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Tuesday 1st March 2022 First Floor, The Boulevard, Quinsborough Road, Bray. A98 R6D7. Tel: 01 - 2869111 E-mail: wicklowed@localtimes.ie www.wicklowtimes.net

# THE MOTHER OF ALL ROWS

The Minister for Health Stephen Donnelly last week welcomed a letter from leading doctors heavily criticising a campaign of 'misleading' and 'ill-informed' allegations being made about the new National Maternity Hospital.

The letter signed by 52 doctors including NMH master Prof Shane Higgins makes it clear the deal with the hospital has "unbreakable legal stipulations" to guarantee that all procedures allowed under Irish law will be provided.

They also made it clear that to suggest that any procedures would be "curtailed by any religious ethos are misleading and ill-informed".

In the letter co-signed by former NMH masters Dr Rhona Mahony, Dr Michael Robson and Prof Declan Keane they said it was "manifestly false" to suggest that only full State ownership of the site can assure "the avoidance of religious influence".

The letter states that all permissible procedures "including abortion, tubal ligation, gender affirming surgery and assisted reproduction" will

be provided.

"Those who argue to the contrary are derailing a vital national healthcare project that has already been delayed for far too long," it continues.

"As you well know the HSE licence for the new hospital will include unbreakable legal stipulations requiring the provision of all the forms of treatment outlined above.

"The ownership debate is a red herring



Summer Brown with Coco at the opening of the new dog park in Charlesland, Greystones, last week. Pic: Michael Kelly

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as a hospital can be built on land owned by another party with the lease terms ensuring that the owner has no hand, act or part in how the hospital runs its operations."

Minister Donnelly said: "To be clear, the National Maternity Hospital is a vital part of improving health services for Irish women and infants. I share the view of the doctors that the allegations being made, including by certain Dail TDs, are misleading, ill-informed and manifestly false. Instead, we need to be focusing all our energies on making sure this project proceeds as quickly as possible because it is desperately needed."

It is understood that he is referring here to Social Democrats TD Jennifer Whitmore who has been a leading light in the campaign to stop

the new hospital being located on the Sisters' of Charity grounds at St Vincent's Hospital.

Deputy Whitmore said the Minister for Health cannot compromise on women's health.

"What is particularly concerning is the Minister's recent comments that those expressing concerns in relation to the governance of the new hospital are doing so in a manifestly false and misleading manner. This is a wholly unacceptable response and a slight on women and families who fought long and hard for a health care system free from religious ethos with women at the centre," she said.

Deputy Whitmore responding to a new agreement recently drafted between the HSE and St. Vincent Holding Group regarding the new National

Maternity Hospital said "While the new agreement reportedly states

that all medical treatment allowed for under the law will be provided

at the New National Maternity Hospital.  
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# Tinahely Agricultural Show announces return

The Tinahely Agricultural Society has announced that the popular Tinahely Agricultural Show will return this year.

The 86th show will resume on the August bank holiday Monday following a two-year gap as a result of the pandemic.

Tinahely Agricultural Show attracts over 20,000 visitors and 400 trade exhibitors and is one of Ireland's largest agricultural shows. The show captures the essence of rural Ireland with a huge range of entertainment, livestock competitions, equestrian competitions, arts & crafts, family entertainment and the best of Irish food produce. The decision has been welcomed by all associated with the show, including the community of members and volunteers who are already working hard and sharing ideas to deliver a superb family day out that everyone can enjoy.

"The show committee would like to thank all of our trade stands, local businesses and sponsors, who have shown such unwavering support through the past few years and we are looking forward to welcoming them back in 2022," said Chairman Thomas McDonald. "This has been a difficult time for so many people and we are committed to delivering a top-quality show that the people of Wicklow and beyond will relish", he added. He



The dog show returns to this year's festival

concluded by saying "It's all systems go to make the 2022 show the best ever".

Entrance dates for show categories will be announced in the coming weeks and entries will be accepted on the website at [www.tinahelyshow.ie](http://www.tinahelyshow.ie)



## Wicklow Darkness Into Light 2022

Wicklow & District Lions Club is encouraging people to take part in Darkness Into Light 2022 which will take place at sunrise on the morning of Saturday 7th May.

This year the in-person world. For the past few years many people across Ireland and the enjoyed taking part in

Darkness Into Light in their own particular way when they could not join together in the usual way. So this year's event will take on many forms and people will come together in different and creative ways to share a sunrise moment and stand in solidarity with people impacted by suicide and self-harm.

You can choose to do Darkness Into Light in three ways:

1. Sign up to one of the in-person walks across Ireland and the world.

2. Create your own sunrise moment with family, friends and colleagues

and walk, swim or bike from Darkness Into Light.

3. Take part in the Darkness Into Light Challenge – when you select this option there's no sign-up fee for anyone who pledges to fundraise €200. Get creative with your activity, and remember that no matter how you choose to take part this year, you'll be giving the gift of hope to those in your community in suicidal crisis, or self-harming.

This hugely important event is supported by Wicklow & District Lions Club



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## Wicklow Lions record-breaking event

In 2019 Wicklow & District Lions Club applied to the Guinness Book of Records to hold a very novel record breaking event - "The Largest Gathering of People Dressed as Lions". It was accepted by the organisation and it was to take place on St Patrick's Day 2020.

Unfortunately due to Covid all parades and gatherings were cancelled. The same applied in 2021. Now, next month, it's all systems go once again. Up to 300 Lions will gather in Wicklow dressed in official Lions costumes and in the process smash the world record. On St Patrick's Day members of the local Lions Club and their supporters will march through the streets of Wicklow in the local parade creating an unbelievable spectacle all dressed as Lions.

If any member of the public would like to be part of this once in a lifetime event email; [garde-nofireland@gmail.com](mailto:garde-nofireland@gmail.com) or make contact with any member of the Lions Club or through Facebook and Instagram. Wicklow Lions Club supports every charity throughout the district.

## Free job-seeking workshop

Join Wicklow Libraries and National Learning Network for a Job-Seeking Skills Workshop at various Wicklow libraries in March.

This free workshop course is designed to give anyone who is looking for work, to return to education and gain the skills and confidence they need to find the job or training course they are searching for.

It will cover 'Top tips for CVs', 'Job search skills', 'Interviews tips' and information about Upskilling. In addition, there will be free fol-

low-up mock interviews and CV review for all those who attend the workshop.

This Job-seeking workshop will take place as below:

1. Tuesday 1st March, Bray library at 6.30pm Ph.: 01 286 2600

2. Thursday 3rd March, Greystones library at 6.30pm Ph.: 01 287 3548

3. Thursday 10th March, Arklow

library at 6.30pm Ph.: 0402 39977

4. Tuesday 15th March, Wicklow library at 6.30pm Ph.: 0404 67025

5. Wednesday 23rd March, Ballywaltrim library at 6.30pm in Bray Library on Tuesday 1st March, at 6.30pm 01-272 3205 Attendance is free but places are limited so please get in touch today to take part in this practical and interactive workshop.

## New walking groups

If you are looking to get started with walking, there are two new walking groups starting soon in Bray and Greystones. Both groups will run for four weeks. The idea is to help people to get out walking again with the support of a small friendly group. There is no charge to take part and everybody will get a free pedometer at the start of the programme and a free gift at the end. Caragh Munn of Social Prescribing for Bray and Greystones, who is running the groups, says: "Being part of a supportive group can really help with motivation - it's also great way to reconnect and meet new people."

Social Prescribing for Bray and North Wicklow

is a local initiative that supports people with their health and wellbeing by connecting them with a range of services and activities in the local community. To find out more about the walking groups and book a place, or to find out more about what Social Prescribing can offer you, call 01 286 8266, email [alex@brayareapartnership.ie](mailto:alex@brayareapartnership.ie), or see [www.brayareapartnership.ie](http://www.brayareapartnership.ie).

## Lotto flutter transformed Into €11,268

There was an extremely happy customer in County Wicklow last weekend following an amazing Irish Lotto win that defied odds of 625/1. The anonymous customer placed the bet in a BoyleSports shop on Saturday, 19th February and opted for an €18 treble on three numbers to land in the main Irish Lotto draw that evening. They needed 1, 6 and 16 to roll out of the machine and when they did, the tasty windfall was triggered meaning the celebrations could begin. When the lucky punter returned to the shop, they were able to exchange their bet-slip for a whopping total of €11,268.

## Laragh & Glendalough Tidy Towns

The group are having their annual AGM, Tuesday March 1st at 7.30pm in the Brockagh Resource Centre, Laragh. "We hope to see many community members attend this year and get involved. It is a great way to meet new people and take part in making small changes to the beautiful area we live in. All ages are welcome to join and every contribution, even a small amount of time makes a difference."

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# Three projects to secure funding as part of the Town and Village Renewal Scheme

Three County Wicklow projects are to benefit from funding of €310,000 under the Government's Town and Village Renewal Scheme as part of Our Rural Future which focuses on initiatives to bring town centres back to life.

The three are Wicklow town, Ballinaclash and Donard. The announcement was welcomed on Friday by Cllr Shay Cullen, Cathaoirleach of Wicklow County Council.

Funding of €221,000 has been awarded for a project to link Wicklow town centre to the port through its laneways. The aim of the project is to reanimate and revitalise the important links between the harbour, the Main Street and the Market Square while at the same time highlighting Wicklow's heritage.

Following recent training provided by Wicklow County Council on place making, the community of Wicklow town have reimagined a public space and are working towards its fruition.

Ballinaclash has a vision of developing into a vibrant and attractive village and has been awarded funding of €63,000 to renovate and repurpose the community centre to meet the needs of the community, both present and future and to make sure that the centre

is inclusive to people of all abilities. This funding will enable the centre to offer remote working facilities and improved community activities for all.

West Wicklow also benefitted from the Town and Village Renewal Scheme. Funding is awarded to the Donard community who have identified an opportunity to revitalise their village through developing a coffee shop in the community centre for visitors and residents.

The positive social impacts would be immediate as "the Meeting Place" will provide an essential hub not just for the town residents and the surrounding environs but also to the tourists who enjoy staying at the nearby caravan park and those involved in outdoor trails.

Cathaoirleach of Wicklow County Council, Cllr Shay Cullen, said: "I would like to thank the staff of Wicklow County Council and in particular the staff of Wicklow Municipal District who worked with

such enthusiasm on this application to secure the funding. I must also pay tribute to Wicklow Town Team for the initiative shown by the members in assisting with the Wicklow application."

Mr Brian Gleeson, Chief Executive, Wicklow County Council, also welcomed the funding saying "the Town and Village Renewal Scheme is another great example of what can be achieved when community groups work together with Wicklow County Council, and I encourage all Town Teams and communities to get involved in these schemes and work with us to make Wicklow a better place to visit and to live."

Minister Simon Harris TD has congratulated the three Wicklow Towns. He said "I am delighted three Wicklow projects in Wicklow Town, Ballinaclash and Donard are to receive funding under the Town and Village Renewal Scheme. The initiative is a key part of Our Rural Future - the Government's five year strategy to revitalise rural Ireland.

"This year the maximum grant available under the Town and Village Renewal Scheme was increased so that projects of scale can be supported. I'm delighted that my colleague, Minister for Rural and Community Development, Heather Humphreys TD, has made this funding available to help rural communities in Wicklow - making them more attractive places to live, work, socialise and raise a family, and I look forward to working with

the local community and local authority to deliver these.

"Wicklow Town is to receive substantial investment of over €220,000 as part of the Town and Village Renewal Scheme. The initiative is a key part of Our Rural Future - the Government's five year strategy to revitalise rural Ireland.

The Wicklow Town Project is the largest to be funded under the Town and Village Renewal Scheme in County Wicklow and will see the refurbishment and enhancement of a number of laneways between the town centre and Wicklow Port. Funding will also be made available to improve their appearance.

Minister Harris added: "For years now, the routes from the main street to the port area have required investment. Take the likes of the 'Doctor's Steps' - it suffers badly from poor lighting and graffiti and I have no doubt this will be one of the laneways that will be funded.

"I have heard time and time again from Wicklow residents that these routes are eyesores and that at night, people using them don't feel 100 per cent safe.

"I am delighted therefore that Wicklow Town has been selected for such major funding under Town and Village, which is one of the Government's most important funding schemes for Rural Ireland.

"This funding will be used to purchase lighting and give an overall facelift to these laneways. Importantly, it is funding

that will brighten up the routes from the main streets to the port area - making Wicklow town a better place to live work and raise a family.

"This year the maximum grant available under the Town and Village Renewal Scheme was increased so that projects of the scale such as Wicklow Town could receive funding and this change to the scheme will have a transformational effect on the connectivity and appearance of Wicklow Town."

Minister for Health Stephen Donnelly said: "I'm delighted to see Wicklow receiving over €300,000 in funding under the RRDF scheme. The monies received by Ballinaclash, Donard and Wicklow will help to breathe new life back into their town centres and communities. I know some projects were disappointed to miss out on this round but we will be working closely with them to make sure they are successful in the future."

Green Party TD Deputy Steven Matthews commented, "The Town and Village Renewal Scheme aims to address derelict ion, enable remote working and revitalise our town centres. This investment will promote Ballinaclash, Donard and Wicklow town centre as thriving and sustainable places to live. As TD for Wicklow, I am committed to the Town Centres First model and delivering measures that will improve quality of life in our rural towns and villages in Wicklow."



Rachel, Sarah and Ciara Byrne celebrate Knockananna Camogie Club reaching a second All-Ireland final after beating Fullen Gaels from Manchester at Abbotstown, Co. Dublin

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## THE MOTHER OF ALL ROWS

Continued from page 1

it is still very worrying that the new deal fails to specify exactly what these medical procedures are, for example, if it will include medical procedures including sterilisations, IVF and terminations. It also fails to outline what circumstances these treatments will be provided for, for example in life and death situations or if they will be allowed on an elective basis.

"I think the Minister has a lot to answer on this as women continue to be concerned about religious influence particularly as €800m of public money will be invested in this hospital. Women in Wicklow overwhelmingly campaigned for Repeal as well as for better women's

healthcare and maternity care.

"I believed this was a very serious concern and raised it with the Taoiseach in the Dáil. Unfortunately,

and to my surprise, the Taoiseach was not briefed on the agreement and did not seem to know what I was talking about. I don't think this instils much confidence in women across Wicklow who will come to rely on the new maternity hospital.

"The Minister and the Taoiseach think they can fool the women into believing that we can trust a non-specific agreement like this. The response to any concerns raised about the hospital is to say that it urgently needs to be built and we can't delay any further. We have heard this response time and time again but without the reassurance that the new hospital will be fully in state hands and ownership. There can be no ambiguity about its independence, and this means that it must be a publicly owned and operated hospital," concluded Deputy Whitmore.

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Fostering Fortnight is the Irish Foster Care Association's annual awareness campaign. We aim to bring awareness to fostering in Ireland and all the valuable contributions made every day in fostering families and fostering communities. Fostering Fortnight is a chance for all those involved in fostering and the communities that support them to tell their stories and share their experiences.

This year we are celebrating Fostering Relationships and the importance of strong and supportive relationships in fostering

and the many different relationships that are at the heart of the gift of fostering and that make it possible - relationships with the child, the foster family, brothers and sisters, birth parents, fostering practitioners and with the community of foster carers throughout the country.

To find out how you can get involved this year follow us on Facebook and Twitter for all the latest updates or visit [www.ifca.ie](http://www.ifca.ie).

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# 40 families occupy their new Dunlavin homes

16th February saw the final handover to all 40 families of their new homes at Fairgreen Manor, Dunlavin, as Cathaoirleach Shay Cullen, alongside local councillors and representatives from Circle VHA, Dunlavin GAA and Dunlavin and District Forum.



Cathaoirleach of Wicklow County Council Shay Cullen, handing the keys over to new residents Elizabeth Murphy and Rodney Keogh. Pic: Andres Poveda

Comprising of 40 houses, a mix of 2-, 3- and 4-bedroom homes on the outskirts of the village, Fairgreen Manor is an important housing scheme for the village of Dunlavin providing much needed quality social homes to local families.

"We are delighted to welcome the final tenants to Fairgreen Manor, and we wish them the very best in their new homes. Whilst there were many challenges to the delivery of this development, we have been vigilant in ensuring that these new homes were built and completed to the highest standards and have all the necessary certification to ensure our tenant families have safe and quality constructed A rated, low energy homes



Cllr Patsy Glenmon, Theresa O'Brien, Senior Executive Officer at Wicklow County Council, Cllr Avril Cronin, Cathaoirleach of Baltinglass Municipal District, Cathaoirleach of Wicklow County Council Shay Cullen, David Porter from the Council's Housing Department, and John Hannigan, CEO of Circle VHA. Pic: Andres Poveda

and it is great to finally get to this point to deliver these homes to local families in housing need. Fairgreen Manor is a special development as it is a community within a community, with tenants originating from the village itself, with many

children and grandchildren, brothers and sisters and families all living together in the same estate or within close proximity to each other. We'd like to thank Wicklow County Council for their assistance in the delivery of

the scheme and the Department of Housing and AIB as our funding partners for the project." Says, Russell Grainge, Director of Property at Circle Voluntary Housing Association. The land, former home of Dunlavin GAA

Club from 1974 - 2000, plays homage to many golden memories.

A special mention on the Fairgreen Manor Estate welcome sign is a nod to the GAA's legacy for present and future Dunlaviners and visitors alike.

## 'Development Levies must be spent in Greystones to cope with development'

Cllr Derek Mitchell is calling for Development Levies raised in Greystones to be spent in Greystones



Cllr Derek Mitchell

"Council management are proposing a €1M fund for rural areas, especially West Wicklow, funded from Development Levies," said Cllr Mitchell. "These are paid by developers on each house and are meant to fund infrastructure to support those houses such as footpaths, roads, playgrounds and Social facilities. However there is little development in rural areas compared to the fast growing areas of Greystones, Newtown and Wicklow Town where there is much need of new infrastructure.

"The capital funding for West Wicklow is already 20 times more than Greystones and its revenue spend is over twice as much even though the population is equal. This imbalance slows down providing for all the new residents in the new houses. I'm calling for the Development levies to be spent where the levies are raised."

## 'New retrofitting scheme could be out of reach for most people in Wicklow'

Social Democrats TD Jennifer Whitmore spoke in the Dáil during Statements on the new home retrofitting scheme citing concerns that the scheme could end up being out of reach for many people in Wicklow.

The scheme will provide 50% of the cost of a deep retrofit while homeowners take up a low interest loan to cover the rest.

The Party Spokesperson on Climate Action said, "We've seen a lot of fanfare around the recent announcement of the new Home Energy Upgrade Scheme by government and while it's wide in scope, it's not ambitious.

"There are huge concerns as to whether this scheme will in fact reach the target of retrofitting half a million homes by 2030.

"Firstly, the scheme is largely reliant on the private-sector to bring prices down. In the meantime, the average deep retrofit could cost €50,000 with people

having to take a loan out. So many households in Wicklow are pinned to their collar with mortgages, high childcare costs and the rising cost of living. The last thing people want to do is take on another loan. We need to introduce other measures in tandem with the national retrofit programme to make this more affordable including the Social Democrats' proposal for a pay-as-you-save scheme. This would enable homeowners to pay back what they are saving in their bills to the utility company directly.

"Other existing schemes targeting those on low income are still not at full capacity and are waiting on average 24 months to get their



Jennifer Whitmore TD

home retrofitted.

"We are entering a stage where skilled labour will also be in short supply threatening the scheme's capacity to meet our target. There are also delays to the opening up of three more centres of excellence

for retrofitting apprenticeships and only 104 people currently studying in the other three centres of excellence.

"I also raised the concern that only a part of the Carbon Tax revenue is being used towards helping those in fuel poverty. I have consistently requested that the whole of carbon tax be ringfenced to help those vulnerable to rising energy prices.

"What is clear is that the scale at which we need to achieve our energy targets requires multiple funding streams including pay-as-you-save, innovative ways of increasing apprenticeship numbers and ringfencing valuable income from the carbon tax to put towards protecting those who are still waiting to get a retrofit or who will not be able to afford a loan in this scheme," concluded Whitmore.

## Newcastle residential development gets green light

An Bord Pleanála has granted planning permission for a development of nine residential units and a commercial unit in Newcastle.

The site is on the eastern side of the Main Street, adjoining the Rockingham development to the north and with frontage onto Leamore Lane.

Wicklow County Council granted permission for the development in April 2021, and a third party appeal was then lodged in May 2021.

The third party appeal expressed concerns that the matter of foul drainage was not adequately assessed; that there could be a flood risk in the future (It was noted in the appeal that there was flooding from the Newcastle River to the front gates of the appellant's home and the neighbouring property eight years ago and also in 2009); and that there would be increased traffic onto Leamore Lane.

The appeal also expressed the concern about the potential impact of the proposed development upon the visual integrity of Newcastle. Concern was expressed that the stone wall to Rockingham's Barn would not be visible if the development went ahead. Rockingham's Barn is not a protected structure, however it dates from circa 1905 and is a landmark building.

In making its decision, ABP stated that the development is situated within a Primary Development Area as delineated in the Newcastle

Settlement Strategy 2016-2022, and that subject to compliance with conditions the nature and scale of development would constitute an 'acceptable residential density' in this rural location and would not seriously injure the residential or visual amenity of the area, would not detract from the character of the village, and would be acceptable in terms of pedestrian, cyclist and traffic safety.



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# Aughrim Garda named in sex assault case

A Circuit Court judge has lifted a gagging order imposed by a District Court judge to prevent the naming of a garda charged with false imprisonment and sexual assault.

William Ryan (35), who is stationed at Aughrim garda station in Co Wicklow, is charged with falsely imprisoning the woman and three counts of sexual assault her at Aughrim garda station on September 29, 2020.

He also faces an allegation of false imprisonment of the woman at the same place and on the same date. The fifth charge is for engaging in offensive conduct of a sexual nature at another location in Leinster between August 23, 2019, and February 25 last year.

At a hearing last Thursday a trial date was set for June 4, 2024.

Last October, on foot of an application by defence solicitor Martin Moran at Dublin District Court, Judge Treasa Kelly ordered that the man's name or occupation were not to be published.

Lawyers for a number of news media organisations brought an application to have the order lifted but Judge Kelly

refused to do this. She sent the case forward to Dublin Circuit Criminal Court for trial.

At the first Circuit Court appearance last week Tom Murphy BL, for the press organisations, said that there was no basis to restrict the identification of this defendant and that the defence had failed to put forward any grounds of substance to justify doing so. He said that the defendant's personal right to privacy was not a basis for restricting the Constitutional right for justice to be done in public.

He said that it was "very clear" from previous judgements that there were only two grounds for imposing reporting restrictions.

He said the first was legislative provisions restricting publication and the second was where there is a real identifiable risk of an unfair trial arising from publication.

He said there was no evidence that identifying

By Declan Brennan

this accused would impair his right to a fair trial. He said that the rights of the media have been, and continue to be, restricted since October.

The court has heard that the reporting of the defendant's name will not give rise to identification of the complainant, which would be the grounds for an anonymity order.

Judge Melanie Greally adjourned the matter to allow time to consider the arguments submitted and the relevant case law. Last Thursday morning she said that the reporting restrictions were granted on the basis of the privacy rights of the defendant and the sensitive nature of the case.

She said that neither of these were a recognised basis for reporting restrictions. She said that there was no evidence that Mr Ryan's right to a fair trial would in any way be impeded by the publication of his name.

She ordered that the

restrictions be lifted. After lawyers for Mr Ryan submitted that the media organisations should have appealed the district court order rather than applying to the circuit court, Judge Greally said that she "habitually" lifted orders made in the lower court.



Lorna Doran McEvoy, with Eamonn and Mary Doran at the launch of the South Wicklow Drama Festival in Jim Byrne's, Carnew. The festival will take place from March 20th to 26th. See page 16 for details.

## Four firearms and drugs valued at €48,000 seized in raid

Last Wednesday, as part of an intelligence led operation, Revenue officers seized various quantities of MDMA, Ketamine and LSD with an estimated value of €48,000 following the search, under warrant, of a premises in the Wicklow area.

The seizure was made as a result of a joint operation conducted by Revenue's Customs Service, the Garda National Drugs & Organised Crime Bureau (GNDOCB) and the Wicklow Divisional Drugs Unit.

A follow up search of a vehicle resulted in the recovery of four firearms, consisting of a Sten machine gun and three semi-automatic pistols, two of which were loaded, as well as a silencer and a quantity of ammunition which were subsequently seized by An Garda Síochána. They were subsequently seized by An Garda Síochána.

Two men, aged 30 and 26, and two women, aged 25 and 23, were also arrested by An Garda Síochána.

The man (30) and woman (25) arrested and detained under Section 30 of the Offences Against the State Act 1939 have been released from custody.

The man (26) and woman (23) arrested and detained under Section 2 of the Criminal Justice (Drug Trafficking) Act 1996, have both been charged. The man was scheduled to appear before Bray District Court on Thursday 24th February. The woman has been released and will appear before the courts at a later date.

This operation was part of Revenue's ongoing joint investigations targeting organised crime groups and the importation, sale and supply of illegal drugs. If businesses, or members of the public, have any information regarding drug smuggling, they can contact Revenue in confidence on Confidential Phone Number 1800 295 295.



The Sten machine gun that was seized last week.

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**STEVEN MATTHEWS TD**

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📘 STEVEN MATTHEWS TD



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# Public consultation report published for offshore wind project

Energia has published its first public consultation report for the South Irish Sea offshore renewable energy project. The proposed South Irish Sea project aims to contribute to decarbonising our energy supply and achieving Ireland's 2030 climate action targets. It is proposed that the offshore renewable energy project would be located at a minimum of 10km and up to 25km off the coasts of Co. Wexford and south Co. Wicklow.

The introductory public consultation period, held in autumn 2021, provided an early opportunity for the public to learn about the South Irish Sea project and invited the public to provide feedback on the project.

This was Energia's first consultation after the Irish energy firm received a Foreshore Licence from the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage last September to carry out sea surveys for the wind farm project.

During the non-statutory public consultation, there were 4,010 views of the dedicated project website and 730 visits to Energia's virtual exhibition room, culminating in a total of 46 submissions to the project team.

Publishing the consultation report, Eoin McPartland, Offshore Renewables Manager with Energia said, "Energia wishes to thank everyone who submitted feedback during this early round of public consultation. We were delighted to have had such positive engagement with so many people through our public webinars, information clinics and ongoing phone and email information service. All feedback provided through various channels has been fully considered by the project team and will inform and shape the project

going forward.

"Consultation with local communities, the fishing industry and all interested stakeholders forms a key part of the South Irish Sea project.

"The introductory consultation period was the first of a number of non-statutory public consultations that will be held as the project is developed. The public will also have an opportunity to submit views on the project at the statutory public consultation, which will happen when the planning application is submitted to An Bord Pleanála.

"We are committed to ongoing engagement with the community and interested stakeholders as the South Irish Sea project progresses."

There was an understanding of the need for climate action expressed by respondents throughout the consultation. A wide selection of topics was raised in the feedback relating to the planning process, project benefits, visual impacts and fishing. Responses from the project team to each topic are contained in the report.

The proposed South Irish Sea project will provide clean electricity for over 500,000 homes and this significant investment will bring many additional benefits

including career opportunities and a multi-million Euro community benefit fund to the south east region.

Energia currently supplies approximately 20% of all electricity on the island of Ireland. The development timeline for these projects is up to 10 years, therefore it is necessary that the small number of early-stage projects, like South Irish Sea, that have made significant progress to date, continue to achieve key development milestones enabling them to play a part in Ireland's 2030 energy system.

Currently, the project team is undertaking offshore and onshore studies to inform the Environmental Impact assessment (EIA) and design process as well as site suitability investigations. It is anticipated that a planning application for the proposed South Irish Sea project will be lodged in 2023.

Throughout the development of the projects, the Fisheries Liaison Officer and Community Liaison Officer will continue to be available to discuss the project with the community. They can be contacted at any stage of the project using the contact details which are available on the project website.

## New Rathdrum library officially opens this week

Councillor Pat Kennedy has expressed his delight at the news that the new library in Rathdrum is to open on Tuesday 1st March after construction and fit out was completed a number of months ago.

Cllr. Kennedy said "I have had a great number of people contact me enquiring as to when the new library in Rathdrum will be open and everyone has waited with great patience. I am now delighted to be able to announce that the library will open Tuesday, 1st March."

### Opening hours for the library are:

Monday: Closed  
Tuesday: 10am - 1pm & 2pm - 5pm  
Wednesday: 2pm - 5pm & pm - 8.30pm  
Thursday: 10am - 1pm & 2pm - 5pm  
Friday: 10am - 1pm & 2pm - 5pm  
Saturday: 10am - 1pm  
Sunday: Closed  
Bank Holiday Weekends: Closed Saturday, Sunday, & Monday

Cllr. Kennedy went on to say "I've worked to try and deliver a library for many years and, while it has taken some time to deliver, I am absolutely delighted that we now have an opening date. It will be of great benefit to all in the town and it is great to finally see it come to fruition. I would like to thank all those who worked closely with me to bring this idea to a reality, Director Michael Nicholson and in staff in Wicklow County Council, Wicklow County Council Chef Librarian Brendan Martin, and all the local people from the Rathdrum area who supported me while working on this."



Cllr Pat Kennedy at the new Rathdrum Library



Cathaoirleach of Greystones Municipal District Lourda Scott opens the new Charlesland Dog Park with Cllr Gerry Walsh, Rosalie Brown, Summer Brown, Bernadette Stokes, Stephen Stokes, Michael Nicholson, Cllr Derek Michell, and Buddy and Coco. Pic: Michael Kelly

## New defibrillator in Arklow

Arklow Community First Responders has announced that Arklow has another Public Access Defibrillator (P.A.D.) at Arklow Train Station.

John Summers of the Arklow Community First Responders said "We are very grateful to Iarnród Éireann Irish Rail for providing the necessary power supply to host the heated cabinet. We feel its placement is an ideal location as the station has a turnover of approx. 1,100 people per week going through it. Big Thank You to David Byrne for all his help.

"This P.A.D. like all others in Arklow will be available 24/7/365 should it be needed in a cardiac emergency. This is our community's 11th defibrillator; these life saving devices are only in situ through the ongoing support and generosity of our local community. Thank you for your tremendous and overwhelming support to our voluntary group over the last 11 years."

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# Cllrs call 'halt' to Greenway plans

Independent councillor Joe Behan on Friday served a Section 140 resolution signed by him and other councillors to Chief Executive of Wicklow County Council Brian Gleeson directing him to withdraw the current Blessington Greenway Plan.

Councillors are asking that the proposals be withdrawn so that certain elements of the plan can be removed. They say that there was a lack of consultation with them and members of the public before the plans were submitted to An Bord Pleanála, and they are also asking for the matter to be placed on the agenda at next week's meeting of Wicklow County Council.

The Section 140 gives elected councillors the power to require of the Chief Executive "any particular act, matter or thing specifically mentioned in the resolution and which the local authority can lawfully do or effect in the performance of the executive functions of the Local Authority."

The Section 140 delivered to Mr Gleeson stated: "In accordance with Section 140 of the Local Government Act, 2001 as amended by the Local Government Reform Act 2014, we, the undersigned Members of Wicklow County Council, direct the Chief Executive of Wicklow County Council to withdraw the Blessington Greenway proposals from consideration by An Bord Pleanála.

"This will allow for the removal of the elements of the Greenway Plan which will cause serious negative impacts on the lives of the people living in the areas surrounding the Blessington Lakes including the installation of traffic

lights on Knockeiran, Baltyboys and Vallemount Bridges and the proposed new parking restrictions on Blessington Main Street which are widely opposed by the local community.

"The reason for the motion is the lack of meaningful consultation with elected Members of Wicklow County Council and the general public before the matter was referred to An Bord Pleanála.

"We further direct that the matter be placed before the Members of Wicklow County Council at the forthcoming Council Meeting to be held at 2.00 pm on Monday 7th March, 2022 in the Chamber of Wicklow County Council, County Buildings, Wicklow."

## Donnelly opens new Primary Care Centre in Baltinglass

Minister for Health Stephen Donnelly has officially opened the new Primary Care Centre in Baltinglass.

The centre which has been operating since January last year has helped to transform health services in the region.

The centre which offers services to over 2,700 people in the Baltinglass and Dunlavin area is one of seven PCCs now operating in the county.

An eighth PCC is scheduled to open in Arklow later this year while plans are underway for a ninth in Greystones.

The state-of-art 18,600 sq. ft. facility hosts a National Ambulance Service Base as well as a wide range of services offering everything from chiropody, a diabetic nurse, physiotherapy and mental health services.

Minister Donnelly said: "It's fantastic to see a facility like this

in place in west Wicklow.

"It has been a game changer for the level and quality of healthcare that can be provided to the local people.

"The staff I have spoken to have spoken of how it makes such a difference to have all the specialists in one place so they can much more easily provide patients with the holistic care they need.

"And the even better news is that with the COVID restrictions being lifted even more services are going to be offered on site.

"This facility is a perfect example of how we are in the process of transforming healthcare in this country by bringing services into the community. I would like to thank all of the staff at the Primary Care Centre for the immense work they have done in providing a first-class service to the local community," concluded Minister Donnelly



Minister Donnelly

## Calls for better accessibility to Greystones, Kilcoole, Newcastle beaches

Cathaoirleach of Greystones Municipal District Cllr Lourda Scott is calling for increased accessibility to the district's beaches. Currently there is no wheelchair access onto beaches in Kilcoole and Newcastle, while the south beach in Greystones has a portable beach mat which provides access onto the beach but not to the water.

According to the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, ratified in 2018, Ireland has an obligation to ensure that children with disabilities have equal access with other children to participation in play, recreation and leisure and sporting activities. While great steps have been taken locally, access to the sea is still very limited.

Speaking on the matter Cllr Scott says: "I have been contacted by several families on this issue. We are incredibly lucky to live by such a beautiful coastline. During the pandemic in particular people really appreciated being able to take a walk by the sea and going

for a swim for their mental and physical health. The recent Social Infrastructure audit report also highlighted the value people place in our natural amenities. Unfortunately this isn't an option for many people in our community that have challenges with their mobility. The addition of the beach mat in Greystones South beach was a welcome step in the right direction however there is more that can be done. Parents have told me that while the mat helps the person with mobility issues to get onto the beach, they can't get close enough to the water to supervise their other children in the water. In reality this means the

family avoids going to the beach at all. In Kilcoole it is virtually impossible to access the beach if you are not able bodied. This adds to the challenges families already face and removes a valuable source of physical and mental health benefits. It's not just young families that are affected by this as I have also been contacted by older people who experience similar challenges. Luckily Wicklow County Council are very proactive in this area and are keen to resolve this. I have spoken to the Access officer about measures we can take to improve accessibility as well as a supplier of all terrain beach wheelchairs. WCC are very open to addressing this and I will continue to work with them until we find solutions that work for everyone. I would ask anyone that has experienced difficulties accessing our beaches to please get in touch."



John Summers of the Arklow Community First Responders with the Arklow Sea Scouts Tiller Troop who took part in an Emergency Skills course at the Arklow Sea Scout's Hall



## Grief can be unpredictable.

When someone dies, the grief that follows can be difficult and feel overwhelming. Some feelings of grief come and go while others can persist.

Everyone's experience is different. But it's important to remember that you're not alone.

Talking about your loss with the people around you can help. Reach out to someone you trust.

**We're here too if you need extra help or support.**

- Visit [hse.ie/grief](https://hse.ie/grief) or [bereaved.ie](https://bereaved.ie)
- Call our Bereavement Support Line on freephone **1800 80 70 77** (Monday to Friday, 10am to 1pm).
- Or speak to your GP.





# Greystones community gardeners shut out

A group of sustainable gardeners from Greystones and Kilcoole have found themselves in a 'crisis situation' after their 2022 sublease request for their sustainable garden at Shoreline Leisure Centre in Greystones was turned down on January 18th.

The Greystones & Kilcoole Community Garden group (GKCG) has been subleasing the site from Shoreline, who in turn leases it from Wicklow County Council. The group says they had been seeking a mutually beneficial solution to the issue but then on 5th February found that the garden's gate had been boarded shut, restricting their access. The group says that their future is now in doubt as they are unsure if the group will be able to continue.

According to GKCG, Shoreline wishes to use the garden towards a National Quality Standards Acaids effort. GKCG is appealing for help to find a fair and workable solution for their current membership and for future generations of local community gardeners.

In a statement, GKCG said "This community garden has been a lifeline for many families and even more so during the time of

the COVID pandemic, climate change, and biodiversity collapse. Regrettably, we now find ourselves without a place to grow and continue as a community-led organisation for the coming years. Our members, along with other community volunteers including Greystones Tidy Towns, have invested a massive amount of work and effort to get the garden up to its current standard. It is a safe, inclusive, tidy, biodiverse and enjoyable place to spend time, allowing us to learn from and teach each other through the ages.

"After nearly 14 years of operating as a community-led organisation, and on the eve of planting season, one can imagine how extremely upsetting it has been to suddenly discover that our request to renew our 2022 sublease was denied by Shoreline Leisure Centre. Despite our email to Shoreline management on 1st October 2021 to request the 2022 sublease, it was-

n't until we emailed them again on 18th Jan 2022 that they replied with this seemingly uncompromising denial. It is understood that Shoreline Leisure Centre wants to use the garden towards a National Quality Standards Award effort and other Shoreline programmes. This is a bitter pill to swallow knowing that Shoreline has another location in Greystones devoted to outdoor activities and with space to open additional gardens, thus allowing them to use that garden towards their project.

"GKCG was never asked to collaborate or make any effort to discuss how we could have worked together on the submission for the National Quality Standards Awards, provide programme support, a few of our raised beds, or to plan a just and considerate transition. Furthermore, our efforts to amicably discuss a mutually beneficial outcome have been ignored and dismissed,

to date, by Shoreline Leisure Centre's upper management.

"We are currently seeking help from the Wicklow County Council CEO, our local Councillors, Ministers and TDs, and from the general public. We ask that 14 years of a successful, multi-generational, inclusive, community organisation not be forgotten or thrown by the wayside.

"If we cannot be granted a sublease to access the site at Shoreline, we have worked so hard to improve and protect, then we find ourselves in significant need of support, resources, and a suitable location in Greystones from which to rebuild. At this time we are unsure if we will be able to continue as an organisation since we have no access to land to grow or the resources to relocate.

"We hope to continue our contribution to the community at large and to formulate a framework that enables more publicly



Wicklow defender Jackie Byrne beats the Wexford forwards to the ball during the Lidl National Football League Division 3 clash in Aghrim. The final score was Wicklow 0-6 to Wexford 1-3.

supported community gardens. We still hope that we can find a mutually beneficial solution with Shoreline Leisure Centre that doesn't sacrifice a successful project and community group to achieve their business goals. If all goes well then we still might be able to

get our trowels into the ground for planting for the coming season before St. Patrick's Day!"

GKCG has been located in the Shoreline car park since its creation in 2009. "Our mission has been to build a community garden where its members have a place to grow

organic vegetables, provide education regarding locally grown food and flowers, and create a place of tranquillity," they say.

The award-winning community consists of over 25 families and over 75 individuals, who have come on board through an open enrollment form on

their website. Since late 2019 the group has invested over €4,500 of membership contributions towards renovating and building 27 new raised beds. In all, over €10,000 of public grants and members' funds have gone into the community garden since its inception.



## WOMEN'S MINI MARATHON

The Vhi Women's Mini Marathon is the largest all women's event of its kind in the world. The first Women's Mini Marathon began in Dublin in 1983 with 9,000 entrants, it has grown in popularity and the event now hosts approximately 30,000 women on the June bank holiday weekend.

Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, the 2020 and 2021 events were cancelled, and the organisers hope that this year's race will help charities in their fundraising efforts. Women from across the 32 counties of Ireland, U.K. and Europe take part each year to raise vital funds for their chosen charities and causes. An estimated €226m has been raised for charity since its beginning in 1983.

All charities benefit as it is the women themselves who decide who they will support, and many local causes gain vital revenue from the event.

Go to [vhiwomensminimarathon.ie](http://vhiwomensminimarathon.ie) to register your interest for 2022.



## Arklow Cancer Support Group

Arklow Cancer Support Group is asking for your support in this year's Women's Mini Marathon.

"Like many other businesses and groups we were forced to close our doors in March 2020 with the sudden lockdown restrictions due to Covid-19. 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!"

## Wicklow Hospice needs you!

Could you walk, jog or run for Wicklow Hospice in the VHI Women's Mini Marathon on the 5th of June?

"Get the girls together for some fun or challenge yourself in a solo run over the bank holiday weekend! We hope to see old friends and welcome new faces to our team this year but don't worry if you can't take part, perhaps you could sponsor a friend or help us spread the word instead! By supporting Wicklow Hospice you can make a real impact raised will fund the outstanding bank loan, the purchasing of specialised equipment and on-going enhancements to the Hospice.

"To register for your free Wicklow Hospice t-shirt and sponsorship card visit [www.olh.ie](http://www.olh.ie) or call us for advice on fundraising, setting up an online fundraising page on 01-406 8868 for a chat. We'd love to have you on our team!"



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Could you walk, jog or run for Wicklow Hospice in the VHI Women's Mini Marathon on the 5th of June?

To register for your free Wicklow Hospice t-shirt and sponsorship card visit [www.olh.ie](http://www.olh.ie) or call us for advice on fundraising & setting up an online fundraising page on 01-406 8868

If you can't take part, perhaps you could sponsor a friend or help us spread the word instead!

**We'd love to have you on our team!**



## ARKLOW CANCER SUPPORT

We provide a wide range of services including Volunteer to Drive, Counselling and specialist therapies. Contact us for additional information.

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# CAREER DAY

**Tuesday 8th March 2022**  
**10am-3pm**

- LECTURES ON CAREERS
- WORKSHOPS
- DEMONSTRATIONS
- MEET THE TEACHERS
- SPEAK WITH STUDENTS

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Mural in Bray Arcade

## Bray Tidy Towns wins Main Street Award

Bray Tidy Towns has been awarded a certificate from Wicklow County Council in recognition of coming in 1st place in the Tidy Towns, Estates and Environmental Awards, in the Main Street category for large towns.

On receiving the award, BTT stated "On behalf of all our volunteers and supporters in the community, Bray Tidy Towns are delighted to receive the Wicklow County Council Large Town Award. The Award also acknowledges progress made by Bray Municipal District re Litter/Plantings and Shop Local Signage. Bray is on its way back.

"A large number of students and other volunteers have adopted a spot and kept litter volumes down, especially in badly hit areas. The well kept Seafront is also very much worth a mention. Our programme of work projects is continuing with planting on the Ravenswell Road Walkway during the months of March and April."



# Walk in the footsteps of influential women who shaped history

This March, in celebration of International Women's Day, non-profit organisation New Acropolis Ireland are walking in the footsteps of some of the influential women who shaped Ireland's history.

"Join us for online talks across our three centres in Bray, Dublin and Cork where we will explore the lives of Countess Markievicz, Lady Gregory and St. Brigid. What can their examples mean for all of us in 21st century Ireland? Countess Markievicz was a rebel, suffragist, champion of the poor and working class, first female cabinet minister in Europe. She embodied citizenship, leadership and striving for the common good. Lady Gregory was one of the key characters of the Irish Literary Revival, a writer and editor, compiler and publisher of Irish mythology, and the co-founder of the Abbey theatre.

"The enigmatic figure of Brigid, whether a goddess or a saint, remains a mystery profoundly intertwined with our origins. As a saint, she was an example of limitless generosity and courage, as a goddess a patron of poetry and crafts, love and death, fire and water. Their footsteps inspire us to discover the very ideals we all share."

Contact Ivona at New Acropolis Bray on (01) 551 6833 or visit [www.acropolis.ie](http://www.acropolis.ie)



Countess Markievicz, Lady Gregory and St. Brigid

## Wicklow innovators encouraged to 'Be the change you seek' and apply to Social Entrepreneurs Ireland

Social Entrepreneurs Ireland (SEI) is encouraging people from Wicklow who have an innovative idea to solve a particular social problem to "be the change you seek" by applying for a place on its Ideas Academy - aimed at those with an early-stage idea to solve a social problem or Impact Programme - aimed at high-potential social entrepreneurs looking to grow the impact of their organisation.

SEI's vision is an Ireland where people solve every social problem, and its mission is to find people with solutions to these problems and support them on every step of their journey. Since its foundation in 2004, SEI has supported more than 500 social entrepreneurs all around Ireland who have directly impacted the lives of millions of people and contributed significantly to creating employment opportunities.

Commenting on the national call for applications, CEO of Social Entrepreneurs Ireland, Tim Griffiths said: "Every day, in every community across Ireland, we see people stepping up with solutions to solve social problems, taking action and being the change they wish to see. We call these people social entrepreneurs, and at SEI, we're looking to find and support even more of them in Wicklow.

"We're encouraging anyone with even the seed of an idea to create positive change, or anyone who needs help to take their solution to the next level, to apply to SEI for support on your journey."

SEI's Ideas Academy has up to 45 places available for people with innovative early-stage ideas to solve social problems. The three-month programme will be delivered online in 2022 and will provide participants with the support and direction they need as they take the first steps from idea to action, sparking a new generation of social entrepreneurs. Participants will be sup-

ported to clearly articulate, refine and progress their solution, to build skills and accelerate learning in core areas of importance to social entrepreneurs, and to move from idea to action. Participants also have the opportunity to pitch for a portion of a €40,000 seed fund at the end of the programme to pilot their idea.

Alumni of the Ideas Academy include Eliya Lavine, founder of Seed Scholars who is currently running a pilot programme in Bray National School. Seed Scholars is a nature-based experiential education initiative that seeks to re-root young people and

their networks in relationships of curiosity and care with the outdoor environment.

Social Entrepreneurs Ireland's prestigious Impact Programme has up to five places and €€100,000 in unrestricted funding available in 2022. Awardees will join a nine-month accelerator programme, where they will receive mentorship, training, and consultancy in areas such as leadership development, fundraising, governance, strategic planning, and communications. Awardees each receive €20,000 in direct funding, pro-bono support from

partner organisations and access to a network of fellow social entrepreneurs and business experts.

Alumni of the Impact Programme include Greystones-based social entrepreneur Liz, Gleeson, founder of Shapes of Grief who provide comprehensive grief education and resources to individuals, mental health professionals and healthcare workers worldwide.

Social Entrepreneurs Ireland will host an informative Spark Session event for potential applicants on Monday, 7th March at 1pm. The event will outline the supports available

through the two programmes. On the eve of International Women's Day, attendees will hear from two SEI alumni - Madeleine Murray, co-founder of Change by Degrees and Sinead Ryan, founder of Little Fitness. SEI staff and alumni will be on hand to answer questions about the application process over the course of 90 minutes.

Applications for the Ideas Academy and Impact Programme are open until midnight on Tuesday, 5th April. Interested candidates can apply or find out more at [www.socialentrepreneurs.ie](http://www.socialentrepreneurs.ie).



Pictured at the announcement of SEI's Ideas Academy were Eliya Lavine, Seed Scholars (Ideas Academy graduate), with Joanna, Arthur and Elisabeth Widmann, sublings from Westmeath. Pic: Mark Steadman



# New foster carers sought in communities across Wicklow

*Tusla National Fostering Week 2022 highlights the importance of community in the lives of young people*

Tusla-Child and Family Agency last week marked Tusla National Fostering Week 2022 (21st to the 27th of February), its fostering awareness and recruitment campaign. Now in its third year, the campaign focuses on the need to recruit carers for older children in communities across Ireland. A local placement will ensure a young person can maintain important connections with their friends, sports, school, and community, and reach their full potential.

Across Ireland 3,984 foster carers currently open their homes to 5,265 children. Foster carers play a critical role in the child protection system and ultimately a key role in the wellbeing of young people.

Speaking at the launch of Tusla National Fostering Week 2022, Minister for Children, Disability, Equality and Integration, Roderic O'Gorman TD said: "We all share an ambition for children in care to thrive and to reach their potential. For most children in care, this is best achieved through foster care and the committed care these children receive from foster carers, in a family setting. Ireland can be proud of the fact that over 90% of all children in care, reside in foster care, a figure that compares favourably with our European neighbours. I would like to

would urge you to have another think about the positive difference you would make in the life of children and young people in your community."

Commenting on Tusla National Fostering Week 2022, Minister for Children, Disability, Equality and Integration, Roderic O'Gorman TD said: "We all share an ambition for children in care to thrive and to reach their potential. For most children in care, this is best achieved through foster care and the committed care these children receive from foster carers, in a family setting. Ireland can be proud of the fact that over 90% of all children in care, reside in foster care, a figure that compares favourably with our European neighbours. I would like to

take this opportunity to again recognise and acknowledge the work of foster carers. They have made this achievement possible, through their committed care of these children. I would encourage anyone who is considering becoming a foster carer to contact Tusla on the details provided and to make that first step in improving the wellbeing and happiness of some of our most vulnerable children."

Tusla Care Leaver, Shannon Joyce said: "I first went into relative foster care with my younger brother and sister when I was seven years old. I stayed with my family until summer 2021. My whole experience of foster care has been a rollercoaster to say the least. I've met so many people and heard so many stories through-

out the years. I wouldn't change a thing! I'm so happy that I can take all the experiences I have had and all the lessons I have learned and use them to be the best role model and mentor I can be for the young people I teach. Fostering can be an amazingly positive experience for the carers, and children. If it's something you are feeling drawn to you can learn more about it on [fostering.ie](https://fostering.ie)"

Catherine Bond, CEO, Irish Foster Care Association (IFCA) said: "The Irish Foster Care Association is delighted to support Tusla's National Fostering Week. Fostering provides a loving and stable environment in which a child or young person can reach their full potential. The transition to foster care can be



Care leavers Nicole Wynne and Shannon Joyce pictured with Kate Duggan, Tusla Director of Services and Integration (Centre) at the launch of Tusla National Fostering Week 2022. The aim of National Fostering Week is to raise awareness of fostering and recruit new carers across Ireland.

challenging for any child, but older children and teenagers are at a particularly important time in their development. An increase in local foster carers across Ireland will enable a young person to maintain their connections with their friends, sports, school and community, all of which provide comfort in difficult times. We would encour-

age anyone thinking about fostering to get in touch and learn more". Marissa Ryan, CEO, Empowering People In Care (EPIC) added: "Every child deserves a loving home. Research from around the world has shown that family settings are the best possible place for children to thrive and achieve their full potential. At EPIC, we see first-hand the

hugely positive impact foster-carers have on the children and young people we work with. Foster-carers change lives when they offer children a place to call home." It can take just one adult to contribute to a child's wellbeing and happiness. Fostering is a fulfilling and positive role, that is open to people from all walks of life.

To find out more about becoming a foster carer, see [fostering.ie](https://fostering.ie), call freephone 1800 226 771 or you can email [tusla.fostering@tusla.ie](mailto:tusla.fostering@tusla.ie). Tusla National Fostering Week is supported by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs, the Irish Foster Care Association (IFCA) and EPIC, a national organisation that works with children in care.

## New open call launched seeking ambitious solutions to help unlock housing issues

The Irish Architecture Foundation (IAF) and The Housing Agency have announced details of a competition that is looking for innovative ideas to improve Ireland's housing sector, including in Wicklow.

Called 'Housing Unlocked', the initiative is calling for architects, together with people from a variety of disciplines and members of the public with a common interest in housing, to team up and submit ideas to solve housing issues in towns and villages in Wicklow.

Entries are now open, with practical ideas and creative thinking being sought in the areas of density, construction technologies, social inclusion, environmental and other issues. A jury of high-profile judges will select around eight submissions which will each receive funding of €7,500 to develop their proposals into an exhibition piece. The exhibition will open to the public in

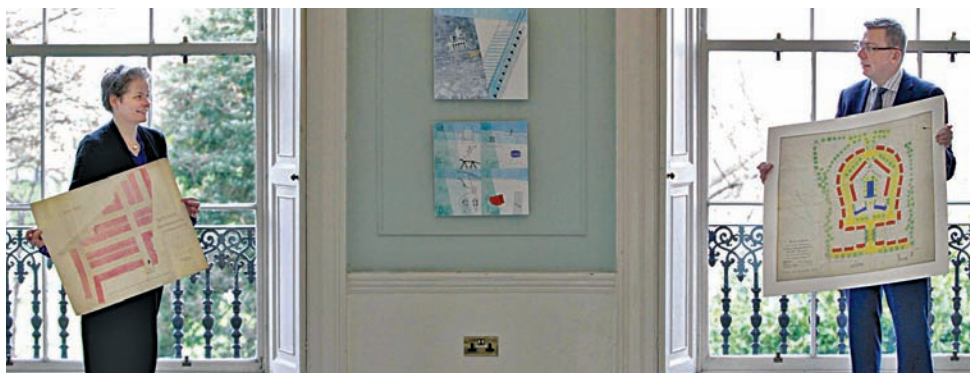
September this year.

Nathalie Weadick, Director of the IAF, said: "Public contributions at recent IAF debates have shown that there has never been a better time for design to rethink how we can deliver homes for sustainable communities in urban areas. 'Housing Unlocked' is driven by the need to apply innovation and expertise, not just to the final product, but to the entire system that delivers homes in towns, cities and villages. A simple idea can produce a powerful effect."

Bob Jordan, CEO of The Housing Agency, said: "The Housing Agency is looking forward to being part of this project. We are seeking innovative and practical solutions that

address the housing issues in Ireland. We are asking applicants to share practical solutions to the everyday issues that they are facing when it comes to delivering homes. We would like to invite architects, in collaboration with all those who are interested, to apply for the opportunity to be featured in the public exhibition later in the year."

All submissions must be made through an online form on the 'Housing Unlocked' website at [HousingUnlocked.ie](https://HousingUnlocked.ie), where further information is available. Entering teams must include at least one member with a qualification in architecture. The closing date is midnight on 24th April 2022.



Pictured at the launch of 'Housing Unlocked', a new joint initiative by the Irish Architecture Foundation (IAF) and The Housing Agency, were IAF Director Nathalie Weadick and The Housing Agency CEO Bob Jordan. Photo Credit: Mark Stedman

# I am Raising Amazing

## Tusla is recruiting foster carers in the Dublin South East and Wicklow areas

Join us for an information event:

- GREYSTONES LIBRARY** Mon 7th Mar 11am-1pm & Thurs 10th Mar 2pm-4pm.
- SAMUEL BECKETT CENTRE, BALLYOGAN** Tues 8th Mar 1pm-5pm & Fri 11th Mar 10am-12pm.

**TUSLA**  
An Ghníomhaireacht um Leanaí agus an Teaghlach  
Child and Family Agency

For more information: Visit: [fostering.ie](https://fostering.ie)  
Call: **Freephone 1800 226 771**  
Email: [tusla.fostering@tusla.ie](mailto:tusla.fostering@tusla.ie)



# New shop volunteers needed to help save lives at sea



Wicklow RNLI shop manager Bernie Jarrett

**The RNLI is looking for new shop volunteers to join its lifesaving teams at Wicklow and Arklow RNLI.**

Just like the charity's lifeboats, the RNLI's retail team need a dedicated volunteer crew - people of all ages and abilities - who can give a little time to help save lives at sea. Bernie Jarrett has been fundraising for Wicklow RNLI for 10 years and is the current Shop Manager.

"My first interaction with the RNLI was as a child when I would go down to the golf club with my father who was a golfer. There was a collection box there in the shape of a lifeboat house and when you put money into it, the lifeboat would launch down the slip. I loved it and was always drawn to it. It was years later when I was a member of the choir in Wicklow town that I was approached by an RNLI fundraiser who was retiring and asked if I would be interested in helping out. I attended the AGM and was impressed with what I heard and got involved."

As for what Bernie finds most rewarding about being a shop volunteer, she says: "I remember working one Christmas in the shop and we had just finished the Christmas raffle and I was standing outside in the lashing rain waiting for people to collect prizes. As I was waiting, the lifeboat was requested to launch on a call out. I watched as the volunteer crew ran from every direction to the station to get kitted out and on to the lifeboat and go to the aid of someone in trouble. In that moment, I realised what I was doing here. It is rewarding to know that in some small way by giving your time you have helped to raise the vital funds to help save lives at sea."

"You can gain some invaluable skills and training whilst volunteering at a shop and you become part of an incredible team. If you enjoy meeting and interacting with people, are confident to make a sale and have a couple of hours a week to dedicate to the lifeboat, it really is a role you will love."

"These stalls started selling commemorative RNLI products in around 1920 and quickly moved on to selling souvenirs and Christmas cards with all profits helping save lives at sea," Pauline McGann, RNLI Community Manager explained.

"Today, we have over 170 RNLI shops around the coast and inland, all of which are still run by our dedicated volunteers. They attract many visitors throughout the year and stock an excellent range of unique souvenirs and gifts. The pandemic unfortunately hit our shops hard as they closed for periods of time in line with Covid-19 restrictions. We were delighted when we could reopen them safely in accordance with government guidance and are looking forward to welcoming our visitors in 2022. To do this successfully, we want to grow our team of shop volunteers and are looking for people who enjoy interacting with others, can help us to provide a high level of customer service and ensure our shops continue to be friendly and welcoming places."

To find out more about how you can help generate vital funds, promote the work of the RNLI, and apply, see [volunteering.rnli.org](http://volunteering.rnli.org)

## In For a Penny - six-year-old inspires Dip in the Nip fundraiser for CHI at Crumlin

This St. Patrick's Day, a group of women from all over Ireland will take part in a 'Dip in the Nip' to raise funds for sick children in CHI at Crumlin. This inspiring fundraiser was launched by Penny O'Brien and her mum Sinead. Penny's family came up with this unique and daring event, inspired by Penny, to support the vital work that happens in CHI at Crumlin each and every day.

Penny and her Mum are asking women to get involved and sign up for the 'Dip in the Nip - In for a Penny' via their idonate page, details can be found on the Children's Health Foundation website [www.childrenshealth.ie](http://www.childrenshealth.ie)

Dip in the Nip has raised almost €80k to date and has an ambitious target of 100k and all the funds raised will be split between Children's Health Foundation Crumlin & Cancer Care Fund for Children at Daisy Lodge House, who are raising funds to build a second Daisy Lodge therapeutic short break centre in Co. Mayo.

In June 2020, 6-year-old Penny O'Brien was diagnosed with Osteosarcoma, a very rare form of bone cancer. She was treated in CHI at Crumlin by the wonderful medical team in St. John's ward.

Penny's Mum, Sinead tells us a little about the journey, "Once in CHI at Crumlin, Penny had a biopsy, when the results came back the medical team confirmed that she had Osteosarcoma. Life changed in that week. Within a couple of days of the diagnosis Penny started her treatment. She had ten months of Chemotherapy and was in St. John's ward. In

September of 2020, she had limb saving surgery. She had the tumour removed together with some of the bone removed and replaced with a prosthetic, she was in St. Michael's ward for this. The medical team started physiotherapy straight away, she was up and walking within two days. In March 2021 Penny finished her chemo and rang the bell. The staff and her pals lined the corridor, it was a very special moment."

Commenting on 'Dip in the Nip - In for a Penny', Denise Fitzgerald, Chief Executive of Children's Health Foundation said,

"From all of us in Children's Health Foundation and on behalf of the staff and families in CHI hospitals and urgent care centres, we would like to express our deepest gratitude to Penny, her family and friends for helping to raise the vital funds to help give every sick child every possible chance to survive, thrive and live to their potential. We would also like to thank every person that has donated and sponsored - your generosity will make a real difference for sick children."

To get involved or find out more, you can visit [www.childrenshealth.ie](http://www.childrenshealth.ie)



Penny O'Brien and Trixie launching the Dip in the Nip for CHI at Crumlin.

## Groups that run community centres invited to network and share their experience

**Running a community centre isn't always easy and the last two years have presented particular challenges for voluntary groups responsible for overseeing the running of our very valuable Community Centres and Halls.**

In the first of their reconnecting communities' events this year, Co. Wicklow PPN is providing an opportunity for these Groups to come together in a safe way to share their experiences, talk about their challenges, learn from each other, and discuss future plans.

Speakers at the event will provide insights from the perspective of an urban and a rural based

community centre and the PPN will launch their new online Funding Resource and provide funding application advice.

Helen Howes Resource Worker for Co Wicklow PPN said "Working together we can support each other to deal with issues and help to keep these important local facilities operating for everyone's benefit". She

added "The groups themselves have a wealth of knowledge and experience between them and there will be lots of time to ask questions and learn from each other"

The meeting will take place on Thursday 10th March from 10am to 12 noon followed by a light lunch & time for chatting in the Ballinacor Community Project,

Glenmalure (Eircode A67 WY83). Booking is essential and available on Eventbrite <https://community-centres-peer-support-session.eventbrite.ie>.

For further information go to [www.countywicklowppn.ie](http://www.countywicklowppn.ie) or you can Email: [info@countywicklowppn.ie](mailto:info@countywicklowppn.ie) or telephone Helen on 087 189 5145 or Grainne on 086 048 7434.





# Wicklow Town Citizens Information Centre closes its doors

Wicklow Town Citizens Information Centre announced that it will close its doors this week on 1st March.

"The health and safety of our staff and our clients are paramount and unfortunately the premises on the Lower Mall is no longer suitable for service delivery," the centre stated.

South Leinster Citizens Information Service is striving to secure funding for a new centre in Wicklow Town but there has been no confirmation as yet.

Information Officer for Wicklow Town, Breda Stanley Pickford, said "we wish to thank all the services in Wicklow Town and the surrounding areas for all their assistance over the last number of years, the volunteers who gave their time, expertise and

commitment to all our clients. I remain optimistic that we will receive the funding to relocate in light of the established need for a citizens Information service in the town."

Development Manager for Wicklow, Martina Cronin, added "our priority is for the people of Wicklow Town to continue being able to access up to date, accurate and independent information/advice/assistance and advocacy on their rights and entitlements. This can be done by availing of our appointment, phone or email service in Bray or Arklow Citizens Information Centres until we are notified if

we have received funding to reopen in a more suitable premises in Wicklow Town".

Martina Cronin stated "Whoever you are, whatever stage in life, we are here to help. Our service is free to anyone living in Ireland. Confidentiality is key for us. We do not talk to other agencies unless you want us to on your behalf. Your query can relate to anything. If we cannot help you we will know where you can get the help and advice you need."

The service will continue to be available in the Bray and Arklow offices. The new telephone number for the Bray office is 0818 07

6780 and the email address is bray@citinfo.ie. They can also be contacted at the Arklow office on 0818 07 6750 and the email address is arklow@citinfo.ie.

"For anyone needing impartial, confidential, non-judgemental and informed advice and support the CIS is here to help. Our website www.citizensinformation.ie is packed full of helpful information. Alternatively, people can call the Citizens Information Phone Service on 0818 07 4000, Monday to Friday, 9am-8pm. We look forward to continuing helping you any way we can."



Bernadette Stokes with Buddy at the opening of the new Dog Park in Charlesland, Greystones

## Covid downgrading of Wicklow NDLS office made permanent

Junior Transport Minister Hildegard Naughten has confirmed that the temporary Covid downgrading of all National Driving Licence Service (NDLS) offices across the State, including the local office located at the Wicklow Enterprise Centre, has now been made permanent.

"The walk-in service previously available was originally discontinued to ensure social distancing and compliance with occupational and public health requirements," she told Independent Clare TD Michael McNamara in the Dáil, continuing: "the current NDLS contract, which was put in place with the front office service provider in 2021, no longer offers a walk-in service."

She outlined that an online service is available for all application types but stated that a "verified MyGovID account, which requires a public services card (PSC), is needed" to avail of the online service. "This is despite a Data Protection Commission investigation into the legality of the Public Services Card which found that there was no lawful basis for a person

to be told they needed the card for anything other than accessing social welfare or benefits," Deputy McNamara explained.

In the Dáil last Thursday evening, Deputy McNamara raised the issue of difficulties encountered by his constituents in availing of the NDLS service in Ennis and explained to the Minister that not everybody was able to go online. He pointed out that government TDs were rightly critical of banks moving their services online because of the effect it had on various sectors, especially the elderly, and here was a government agency doing exactly the same thing.

He told the Junior Transport Minister that a man of retirement age in his constituency had to get his grandchild to make an online appointment for him as he

could no longer walk in to the NDLS Centre. Having completed the forms at the office, he received a form in the post to be signed and he returned to the NDLS and the form would not be accepted. The man subsequently went to the TD's office where he was assisted and the paperwork was emailed.

Another constituent took time out of work to attend his appointment in the NDLS Centre in Ennis and his paperwork was in order - only to discover that the staff would not accept cash from him and he did not have a card. He rang his wife for card details but this would not be accepted as his wife was not present.

McNamara informed the Minister that a woman in her 80's had told him she spent an hour and a half on the phone trying in vain to get an appointment. The TD's office rang the NDLS and spent 45 minutes waiting but nobody answered.

Minister Naughten claimed that no show rates at the Ennis office in January were 12.3% of all booked

appointments and to date in February were 13.3% and she urged customers to ensure that they attend at their appointed time as, where appointments are not held on time, this affects the service for following appointments.

However, Deputy McNamara said he had received reported from neighbouring businesses of elderly customer leaving the office in distress as they had been turned away for being a couple of minutes late but within their 10-minute allotted slot which, he said, might account for the apparently high "no-show" rate.

Minister Naughten confirmed to the Clare TD that an additional staff member was due to commence employment at the centre which, she said, would enable the Ennis office to operate at a two-booth capacity. She also confirmed that she would have the long telephone wait times looked into.

McNamara insisted that the NDLS was "blackguarding the elderly" by the service being provided.

## 'Govt failing most vulnerable children'

The Children's Rights Alliance Report Card for 2022 makes clear that the government is continuing to fail our most vulnerable children, according to Social Democrats Children's Spokesperson Jennifer Whitmore TD.

"The government has received an 'E' grade on child homelessness, due to persistent increases in the numbers of children becoming homeless in 2021. In December, there were 1,077 families and 2,451 children experiencing homelessness across the country. In Dublin, 25pc of children living in emergency accommodation have been there for more than two years," said Deputy Whitmore.

"The report notes that, in the initial phase of the pandemic, the number of families and children experiencing homelessness decreased. However, this was directly related to a ban on evictions and a ban on rent increases. Once the government lifted those measures, the numbers entering homelessness began inexorably increasing once more - and the government has no plan to stop this.

"The government also received an 'E' grade for mental health supports for children - and, in particular, the continued practice of admitting children to adult psychiatric units. Last year, 25 young people were placed on adult wards, which are completely unsuitable for juvenile patients.

"As recently as last month, Children's Ombudsman Dr Niall Muldoon warned the government that its own legislation - the Mental Health (Amendment) Bill 2021 - risks embedding this antiquated and damaging practice even further, by failing to mandate that children should be cared for in an age-appropriate setting.

"Elsewhere in the report, the government failed to progress even relatively straightforward measures that could make a real difference to children's lives. It received a 'D-' grade for failing to expand a very limited pilot programme to deliver free school books and a further 'D' for failing to evaluate four pilot education projects for Traveller and Roma children. Childhood is short and the government has limited time to intervene and make changes that materially improve children's lives. This is particularly true for disadvantaged and vulnerable children, who rely on the State for support and whose families are most impacted by the escalating cost-of-living crisis. The government must stop failing these children and commit to implementing targeted measures that help these children reach their full potential."

## Community audit reveals deficit of facilities in Greystones

An assessment report on the community and recreational needs for Greystones Municipal District has revealed a deficit of facilities in the area.

Greystones Cathaoirleach Cllr Lourda Scott welcomed the publication of the report, which was commissioned after she raised community concerns over shortfalls in infrastructure and community facilities last year.

Consultants were contracted by Wicklow County Council to carry out the community audit.

Key findings of the audit included the notable growth in the population of youth in the area but a deficit of facilities for this group. A high dependency on car transport was noted along with requirements for more public facilities that are freely available and affordable, such as a large public park.

Speaking on the issue Cllr Scott said: "Greystones District has seen huge growth over the past number of years and it is well known by people who live in the area that the infrastructure hasn't kept pace. The key audit findings are exactly what

people have been raising to me from their own experience. In particular, that there is a lot of teenagers and young adults in the area but a deficit of facilities for this group.

"A need for a large public park was recommended and is something that I have been calling on for some time as have the wider community. There also must be an emphasis on facilities developed across the MD, not just in Greystones, with better access so we can move away from our heavy reliance on the car.

"I would like to see innovative approaches such as a bike sharing schemes looked at to help address this. The audit wasn't just about sporting facilities and also highlighted the need for more community indoor spaces, with high demand for yoga and pilates expressed as well as the need for meeting places for voluntary groups.

"When I meet with local groups across the MD the struggle to find affordable places to rent is brought up a lot and something that I will continue to push for. Interestingly gardening was mentioned as a recreational activity that matched GAA in terms of popularity.

"The provision of more community gardens and allotments is something that will benefit all age groups and is notably lacking in the area at the moment. Overall the insights from this audit have been very valuable in highlighting gaps in our community needs. There is a lot of work to be done to catch up to the rapid development in the area and I will continue to work with Wicklow County Council to help address these."

Also reacting to the report's findings, Cllr Jodie Neary said "The study shows clearly that there is currently a dearth of recreational facilities in Delgany of about 2.67% compared to Greystones which stands at 65.33% despite the

fact that Delgany is home to nearly 20% of the District's population. There is a mismatch here between demand and capacity which must be addressed and I believe the Council must now look to prioritise investment in this area to facilitate the growth in new homes and new families moving to the area.

"This should include a playground within walking distance that is fully inclusive to children of all abilities, indoor and outdoor sporting pitches as well as safe spaces for teenagers and young people. We shouldn't have to be reliant on large developers to construct these facilities alongside unsustainable housing development and SHDs.

"It has been stated in the current Local Area Plan, due for renewal this year, that a playground must be within a certain distance and for a specified population. We are far from that at the moment in this District. Kilcoole and Newcastle are also lacking sufficient facilities to meet demand."





The newly re-opened Wicklow Lidl store was delighted to welcome members of the victorious Junior All Ireland Wicklow team of 2021 along with their trophy to the store. Pictured with store manager Evelina and deputy managers Guilherme and Marta are the three McGettigan sisters, Clodagh Fox and Sarah Delahunt. Pic: Robbie Reynolds

## Arklow awarded €64,000 under Sports Capital Equipment Programme

Major improvements to Arklow Running Track at Seaview Avenue will be undertaken by Arklow Municipal District as a result of a grant of received from the Government.

The announcement was made by the Minister for Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media, Ms Catherine Martin TD. In total, Arklow Municipal District will receive €64,000.

Arklow Running Track at Seaview Avenue will be enhanced with extra lighting with €43,704 of the funding awarded. It is the intention of Arklow Municipal District to carry out further upgrades of the facility when further funding streams become available.

The Coral Leisure Centre in Arklow was also awarded €20,299 to improve disability access in the Centre.

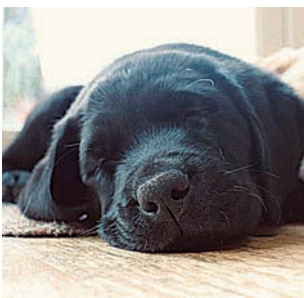
Cathaoirleach of Arklow Municipal District, Cllr Miriam Murphy, welcomed the funding for both projects saying: "The running track facility is a fantastic free amenity available for everyone in the community to use. The addition of floodlighting to the facility will enable it to be used during the winter months or at night-time which is not currently possible. Improving accessibility to the Coral Leisure facility will bring about increased quality of life, create better independence and better social integration. Both projects will enhance everyone's overall health and wellbeing."

## Irish Guide Dogs for the Blind need Puppy raisers in Wicklow

Irish Guide Dogs for the Blind is currently recruiting for Puppy Raising Volunteers in the Leinster area specifically in Blessington, Bray, Delgany and Greystones only.

Irish Guide Dogs for the Blind explained, "Puppy Raisers foster one of our puppies from age 8 weeks until approximately 12-14 months. At eight weeks old our puppies begin their journey to becoming a Guide Dog for a person who is vision impaired or an Assistance Dog for a family of a child with autism. This journey starts in the homes of our Puppy Raising Volunteers. The puppy will live with

your family in your home. Under the direction of our Puppy Raising Supervisors, puppies learn basic rules and obedience. At approximately 14 months they move into our Training Centre with our highly skilled trainers and the hard work towards graduating as a Guide or Assistance Dog begins. This is a great opportunity to make a real difference to someone's life and to learn new dog training skills."



Criteria to become a Puppy Raiser:

- No more than two other dogs in the home. They must be sociable, well behaved and neutered/spayed
  - The puppy must not be left alone for prolonged periods of time (max 4 hours but this is age dependent)
  - You must have access to a secured outdoor area
  - Children in the home must be over five years of age
  - You must be 18 years or older, but the whole family can get involved
  - Must have internet access and be able to use Zoom platform
- To apply or to find out more please visit [www.guidedogs.ie](http://www.guidedogs.ie) or email Erin at [erin@guidedogs.ie](mailto:erin@guidedogs.ie).



# 8.5% increase in employment

The Mid East region which includes County Wicklow saw employment grow by 8.5% last year, according to figures released by the CSO in February. A record 2.48 million people are now at work, close to the 2.5 million target set in the Economic Recovery Plan published by the Tánaiste last year, Fine Gael Minister Simon Harris TD has said.

Despite the imposition of restrictions at the end of last year, 17,500 jobs were still added in October, November and December.

Minister Simon Harris said: "It's really encouraging to see the Mid East region including Wicklow add 28,600 jobs over the course of 2021. In fact, all 8 regions in Ireland recorded strong employment growth. Employment outside of Dublin increased by 156,800 or 9.7%.

"Balanced regional development is a priority for this government. The pandemic and Brexit remain risk factors for the year ahead and the Government will be monitoring the situation closely, but we have grounds to be hopeful. These impressive jobs figures are a testament to the exceptional levels of financial support

the Government has provided workers and businesses over the last two years.

"A new record high in female participation suggests that remote working may have made our jobs market more accessible, creating greater opportunity for participation, now and in the future".

Minister Harris continued: "The figures published by the CSO month provide a strong basis for growth and as Minister for Further and Higher Education, my priority is to ensure there is the necessary training available to ensure Wicklow has the skilled workers who can make the most of the opportunities offered by Wicklow's growing and newest sectors including, tourism, hospitality, green jobs and the emerging Wicklow renewable energy sector."

## E. coli found in 1 in 20 private water supplies, says EPA

The EPA last week released the Drinking Water Quality in Private Group Schemes and Small Private Supplies 2020 report. Drinking water is provided by over 380 group water schemes to approx. 200,000 people across rural communities.

Over 1,700 small private supplies (premises like hotels, pubs and restaurants, crèches, nursing homes and national schools) also provide water to staff, customers and service users on a daily basis.

Meeting E.coli standards is a basic requirement of safe drinking water. In 2020, twenty of the 380 private group schemes (serving more than 2,900 people), and 49 of the 1,225 small private supplies monitored, were found to have E.coli contamination. These failures, at 1 in 20 private water supplies, are of significant concern and put the health of the consumer at risk.

Commenting on the findings of the report, Dr Tom Ryan, Director of the EPA's Office of Environmental Enforcement, said:

"Consumers should expect, as a minimum, that their water is safe to drink. However, compliance with the E.coli standard is not as good as it should be for water from private group water schemes and small private supplies. It is essential that works to improve water quality are carried out as soon as possible to eliminate the serious risks to people's health. Water suppliers are obliged to make sure drinking water is clean and whole-

some for consumers."

Trihalomethanes (THM) are a by-product of the chlorine disinfection process and are formed where there is an excess of organic matter in the water source. Water suppliers should keep THM levels within the drinking water standards to avoid any possible health impacts from long term exposure. Twenty-two private group schemes (7 per cent) failed to meet the standard for THM, including seven schemes that the European Commission has identified as being of particular concern.

The report also shows that over one quarter of small private supplies, serving food businesses, nursing homes, crèches and B&Bs, were not monitored in 2020.

Noel Byrne, Programme Manager of the EPA's Office of Environmental

Enforcement, said: "We recognise that, in many cases, the failure to monitor these premises was due to difficulties in accessing premises during Covid-19 restrictions. However, it is vitally important that Local Authorities ensure all water supplies are monitored annually to provide assurance to consumers that their drinking water is safe".

To address failures in drinking water quality due to deficiencies in infrastructure, the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage makes funding available through the Multi Annual Rural Water Programme. Upgrade works should be progressed without delay at those Private Group Water Schemes which have identified as a priority in order to improve the drinking water quality of these supplies.



Wicklow Captain Sarah Jane Winders holds off a challenge from Wexford's Amy Wilson during the Lidl National Football League Division 3 clash in Aghrim. The final score was Wicklow 0-6 to Wexford 1-3.



# Chairperson announced for new South East Technological University

Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research, Science and Innovation Simon Harris TD last week announced the appointment of Dr Patrick Prendergast as the first Chairperson of the new Technological University for the South East.

Minister Harris confirmed the new university will open its doors on May 1st.

Dr Prendergast, the former Provost of Trinity College, will be joined on the new Governing Board by Mr Jim Bergin, CEO of Glanbia, and Ms Ruth Beadle, who holds a key leadership role at Sanofi, which has a manufacturing facility in Waterford.

Minister Harris said: "After decades of debate, the Technological University for the South East is finally a reality.

"I have formally granted designation status to the fifth technological university in the State. This is the first university presence in the region and marks a truly historic moment in higher education for staff, students, regional stakeholders and local communities in the South East.

"I am also thrilled to announce that Dr Patrick Prendergast will be the University's first Chairperson, and that he will be joined on the Governing Board by Jim Bergin and Ruth Beadle.

"I want to wish Dr Prendergast, Mr Bergin and Ms Beadle the very best in their roles. Having an inaugural governing board with such vast and invaluable experience will be of huge benefit to the Technological University as it embarks on this new journey".

The application for TU designation was made jointly on 30 April 2021 by the Institute of Technology Carlow and Waterford Institute of Technology under the Technological

Universities Act 2018.

There followed a rigorous assessment process by an international advisory panel, the Higher Education Authority and the Qualifications and Quality Assurance Authority of Ireland reporting to Minister Harris and enabling him to consider all data, implications and statutory requirements before making his decision.

Upon establishment of the new TU, with all parties working towards a date of 1 May 2022, the TU, with multi-regional campuses in Carlow, Waterford, and Wexford, will see current students from the former IT Carlow and WIT graduating in 2022 with university qualifications.

Welcoming the announcement, Tánaiste Leo Varadkar TD said: "This is a red letter day for the south-east. I've been campaigning for this day for many years, and I heartily congratulate the colleges and Minister Harris for getting us to this point. This new University will help us to secure more economic investment for the region.

"Indeed, I think some of the new IDA jobs we secured for Waterford and Kilkenny in the past year were spurred by the assurance that this would happen. The new university will also lead to more indigenous businesses being founded in the region fostering more job creation.

"Crucial to making an economic success of Ireland's south-east region is retaining and attracting talent and creating well-



Minister Simon Harris

paid jobs. It's a virtuous circle. Making higher education accessible to all is the best way to make Ireland a country of equal opportunities."

Minister of State for Further Education and Skills Niall Collins said: "Today's announcement marks the forging of a network of TUs across the country from the North West to the South East, across the Midlands and Midwest down to the South West and serving Dublin and its hinterland.

"This delivers on the Programme for Government commitment to establish this new type of higher education institution nationally, enabling higher education access to provision across the full range of the National Framework of Qualifications and delivering programmes ranging from apprenticeships to doctoral degree courses."

Minister Harris added: "We will continue to invest in this new university with new campuses in Wexford

and Waterford so that the footprint of this technological university will benefit the whole region.

"I would like to sincerely thank and warmly congratulate the very many people from the two Institutions including their management, governing bodies, staff, representative bodies and, of course, the students themselves as well as wider regional and local community stakeholders who have delivered this TU to the region following a decade of effort."

Minister Harris has now charged the Institutes with undertaking an open public competition to identify and propose to him a suitable candidate for designation as the TU's first president.

Labour Party TD for Wexford, Brendan Howlin said: "The appointment of such an esteemed academic, like Dr Patrick Prendergast to the role of Chairperson gets the new Technological University for the South East off to a good start on a day of celebration for regional stakeholders, local communities, students, academics and education workers in the South East. For many campaigners to finally have a university presence in the region is a culmination of many years of hard work and a real commitment to this institution and the importance of quality education. We hope, with Dr Prendergast leading the Governing Board of the institution, that commitment and drive will only grow over time for Ireland's newest University."



Alan Jagoe, Chairman of Agri-Aware, with Elly Hyland

## Students return to Agri-Aware farm walk & talk

The Agri Aware Farm Walk & Talk series has returned as a live in-person experience for the first time since 2019. Farm Walk and Talk is an interactive series of events for second-level, agricultural science students throughout early March on ten research farms across the country.

While Farm Walk & talk was a brilliant success in its virtual format in 2021, with over 18,000 students involved, everyone is excited to get back to a hands-on experience.

This year, all schools that attend the Farm Walk & Talk Events get access to a suite of educational videos from a variety of contributors alongside the comprehensive study notes.

The full event price is €10 per student and registration is open, schools can at agriaware.ie. There is also a virtual-only package where students can avail of the videos and notes only available for just €5 per student.

The series of events is a longstanding collaboration between Agri Aware, Teagasc, UCD, the Irish Farmers Journal, and I.A.S.T.A.

Dr. Anne-Marie Butler, Teagasc Head of Education, said: "Teagasc is delighted to partner with Agri Aware again this year on the Farm Walk and Talk series. The series offers tremendous insights and learning opportunities for second-level students preparing for their Leaving Certificate

Agricultural Science exam.

"Our Teagasc college network and research centres actively demonstrate the practical elements of modern agriculture to students and their teachers, and we look forward to welcoming all to the events. After a challenging two years, it's wonderful to return to a vibrant learning environment for the Farm Walk and Talk series."

Alan Jagoe, Agri Aware Chairman said: "Agriculture is hands-on and events like the Agri Aware Farm Walk and Talk provide thousands of students with an insight into the practicalities of farming and the hard work that farmers do each day.

"Farm Walk and Talk shows the students the theory of agricultural science in action. The students get a brilliant opportunity to see some of the best farming techniques and cutting-edge research up close.

"We hope those who take part will leave with a greater understanding of what a future in agriculture could be and how these students might shape it."

## Call to introduce mental health supports for children at primary school level

As school children emerge from what has been an incredibly challenging and uncertain time, and with research last year showing that almost 20% of parents of primary school aged children have sought some form of mental health support for their child over the past two years, the National Parents Council Primary and St Patrick's Mental Health Services are issuing a call for the development and introduction of additional primary schools-based mental health supports.

Through the introduction of schools-based mental health supports at primary level, there is an opportunity to strengthen and protect the mental wellbeing of children, while also supporting their parents and teachers. The introduction of primary schools-based mental health supports could also see a reduction in the number of children requiring specialist mental health treatment.

The call from the National Parents Council Primary and St Patrick's Mental Health Services, which is supported by other organisations including the Irish National Teachers' Organisation, the Irish Primary Principals' Network and Mental Health Reform, aligns with the commitment, outlined in

Government's mental health policy, Sharing the Vision, for schools and centres of education in Ireland to have initiated a Wellbeing Promotion Process by 2023.

An event was held online last week explored how a similar primary schools-based mental health support service is being rolled out in the UK, and could offer a model through which primary school children in Ireland could receive the mental health awareness and support they require. A similar service is also currently being piloted in a primary school in Limerick and has indicated positive outcomes.

Speaking about the call, Áine Lynch, CEO, National Parents Council Primary said:

"Research, conducted by the National Parents Council Primary and Walk in My Shoes last year, demonstrates the need for mental health supports for children of primary school age, with 20% of parents of primary school children surveyed having sought support for their children's mental health during the pandemic."

Paul Gilligan, CEO, St Patrick's Mental Health Services said: "Young people have shown incredible resilience over the past two years as they have adapted to the public health emergency, however, as evidenced across multiple research studies, there remains a significant requirement for additional mental health supports for this cohort. As we emerge

from the pandemic restrictions, with a heightened focus on the mental health of our young people, it is timely to explore the different mechanisms by which we can further support, protect and enhance children's mental health at a community level. We know, from the high levels of interaction and engagement with our flagship Walk in My Shoes campaign, that teachers and schools are dedicated to promoting positive mental health among their students, and there is a significant demand for mental health supports and resources. The development and introduction of a school-based mental health service presents a real and significant opportunity to support schools, teachers and parents in the promotion and protection of young people's mental health."

The call for additional mental health supports has also been welcomed by a number of other organisations in the mental health and education sectors.

John Boyle, General Secretary, Irish National Teachers' Organisation, said "The Irish National Teachers' Organisation warmly welcomes the call from the National Parents' Council Primary and St Patrick's Mental Health Services. The proposed pilot Mental Health Support Team initiative is a practical and timely proposal, and an important initial step towards establishing a much-needed

national primary schools mental health service."

Pairic Clerkin, CEO of the Irish Primary Principals' Network said "The Irish Primary Principals' Network, through its work with the Wellbeing For All group (WFA), is supportive of the recommendation to provide therapeutic services in schools for children and the supports for their parents and school staff. This initiative could make a real difference to wellness in school communities and address the difficulty of accessing essential and timely intervention for children at the earliest possible opportunity."

Fiona Coyle, CEO, Mental Health Reform said, "Mental Health Reform welcomes this call for additional primary schools-based mental health supports. This initiative highlights the importance of investing in youth mental health to enhance mental health outcomes for children and young people. Given the increasing demand for primary and secondary mental health services, it is critical that community and school-based care for children is adequately resourced. Sharing the Vision recommends a cross-departmental approach, therefore the Department of Education will have an essential role to play in the delivery of mental health supports in educational settings."



# 15th South Wicklow Drama Festival

*Sunday 20th March - Saturday 26th March*

The South Wicklow Drama Festival returns this March, under the auspices of the Amateur Drama Council of Ireland, with Ciaran McCauley ADA as adjudicator. Plays will be performed nightly at at 8pm with the exception of closing night, 26th March, when it will begin at 7:30pm.

The Committee once again has a wonderful and varied line up of plays. The festival's official opening will take place on Sunday March 20th and the play on the first night will be the very popular comedy 'The Odd Couple' by Neil Simon, and will be performed by Coolgreany Amateur Dramatic Society, who are not taking part in this year's festival adjudication.

Adjudicator Ciaran McCauley ADA hails from Sligo and has been a core member of Blue Raincoat Theatre Company since 1991. Working in this ensemble, Ciaran has

gained a wealth of "hands on" experience in all aspects of Theatre life primarily as an actor but, also directing, designing lighting, sets and costumes, set construction, tour management and the many other factors that go into producing a piece of theatre.

Ciaran delivers a module "Physical Theatre" for the BA in Performing Arts course at Sligo IT. Ciaran has a wealth of professional theatre training including the Ecole de Mime Corporeal Dramatique, London with Corine Soum and Steve Wasson, at the Saratoga International Theatre Institute, New York

with Anne Bogart and at the Roy Hart Theatre of Voice in Malargues, France. He also has an MA in Drama and Performance from UCD. Patron Tickets for the Festival are available from any of the Festival Committee, from Mark Kennedy in Hall's Shop, Main Street, Carnew; Carnew Training & Development Centre and from Candy's, Carnew. Purchasing a patron ticket enables you to see the seven plays listed for just €35. The standard of amateur drama throughout the country is very high and it is once again a privilege to bring quality performances

to the stage in Carnew. PRO, Mary Doran SWDF, welcomed Philip Howlin from Camross to launch the 2022 festival recently in Jim Byrne's, Carnew. Philip is well known in both local and national drama circles and is presently the Festival Liaisons Officer and a board member of the Drama League of Ireland committee.

Philip was a longstanding member of Rathnure Pantomime & Musical Society, both acting and behind scenes. In 2012 Philip took part in the very successful Camross "Passion Play" and being a



Philip Howlin, Anne Howlin, Tommy Kavanagh and Billy McCreery at the launch of the South Wicklow Drama Festival which was held in Jim Byrne's, Carnew. The festival will run from Friday 20th to Saturday 26th March in St. Brigid's Hall, Carnew.

## Line-up of plays

### Sunday 20th March

Coolgreany Amateur Dramatic Society - *The Odd Couple* by Neil Simon

### Monday 21st March

Ballycogley Players - *The Beacon* by Nancy Harris

### Tuesday 22nd March

Kilmuckridge Dramp Group - *The Playboy of the Western World* by John Millington Synge

### Wednesday 23rd March

Bunclody / Kilmyshal - *The Good Father* by Christine O'Reilly

### Thursday 24th March

Camross Drama Group - *The Kings of the Kilburn Highroad* by Jimmy Murphy

### Friday 25th March

Prosperous Dramatic Society - *God of Carnage* by Yasmina Reza

### Saturday 26th March

Saturday 26th March - *Class* by Kilrush Drama Group



Mary Hall, Caroline Young, and Jim Byrne at the launch of the South Wicklow Drama Festival.

## Una Crawford O'Brien and Barry McGovern star in hit show Halcyon Days

*Mermaid Arts Centre, 16th March*

Soap star Una Crawford O'Brien who plays Renee Phelan in the RTÉ show *Fair City* is currently getting ready to embark on a nationwide tour.

The Carrigstown star will be playing the lead role in the critically acclaimed hit show *Halcyon Days* which will be showing at Mermaid Arts Centre, Bray, on March 16th as part of a 10 theatre tour across Ireland. O'Brien will star in the show alongside actor Barry McGovern known for his award-winning one-man Beckett shows.

*Halcyon Days* is written by Irish playwright Deirdre Kinahan and is a hilarious and poignant story, set in a nursing home, that dramatises the emerging friendship between Patricia played by Crawford O'Brien and Sean played by McGovern. As the pair negotiate their failing health, a combative and charming friendship begins to blossom.

The show is directed by Joe Devlin of Directions Out Theatre Company and speaking ahead of the national tour Devlin remarked: "Halcyon days is a play about hope. Filled with unexpected surprises the show explores the importance of companionship in life as we grow older. It is a play about staying positive despite the odds. The message is that no matter how hopeless a situation might seem we are always capable of love, laughter, and of future meaning."

*Halcyon Days* will be showing Mermaid Arts Centre, Bray on March 16th. Tickets start at €18. For more information visit <http://www.halcyondays.com/>



*Fair City* star Una Crawford O'Brien will bring the show to the Mermaid as part of a nationwide tour



# County Arts Office funding schemes now open for applications for 2022

Wicklow County Council Arts Office is offering a number of schemes designed to support artists, arts festivals, arts participation and artform development in County Wicklow. This scheme forms part of a wider set of actions initiated and developed by Wicklow County Council directed at supporting quality practice and public participation in the arts in the county.

Wicklow County Council Arts Office is now accepting applications for the Artist Award Scheme and the Artists and Communities Collaboration Award Scheme. The Arts Festival Award Scheme will follow. The deadline for applications is March 4th at 4pm and all details, guidelines and applications can be made online through <https://wicklowcountycouncil.submittable.com/submit>

Wicklow County Council is particularly conscious of the disruption caused by the Covid-19 pandemic to artists' work so the main aim of these schemes is to empower artists and communities to creatively move forward in 2022. Artists and communities are being offered an opportunity to take time to recalibrate their work, grow new ideas and resource themselves to generate

something new, test out some innovative thinking and ways of working together collaboratively. An online advice clinic to assist artists and organisations in Wicklow in making their funding applications for 2022 will take place on February 23rd and can be booked free of charge on Eventbrite.

Arts Officer Jenny Sherwin said "It will be wonderful to see artists and communities return to delivering work and developing in person for 2022. The Individual Artist Award will once again have a higher level of funding than previously to reflect how the pandemic has affected artistic opportunities."

The purpose of the Artist Award Scheme is to assist artists in the development of their practice. Awards to date have been offered to artists at all stages of

their careers and who live in or are originally from County Wicklow. The Artist Award Scheme has supported professional artists to develop or realize a particular body of work and/or to undertake professional development to that end. Professional practicing artists working in any artform, discipline or genre are eligible to apply to this scheme. Applications to fund third-level or on-going study are ineligible. The maximum award offered is €5,000 although awards are often made for smaller amounts. The average award made under this scheme in 2021 was in the region of €3,000

The Artists and Communities Collaboration Award Scheme is designed to support artist and community collaboration in any discipline or genre of the arts to

develop or realize a high-quality project or programme which will support both the artist's and the community's creative development. Wicklow County Council welcomes applications from all artforms including film, music, visual arts, theatre, dance, literature, architecture, animation, performance, circus, traditional arts, film, music and drama. Artists, prior to making this application, are required to have already approached a community group and have their full agreement to collaborate in the project. The maximum award available under this scheme is €5,000.

Please see <https://wicklowcountycouncil.submittable.com/s> submit for further details, assessment criteria and all guidelines relating to this initiative by Wicklow County Council.

## Arklow Visual Arts exhibition

### AVA IN THE ARKLOW LIBRARY



1ST – 5TH MARCH

CELEBRATING ART IN THE COMMUNITY

The Arklow Library will host a group exhibition of works by Arklow Visual Arts Members from 1st March 2022 - 5th March 2022. This will be an exciting exhibition and a first in many collaborations between the two organisations.

Exhibition Launch 1st March 7 pm Arklow Library, Main Street Arklow.

Opening the exhibition Cllr Peir Leonard Independent will say a few words; having a strong connection to local arts and the many surrounding projects due to improving the lives of people in Arklow and visitors alike.

The Arklow Visual Arts are excited to showcase many new members and the works of the longer-standing members in a unique exhibition where all the members grow together encouraging the promotion of art in the community.

There will also be a raffle on the 1st of March raising funds for Talk To Tom Suicide Prevention Tickets available through our website.

Group exhibition of works by Arklow Visual Arts Members runs at The Arklow Library from the 1st March until 5th March 2022. Admission is free and all are welcome.

For further information please email [arklowvisualarts@gmail.com](mailto:arklowvisualarts@gmail.com)

Exhibiting artists include but are not limited to Tony Byrne, Ann McKenna, Niki Keane, Jadwiga Pawlak, Mary Mitchell, Iwona Blasi, Aidan Fitzgibbon, Sofia Bury, Sarah Eva Manson, Patrick Power, Andrew Manson, Dorothy Hutson, Gabrielle Boylan, Attracta Manson, Carl Byrne, Elaine Tobin, Paola Iacovone, Helen Woods.



## Bolshoi Ballet presents: Swan Lake

Whale Theatre, Sunday 13th March

Lured to the banks of a mysterious lake by his alter-ego, the Evil Genius, Prince Siegfried encounters the most beautiful swan Odette and swears his love to her. At the castle, prospective brides try to entertain the distracted Prince, but it is the ravishing swan Odile who threatens the promise Siegfried made to Odette.

Lured to the banks of a mysterious lake by his alter-ego, the Evil Genius, Prince Siegfried encounters the most beautiful swan Odette and swears his love to her. At the castle, prospective brides try to entertain the distracted Prince, but it is the ravishing swan Odile who threatens the promise Siegfried made to Odette.

This performance was captured live in February 2020.

3pm (doors 2pm). Tickets €20 and Concession €17.50 available at [www.whaletheatre.ie](http://www.whaletheatre.ie) or call the booking office on 01 2010550

## Karen Egan's Warrior at Mermaid Arts Centre

Monday 21st March - Sunday 3rd April. For streaming on demand any time. €10 / €15 Household Ticket

Everyone knows somebody who has suffered from cancer. Being a patient puts everything into perspective and gives one time to reflect.

As a breast cancer survivor, Karen's journey through the medical system has inspired her to explore the vulnerability, chaos and humour of that experience. Warrior takes us on a dreamlike voyage, navigating the stormy seas of fragility, anxiety, patience, ignorance and good, old-fashioned mortality. In this beautifully shot theatre-film, our anti-heroine, Katherine Kirk, shows the many sides to her troubled mind as she time-travels through treatment, while also exploring her relationship with her brother Barry. This is a universal story of how we derive strength by turning adversity into opportunity.

Music and comedy have always played an important part in Karen's work, and are central to this piece. Collaborating with leading musicians and actors, Egan fuses drama, music and satire in an entertaining and provocative way, presenting the idea of patient as both warrior and prey. In her parallel universe, Katherine explores the light and dark sides of what cancer can do to a family, and celebrates the warrior within us all.





# Wicklow-developed EV named one of 'the greatest eCars on planet earth'

The Croxford Defender, made by Wicklow-based AVA, has been named one of "the greatest eCars on planet earth" by GQ Magazine. The vehicle last night won 'Off-Roader of the Year' at the 2022 GQ eCar Awards.

The leading men's lifestyle title was impressed by AVA's "updated and re-imagined Land Rover Defender".

GQ magazine noted the vehicle has a range of 200 miles, fully charges in three hours and leaps from 0-62mph in 5.4 seconds.

Having already re-engineered a Fiat 500 for Dev Patel and an old VW Camper for Ellie Goulding's wedding, AVA created an eDefender 110 in Stuart Croxford's honour.

The vehicle was inspired by and designed

with Stuart Croxford, a former Captain of the Duke of Lancaster's Regiment, who has taken part in Ironman triathlons and endurance challenges to raise money for injured veterans, despite suffering life-changing injuries in Afghanistan in 2012. The vehicle is AVA's tribute to his incredible courage and determination in the face of adversity.

The electric vehicle technology within AVA's Croxford Defender car benefits from over a decade of development, by a team from some of



the biggest brands in the automotive industry including Lotus, McLaren, Jaguar and Williams Advanced Engineering.

"The world is changing and it has set us a challenge. We chose to accept it and become part of the solution," AVA founder Norman Crowley said.

"To be named as one of the greatest electric cars on planet earth is a real honour. Our whole team has worked tirelessly to create the vehicle that will accompany Stuart Croxford on his challenge as he cycles from Land's End to John

o'Groats in May," he added.

GQ's Paul Henderson said: "For 2022, we made the decision to update the GQ Car Awards and make all the winners electric-powered. What remained unchanged, though, was our intention to pick machines that are inspiring, interesting, have automotive integrity and, most importantly of all, get our pulse racing."

"Our winners this year are all EV wonders – from re-imagined icons to wildly ambitious next-gen zero-emissions machines. The futuristic, practical, and downright-gorgeous era of electric cars we've been promised is finally here," he added.

AVA brings together a team of Formula 1-grade engineers who have led some of the biggest

brands in the automotive industry, from Lotus and McLaren to Williams Advanced Engineering, and whose combined credits include the prototype design of some of the world's breakthrough supercars – from the Jaguar C-X75 to the Aston Martin Rapide-E.

The company is on a mission to create cars that not only have the lowest carbon footprint on the road, but that are built in a way that has the least impact on the planet.

Not since DeLorean closed its doors in the 1980s has anyone attempted to bring back car manufacturing at scale to Ireland, but Norman Crowley who was born just a short distance from Henry Ford's home place is not afraid of a challenge.

## Luke 6:39-45 GOSPEL

Jesus told a parable to his disciples, 'Can one blind man guide another? Surely both will fall into a pit? The disciple is not superior to his teacher, the fully trained disciples will always be like his teacher. Why do you observe the splinter in your brother's eye and never notice the plank in your own? How can you say to your brother, 'Brother, let me take out the splinter that is in your eye,' when you cannot see the plank in your own? Hypocrite! Take the plank out of your own eye first, and then you will see clearly enough to take out the splinter that is in your brother's eye.

'There is no sound tree that produces rotten fruit, nor again a rotten tree that produces sound fruit. For every tree can be told by its own fruit; people do not pick figs from thorns, nor gather grapes from brambles. A good man draws what is good from the store of goodness in his heart; a bad man draws what is bad from the store of badness. For a man's words flow out of what fills his heart.'

## Reflection

Imagine if we always followed Jesus's advice to take a look at our own failings before criticising others. We would never criticise anyone, and how much happier our lives and relationships would be. Jesus reminds us that our inner spiritual health can be gauged by how we live our life, by our actions, by the fruit we bear. If we regularly display virtues such as patience, honesty and courage, there is a fair chance that this good is coming from the store of goodness.

C.J.

## Westmount CLINIC PRACTICE MANAGER

required for **Westmount Clinic**, a well-established, 7 doctor practice with excellent administrative staff creating a supportive and structured work environment

If interested, please email a CV to:  
[dee@westmount-clinic.com](mailto:dee@westmount-clinic.com)

**National Talent Academies**  
Film & TV Crew Hubs  
Managed by Clermont Enterprise Hub

## Project Manager required

Clermont Enterprise Hub CLG is a not for profit company established by Wicklow County Council to oversee the construction, development and management of an Enterprise Hub with a particular focus on the Content Creation and CreaTech sector, at Wicklow County Campus, Rathnew.

Fís Éireann/Screen Ireland, the development agency for the Irish film, television and animation industry, has appointed Clermont Enterprise Hub CLG as the lead organisation to manage the establishment of a Film & TV Crew Hub along the East coast, an initiative that will seek to alleviate shortages of skilled labour in the Irish film and television industry through training, work placements and mentoring.

To assist with the roll out of this exciting initiative, applications are invited from suitably qualified persons. This full-time contract position will run over a 12-month period, remunerated at €45,000 per annum. This position will report to the board of Clermont Enterprise Hub CLG and is based in Rathnew, occasional travel may be required, and flexible working arrangements may be possible for the right candidate.

Interested applicants can request an information booklet with further information by emailing [enterprise@leo.wicklowcoco.ie](mailto:enterprise@leo.wicklowcoco.ie)

## Application Process

Interested applicants are invited to forward a copy of a detailed CV that highlights relevant experience and a covering letter in strict confidence to [vdelahunt@leo.wicklowcoco.ie](mailto:vdelahunt@leo.wicklowcoco.ie) by Monday 7th March. Please use 'Crew Hub Manager Role' in the subject line of your email. As part of your application, you should set out your skills and experience to meet the requirements of the position.

**CLOSING DATE FOR RECEIPT OF CV & COVER LETTER IS 12 NOON on Monday 7th MARCH 2022.**

The information booklet may also be obtained from the Local Enterprise Office website:  
[www.localenterprise.ie/wicklow/news](http://www.localenterprise.ie/wicklow/news)

Clermont Enterprise Hub CLG reserves the right to shortlist candidates in the manner it deems most appropriate.

Clermont Enterprise Hub CLG is an equal opportunities employer

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## RECRUITMENT

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Bord Oideachais agus Oiliúna  
Chill Chainnigh agus Cheatharlach  
Kilkenny and Carlow  
Education and Training Board

## PART-TIME CLEANER

### Coláiste Eoin, Hacketstown

Fixed Term Contract – 10 hours per week

A panel will be created for the filling of other  
Cleaner positions in Kilkenny and Carlow ETB that may  
arise during the 2021/2022 school academic year.

Please refer to: [www.kcetb.ie](http://www.kcetb.ie)  
for job application form and further details  
**Closing Date: Monday, 14 March 2022 (12 noon).**

Shortlisting may apply.

Kilkenny and Carlow ETB is an  
equal opportunities employer.



# 'New bill will give Wicklow consumers better protections'

Wicklow consumers will have new rights and protections on digital goods and services thanks to a new bill approved by Government, Wicklow Fine Gael Minister Simon Harris TD said.

## PLANNING

### WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL

We, Kildare & Wicklow Education & Training Board, intend to apply for permission for development at this site: Kilbride Education Campus, Arklow, Co. Wicklow. The development will consist of the construction of a new educational campus and a new link road that will serve the school campus which will include the provision of two school buildings. Gaelscoil an Inbhir Mhoir a two-storey, 16 classrooms primary school with two special needs rooms and ancillary spaces with total floor of circa 3093sqm serving 480 pupils. Gaelscoil na Mara a three-storey, post primary school with two special needs rooms, PE hall and ancillary spaces with a total floor area of circa 6585sqm serving 400 pupils. Proposed site works to include the construction of all new hard play areas, six play-courts, grass pitch, 182 no. car-parking spaces together with boundary treatment, 79 bicycle stands, ancillary infrastructure works, pedestrian links and landscaping. The planning application may be inspected or purchased at a fee not exceeding the reasonable cost of making a copy, at the offices of the planning authority during its public opening hours. The planning application may be viewed online at [www.wicklow.ie](http://www.wicklow.ie), under planning online enquiries. A submission or observation in relation to the application may be made in writing to the planning authority on payment of the prescribed fee, €20, within the period of 5 weeks beginning on the date of receipt by the authority of the application, and such submissions or observations will be considered by the planning authority in making a decision on the application. The planning authority may grant permission subject to or without conditions, or may refuse to grant permission.



Minister Simon Harris

Minister Harris said, "My colleague, Tánaiste and Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment, Leo Varadkar, has received approval to publish the Consumer Rights Bill 2022, which is an extremely welcome development.

"Consumers in Wicklow will now have the same rights and protections over digital content and digital services, like streaming, down-

loads, and cloud products, as traditional products and services.

"This means they have the right to a full refund, exchange or repair when a good or service is not as described or not fit for purpose. Upgrades to a product or service that are required for goods to operate as expected and agreed should also be provided to the customer free of charge.

"With regard to businesses, they will have to

set out a description of the goods or services being provided, the total price of the item and the cost of delivery before entering into a contract with a consumer.

"Furthermore, any businesses that operate misleading and aggressive commercial practices, like fake reviews, will be fined by the Courts following enforcement action by the Competition and Consumer Protection Commission.

"Customers in Wicklow will also have other recourse options to redress and will be entitled to a price reduction on faulty goods if they so wish, instead of a refund or repair. They will also be entitled to withhold payment for goods partially paid for if they are not satisfied with the quality of the item received. Any form of redress must be free of charge and must be carried out as soon as possible.

"This proposed legislation is extremely welcome and is beneficial for all parties involved in commercial activity in Wicklow in an increasingly digital age."



New research from LloydsPharmacy finds that over 70% of Irish smokers have previously tried to give up cigarettes and have been unsuccessful. Lloyds Pharmacy staff are calling on the people of Wicklow to ditch the habit and in turn, make Wicklow a smoking free zone. Pictured from the LloydsPharmacy store in Greystones Shopping Centre are L-R Lucy Cui, Valerie Boylan Store Manager and Anne-Marie Cunningham. Pic: Mark Harrison

Minister Harris concluded.

The Consumer Rights Bill 2022 will be published shortly and will then make its way through all stages in the Oireachtas.

The Tánaiste said, "This new law is good for consumers and good for business. Most businesses are responsible and treat their customers fairly when things go wrong. For those that don't, it can give them an unfair advantage over their competitors. This new law consolidates a lot of existing legislation and updates it, to make it fit for the modern, digital age."

## ATTENTION Architects, Planners & Builders

Reach the widest readership for your planning notices in County Wicklow with Wicklow Times  
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