cork (up 60%). Dublin also experienced strong growth (up 39%) and accounted for by the largest number of postings, 21% of the national total. Six counties also experienced a decline in opportunities, with the largest drops coming in Roscommon

(down 45%) and Donegal (down 30%).

FRS Recruitment is also forecasting further employment growth in 2022, with opportunities expected to rise by 10% over the next 12 months. This will be buoyed by the ongoing recovery of the economy across most sectors, leading to the majority of employers seeking additional staff as they look to grow their businesses and address skills shortages. In particular FRS Recruitment is forecasting strong demand in manufacturing and engineering, construction and IT roles this year. The information was published in FRS Recruitment's end of year report, Job Opportunities Abound.

Speaking about the report Lynne McCormack, General Manager of FRS Recruitment said, "Last year was a very strong year for recruitment in Wicklow. We recorded a 17% jump in the number of roles handled locally, which is well above the national average."

"FRS Recruitment also expects to see further growth in job opportunities in Wicklow over the coming year. We are projecting a further 10% rise in the total number of roles handled nationally and we would anticipate Wicklow will share in that growth. There should be significant movement across the economy with employers looking very closely at their resourcing needs as they seek to grow and expand their organisations and address any current and projected staff shortages."

"While in 2021 it was a few months into the year and post the lockdown before the recovery in employment began in earnest, this year FRS Recruitment anticipates demand will be strong right from the outset. This will be particularly apparent in the manufacturing and engineering, construction and IT sectors, but increased demand is likely to be shared across most sections of the economy."

"In some sectors the need for experienced, skilled personnel is also becoming challenging, with employers finding it difficult to attract suitable candidates. This is likely to lead to pressure on salary packages as employers compete to attract the best personnel and retain their current teams. We also believe there is likely to be an increased focus on attracting foreign based qualified candidates to meet shortfalls in some sectors. However the trend is looking very positive in terms of job openings for the coming year and we believe that will be the experience in Wicklow and most other parts of the country," Ms. McCormack concluded.

FRS Recruitment is one of the leading recruitment businesses operating in Ireland. They have 10 offices nationwide, with locations in Dublin, Cork, Galway, Tipperary, Limerick, Kerry, Kilkenny, Offaly, Cavan and Roscommon. A 100% Irish business, FRS Recruitment is part of the FRS Network - the social enterprise co-operative.

Local Enterprise Office clients created over 117 jobs in 2021

148 total small businesses employing 655 people supported by LEO Wicklow

At a live virtual event An Tánaiste and Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment Leo Varadkar TD, announced the annual results of the Local Enterprise Offices (LEOs) for 2021 which showed that Local Enterprise Office Wicklow supported companies created 117 jobs in 2021.

The net jobs created by Local Enterprise Office Wicklow supported clients in 2021 was 50, which takes into account companies that amalgamated, ceased trading and those that transferred on to Enterprise Ireland. In 2021 there were 131 transfers nationally by Local Enterprise Office companies to Enterprise Ireland.

The new figures show that the LEO Wicklow financially supported 31 small businesses in their portfolio across the county these companies in turn employ 106 people.

The total national figures for the Local Enterprise Offices across the country were announced with the LEOs now supporting 35,729 jobs across 7,158 companies. In 2021 there were 7,440 new jobs created by LEO client companies with a net job creation figure of 2,999. This was up 9% nationally on 2020. From those figures, 85% of those employed in LEO supported companies are outside the Dublin region.

The LEOs also provide substantial funded supports to thousands of other small businesses across the country with programmes such as the Trading Online Voucher, Lean for Micro and Green for Micro along with training and mentoring.

The Tánaiste and Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment Leo Varadkar TD said: "Over 35,000 people employed in small businesses around the country have been helped in some way by our Local Enterprise Offices. They are at the heart of communities in every county, always on hand to provide advice, training or financial backing and have proved invaluable throughout the pandemic, during which I know a huge amount of people relied on their local office."

"Last year, businesses supported by LEOs created nearly 3,000 net new jobs, which is remarkable given the year we just had. I'm really pleased to see that 85% of these jobs were outside of Dublin, indicating the Government's focus on balanced regional development is working."

"These numbers a real boost today and will contribute to our overall target of having 2.5m people in work by 2024. Thank you to all our LEO staff for your phenomenal work over the past year."

The Local Enterprise Offices were to the fore in supporting small businesses across the country in 2021, helping thousands to pivot online or adapt their products and services through a large

suite of supports. They offering training and mentoring in a range of areas from financial skills and product innovation to starting your own business and maximising your presence online.

Head of Enterprise, Vibeke Delahunt, said: "The results announced today are a testament to Ireland's small business community. When faced with adversity, they have adapted, pivoted, upskilled and did whatever it took to sustain themselves. The figures show that companies have seen the opportunities in the challenging trading conditions they have faced. The Local Enterprise Offices across the country have gone above and beyond in their support of small businesses but there is renewed optimism. We are seeing new opportunities for Irish businesses here and as always with tough economic periods we see new ideas and companies emerge and flourish. This year will be no different and as we continue to work closely with Enterprise Ireland and the local authorities to ensure our small businesses get the best possible supports there are certainly green shoots emerging across the country."

Welcoming the strong employment results, Enterprise Ireland CEO, Leo Clancy said: "2021 was another very positive year for job creation in companies supported by the Local Enterprise Offices. Companies supported by the Local Enterprise Offices are creating good quality employment across the country and play a vital role in vibrant local economies."

"Enterprise Ireland's new strategy 'Leading in a Changing World' will see the Local Enterprise Offices and Enterprise Ireland continue to work closely together over the next three years to ensure that companies of all sizes have the best possible support to back their growth and development."

The Local Enterprise Offices located in the local authorities and funded through Enterprise Ireland support over 7,158 small Irish businesses and entrepreneurs nationwide. Since their establishment in 2014 they have been for the first stop shop for entrepreneurs and small businesses and providing a range of supports including financial, mentoring, training and sector specific expertise to help guide businesses at any stage of their development. For more information on the Local Enterprise Offices go to www.LocalEnterprise.ie



Julie Gaffney, Gerry Delaney and Anne Carey at the vigil which took place in Arklow in memory of Ashling Murphy.

€1m for research projects on societal issues

Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science Simon Harris TD has announced €1 million in funding for researchers and community organisations to collaborate on societal issues.

The 77 projects from The Irish Research Council will reach communities across the country and beyond, focusing on diverse societal challenges.

Among the new research projects that will be funded with civic society partners are:

- Conn Holohan, of National University of Ireland, Galway, who will work with Galway Simon Community on immersive technology as a tool for advocacy and self-expression for people experiencing homelessness.
- Dawn Wheatley, of Dublin City University, who will collaborate with the National Women's Council on a project exploring Irish female journalists' experiences with hostility and abuse via social networks.
- Lisa O'Rourke Scott, Limerick Institute of Technology, who will work with Haven Horizons on gender-based abuse.
- Sarah Cooney, of University College Dublin, who will collaborate with Bodywhys to broaden our understanding of the challenges society faces with respect to body image and eating disorders.
- Louise Crowley, University College Cork, who will work with a secondary school on educating and empowering young people to speak up and demand a

zero-tolerance approach to all forms of sexual harassment and violence.

Minister Harris said: "This is a really important partnership between our research family and community and voluntary groups. This will be incredibly valuable because it will examine societal issues and the impact on the most vulnerable in society.

"The community and voluntary sector plays a critical role in Irish life and will continue to do so. The questions this research will examine are some of the greatest societal challenges we are facing.

"For example, the research on body image and eating disorders. The conversation is often limited to describing the experiences of young women. This project brings together leading experts, Bodywhys, the public, and patients to work together to enrich our understanding of the diverse challenges society faces with respect to body image and eating disorders.

"Or sexual harassment and violence in secondary schools. We have launched the Bystander programme in third level. This research will examine if the same programme can be rolled out in secondary school. I look forward to seeing the outcome of this research and its reach."

Building healthy communities around Ireland

Irish Life recently announced an extension to its partnership with the GAA Healthy Clubs programme, deepening a long-standing relationship that brings health awareness, support and opportunities to communities around Ireland.

The new partnership will run for four years and will facilitate up to 400 additional clubs in joining the innovative and impactful Irish Life GAA Healthy Clubs programme.

Since launching as a small pilot involving just 16 clubs in 2013, GAA Healthy Clubs has to-date engaged 300 clubs and tens of thousands of participants.

An additional 175 clubs will commence their Healthy Club journey in February 2022 while a further 200 clubs will join the growing movement in January 2024. The goal is

for all GAA clubs to become Healthy Clubs.

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).

GAA Healthy Clubs gained significant visibility

during the pandemic. Due to the structures that they had already implemented, Healthy Clubs were amongst the first GAA clubs to coordinate the delivery of vital essential supplies to those forced to self-isolate during the first lockdown.

Two Healthy Clubs Steps Challenges (in June 2020 and January/February 2021) also provided 40,000 participants across 700 GAA clubs with a fun-focused way to stay active and connected while our population was locked down. Collectively, they recorded over 7.7 billion steps.

Niamh O'Sullivan, All Ireland senior football championship winner with Meath in 2021 and member of the Dunshaughlin & Royal Gaels club, said: "I'm delighted that our club will participate in the Healthy Clubs programme in 2022. Our Healthy Club officer Eadaoin Slattery has done great work in readying the club for participation.

"Our work with older members of the community is something we're particularly proud of and that really came to the fore during the pandemic as our members rallied around those forced to isolate during the lockdowns. The Healthy Clubs Steps Challenge was also a great way of staying active and connected when our games programmes were forced to stop."

Also speaking of his involvement with the GAA Healthy Clubs, William O'Donoghue, Na Píarsaigh GAA Club in Limerick, said: "While we've been fortunate to have experienced great success in recent years on the field, the Healthy Club project has ensured we've remained mindful of our wider membership and community too.

"We've had huge crowds attend talks by the likes of Oisín McConville and Conor Cusack on gambling awareness, and mental health and wellbeing. A Healthy Club strives to support its members both on and off the field of play."



Pictured at the announcement of the Healthy Club partnership extension were Meath Ladies footballer Niamh O'Sullivan, GAA President Larry McCarthy, Grace Birch, Lucan Sarfields GAA Healthy Club, Declan Bolger, CEO of Irish Life, and Limerick Hurler William O'Donoghue. Pic: Sportsfile.



Connie and Violet Wilkin with a supporter at the Bray Bandstand last Wednesday where people gathered to raise awareness of violence against women and call for 'Emergency Action' to impose harsher sentences for those who are convicted of violent and sexual crimes against women. Pic: Joe McQuillan

Free online courses to support people with arthritis

Arthritis Ireland will deliver ten free online self-management courses starting in February to support people with arthritis during Covid-19.

The Living Well with Arthritis course gives people with arthritis the tools and techniques to help them better manage their condition. This includes managing pain and fatigue and developing a healthy lifestyle.

The award-winning course,

which is usually delivered in person in a community setting, will be delivered online via Zoom. The first course starts on Monday 7th February.

Gráinne O'Leary, Arthritis Ireland chief executive, said: "Covid-19 has highlighted that the skills and knowledge of self-

management are more important now than ever. The Living Well with Arthritis course gives people the tools to be able to better manage their arthritis and to live happier, healthier lives, which is so vital during these challenging times."

She added that: "People are really enjoying the online delivery of the Living Well course. It's a way of connecting with others who understand what it's like to be living with a chronic condition. The fact that it's online has removed the barrier of distance and you can do the course from any place in the country. People of all ages are becoming increasingly familiar with the technology and we put in a lot of effort to ensure that it works smoothly for everyone."

According to course leader, Rachel Dungan, "You can now participate in the course from the comfort and safety of your home. Like the in-person workshop, the online course features a lot of groupwork and interaction between the participants. It is a very rewarding experience.

"Since no cure exists, learning to live well with arthritis is crucial to ensuring you have a good quality of life," Ms Dungan stated.

On the course, participants learn about pain and fatigue management; healthy lifestyle and the importance of healthy eating; dealing with negative emotions; and exercise techniques for weak and damaged joints.

Developed by Stanford University, over 700 people completed an Arthritis Ireland online self-management course in 2021.

To register for a place on one of 10 free self-management courses, visit www.arthritisireland.ie.



Gráinne O'Leary, Arthritis Ireland chief executive



Whale Theatre will host a very special performance of John Tavener's beautiful song cycle "To a Child Dancing in the Wind". Performing the instrumental accompaniment will be Trio Táin, which consists of Wicklow based harpist Aisling Ennis, flautist Vourneen Ryan and violinist Robin Panter.

Classical and jazz concerts coming to Whale Theatre this Spring

Gradually emerging from an extended Christmas break, the Whale Theatre has been working hard behind the scenes to prepare a fresh Spring programme that will shake off the cobwebs and bring another few rays of sunshine to Greystones.

Alongside previously announced performances including Robert Gogan's "Strolling Through Ulysses!", a Cuban Guitar Recital with Ahmed Dickinson & Eduardo Martín, the return of National Theatre LIVE and "Motherland" a celebration of the Songs of 20th Century Women, the Whale Theatre is thrilled to announce new must-see performances to its Spring programme featuring an impressive line-up of local and international artists.

On Sunday 20th March, "Journey Through the Senses" sees local pianist Dr. Svetlana Rudenko collaborating with San Diego based professional ballet dancer Zoe Marinello-Kohn and US lighting engineer Sterling Baldwin in an exploration of synesthesia through live music, ballet and lighting design. Described by neuroscientists Ramachandran & Hubbard as a "window into perception, thought and language", the study of synesthesia helps us to understand how our senses interact, influencing our perception and emotions.

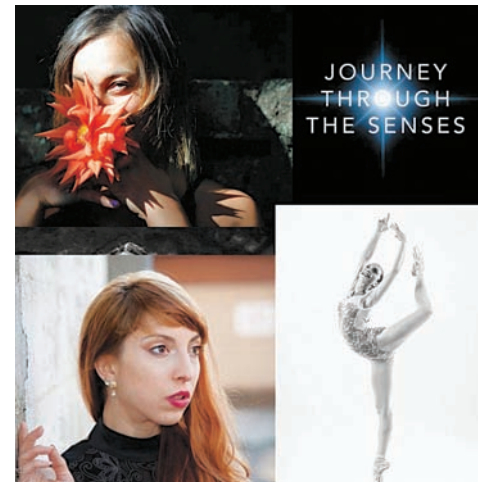


Greystones native and acclaimed soprano Jade Phoenix

Featuring celebrated Wicklow-based Canadian soprano Catherine Redding, the Whale Theatre will host a very special performance of John Tavener's beautiful song cycle "To a Child Dancing in the Wind" on Sunday 10th April with additional works from

Debussy and Fauré. In a rare departure from his prolific output of liturgical and choral works, Tavener's song cycle sets a number of poems by W.B. Yeats, with instrumentation for Flute, Viola and Harp. Performing the instrumental accompaniment will be Trio Táin, which consists of Wicklow based harpist Aisling Ennis, flautist Vourneen Ryan and violinist Robin Panter.

Continuing its classical Spring programme, the Whale Theatre is also delighted to welcome back Greystones native and acclaimed soprano Jade Phoenix, who returns to



Journey Through the Senses comes to Whale Theatre on 20th March

14th May. Performing beloved opera classics from composers including Puccini, Mozart and Strauss alongside a selection of Irish songs, this is the perfect concert for anyone wanting to dip their toe into the world of opera! Having recently sung the role of Giulietta in Bellini's "I Capuleti e i Montecchi" (The Capulets and the Montagues), Jade Phoenix was described by the Irish Times as having "an aptitude for Bravura that is quite impressive".

Having performed at the Whale Theatre last October as part of the stellar Ari Hoenig Trio, UK-based guitarist and composer Tom Ollendorff also makes a welcome return to Greystones on Friday 20th May with his own trio. Described by The Jazz Man as a "highly talented, imaginative player"

Ollendorff has quickly built a strong reputation as an outstanding improviser and imaginative composer. His debut album A Song For You is described as a mix of gracefully grooving songlike themes, warmly conversational improvising, baroque-like unaccompanied etudes, and headlong fast-bop swing.

The Whale Theatre invites you to come and explore the great indoors this Spring, with a diverse programme of music, theatre, comedy, film, spoken word and family events. Covid-19 safety measures are in place at the venue, and audiences are encouraged to familiarise themselves with these guidelines before attending.

For more information and to book tickets, please see www.whaletheatre.ie.

'Love your Wellies' art competition

Wicklow schools are being invited to participate in the newly launched 'Love Your Wellies' Art's Competition.

This competition has been developed for students living within the peat landscape and particularly throughout the midland's region. It is uniquely

designed to cater for all perspectives, age groups and skill sets, and to help raise awareness to the importance of the peat landscape in which they live in.

This is not strictly for art class, in fact, this competition has been designed to be open to all subjects!

Schools are also being offered the opportunity to avail of free workshops during this competition. The purpose of these workshops is to support teachers as they deliver an engaging competition to their students.

See Farmpeat.ie for the Competition Details, a poster for school Promotion and a Submission Form and Check List.

If there are any further details you require, or if you would like to avail of the free workshops offered, please do not hesitate to email: loveyourwellies@farmpeat.ie or visit www.Farmpeat.ie.



Luisne Art Group 2022 Exhibition

Signal Arts Centre, March 14th to 27th

The Luisne Art Group is a unique style of class that began 9 years ago in the Luisne 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.

Opening Reception: Sunday, March 20th 2022 3pm - 5pm



Guitarist and composer Tom Ollendorff

Take steps to prepare for freezing weather and conserve water

Irish Water and Wicklow County Council are asking homes and businesses to take some simple steps to avoid damage to their pipes and help conserve water during the cold weather.



Freezing conditions can lead to a higher than normal volume of burst pipes. A burst pipe can cause severe damage in the home, while also leading to valuable water being lost. Sometimes a small leak can go undetected for weeks, resulting in expensive repair bills and a disrupted water supply.

To avoid this, Irish Water is asking home- and business-owners to take some simple steps to winter-proof their premises over the coming months.

Speaking about preparing for colder weather, Tom Cuddy, Head of Operations, Irish Water, said, "With temperatures often dipping below zero at this time of year, we are appealing to homes, businesses and those responsible for unoccupied buildings to check for leaks whilst adhering to current public health regulations and advice, and to turn off water where it's not needed. We are also appealing to customers to check outside pipes in particular that can become frozen and burst during periods of cold weather and report leaks they see on the public network to us."

"Small efforts by everyone to conserve water wherever possible make a big difference and we would ask the public to only use what they need whilst continuing to adhere to public health advice on hand washing and hygiene regarding COVID-19. Simple advice on conservation includes for example taking showers

over baths and fixing dripping taps where it is possible to do so.

"In preparing for freezing weather, there are some simple steps to follow to avoid your pipes freezing or bursting."

What to do if you have a frozen pipe

If you have a basic knowledge of plumbing, these tips will help you locate and thaw a frozen pipe. If you are unsure of what to do, call a registered plumber.

Turn off the water supply, this will limit the amount of leakage or damage if a pipe bursts:

- Find and turn off your inside stop valve, usually located under the kitchen sink
- Turn off the stopcock in your cold water tank, usually located in the attic
- Check the water pressure in appliances such as taps and toilets to see if it is lower than usual
- Locate the general area where you think there may be a frozen pipe
- Check for visible pipes that are not insulated, pipes that feel much colder than others, have nearby draughts or damage
- Turn on nearby cold taps to relieve pressure on the frozen pipe. NEVER turn on the hot taps
- Thaw the pipe
- If the pipe and fittings are not cracked or broken, you can try gently thawing the pipe
- Protect or move anything which

might be damaged if the pipe bursts when thawed

* Use a hairdryer on the lowest setting to gently warm the pipe, starting at the end nearest the tap
NEVER attempt to thaw out frozen pipes by switching on your immersion, central heating, blow torch etc.

What to do if you have a burst pipe

A burst pipe can cause serious damage to your home so it is important to take action as soon as possible. Limit the damage

- Turn off the water supply as instructed above
- Drain the system by turning on all the cold water taps and flushing the toilets
- Switch off the central heating and immersion. If you use solid fuel, let it die out
- When the water heating is completely off, turn on the hot taps to further drain the system
- If water from a burst pipe is leaking near any sockets, switches or appliances, switch off the mains if it is safe to do so. If the switch is wet, do not touch it, instead call a qualified electrician
- If you have a shared water supply e.g. if you live in an apartment complex, ensure you have access to the stop cock. This is usually located where the water supply enters the building
- Check with your neighbours that turning off the water has not affected their supply
- Get it repaired
- You can make a temporary repair to a burst pipe by binding it tightly with a cloth or tape.
- Replace this as soon as possible by a permanent repair, carried out by a qualified and registered plumber.
- Ensure your hot water system is refilled BEFORE you switch back on your immersion or boiler.

EPA competition asks students to consider the global impact of their everyday decisions

Second-level students from across Wicklow are being asked to consider the global consequences of local actions as the EPA today launches The Story of Your Stuff competition 2022.

The competition asks students to think about the wider environmental impact of their everyday decisions. It asks students to research the life cycle and environmental impact of an everyday item - such as their toothbrush - or everyday activity - such as eating their lunch, and to present their findings in a creative way.

Now in its sixth year, The Story of Your Stuff has the empowerment of students at its core, encouraging young people to realise the influence they can have on their friends and family when it comes to making environmentally responsible consumer choices. With its focus on sustainability, waste management, climate action and environmental protection, the competition asks young people to think, talk and make small changes that can have far-reaching impacts.

Entrants visually tell the environmental story of their 'stuff' through a creative medium of their choice (including video, animation, infographics, photography, etc.). They are then in with a chance to win €500 for themselves and €500 for their school. There is also a special 'climate topic prize' as well as a prize for the best Irish language entry.

Speaking at the launch of the competition, the EPA's Stephen Fennell said: "Whether using disposable coffee cups, or taking the car instead of walking, or using public transport, these short-term conveniences often are not environmentally sustainable. Our individual actions have lasting impacts, and The Story of Your Stuff competition asks young people how they, and those closest to them, can act in a more environmentally friendly way.

Now more than ever, we cannot lose sight of our power as individuals to bring about change, and this competition instils that message among young people. By presenting their findings in a creative way, students will communicate the benefit of making environmentally conscious decisions and hopefully empower others to reflect on their own consumption habits.

"Students can access resources from the EPA website, particularly the Ireland's Environment and Environment and You sections while researching their topics. These resources will help students to better understand the 'why' and 'how' behind us needing to change our waste systems, the way we use energy and the ways that we get around, as well as wider environmental concerns."

Aeronautical engineer, citizen scientist-astronaut candidate and award-winning STEM advocate, Dr Norah Patten returns as competition ambassador for 2022. Dr Patten said: "The Story of Your Stuff is a fantastic initiative, and I am delighted to take on the role of competition ambassador for a second year. Its focus on thinking, talking, and making changes to consumption habits, highlights to students the impact they have as individuals on our environment and climate change. It also allows them to develop important skills that they will use throughout their studies and into the future. I hope The Story of Your Stuff can be an entry point into environmental research and science communication for a new generation."

Last year's overall winner was Robert Urquhart from Presentation College Athenry in Galway for his very topical video 'The Story of a Disposable Face Mask'. Oonagh Hales from John the Baptist Community School, Co. Limerick was awarded the climate topic prize for her entry 'The Story of Plastic Cutlery'.

Competition guidelines and tips are available at www.thestoryofyourstuff.ie



Pictured are Ciara Kelly and Lauren Raftery from St Mary's College who were highly commended for their project 'Carbon Captures- is seaweed a silent superhero in the battle against climate change?'. Photo: Fennell Photography

Wicklow takes home five prizes from 2022 Young Scientist & Technology Exhibition

Schools from Wicklow have taken home five prizes from the BT Young Scientist & Technology Exhibition 2022.

From St. David's Secondary School in Greystones, 6th year student Vagif Aliyev won two awards for his project entitled 'Snapstudy'; the Science at Trinity Global Challenges Award and 1st place in the Senior Individual Technology category. Vagif created an app which can scan a text and generate questions from it.

From Educate Together Secondary School in Wicklow Town, Daniel Monahan's project, 'Are plant saponins better at removing stains than commercial laundry detergent?', earned him 3rd place in the Biological and Ecological Junior Individual category.

From St. Mary's College in Arklow, Ciara Kelly and Lauren Raftery were Highly Commended in the Biological and Ecological category for their project 'Carbon captures- is Seaweed a silent superhero in the battle against climate change'. Meanwhile Joanne English, a teacher at St. Mary's, won the Perrigo Educator of Excellence Award in the Biological and Ecological category.

Food and the circular economy - an online conference

Wicklow Naturally, Wicklow County Council, the Wicklow Local Enterprise Office and Sustainable Tourism Ireland have come together to offer an online conference to explore opportunities in the circular economy for food producers.

The conference will explore the importance of the circular economy to food production and consumption. Globally 22 per cent of all carbon emissions have been linked to food so any steps taken to use food more sustainably and reduce food waste is a win for Climate Action.

Wicklow Naturally is a network of food producers and food related businesses in the county. Its membership includes the best producers of ingredients and food products in the county, businesses serving food in the hospitality sector and

es. Local case studies will feature in the programme of speakers.

Welcoming the announcement of the event, Cathaoirleach of Wicklow County Council, Cllr Shay Cullen, acknowledged the strength of the Wicklow Naturally brand in marketing and raising awareness on local products. He commented:

"Members of the network have identified sustainable production as core goal for Wicklow Naturally and this conference will help to deepen members discussion and engagement in delivering that goal."

The conference will be held on the 3rd of February from 10.00am to 3.00pm. The morning will contain an introduction to the circular economy and food while the

afternoon will divide into two sessions, one for the hospitality sector and one for the food production sector. The event is funded by the Environmental Protection Agency through the Local Authority Prevention Network and is free to attend. It will be delivered via Zoom.

For further information on the conference, businesses or members of the public can contact the Environmental Awareness Office of Wicklow County Council by email on eao@wicklowcoco.ie.

Any business can register on line for the event using the link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/6hrjMrEtASTnPlzTC7FwVVw4nByZVN>

MERCEDES-BENZ ALL-ELECTRIC EQB ARRIVES WITH 7-SEAT OPTION

Mercedes-Benz continues to extend its presence in the all-electric segment with the arrival of their new EQB compact SUV, available now with a family-size 7-seat option. What began as a trickle has become a flow with three 'EQ' badged all-electric model lines already established in the market (EQC, EQV and EQA).

The arrival of the EQB heralds the imminent launch of two further models: the S-Class-based EQS and the E-Class based EQE.

Designed to deliver electric-powered motoring in a family-size package, EQB shares its dimensions with the conventionally-powered GLB. Compact

on the outside, roomy on the inside, its robust bodyshell measures 4,684mm long, 1,834mm wide, 1,667mm tall with a 2,829mm wheelbase.

Practical in all respects, EQB comes with adjustable second-row seats and an optional third-row seat arrangement concealed beneath the luggage floor which can be raised to expand capacity to a 7-seat layout as required. Up to four child seats can be fitted in the second and third rows. Maximum boot capacity is 1,710-litres.

Describing it as 'a model designed to meet the needs of family-oriented customers and eco-conscious motorists alike', Ciaran Allen, sales manager for Mercedes-Benz in Ireland said: "Thanks to its exceptional levels of flexible spaciousness, the EQB is poised to set a new benchmark in the all-electric compact class".

Externally, there is no mistaking its Mercedes-EQ credentials. Distinctive is its black panel grille with central star, front 'EQ' blue headlamp strips and a continuous fibre-optic strip running along front and rear. Light-alloy wheels in bi or tri-colour design are available in sizes up to 20

inches. Studded roof rails point to its effectiveness as a utility vehicle.

With a 0.28 Cd value, the EQB's lower wind resistance delivers greater efficiency and range, other aerodynamic features including front and rear aprons, a smooth and enclosed underbody, closed cooling air system, and wind-optimised wheels with spoilers.

Noting the appeal it will likely have for family buyers, interior spaciousness has been a byword for designers, reflected not just in its 7-seat option but in its upright appearance.



RECRUITMENT



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KILDARE AND WICKLOW
EDUCATION AND TRAINING BOARD

EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST FOR EXTERNAL MEMBER TO FINANCE COMMITTEE

Kildare and Wicklow Education and Training Board invites expressions of interest for persons willing to serve as an external member to the Finance Committee.

Experience and/or knowledge of financial practices, audit, corporate governance and public sector is desirable. A modest fee may be payable.

Please refer to www.kwetb.ie for further information and details.

Closing date for expressions of interest is **Friday 4th February 2022.**



kcetb

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Chill Chainnigh agus Cheatharlach
Kilkenny and Carlow
Education and Training Board

Applications are invited from suitably qualified persons for the following position in the Further Education and Training Service within **Kilkenny and Carlow Education and Training Board**

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Late applications will not be accepted.

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PLANNING

WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL

I, Liam Keogh seek planning permission to complete planning application 13610019. The construction of an external entrance, stairs and associated site works to existing Scout Den, Harbour road, Arklow. The planning application may be inspected or purchased at a fee not exceeding the reasonable cost of making a copy at the offices of Wicklow County Council, County Buildings, Wicklow during its public opening hours and a submission or observation in relation to the application may be made to the authority in writing on payment of the prescribed fee within the period of 5 weeks beginning on the date of receipt by the authority of the application.

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.

K.H.



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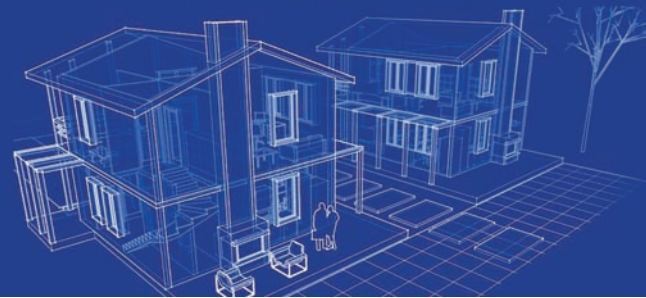
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CLASSIFIEDS

Luke 1:1-4, 4:14-21 GOSPEL

Seeing that many others have undertaken to draw up accounts of the events that have taken place among us, exactly as these were handed down to us by those who from the outset were eye-witnesses and ministers of the word, I in my turn, after carefully going over the whole story from the beginning, have decided to write an ordered account for you, Theophilus, so that your Excellency may learn how well funded the teaching is that you have received. Jesus, with the power of the Spirit in him, returned to Galilee; and his reputation spread throughout the countryside. He taught in their synagogues and everyone praised him. He came to Nazara, where he had been brought up, and went into the synagogue on the sabbath day as he usually did. He stood up to read, and they handed him the scroll of the prophet Isaiah. Unrolling the scroll, he found the place where it is written: The spirit of the Lord has been given to me, for he has anointed me. He has sent me to bring the good news to the poor, to proclaim liberty to captives and to the blind new sight, to set the downtrodden free, to proclaim the Lord's year of favour. He then rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the assistant and sat down. And all the eyes in the synagogue were fixed on him. Then he began to speak to them, 'This text is being fulfilled today even as you listen.'

C.J.

New education platform for migrants and refugees

A new online platform that provides free access to education and training courses for people from refugee and migrant backgrounds in County Wicklow and throughout Ireland has been launched.

SaorEd is a collaborative initiative between three Irish non-profit organisations; Doras, New Horizon, and Dignity Partnership. It is built on the Kiron online learning platform which has been designed specifically for refugees and underserved communities and is already widely used in the Middle East and Europe.

SaorEd, available at www.saored.com, aims to provide free access to a range of entry-level and advanced courses. Initial offerings include English language courses, information technology (IT) skills, healthcare, and career preparation courses. The courses on offer are mostly in English, with some in Arabic. Navigation interfaces are available in Arabic and Farsi and those behind the venture hope to expand the range of courses and languages on offer.

SaorEd is intended to fill the gaps in existing education and training programmes. While free English language classes are provided by the 16 Education and Training Boards (ETBs) and others, for example, places on these are often difficult to obtain. Yet, language skills are essential for the integration and wellbeing of protection applicants and refugees.

Initial language courses provided on SaorEd include an introduction to the English language, intermediate English for University, English for Arabic speakers, and advanced English for the workplace. The IT Skills study track will cover basic digital skills (in English and Arabic), intermediate IT skills (including a course on 'Living in a Digital World'), as well as more advanced courses like web design with HTML, CSS, and Javascript.

SaorEd provides study programs using open online courses (MOOCs) from reputable education providers. The initial offerings are based on a survey of over 100 people who are in or have transitioned out of Direct Provision. Over the coming months, the platform will be extended to include courses in other areas that will help open pathways to employment and further education.

John Lannon, Doras CEO said "It is difficult for people living in remote areas, particularly Direct Provision centres, to access regular transport to attend in-person training. SaorEd can provide pathways to further education and employment for them. The platform is also of value to parents of young children who may not be able to access mainstream education during the day. It is also accessible to people who face financial barriers to education, who may not be entitled to the Back to Education Allowance, for example.

"Refugees and Asylum Seekers are among the most marginalised people in Irish society. Those in Direct Provision in particular face huge challenges when it comes to managing their mental health and finding ways to participate in Irish society. Education is a doorway to inclusion, connection, and dignity. It opens up doorways of possibility and opportunity that are so critical for people who are often fleeing war, poverty and persecution. Making education and training accessible is vital. There are currently too many obstacles, which is why SaorEd is important. The level of interest in it has already

taken us by surprise and the potential is exciting. We are hoping that funders and partners come on board to join us to help build this exciting platform."

Rosemary Kunene of Dignity Partnership, said "Education is the key to unlocking talents. Empowering people through education is one of the best investments for the future. SaorEd is a tool for social change that is needed to promote educational inclusion for people from a refugee and asylum-seeking background".

Gerry Callaghan of New Horizon: said "SaorEd is an opportunity for people to access learning opportunities that may otherwise not be open to them due to cost, distance, childcare or language barriers.

The refugee and asylum seeker community puts an incredible value on educational opportunities. I recall many years ago when a busload of Asylum Seekers arrived into Athlone into a bleak site of 100 mobile homes with just an industrial canteen and rain-swept tarmac. I distinctly recall people's main concern was schooling for their children and I was struck by what a priority education was for people who value the opportunity to learn, grow and contribute."

Many of the SaorEd study programmes are offered exclusively to international protection applicants, with certificates provided to learners on completion. By providing open access to online learning opportunities, it ensures that free education is available at any time, in any place to underserved communities.

For more see www.saored.com



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