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Tuesday 8th February 2022 First Floor, The Boulevard, Quinsborough Road, Bray. A98 R6D7. Tel: 01 - 2869111 E-mail: wicklowed@localtimes.ie www.wicklowtimes.net

'TOWN CENTRE FIRST' POLICY

A new 'Town Centre First' policy will revitalise towns across County Wicklow and benefit local communities, Minister Simon Harris TD said last week.

"We are working to create stronger safer communities and this new 'Town Centre First' policy is crucial to this. It is designed to support the regeneration of our towns and villages with targeted funding to support above-shop and town centre living.

"This ambitious and far-reaching policy contains a range of measures and funding supports aimed at making towns in Wicklow more viable and attractive places in which to live, work and visit,



Minister Simon Harris

whilst ensuring they are social, cultural and service hubs for the local community.

"The 'Town Centres First' policy contains a major new strategy to tackle vacancy, combat dereliction and breathe new life into town centres. This has been a key priority for Fine Gael and something on which we have been working hard. A recent policy paper put forward 26 proposals for consideration, which could enhance by over 10,000 the number of vacant homes becoming available for early use.

"This major new policy is going to be a



The Knockananna Camogie team celebrate winning the Leinster Junior B Cluc Championship against St. Brigid's of Westmeath. Pic: Michael Kelly

game changer for Wicklow with local communities and local businesses central to reimagining and planning their own futures through a tailored plan. Our towns will benefit from Government funding, which will emphasise the importance of town centres as the central hub of our communities.

"This ambitious programme will be backed up by significant Government funding. It is underpinned by multi-billion euro investment spread across major Government schemes such as the Rural Regeneration and Development Fund (RRDF), the Urban Regeneration and Development Fund (URDF), Críó Conaithe (Towns) Fund and the Town and Village Renewal Scheme. Last year, over €410 million was distributed nation-

wide under the URDF and I understand a new call will be opened shortly, focused specifically on support for our town centres in places like Wicklow.

"For the first time, towns will also gain their own dedicated Town Regeneration Officers, who will be crucial to driving future development. They will be full-time dedicated positions within Wicklow County Council working with Town Teams and local business groups to design and implement town plans. They will also work to identify derelict buildings and assist in bringing them back into use, a key objective of the Town Centre First policy," Minister Harris said.

Publishing the plan, the Minister for Rural and Community Development, Heather Humphreys TD, said:

"Many of our towns face significant challenges, not least in the

wake of the pandemic. Town revival requires a coordinated and com-

prehensive response. Through Town Centre
Continued on Page 3

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Greystones Active Retirement Association's activities have recommenced and they are looking forward to seeing more members participate, now that most Covid restrictions have been lifted. Art takes place on Mondays 2.30 to 4.30pm; Short Mat Bowling Tuesdays 10.45 to 12.45; Bingo Thursdays 2.30 to 4.30pm.

The group's first Coffee Morning of the new year took place on Friday 28th January. Many members enjoyed the chat and the tea/coffee. Maevie Donohoe was named as the winner of the recent Short Story competition and she read her winning story. The next Coffee Morning takes place Friday 25th February at 10.30am. The G.A.R.A. office will be open at Kilian House Family Centre on the first Tuesday of the month at 10.30 to 11.30am, to welcome new members and for reregistration of existing members.

Wicklow ICA Drama Festival

The 66th Wicklow ICA Drama Festival will take place in Gleanealy Village Hall from 25th-27th February. This is an open festival with a section for One Act plays and a section for Short Plays / Sketches.

"We would welcome late entries in both the One Act and Short Play/Sketch section," organisers say. For further information contact Festival Director Hilda Roche at hdroiste@gmail.com or call 087 9833935."

Wicklow Active Retirement Association

Wicklow Active Retirement Association (WARA) is back meeting every Tuesday morning in the De La Salle Pastoral Centre at 11am for tea/coffee and a chat. There is Line Dancing at 12 noon each Tuesday and the Association Choir starts again on Friday 11th February at 3pm in the Centre. At the end of April the group has booked a holiday to Kilkenny. New members are welcome.

Dogs Trust appeals for foster homes as 297 post-Christmas surrender requests received

Family 'dogfished' by hypoallergenic claims

Dogs Trust Ireland has received 297 surrender requests from members of the public, from Christmas Day to the end of January, seeking to relinquish their dogs into the charity's care.

This is a 73% increase on the 172 requests received over the same period last year, leading to an urgent appeal for foster homes so Dogs Trust can continue to help as many dogs as possible.

Ciara Byrne, Head of Communications at Dogs Trust Ireland said: "While many of the people who contact us do so because of extenuating circumstances, sadly many are telling us they underestimated the commitment dog ownership involves. We are also continuing to see victims of unscrupulous breeders and families being 'dog fished' as misleading and often illegal online advertisements continue. Dogs are often advertised as being 'hypoallergenic' but as the causes of individual's allergies can vary, no dog can be said to be 100% hypoallergenic, even if the breed or crossbreed doesn't shed very much or the dog doesn't have much or any hair."

One such case is Maggie a five-month-old Spaniel puppy who was fictitiously advertised as a hypoallergenic Poodle cross. Her family thought she would be the perfect pet, but their allergies flared up and as a result, Maggie was surrendered to Dogs Trust. She is a very nervous dog, another indicator of poor breeding and the environment she was born into. Due to how fearful she was upon arrival; the charity sought a foster home for Maggie where she is being cared for and the family hope to adopt her.

Kate Horgan, Fostering Coordinator at Dogs Trust Ireland continued: "We are urgently appealing for foster homes across the country. Fostering not only provides invaluable experience in caring for a dog but it plays a fundamental role in helping the most vul-



Maggie, a five-month-old Spaniel puppy who was surrendered to Dogs Trust Ireland after her owners were duped into buying what was falsely advertised online as a 'hypoallergenic' dog. Maggie is just one of 297 surrender requests the rehoming centre have received since Christmas, a 73% increase on last year. The charity is appealing for foster homes to help them cope with the worrying rise in numbers. Photograph by Fran Veale

nerable dogs get back on their paws and gives them a better chance of finding their forever home, an incredibly rewarding experience for any dog lover. If you are over 18, have access to dog friendly transport for vet visits and meeting

potential adopters, a secure garden and time to temporarily care for a dog in need, we would love to hear from you."

For more information about fostering a dog from Dogs Trust, please visit DogsTrust.ie/Fostering

Lions recycled spectacles

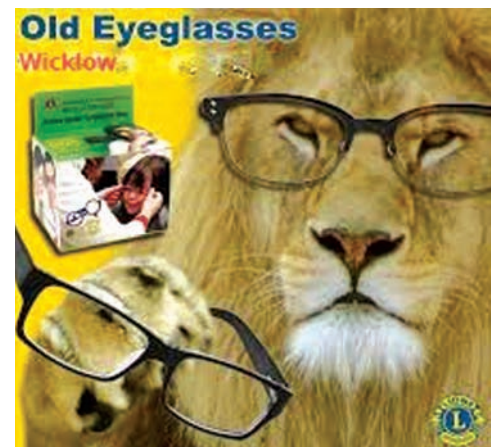
Lions Clubs International sponsor a very important worldwide collection and distribution of used spectacles to third world countries. The World Health Organisation is also very much behind this.

Millions of people in developing nations are pushed deeper into poverty simply because they don't have glasses. They can't learn, because reading is difficult. They can't work to the best of their ability, because they can't see clearly.

For adults, it means greater employment opportunity and economic strength. For seniors it means less dependence on others.

This is an ongoing project organised by Wicklow & District Lions Club as well as all Lions clubs throughout Ireland. The clubs collect and recycle thousands of pairs of spectacles each year donated by the community for distribution to the Third World. The main interest is in the spectacles broken or unbroken but not the cases. The lenses are most important and if the frames are intact that is an added bonus.

If anyone have some unwanted old spectacles please



contact any member of the local Lions club in Wicklow Town or drop them in to Lion Joe Kirwan at Curtain & Blinds in Wicklow. Contact is also available on Instagram and Facebook.



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Bray Skatepark to proceed to design stage

The efforts to get a Skatepark for Bray reached a major milestone last week as approval was given for a Part 8 process to proceed. The project will now move to the design stage and there will be a public consultation process.

A location for the proposed skatepark has been identified on the Southern Cross Road, and the matter was brought forward for discussion at last week's meeting of Bray Municipal District Council.

Over the last few months the Bray Skateboarders Association has been working to progress the project as part of a working group with local councillors Erika Doyle, Rory O'Connor and Aoife Flynn Kennedy, and officials from Bray Municipal District.

Cllr Erika Doyle said, "A design will be created (with input from the skateboarders) and it will go to public consultation before being put to a vote by councillors. It's important to say at this point that we all fully expect skateboarders to keep hanging out in some of their informal skate points around the town. We also hope that further down the line, a second location in the town can be sourced for another skate area. Having met with the skateboarders I was so impressed by their desire to have a meaningful input into the process and their ability to

think outside the box. Their persistence has brought us to this point, and I'm excited to be in a position to help progress it now from idea to reality."

Cllr Aoife Flynn Kennedy said "The campaign for a local skateboarding park in Bray has been ongoing since 2015. Previous proposed locations have seen divisions both within the community and politically. Ultimately it is the skateboarders in Bray that have lost out.

"In April 2021, I put forward a motion to establish a group to look at a skateboard park for our community. The motion sought inclusion of the Bray Skateboarding Association and was open to all Councillors to be involved. Cllr Erika Doyle and Cllr Rory O'Connor opted to join the group with me, and work got underway. There have been lots of discussions and considerations by this group who have worked really hard to look at the issue."

Cllr Flynn Kennedy said there were "mixed views" at last week's meeting but that it was agreed to move forward with it.

The location is on the

Southern Cross near Shoreline and was chosen because: it is not directly beside residential homes; the land is owned by Wicklow County Council; The new supermarket and planned cycle lanes on the Southern Cross and in Deerpark make the location more accessible to travel too; Improvements planned for the Ballywaltrim area as a result of €250,000 Healthy Ireland Funding will support the upgrades to the area and better lighting and pathways to the location. Part of this funding will also be spent on the basketball courts beside the site; The site is located beside Shoreline, football pitches etc., creating an informal sports hub; It has the support of the Bray Skateboarding Association.

"We are not there yet but this is the closest we have got on a potential location in Bray, considering that other towns across the Country already have one if not two parks, we are way behind, but it's a positive move forward. If you have any views on this proposal at this early stage, please do get in touch, it's important that

we hear all voices."

Cllr Rory O'Connor said, "For years the Bray Skateboard Association have been asking the council for a skatepark and last night at our council meeting we got the furthest any council have got to achieving that dream. This is thanks to the council's newly formed Bray Skatepark committee, which has myself, Cllr Erika Doyle and Cllr Aoife Flynn Doyle but most importantly the Bray skateboard association members.

"The location of the proposed skatepark will be on the southern cross, right beside shoreline and a football pitch. We will be carrying out pre planning consultations with members of the public who are immediately impacted by this new development. This will be followed by a part 8. Members of the public will be able to see the plans in full for the skatepark and give whatever feedback they want about the development. This has been a long fought battle by the Bray skateboard association and I want to commend their persistence."



Minister Simon Harris pictured on Friday during his visit to Clermont County Campus in Rathnew, with Michael Nicholson, Vibeke Delahunt (Head of Enterprise with Wicklow Local Enterprise Office), and Cathaoirleach of Wicklow County Council Shay Cullen. Clermont is currently undergoing a major refurbishment to transform it into a new Film Hub for the county.

'TOWN CENTRE FIRST' POLICY

Continued from Page 1

First, the Government will provide towns with the supports, resources and funding to enable them map out a coherent vision for their future and to take ownership of their future. This approach will help ensure our town centres can be vibrant and attractive places to live, work and visit."

The Minister of State for Planning and local Government,

Peter Burke TD, said:

"Local authorities will play a vital role in assisting towns shape their futures. Town Regeneration Officers and technical expertise will assist local Town Teams in formulating their local responses and accessing regeneration funding. The National Town Centre First Office will help drive this new approach to revitalising town centres and bring together the

stakeholders who can help towns realise a vision for their future.

"We know that many of our town centres are underutilised for housing, and have limited housing choice despite being close to all amenities and public services. We are determined to act on this and ensure that we tackle dereliction by providing new and much needed housing supply within our town boundaries."

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Oisín Byrne is pictured at the Leinster Junior B Club Championship between Knockananna and St Brigid's of Westmeath which took place in Santry. Knockananna won the game and will now play Fullen Gaels on February 19th in the All Ireland semi-final.

Search is on for Bray St. Patrick's Day Parade participants

Bray Chamber of Commerce in association with Wicklow County Council have announced the return of the Bray St. Patrick's Day Parade, subject to license, and are looking for local groups and organisations to participate this year.

The parade which will kick off at 2pm on St. Patrick's Day starts at the town hall and finishes at the reviewing stand on the Seafont.

It is expected that this year will be the biggest and brightest parade yet and is an excellent opportunity for local organisations to showcase what they do.

Judging of all participating groups across several different categories will take place at the reviewing stand with a prize giving ceremony at Bray Town Hall.

An application form is available at bray.ie and the deadline for completion is February 14th.

If anyone has queries, they can contact Kathy O'Toole on 01 2828248 or info@braychamber.ie.



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Project status update for N11M11 Junction 4 to Junction 14 Improvement Scheme

The project team for the N11/M11 Junction 4 to 14 Improvement Scheme has now released Bulletin No.12 on the scheme website www.n11m11.ie which provides a status update on the scheme.

Government funding for new national roads for the first half of the NDP will be €1.1b. From this budget, Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) provides grant allocations to local authorities for national roads on an annual basis. This level of funding is not sufficient to concurrently progress all schemes outlined in the NDP through planning and design in the 2021-2025 period. Accordingly, the progression of projects must be phased in line with available funding and the priorities of the NDP.

Given these overall funding constraints and following a review of the grant allocation for 2022, it has been confirmed that funding is not available to Wicklow County Council to advance the N11M11 Junction 4 to Junction 14 Improvement Scheme to the next phase of

development at this time.

TII says it remains committed to supporting the progression of all major projects listed in the NDP, on a phased basis, and Wicklow County Council said that "TII fully supports the future advancement of the N11M11 Scheme and once funding from the Government is available, Wicklow County Council intends to recommence the planning and design of this important scheme."

A separate project aiming to deliver bus priority measures on the N11M11 national road is currently progressing. This bus priority scheme has been allocated funding for 2022 and the planning and design of this project will be advanced by Wicklow County Council over the coming year. Further information on the N11M11 Bus Priority Interim Scheme will be communicated via the project website as this

work progresses.

The planning and design of the N11M11 Junction 4 to Junction 14 Improvement Scheme has been progressing over the past number of years. Phase 2 of the project concluded in 2021 with the announcement and public display of a preferred option for the scheme, together with the publication of the Option Selection Report in December. The project was due to proceed to Phase 3 (Design and Environmental Evaluation) in 2022.

TII delivers on Government policy relating to national roads as set out in the National Development Plan (NDP). The 10-year period of the NDP is considered in two phases of five years, namely 2021-2025 and 2026-2030.

The project team is available to interested parties and members of the public to deal with any queries or issues arising on the project by emailing n11m11@wicklowco-co.ie or at the contact details contained in the Bulletin.

Completion date brought forward for water supply upgrade project in Barndarrig

Irish Water has confirmed that following the successful delivery and efficiency of these works to upgrade the water supply in Barndarrig, the project completion date has been brought forward to 15th March.

The project is progressing ahead of schedule with over 80% of the completed works already reinstated, Irish Water said.

Irish Water is working in partnership with Wicklow County Council to deliver the significant upgrade. The project, which began in November 2021, involves the construction of over 3km of new water mains and ancillary works linking Barndarrig to Redcross Water Treatment Plant, replacing the local water supply and providing the community of Barndarrig with a safer and more secure water supply.

Directional drilling is currently in progress under the bridge crossing, just outside the village of Redcross, with both water main and pumped sewer installation works constructed concurrently along the same route. Irish Water say that to minimise the impact on the local community, the project is being carried out in phases.

Joe Carroll, Water Network Programme Lead with Irish Water, said: "Irish Water is undertaking this important project to provide a safer and more secure water supply for the community of Barndarrig. Works are progressing quickly and ahead of schedule and involve the construction and commissioning of over 3km of new water mains linking

Barndarrig to Redcross Water Treatment Plant.

"Over 50% of the new pipeline has already been installed and we are progressing quickly through the final phase of the project. We would like to thank Ward and Burke for their hard work and also the local community for their patience while we work to complete this vital project."

The R754 road between Redcross and Barndarrig will remain closed until 15th March, however, local and emergency access continues to be maintained at all times. Route diversions have been communicated locally. Irish Water and Wicklow County Council say that they regret the inconvenience these works may cause.

Local residents have been frustrated and angered by the works



Joe Carroll, Water Network Programme Lead with Irish Water

which have been an inconvenience to their daily lives. There have been complaints about a lack of clear diversion signs and about the road being closed even during hours where works are not taking place. Jennifer Whitmore

TD said she had been contacted by a woman who said her emergency call for an ambulance resulted in the medics being 20 minutes late as there was no clear diversion route and the ambulance got lost along the way.

In a statement, Irish Water said, "Irish Water and Wicklow County Council are continuing to make every effort to maintain normal supply to customers. Some temporary water interruptions may be necessary, however, the project team will ensure that customers are given a minimum of 48 hours' notice prior to any planned interruptions. Standard working hours are between 8am and 6pm, with no work anticipated on Sundays or public holidays. Irish Water would like to thank our contractors Ward and Burke who are carrying out these works on our behalf for their speed and high standard of work on this project."

"Also, in conjunction with this project, Irish Water is upgrading the wastewater network which involves the construction of almost 2.5km of new sewer pipeline from Barndarrig to Redcross. A sewer network that is fit for purpose is essential in order to support business and social development in the community. These works will support future growth and development while also improving the overall performance of the sewer network, helping to safeguard the environment."

"The Irish Water customer care helpline is open 24/7 on 1800 278 278 and customers can also contact us on Twitter @IWCare with any queries. For updates on local water supply issues, please visit the Water Supply Updates section of www.water.ie."



Vartry removed from list of 'at risk' supplies

Almost 130,000 water customers in Wicklow and South Dublin received good news last week following the removal of seven water supplies by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) from their Remedial Action List.

The Remedial Action List identifies drinking water supplies that are at risk of failing to consistently supply safe, clean drinking water. The seven water supplies which form part of the Vartry Water Supply Scheme were removed by the EPA following extensive investment and upgrade works by Irish Water working in partnership with Wicklow County Council, Dublin City Council and Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council.

Irish Water recently completed construction on a new, state-of-the-art water treatment plant in Vartry. The completion of the new water treatment plant marked the culmination of a total investment of €150 million in the upgrade of the Vartry Water Supply Scheme.

This has not only ensured the removal of Vartry and associated supplies from the EPA's RAL, it has also ensured a safe and sustainable water supply for more than 200,000 people overall across Bray, Wicklow Town, Enniskerry, Greystones and South Dublin now and into the future. For more information on the project, visit www.water.ie/vartry.

Works are continuing on the two remaining Wicklow supplies with a view to having them removed from the RAL as soon as possible. Irish Water has commenced detailed design on a project to rationalise both the Ballymorris and Aughrim / Annacurra water supplies to the Arklow Water Supply Zone. The project will ensure a safer and more reliable water supply for customers in both areas while facilitating growth and development and represents an investment by Irish Water of €6.3m. The project is expected to be completed in 2023 and further details and timelines will be confirmed later in the design process.

Peter Thornton, Asset Operations Lead with Irish Water, commented: "Irish Water is committed to ensuring that all our customers have safe, clean drinking water. This is a significant challenge due to decades of under-investment in our water infrastructure, but we are making steady progress, with approximately 127,000 people in Wicklow and South Dublin now removed from the Remedial Action List.

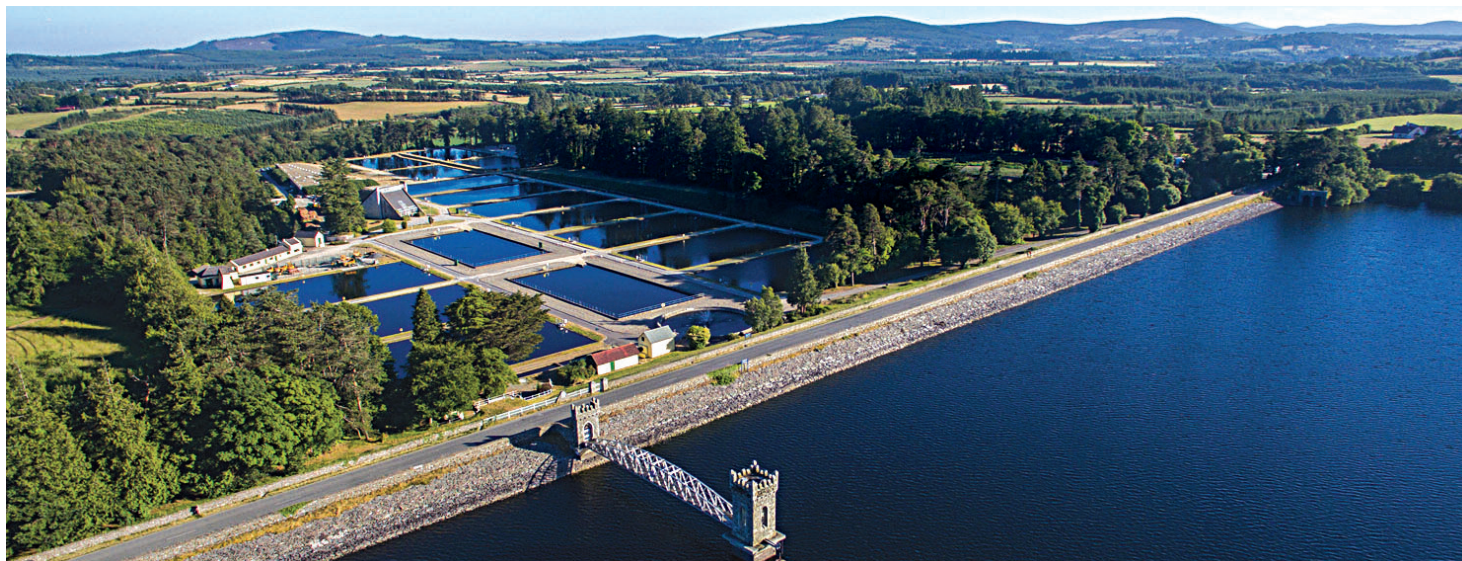
"Nationally, the numbers of customers on the list continue to fall. Overall 16 supplies have been removed from the list in the past year, serving a total of 790,000 customers. We are working in partnership with Local Authorities to address issues with the supplies which remain on the list and to bring them to a standard where the EPA determines that they can be removed."

As a single national utility, Irish Water has been able to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the performance of Ireland's drinking water treatment plants and focus investment where the risk to our customers is highest.

Nationally Irish Water is investing €5.2 billion in drinking water and wastewater quality and capacity and new infrastructure between 2020 and 2024. Significant improvements in water quality are being achieved year on year by this approach right across the country.

The Remedial Action List is updated quarterly by the EPA for those water supplies where investment in treatment processes is required. When Irish Water was established in 2014 there were 140 supplies on the list. Of these 140 supplies, seven supplies remain – and three of these are candidates for removal in 2022.

The remaining supplies were added by the EPA since January 2014



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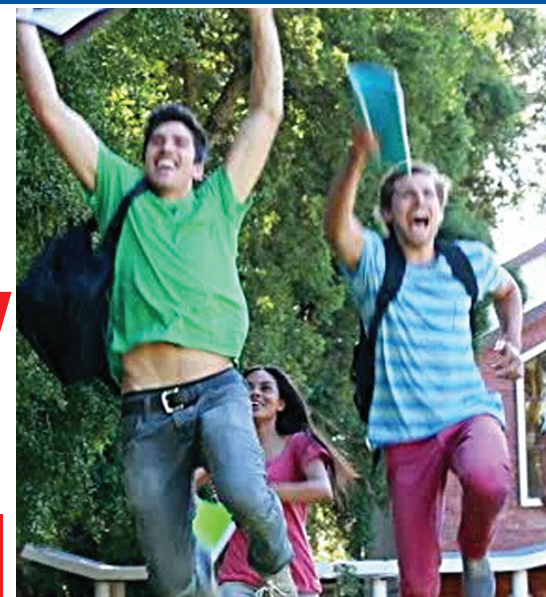
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Deputy Matthews in Carnew where the former bank building is to be brought back to community use

Progress made in bringing former bank buildings back to community use

Green Party TD Steven Matthews has made significant progress in turning the former Bank of Ireland buildings in Carnew and Tinahely town centres into remote work hubs and community spaces.

Through a series of meetings and engagements with bank officials and Wicklow County Council over the past 6 months, Wicklow County Council are strongly positioned to acquire the buildings. Discussing the process, Deputy Matthews said: "The news last year that these bank units were closing was hugely disappointing and I first raised the matter with the Bank of Ireland Chief Executive at the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Finance to see what could be done to repurpose the units. I then followed up with a meeting with officials from the Bank to get their assessment of potential community leases on the vacant buildings.

"Subsequently, I visited both sites and I then discussed my idea with Minister for Finance - Pascal Donohue and Minister for Rural Development - Heather Humphreys to seek their advice and experience on options we could pursue. I met again with Bank of Ireland to explore options on purchasing the buildings and engaged again with Wicklow County Council to examine potential funding, future enterprise use of the buildings and options to purchase.

"I have now brought the Bank of Ireland and Wicklow County Council together with a clear objective to acquire the buildings and I am very hopeful of a posi-



Deputy Matthews in Tinahely where progress has been made to bring the former bank building back to community use.

tive conclusion to this process.

"The former bank buildings are in good condition, well placed and well suited to use as work hubs having excellent broadband connectivity in place already. The creation of these community and work facilities can bring economic benefit to the town and hopefully more footfall and vibrancy to assist local business and provide residents with options for remote education and work opportunities.

"I regularly meet with West Wicklow residents and local groups who feel that this is a part of the county that often is neglected through lack of investment. With significant public realm investments announced for Blessington and Baltinglass recently, this investment in Carnew and Tinahely is well overdue, and I'm delighted to have brought Wicklow County Council and the Bank of Ireland together to complete the proposal.

"While some public representatives go no further than posting a photograph of themselves accompanied with a demanding but ultimately useless social media post, I believe that action, engagement, and negotiation is the best way to achieve results and I look forward to bringing these much-needed community facilities to Carnew and Tinahely and continued investment throughout all parts of West Wicklow."

Beware of flea infestations

Rentokil is advising home and business owners to be on the lookout for signs of flea infestations this winter period. Fleas typically move indoors at this time of year to escape the cold weather.

The wingless bloodsucking insects can attach to pets or people. In particular, those who have come into contact with wildlife such as foxes, rabbits, rodents or deer, are at risk of carrying the insects indoors as a host.

The most common indication of a flea issue is a bite or skin irritation. Fleas most often bite people around the ankles and legs. The bites are felt immediately and can be sore for as much as a week. Fleas can also cause allergic reactions to sensitive individuals, transmit tapeworm and, in very rare cases, even transmit serious diseases.

Top tips for preventing a flea infestation in the home

1.) Regularly wash and check pets

for fleas with a flea comb to catch a potential problem early and prevent fleas from becoming established in carpets and bedding
2.) Wash pet bedding weekly, ideally at temperatures above 50 degrees to kill any dormant fleas and eggs
3.) Vacuum floors and furniture regularly - ensuring to cover hard to reach places as fleas like to hide in cracks in floorboards and crevices
4.) Shake out or beat rugs and pet bedding outdoors so fleas and eggs fall off
5.) Consider placing pet beds in areas without carpets such as on wooden floors (but ONLY if these are well sealed - if there are gaps between the boards this may actually make the pest much harder to treat)

EcoTrail and Wicklow Wolf plant more than 400 trees in Roundwood

Around 400 participants made the sustainable decision to sponsor the planting of a tree at registration of the 2021 EcoTrail Wicklow.

Those trees are now being planted by Wicklow Wolf's Hop farm on four acres of land adjoining their hop farm owned by the premium beer producer on the slopes of Djouce Mountains.

Only Irish native trees are being planted and those include Oaks (*Quercus robur* and *Quercus petraea*), Alders (*Alnus glutinosa*), Scott's Pines (*Pinus sylvestris*) and birch trees (*Betula pendula*). The objective is to help offset carbon while at the same time create a new natural habitat for local flora and fauna to thrive.

"We are extremely thankful to all participants that are making this project possible through their sponsorship," says Paul Mahon, EcoTrail Wicklow Race Director. "With the support of Wicklow Wolf, we are increasing the sustainability of EcoTrail Wicklow, while giving back to the fabulous playground that is County Wicklow."

Simon Lynch, who co-owns Wicklow Wolf Brewing Co., has been very busy with the planting of the trees. He says: "This project demonstrates our intent to be as sustainable as possible and that is what makes our partnership with EcoTrail Wicklow so valuable, we are delighted with the support from participants of this super race. Our objective is to plant more than 700 trees on our land over the next few weeks adding to over 2,500 trees already planted. It will take many decades to fully mature, but I truly hope to be able to walk under the young canopy in the next 20 years and all going well see red squirrels leaping between the trees. We are so very privileged to work, live and run in such a stunningly beautiful county as Wicklow each one of us has a responsibility to protect and enhance it."



Symon Lynch from Wicklow Wolf and Rene Borg from Eco Trail planting trees in Roundwood



COMHAIRLE CONTAE CHILL MHANTÁIN
WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL

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

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

Road to be closed

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

Period of closure

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

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

*Local Access will be permitted to Delaneys Emo Oil.

Alternative Routes

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

Reason for Closure

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



**COVID-19
VACCINE**
Public Health
Advice



COVID-19 vaccines for children aged 5 and over.

All children aged 5 and over are being offered a COVID-19 vaccine. The vaccine will help to protect them, and the rest of the family too.

The World Health Organization has advised that the COVID-19 vaccine is safe for children of this age.

So if you're wondering about the benefits of the vaccine or if you have any other questions, we have answers you can trust.

**To register, or for information,
visit hse.ie**



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

#ForUsAll



Patricia O'Keefe and Nigel Doyle at the Leinster Junior B Club Championship final between Knockananna and St Brigid's of Westmeath. Knockananna won the game to claim their place in the All Ireland semi-final.

New employment project for people with disabilities

A new employment project for people with disabilities, IMPACT, has opened its doors in Bray.

IMPACT will use a person-centred approach to support job seekers with disabilities to find suitable secure paid employment, advance their careers or become self-employed.

Supports available will include mentoring, training, supported work and job experience placements, in-work supports and upskilling in a current role. The service is open to people aged 18 and over who are in receipt of a Disability Allowance.

IMPACT was set up by a consortium of local organisations, led by Bray Area Partnership, and is administered through Pobal on behalf of the Department of Social Protection, resourced through the Dormant Accounts Fund.

"We're really looking forward to start meeting clients", says IMPACT Co-ordinator Orla Butler, "and to working with local employers to help create more inclusive work environments for people with disabilities so they can reach their full potential."

The IMPACT team is based in the Southern Cross Business Park in Bray. To find out more or make an appointment, call Orla Butler on 01 963 3342 or email orlabutler@brayareapartnership.ie. See www.brayareapartnership.ie for more information.



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Application lodged for mast close to Bray Head

Hibernian Cellular Networks Ltd are seeking to construct a 60m-high telecommunications tower in Ballynamuddagh, near Bray Head.

The planning application was lodged with Wicklow County Council on 14th January by consulting engineers Jennings O'Donovan & Partners Limited, on behalf of Hibernian Cellular Networks.

The development would involve the removal of the existing telecommunications structure and the erection of the lattice support structure with associated antenna and transmission equipment.

The tower would be located close to the R761 Bray to Greystones road, between Kilruddery and Windgates.

Hibernian Cellular Networks Ltd is an established national provider of mast infrastructure for the transmission and broadcast sectors, operating approximately 60 transmission sites nationwide, including radio stations and coastguard services.

The site is an existing telecommunications transmission site, with permission for use originally granted in 1981. A 39-

metre high mast was subsequently erected in 2016, though it was unauthorised.

The applicants argue that the provision of a taller mast will assist in improving connectivity for local residents and businesses in Bray and the wider area and will be 'instrumental' as part of the National Broadband Plan.

The existing structure is not capable of meeting the future needs of telecommunications providers, they say, and

the need for high-speed data and broadband. The recent dramatic increase in remote working makes the need even more pressing, they say.

The Council's previous decision to grant permission for retention of the 39-metre mast on the site was appealed to An Bord Pleanála in 2010. ABP decided to uphold the Council's decision to grant permission.

The Council is due to make a decision on the application by March 10th.

Decision to refuse Kilmacanogue mast is appealed to ABP

Emerald Tower Ltd has lodged an appeal with An Bord Pleanála following Wicklow County Council's decision to refuse planning permission for a telecommunications tower on the outskirts of Kilmacanogue.

The development would see the erection of a 21m high monopole together with antennas and dishes, in a field in north Kilmacanogue. The mast would be approximately 100 metres from the nearest residential dwelling and 200m from the nearest built-up area.

The Council refused permission in December, due to 1) the proposed site being in a rural location and elevated in an area of outstanding natural beauty; 2) The failure of the applicants to submit a visual impact statement; 3) The failure of the applicants to adequately demonstrate that there is not a more appropriate location for the development.

The Council deemed that the development would be contrary to the development standards for mast and telecommunications structures as set out in the County Development Plan, and would have a negative

impact on the visual amenity of the area.

The Council also refused permission due to the failure of the applicant to submit a statement of compliance with the International Radiation Protection Association (IRPA) Guidelines.

A number of public submissions also objected to the mast, raising concerns about the visual impact, the impact of electromagnetic radiation on flora and fauna, and the impact on human health among other concerns.

Emerald Tower Ltd wish to erect the mast to address Vodafone's requirement to significantly improve services in the Kilmacanogue area.

Current infrastructure within the area is inadequate to fulfil the current and predicted demand for new technologies and communication services, they say. They say that the surrounding areas will also benefit from a significant improvement in service levels.

Emerald Tower Ltd is a subsidiary of Phoenix Tower International, a global telecommunications infrastructure provider.

An Bord Pleanála is due to decide on the case by 26th May.

Surveying for Broadband Plan in Wicklow continues

National Broadband Ireland (NBI), the company rolling out the new high-speed fibre broadband network under the Government's National Broadband Plan (NBP) has announced that surveying works in Wicklow are well underway.

In Wicklow, there are 17,781 premises in the Intervention Area (IA), which includes homes, farms, commercial businesses and schools. This equates to 23% of all premises in the county. Under the National Broadband Plan, Wicklow will see an investment of €59M in the new high-speed fibre network. This will enable e-learning, remote monitoring of livestock or equipment, e-health initiatives, better energy efficiency in the home, and facilitate increased levels of remote working.

NBI crews have surveyed Glendalough and Redcross. These initial works pave the way for the next stage of deploying fibre on poles/ducts and includes the erection of poles, unblocking of ducts, and the insertion of sub duct into existing ducts, for the fibre to be installed.

NBI contractors have been on the ground across the country for 22 months and over 293,809 premises nationwide have been surveyed to date. In advance of the Fibre-to-the-

Home roll out, the NBP provides for the delivery of Broadband Connection Points (BCP's) nationwide. 454 of these sites are now 'live' and have both internal and external broadband access. These facilities - which include GAA clubs, community centres and tourist sites - will provide free public access to high speed internet in the rollout area.

These will pave the way for rural communities to receive the benefits of broadband, from mobile working, e-learning and mobile banking, to digital tourism. A full list can be found at <https://nbi.ie/bcp-map/>. Locations of Broadband Connection Points in county Wicklow will include Crossbridge Community Hall, Brockagh Resource Centre, Knockree Youth Hostel and Ballinacor GAA Club. Primary schools in the Intervention Area are also being connected for educational access as part of the NBP.

NBI Chief Executive Peter

Hendrick said: "Momentum has been steadily building in the progression of the National Broadband Plan rollout, with homes across the country being connected to high-speed broadband. Our teams have been, and continue to do so, work on the rollout plan and substantial progress has been made from surveying, design, build to connection works."

"As an increasing number of homes and businesses are being connected, we are confident that the rollout will continue to gather pace as we look to connect thousands more homes and businesses. We are acutely aware that people want access to high-speed broadband and our goal is to deliver that as quickly as possible."

"Survey and designs are an important part of mapping out how every home, farm and business will be connected, and they provide the blueprint for how the NBI fibre is laid. The BCPs are also a key milestone in delivering access to high-speed internet in the Intervention Area, and we're delighted to see these being connected for access - internally and externally - right across the county."



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Bray artist is curious about puffins in new exhibition



Bray artist Hannah Sayers

'Be Curious' is the new collection from Bray-based artist Hannah Sayers (of SayersStudio). Hannah is a semi abstract artist and concentrates mainly on the flora and fauna of Ireland. She is a graduate of NCAD (National College of Art & Design in Ireland) where she studied Art & Design Education.

"This collection is based heavily on Puffins, although small they are bold and curious. Never ones to shy away from a little adventure whether it's waddling around on the Skellig or making new friends with visiting tourists," explains Hannah.

"We are now well into a brand-new year and as we take our first tentative steps into 2022 we can only hope that this will bring us one step closer towards a bit more normality. What we take with us into this new world is however up to us.

"For myself I made some huge changes over the last two years. I started pandemic life as a first-time mother to a small baby and I emerge with a toddler, realising how lucky I was to get so much

quality time as a family.

"I hope I will continue to remember the value of life and appreciate what we have. But the biggest change of all was leaving my corporate job behind me and setting up this little business to sell my art during lockdown. For the first time in my very introverted life, I took a leap of faith, like the curious puffin I bravely ventured forward to pursue the job/lifestyle I have always wanted."

The 'Be Curious' collection will be on exhibit from Thursday 10th - Thursday 17th February in Catalyst Coffee in Bray. See www.thecatalyst.ie. The collection will be available for purchase from 9am, Friday, February 11th on www.sayersstudio.com.



Life on the Rock by Hannah Sayers

An Eye On Nature: Wildlife photography competition returns for a second year

Following on from the huge success of last year's inaugural 'Eye on Nature', the wildlife photography competition launched once last week on Today on RTÉ One in association with Mooney Goes Wild on RTÉ Rádaí 1 and the National Botanic Gardens/OPW.



Last year there were over 7,000 entries and all eyes will once again be on the natural world in 2022. Photos of landscapes, flora and fauna will all be welcomed by keen amateur and professional photographers.

Last year's winner was Larry Doherty, who took an astonishingly sharp close up of the tiny Orange ladybird, *Halyzia sedecimguttata*, bóin Dé buí, at Cabragh Wetlands, Thurles, Co. Tipperary.

This year's competition will be judged by award-winning filmmaker Anne Sommerfield, wildlife photographer Mike Brown and Matthew Jebb, Director of Botanic

Gardens of Ireland.

Dr. Matthew Jebb is Director of Botanic Gardens of Ireland. Other career highlights include a five-year appointment as Director of the Christensen Research Institute at Madang in Papua New Guinea and a post-doctoral position at Trinity College Dublin. Matthew is a regular contributor to Mooney Goes Wild, and has been involved in the conservation of Irish plants for over 25 years.

Matthew says "The Office of Public Works is delighted to be hosting the launch of the second 'Eye on Nature' competition at the National

Botanic Gardens. Ireland's wildlife is so precious and essential to all of us, and seeing it afresh from another photographers' viewpoint is always inspiring and uplifting. Having the finalists printed in large format and displayed in an outdoor setting really is breath-taking, and as with last year, we hope to tour the exhibition around the country to other OPW sites."

Anne Sommerfield is an award-winning filmmaker whose latest work includes the BAFTA-nominated series, 'Great Barrier Reef with David Attenborough' for BBC One.

Anne Says: "The thing that excites me about the 'Eye on Nature' competition is that it's an invitation to everyone no matter what stage you are at, to pick up a camera and connect with nature. I think that's one of the most important things we

can do as a society because without that connection we haven't got a hope of saving the natural world. I'm thrilled to be one of the judges in a competition that will celebrate Ireland's spectacular wildlife and the very talented people who photograph it."

Mike Brown is an award-winning professional photographer and is best known for his Irish Landscape and Nature photography. He is one of the Irish Wildlife Trust's photographers.

Mike says: "I'm delighted to be a judge for this year's 'Eye on Nature' competition as I love to see what photographers are doing out there at the moment. There are some wonderfully talented photographers making nature pictures in Ireland and it's always exciting to see new, fresh images, which show the beauty of nature

in Irish habitats. I'm hoping to see some great shots and some diverse and interesting entries showing our nature at its best."

Along with a €1000 cash prize, the winner will be presented with a trophy. They will have their photograph displayed at the National Botanic Gardens, along with the other 11 other finalists. The exhibition of finalist images is due to tour other OPW sites later in the year.

The closing date for entries is 12 Noon on Friday March 4th. Entries can be submitted to www.rte.ie/eyeonnature, where full details along with Terms and Conditions will be found. The winner will be announced LIVE from The Botanic Gardens exhibition on The Today Show on Wednesday April 27th. An online gallery will also be available.

Bray Camera Club 50th anniversary exhibition

Bray Camera Club's exhibition celebrating their 50th anniversary continues until 13th February in the Signal Arts Centre.

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

The members comprise of an eclectic mix of amateurs, competition winners and professionals and it is the mission of BCC to learn from and support one another in improving each member's photographic creativity and skills in the use of all sorts of cameras. BCC's work features all mainstream photographic genres including landscape, wildlife, abstract, street, macro and studio photography. Thus, when the Club presents its work to the public, a wide variety of photographic styles is guaranteed.

This exhibition is sure to appeal to anyone with a curious eye, an interest in photography or who may have a view to joining the club for the simple pleasure of taking and sharing photographs.



Fisherman's Hut, St Michel Chef Chef



COUNTY WICKLOW ARTS CENTRE



LIVE SHOWS ARE BACK!

Spring is in the air, Mermaid Arts Centre is open & there's loads for all to enjoy!

Visit mermaidartscentre.ie for all events.

Privilege: the Musical

*Mermaid Arts Centre, Friday 4th & Saturday 5th March
(Previews Wednesday 2nd & Thursday 3rd March)*

What is privilege? Why does mentioning it detonate conversations?? What happens when five people try to make a musical to figure this out???

Privilege: The Musical! is a glittering, soul searching look at power and inequality, the most ambitious show to date from award-winning theatre maker Louise White. When the piece premieres with performances on Friday 4th and Saturday 5th of March at Mermaid Arts Centre, audiences can expect quirky show tunes, snowflake earnestness and knees up entertainment in a production co-created with a gender bending, intersectional, fire-cracking cast of actors, dancers and musicians.

Louise, who has written, directs, and performs in Privilege: The Musical!, is known for her alternative, poignant productions exploring contemporary topics, including This is The Funeral of Your Life, Mother You, and Way Back Home. Of her latest production she comments, "It's almost impossible to speak to people about their own privilege without creating sparks. I often feel ill equipped to talk articulately about it, whether I am sitting across a dinner table or gathered with new friends — I get so frustrated with myself that I can't find the right words. I want to do better. All my work starts from something that I feel strongly about and want to expand the conversation on. For my last project it was how I would overcome grief after my father's death. For Privilege: The Musical! I'm getting comfortable being uncomfortable and exploring the vastness of



privilege with a bunch of performers with different experiences to mine, to see if we can find new ways to see, understand and enjoy the complexities of each other."

Co-creating Privilege: The Musical! is its incredible cast. Stephen Quinn is an award-winning theatre and performance maker exploring Irish queer identity through a kaleidoscope of drag, burlesque, physical theatre, and alternative cabaret. Jade O'Connor's career has seen her on screen alongside Olivia Coleman, in her own award-winning show CAGED, and in Catherine Young's Floating On A Dead Sea, which offered a glimpse into life in Palestine. Ashley Xie is a Chinese actor, film director, dancer, writer and theatre

practitioner exploring and creating unique voices in contemporary Asia and Europe. Privilege: The Musical! will be Los Angeles-born Venus Patel's Dublin theatre debut, and he could not be more excited! The production's original score has been composed by award-winning Matt Regan, known for his socially conscious and formally adventurous work, with live cello from Lioba Petrie, and lyrics devised by Louise and the cast.

This production is funded by the Arts Council / An Chomhairle Ealaíon and Dublin City Council, with support from Project Arts Centre, Mermaid Arts Centre, and field:arts. Developed with the support of Dublin Fringe Festival. Louise White is a resident artist of Project Arts

Centre. Killian Coyle is an independent producer at field:arts.

Louise White is a theatre and performance maker celebrating nearly 15 years' progressive arts practice. She experiments with dramatic form to create original audience experiences that ask questions about community and the contemporary moment. She continues to surprise audiences with alternative, poignant productions. This is The Funeral of Your Life (Premier Project Arts Centre 2017 & National Tour 2019), Mother You (2015), Way Back Home (2013) winner the Spirit of the Fringe. From the Heart 2010; NOMINATED Spirit of the Fringe, Best Off-Site Production, & Best Design.

Each project is devised around a core topic and interdisciplinary collaboration is very important to her practice. She has worked with a diverse array of performers, and weaves their personal stories into the narrative of each show. These have included dancers, opera singers, visual artists, chefs, composers, actors, children and older people. She takes influence from pop culture, sociology, lived experiences, therapeutic exercises, classic literature and post-dramatic art.

This time she returns with a brand new technicolour musical asking us where the power lies.

Age suitability: 15+
TICKETS €18/€16/€15
mermaidartscentre.ie
01-2724030



The Book of Dust - La Belle Sauvage

Whale Theatre, Greystones,
Thursday 17th February
@ 7pm (doors 6.30pm) Tickets
€17.50 available at
www.whaletheatre.ie or call the
booking office on 01 2010550

The Book of Dust – La Belle Sauvage by Philip Pullman, has been adapted by Bryony Lavery and directed by Nicholas Hytner

Set twelve years before the epic His Dark Materials trilogy, this gripping adaptation revisits Philip Pullman's fantastical world in which waters are rising and storms are brewing.

Two young people and their daemons, with everything at stake, find themselves at the centre of a terrifying manhunt. In their care is a tiny child called Lyra Belacqua, and in that child lies the fate of the future. And as the waters rise around them, powerful



adversaries conspire for mastery of Dust: salvation to some, the source of infinite corruption to others.

Eighteen years after his ground breaking production of His Dark Materials at the National Theatre, director Nicholas Hytner returns to Pullman's parallel universe. Broadcast live from London's Bridge Theatre.

THE COURTHOUSE ARTS CENTRE

Spring 2022

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Jack O'Rourke

Mar 12th
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April 1st
Eleanor McEvoy

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**Arklow Visual Arts Gallery Fine Art raffle in support of
Talk To Tom Suicide Prevention**

For your chance to win some beautiful unique original art pieces created by local artists simply purchase a raffle ticket and your name will be entered into the draw. You may enter as many times as you like. All proceeds go directly to Talk To Tom Suicide Prevention. The grand draw will be made at the end of February. There are nine chances to win (so far), our members continue to donate original artworks and we will update the website as submissions come in.



‘A Sense of the Place’: An exhibition by Paula Kearney

Signal Arts Centre, Monday, April 25th to Sunday, May 8th

Paula Kearney brings a new series of paintings to the Signal Arts Centre. This collection of work explores the landscape of the Murrough where she lives and walks each day.

The land there is a nature reserve and is full of migratory birds. It comprises of marsh lands and salt water lakes which stretch along the coast line for 15kms from Kilcoole to Wicklow town. The land is rough and soggy. Bitter and cold in the winter, while warm and wild and open in the summer. Standing alone here Paula feels the full weight of the beauty of the isolation and the broody solitude of the landscape engulfs her. A sense of calm prevails while standing feeling tiny in the vastness of the view. Land meets sea, land meets sky. It is rugged, harsh and wet. There is a heavy silence here which is only broken by the wind or the shrill cry of the Little Egrets.

The paintings Paula chose for this exhibition convey the mood that this place leaves her with. They are dark and brooding but always have a hint of light breaking through. The backgrounds are abstract and vast while the foregrounds are more immediate and real, with the dominant entangled grasses and the tall wild foliage. The paintings are about weight, Isolation and silence and strive to capture a sense of this place for the artist and the viewer. Mood and memory are central to her imagery and overall composition.

The paintings marry the two mediums of oil paint and graphite. The brush allows Paula the freedom to make lush moody painterly landscapes while the graphite drawings in the forefronts allows her to make sharp, bold, complex and realistic lines.

Paula Kearney studied Fine Art Painting in the College of Marketing and Design (DIT) and at the National College of Art and Design (NCAD) in Dublin. She graduated in the late 80’s and soon after moved to Singapore where she lectured in Life Drawing and Painting. In early 2000 she moved to Dubai where she continued to teach. Whilst living in Dubai she returned to painting full time and took part in several exhibitions and group shows. Her work hangs in private and corporate settings there. Since returning to Ireland she has focused primarily on her painting, gradually shifting her focus from Figurative Images to exploring the Landscape.

Paula now lives in county Wicklow where the naturally rugged landscape is central to her work.



February at Mermaid...

Mermaid Arts Centrer has a busy and wide-ranging programme of events this month, that includes cinema, theatre, live music, comedy and visual art. There are options for families and young people, offerings for those of you thirsty for a taste of something new and thrilling, or something familiar and entertaining.



COMEDY
David O'Doherty - Whoa Is Me

FRIDAY 11th
& THURSDAY 24th
February, 8pm, €22

Here he comes again, trotting on to the stage with all of the misplaced confidence of a waiter with no pad. Is he going to remember it? HOPEFULLY! There'll be lots of talking, some apologising and some songs on a glued together plastic keyboard from 1986.

As seen on BBC's 'Live at The Apollo' and Channel 4's '8 Out of 10 Cats Does Countdown'.

MUSIC



Musici Ireland: Music From The Movies

SUNDAY 13th February, 3pm, €16/14, €50 (Family of 4)

In this concert, Musici Ireland presents a wonderful selection of Classic film music.

These marvellous arrangements for string quartet will take you on a journey of discovery, from Barbers' Adagio (Platoon) to Boccherini's Joyful La Musica Notturna di Madrid (Master &

Commander), all expertly performed by one of Ireland's leading chamber ensembles.

Expect music from Cinema Paradiso, The Wizard of Oz, Mishima, Star Wars, Scent of a Woman and music by the incomparable Ennio Morricone.

MUSIC / CHILDREN

The Speks

SUNDAY 20th February, 2pm, €8

The Speks present a lively show of nursery rhymes and sing-along songs set to acoustic Irish music which will have adults and kids jumping in their seats!

They encourage everyone to sing, scream, clap and dance along during their performances. This will be a great, fun event for kids aged 2 to 92!



MUSIC

Tommy Halferty & Voices

SATURDAY 26th February, 8pm
€18/16

Tommy Halferty's Voices brings original music arrangements of Beatles, Paul Simon, James Taylor and Brazilian music to the stage with new compositions by Halferty. Tommy Halferty - guitar, Izumi Kimura - piano, Derek Whyte - bass, Jenna Harris - Voice.

Free growing kits for classes with The Big Grow

Primary school teachers nationwide can now sign up for a free food growing kit for their students at www.innocentdrinks.ie/big-grow which comes with three packs of different seeds including mixed salad, peas and radish along with enough compost, growing cups, instructions, and a fun lesson plans for the entire class.

Last Thursday kicked off the eleventh year of The Big Grow, a campaign started by innocent and GIY to get kids growing their own veg at school and helping thousands of schools to get free growing resources. The Big Grow has so far helped 1.6 million children to start growing their own veg, and this year 50,000 children in Ireland will have an opportunity to learn how to grow food in their classrooms.

Launching the 2022 initiative founder of GIY Michael Kelly said: "Getting involved with 'The Big Grow' is a brilliant opportunity and often for many children it is their introduction to grow-

ing food. It is a life skill that we now know after 11 years of this initiative stays with many children as they have gone on to create gardening clubs at school and even outside of school in their local community. Each year it is one of the most popular initiatives that we run at GIY and we hope that 2022 will be no different so we're encouraging all teachers to get their class registered as soon as possible!"

Brand manager for innocent drinks Ireland, Laura O'Connell added: "We're big fans of fruit and veg here at innocent and we're really proud of The Big Grow seeing as it helps kids to grow their own. Over the last eleven

years, we've made it our mission to reach over half the primary school kids in Ireland with this healthy-eating project, so we are delighted to continue 'The Big Grow' again this year and get even more kids excited about veg."

Each school taking part in The Big Grow will be encouraged to share their growing experiences online in order to be in with a chance of being crowned The Big Grow Champions of 2022 and be awarded the fantastic prize of a school garden revamp. Teachers will also be provided with a resource pack to assist them in guiding their budding growers through the process with lesson plans, growing

activities, growth charts, quizzes and more. The guide also includes radish, pea and mixed salad recipes so that the children can enjoy the complete 'plot to plate' experience.

The winners of the 2021 Big Grow were Carrigania National School in County Cork. The teacher of the winning class, Lavinia Sheahan said, "Our two-teacher school took to this challenge with gusto. They all absolutely loved the experience of growing their own food and learned a lot through the process. They were excellent at growing their seeds from scratch and transplanting everything outside to the raised beds successfully. We also



Pictured launching The Big Grow 2022 are Oscar McMarara, Muireann Cooke, Odhran Rellis, Eve Power and Lucy Hayes innocent and GIY are calling on teachers to sign up for a free food growing kit for primary school classrooms this Spring; which comes with three packs of different seeds and enough compost, growing cups, instructions and fun lesson plans for the entire class - sign up at <http://www.innocentbiggrow.com/innocentdrinks.ie/big-grow>. Photo Patrick Browne.

used a lot of recycled materials for our grow cartons. 2021 wasn't the easiest year for children at school so this outdoor activity offered us a wonderful slice of normality and learning in a fun way together."

Teachers can sign up for a free food growing kit at innocentdrinks.ie/big-grow. Registration is still open while stocks last, and kits will be delivered to schools in the first week of March 2022.

Forestry group unhappy with narrative from Government

The members of IFO (Irish Forest Owners) have reacted angrily to the narrative being promulgated regarding the ongoing crisis in the forestry sector.

Nicholas Sweetman, chairperson of IFO, states that "various government spokespersons have been making statements on air to the effect that the forestry licence backlog has essentially been solved and blaming all the problems experienced by the sector on European Union environmental legislation."

"It seems that because the supply of timber to the sawmills has improved recently, as a result of unfair priority being given to larger suppliers, false claims regarding the forestry crisis are being made. The facts do not support this narrative. Major licensing issues still remain."

"Figures published by the DAFM on 3rd December 2021 show that the number of licences applied for in 2021 exceeded the number issued by 909. In other words, the number of licences in the system awaiting decision increased by a substantial margin in 2021. The fact that over 1,200 licence applications were in the system for over a year in Dec 2021 and many for over 2 or 3 years does not indicate that resolution of the licensing backlog is at hand. The European Union environmental directives concerning EIAs (Environmental Impact Statements) and Habitats have been around since the 1980s and 1990s, respectively, and are not the problem. The inability of our government to legislate and regulate sensibly and in a timely manner regarding those EU Directives is central to where the problem lies."

"To add insult to injury, the forest budget for 2021 was once again underspent and funds allocated to support afforestation were returned to the exchequer. This occurred at a time when the costs of running the Forest Service as a percentage of the overall budget increased dramatically."

On Friday, Minister of State for Forestry at the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Senator Pippa Hackett, published her Department's Forest Licensing plan for 2022. The plan sets a target of 5,200 new licences for this year.

Referring to the plan, the Minister emphasised the focus on increasing the numbers of planting licences issued: "Last year there were significant increases in the numbers of felling and roads licences issued. In 2022, we are giving a much higher priority to issuing planting licences. Our plan is to achieve a 100% increase in output. In addition, we intend to increase the overall number of private licences issued in respect of felling, roads and planting by almost 50%, and to achieve an overall increase in licencing output of 30%. We will also significantly increase the output on schemes like the Reconstitution and Underplanting Scheme (Ash Dieback) (RUS), Reconstitution of Woodland Scheme (Frost) and the Native Woodland Conservation Scheme. The targets are ambitious, but we feel they are achievable, especially in light of the good progress we made last year. Last year was a record year for licencing, in terms of felling volume and forest roads, and we intend to build on that."

The Minister also pointed to the broader challenge of increasing the level of planting by farmers and landowners: "Improved licencing output has a role to play in building confidence among farmers and landowners, and in increasing demand for licences and planting rates. That is why I am attaching such importance to improving output in 2022. We are already making significant progress. However, we also need to address the broader issue of increasing the level of interest in planting among farmers and landowners. In 2021, for example, there were 502 afforestation licences issued. Those licences would have facilitated the planting of over 4,200 ha, but only 2,000 ha have been planted to date. The conversion rate from licencing to planting, at about 64%, is low. This means that at present, a disproportionate amount of processing effort both by the Department and forestry companies is wasted. We need to change that."

She continued, "I am equally concerned about the decline in the number of applications for planting licences in recent years. This should be of concern to all of us who want to see more trees planted in Ireland. In addition to the progress made already, my department has, through Project Woodland, commissioned reviews of its processes and the regulatory framework with a view to further increasing the efficiency of the licencing system. I am also introducing an amendment to the Forestry Act 2014 to facilitate small scale tree-planting without the need for a licence. But we also have to get much better at communicating the benefits of forestry to those we are trying to encourage to plant trees."

€1.5 million available to support heritage

The Heritage Council is now accepting applications from community groups and not for profit organisations around the country for its Community Heritage Grant Scheme 2022.

A total of €1.5m is available for this year's scheme. Applications are sought for projects aimed at improving the management and maintenance of heritage collections, objects, buildings, and sites, as well as capital projects that improve access and inclusion at heritage sites, in particular for people with disabilities.

Funding is also available for projects that explore the heritage of minorities, including newly arrived immigrants, and the Traveller community. The Scheme also supports training events for traditional building skills, biodiversity, and archaeology, as well as the purchase of specialised equipment.

Commenting, Chief

Executive of the Heritage Council, Virginia Teehan said: "Each year we receive a diverse range of applications, which are a testament to the vibrancy of the heritage sector. Last year, for example, the Irish Film Institute received €11,400 towards the restoration of an important 1969 film, Ciall Cheannaigh (Shopping Sense) made by

the Guinness film group, with a soundtrack by Donal Lunny. The film records a day of activity at Dunnes Stores Cornelscourt just as supermarkets were beginning to enter the Irish market. In depicting activities in one of Ireland's first supermarkets so soon after their emergence in the country, Ciall Cheannaigh is not only a compelling, richly textured picture of life in an ordinary suburb in Dublin in the late 1960s,

but a unique sociological record that documents changes in Irish consumer habits, as we moved from a rural to an urban society. It will be available for free on the IFI Archive Player in late spring."

She added: "I'm also especially pleased that the benefits of the money allocated is tangible in various locations across Ireland. This includes in Co Cork, where Saint George's Arts and Heritage Centre, in Mitchelstown was awarded a grant of €15,000 from the Heritage Council to undertake works to facilitate universal access to the building. Separately, in Co Donegal, Ramelton Georgian Society was awarded €12,200 to commission a Conservation Energy Performance report, using the House on the Brae as a demonstration project. This complements the wider ambition of the Ramelton Local Action Plan to encourage and facilitate responsible retrofit methods appropriate to historic buildings and to develop skills locally."

The closing date for applications for this round of the scheme is Wednesday, 16th February 2022 at 5pm. Applications must be made via the Heritage Council's online grants management system. Funded projects must be completed by Monday, 19th September 2022. Full details are available on the Heritage Council website.



Christy Devlin, a legend in Kilmacanogue, turned 80 on the 30th January. He is the heart and soul of Glencormac Utd since it was founded in 1974. At present he is the Chairman, a role he takes very seriously. Having lived in Kilmac all his life Christy likes to give back to the community he lives in. A resident of Rockfield Park he is proud to promote the local Residents Association which he is also chairperson of.

Christy has been involved in local politics for years and has been involved in many elections canvassing for both John and Liz McManus, John Byrne and Paul O'Brien. To celebrate his birthday his friends who he socialises with met in Kavanagh's of Roundwood where Joe Kavanagh pulled out all the stops to provide a safe venue and good food. All Christy's friends wish him a happy birthday and a great year of celebrations.

Nominations for 25th EY Entrepreneur of the Year programme now open

The EY Entrepreneur Of The Year (EOY) programme celebrates its 25th anniversary in Ireland this year and has officially opened its call for nominations. Entrepreneurs from emerging businesses to established and international groups, across all sectors from Wicklow, are invited to submit their nominations between now and 28th February.

Previous finalists from the Wicklow area include: Bill Walsh (2014 Finalist) – Aspire Technology (technology company); Norman Crowley (2011 Finalist) – Cool Planet (formerly Carbon Crowley) and also recently launched AVA, his electric car company; Barry McCleary (2009 Finalist) – Megazyme International; and Finbarr Power (2004 Finalist) – Smart Profiles.

Roger Wallace, Partner Lead for EY Entrepreneur Of The Year(tm) Ireland said:

"The 25th anniversary of the programme is a fantastic milestone and it's an excellent opportunity to pause, reflect on and celebrate the truly meaningful impact that a generation of entrepreneurs have made to business and life across the island of Ireland. What we have seen over the last two years in particular has cemented our belief that

entrepreneurs are special. Our alumni of over 560 entrepreneurs represent the very best of innovation, bravery and leadership, building world class businesses, creating employment and inspiring others to become change makers in their own right. We start this 25th year of the programme with optimism and a strong belief that the health of Irish entrepreneurship is stronger than ever.

"We are proud to continue to support entrepreneurs who are actively seeking to take their businesses to the next level and we are keen to hear from a broad array of nominees, across industries, age, gender, location and background. I am also personally very excited at the prospect of welcoming another cohort of tremendously talented entrepreneurs to this unique and incredibly supportive group."

The programme is open to entrepreneurs from all sectors and growth stages in the Republic and Northern Ireland. The awards programme is divided into three categories - Emerging, Established and International - with eight finalists chosen per category.

This year, the programme's inaugural EY Entrepreneur Of The Year Sustainability Award will also be presented to one of the finalists, recognising the critical importance of innovation leadership in meeting our collective sustainability challenges. This award will be presented to the finalist who is making the biggest contribution towards environmental sustainability through their business.

Roger added, "This award will recognise those entrepreneurs that are making a material difference in the critical area of

environmental sustainability. Entrepreneurs have always found solutions to our most pressing challenges and the award will acclaim those whose core business ambition is to provide answers to our critically important environmental questions. I am delighted that the EOY programme now has an opportunity to shine a light on those who are innovating to protect our future."

The 24 finalists will be selected by an independent judging panel, comprising former winners and chaired by Anne Heraty of CPL Resources plc.

EY is delighted to announce that Aimee Connolly, CEO, Sculpted by Aimee and winner of the 2021 Emerging EY Entrepreneur Of The Year category, will join the judging panel this year.

Speaking at the launch, Anne Heraty, CEO of CPL



Pictured at the launch were: Brian O'Sullivan, CEO, Zeus Packaging, winner of EY Entrepreneur Of The Year Award in 2021, Aimee Connolly, CEO, Sculpted by Aimee, winner of EY Emerging Entrepreneur Of The Year Award in 2021 and new member of the EOY judging panel for 2022, and Roger Wallace, Partner Lead for EY Entrepreneur Of The Year.

Resources plc and Chairperson of the EY Entrepreneur Of The Year Judging Panel said:

"I am delighted to welcome Aimee to the judging panel, following her win of the Emerging EY Entrepreneur Of The Year Award in 2021. Aimee and her business epitomise what this programme is all about - great ideas, expert knowledge and true grit and determination. I have no doubt that Aimee will have invaluable wisdom to share with our next group of finalists."

"While the business environment continues to be challenging, entrepreneurs have been relentless in their pursuit of excellence and in playing their role in strengthening and supporting the resilience of the communities and economies across the island of Ireland in an uncertain climate. We know there are many more brilliant entrepreneurs contributing in this way and we look forward to welcoming the next generation of entrepreneurs to the programme."

Aimee Connolly, CEO, Sculpted by Aimee commented: "I am thrilled to join the judging panel for EOY. My experience of the programme in 2021 was fantastic from start to finish. What stood out for me as a finalist was the amazing support that I felt from the alumni community right from the beginning."

"It was a real privilege to be surrounded by people who are continually setting the bar ever higher in business and I'm looking forward to meeting

and working with the next group of finalists in 2022."

The EY Entrepreneur Of The Year Ireland programme is supported by Premium Corporate Sponsor Julius Baer International, and Government sponsors Enterprise Ireland and Invest Northern Ireland.

Anyone interested can find out more or complete an online nomination form at www.eoy.ie. Those nominating someone else must do so with the entrepreneur's consent.

Wicklow social enterprises highlighted in Rethink Ireland impact report

Rethink Ireland are marking four years of their Social Enterprise Development Fund and have published a report highlighting the impact of the Fund and spotlighting some of the social enterprises supported since 2018, including local groups: Generation Accommodation and Herstory.

The Social Enterprise Development Fund was created in 2018 by Rethink Ireland in partnership with Local Authorities Ireland and funded by IPB Insurance and the Department of Rural and Community Development via the Dormant Accounts Fund to find and back the best social enterprises in Ireland by making cash grants and strategic business support available to Awardees.

Nationally, the Social Enterprise Development Fund has supported 112 social enterprises and created 209 jobs. According to Rethink Ireland, a significant achievement of the Fund is the support that has been given to traditionally under-represented communities. The Social Enterprise Development Fund has succeeded in delivering services to over 270,000 people throughout Ireland and mobilised 16,507 volunteers.

Commenting, Stephanie Walsh, Business Development Director at Rethink Ireland, said: "Over the past four years, we have supported social enterprises throughout Ireland to provide responses to urgent social issues, while working closely with local communities. These social enterprises work to promote access to employment, delivering training and giving a voice to those not often heard in society; creating local solutions to the global climate crisis; and providing bespoke, holistic services to our most vulnerable in society."

Social enterprises based in Wicklow are being encouraged to apply for funding

through the Social Enterprise Development Fund 2022 and the Social Enterprise Start-Up Fund which have officially opened for applications.

George Jones, Group Director and Chairman of IPB Insurance, added: "We are delighted to renew our support for a further two years of the Social Enterprise

Development Fund with Rethink Ireland and the Department of Rural & Community Development in partnership with our local authority members. Working alongside our local authority Members, our collaboration with Rethink Ireland and the Department has focused on identifying and supporting the best social enterprises nationwide with the added benefit of promoting the sector as an important contributor to Ireland's socio-economic development.

"I think the need for Social Enterprises has been highlighted more than ever by the pandemic and global conversations around sustainability. Social enterprises are motivated by seeing a social need and setting out to meet that need in a sustainable manner."

Applications for the 2022 Social Enterprise Development Fund and Social Enterprise Start Up Fund will be open until March 3rd and can be found on Rethink Ireland's website, www.rethinkireland.ie.



George Jones, Group Director and Chairman of IPB Insurance; Stephanie Walsh, Business Development Director at Rethink Ireland. Photo credit: Marc O'Sullivan Photography

Majority of Wicklow workers will be office based

Pure Telecom, the broadband and telecoms provider, has announced the results of a survey which found that Gen Z office workers are more likely to work in the office in some capacity following the easing of COVID-19 restrictions than all other older generations. It found that 97% of Gen Z office workers - those aged 18 to 23 - will be working from the office on a full or part-time basis.

Pure Telecom's survey of 500 office workers in Ireland, carried out by Censuswide, asked office workers about their plans when COVID restrictions were eased.

The survey also looked at the counties most likely to be based in the office following the easing of restrictions. The majority (94%) of office workers who live in Wicklow say that they will work from the office in some capacity, followed by 93% in Donegal and 92% in Cork. Office workers living in Tipperary (70%), Louth (73%) and Limerick (75%) are the least likely to be office based.

Of the office workers who worked remotely during the pandemic, Gen Z is also the most likely generation to return to the office full-time, without any remote working. 23% of remote office workers will return to the office full-time following the easing of restrictions, rising to 35% for Gen Z. Just 18% of Baby Boomers who worked from home will return full-time, along with 20% of Millennials and 30% of Gen X.

Paul Connell, CEO, Pure Telecom, said: "It has been a long two years and younger workers may be feeling that they are missing out on the social aspects of being in the office. But it is clear from our research that the future is in hybrid working and what works for one generation may not work for another."

"People have become used to a work-life balance that allows them to enjoy time with their families and friends, or take on extracurricular activities. These things are important for employees and many would find it very difficult to replace these with long, unnecessary commutes twice a day. But the learning, collaboration and social life that the office brings is important too and it is particularly valuable to younger generations who are just starting out in their careers, and who are looking to expand their social circles."

"As businesses continue to struggle to hire, they must make sure they are doing everything they can to attract and retain the best talent; many will not even consider a job that doesn't offer flexibility anymore. It's vital for companies to work with their employees on their individual needs and ensure that they have the policies and systems in place to make it work."

"More and more premises across the country are getting connected to high-speed broadband and the desire for hybrid working makes this even more of a necessity. Work needs to be accessible to all employees; whether they are working remotely from a rural village, or in an office building in a city."

Innovate Wicklow!

Local Enterprise Office launch a new 8-week businesses innovation support programme

Local Enterprise Office (LEO) Wicklow has announced the launch of Innovate Wicklow!, a new 8-week Business Innovation Support Programme.

The programme, designed for ambitious Wicklow-based businesses, has been developed by LEO Wicklow in association with Design+, an established centre for innovation and commercialisation, at Institute of Technology Carlow and supported by Enterprise Ireland.

Over the course of 8 weeks, through a series of 6 group workshops (online), participants will learn about the process of Design Thinking and apply it to their business. Successful applicants will discover the innovation potential within their own business and develop a bespoke innovation road map, with potential to transform their business.

Experienced Design Strategist, Lynn Whelan and a team of Design+ mentors will work with growth-oriented business owners/managers to examine their businesses with fresh eyes through a defined process.

The programme commences on 24th March 2022 and will close with a live peer review and networking event in May 2022. The format of the programme offers participants the additional benefit of fresh perspectives from a peer group of business owner/managers, as well as an individual follow-up mentoring session with an innovation specialist.

LEO Business Advisor, Clodagh Whelan, encourages business owner/managers to consider the benefits: "This programme provides an opportunity for innovative Wicklow business owners, to re-assess their business and develop innovative strategies for adapting to market challenges and opportunities - whether that be new products, new processes or new approaches to markets and distribution channels." She proposes that "this programme is particularly relevant for companies with concerns about the effects of Brexit & Covid-19 on their business model and the sustainability of their business for the longer term."

The Innovate Wicklow! programme gives established business owners an opportunity, to apply proven innovation tools in a strategic, practical and bespoke manner to their own business. Now open for applications, the Innovate Wicklow! Programme costs €200 per participant company. Places are limited; therefore, a selection process will apply for those who submit an Expression of Interest Form before 18th March.

Find out more about the new Innovate Wicklow! Programme on the LEO Wicklow website: <https://www.localenterprise.ie/Wicklow/Training-Events/Programmes/Innovate-Wicklow/>



Ewelina Sliwka, Wicklow Store Manager; Sarah Jane Winders Wexford Ladies Football Captain; Robert Doyle, Sales Operations Manager at Lidl Ireland.

Lidl open new-look Store in Wicklow Town

Lidl opened its brand-new store in Wicklow Town on Thursday, 3rd February. The opening of the new store creates five new jobs in the local community, bringing the total number of those employed at the Wicklow Town Store to 25. The redevelopment of this store brings an investment of €9 million to the local area.

To mark the opening, the staff at the Wicklow Store welcomed representatives from The Gavin Glynn Foundation, to accept a donation of €1,000 in Lidl vouchers to support the ongoing work they do in assisting families fighting childhood cancer.

Robert Doyle, Sales Operations Manager for the district, Ewelina Sliwka, Wicklow Store Manager and Wexford Ladies Football Captain Sarah Jane Winders, were all on hand to open the store on the Dublin Road.

The new 1,700 metre squared shop floor features larger aisles, higher ceilings, a new bakery, PV solar panels and on-site Electric Vehicle charging units.

Commenting on the opening of Lidl's Wicklow Store, Ewelina Sliwka, Store Manager, said: "We are delighted to be welcoming back shoppers to our store on the Dublin Road following six months of construction. We have been working hard to get the store back up and running and we look forward to our customers seeing the new look store, enjoying the new features and experiencing the same great value they are used to. A huge thank you to our loyal customers over the past few months. We look forward to seeing them in the coming days, weeks and months."

Free Generating or Developing Your Business Idea Workshop

If you've ever thought about setting up your own business, but don't know where to start, Bray Community Enterprise's free upcoming workshop 'Generating or Developing Your Business Idea' will help you if you would like to start a business or are looking for new ideas within your business.

The workshop takes place on Monday 7th March from 10am-1pm online via Zoom. The trainers will take you through the steps to identify your own talents and limitations, perfect your business idea, design a product or service that will fill a real need, identify pitfalls, carry out research and refine your business

plan. You'll also get to hear about how other successful businesses got their ideas.

Call the team on 01 205 0111 to book your place. Certain qualifying criteria may apply - see www.brayareapartnership.ie to find out more.

This workshop is provided under the Social Inclusion and

Community Activation Programme (SICAP) 2018-2022, funded by the Irish Government through the Department of Rural and Community Development and co-funded by the European Social Fund under the Programme for Employability, Inclusion and Learning (PEIL) 2014-2020.

Courthouse Arts Centre want to know what you think

The Courthouse Arts Centre in Tinahely is developing a new Five-Year Strategic Plan, which will articulate its ambitions and priorities over the coming years. As part of this process, they have designed a survey to gather feedback, insights and ideas from our diverse audiences.

"These insights will inform the future direction of The Courthouse Arts Centre and your input will be extremely valuable to us as we embark on this journey," said Denise McGrath, Artistic Director.

"As Ireland's longest established rural arts venue, the Courthouse has played a vital role within the local community in Tinahely since 1996, as well as being an integral part of Wicklow's cultural infrastructure.

"Over the past 25 years, the organisation has weathered many storms but has been steadfast in providing a high-quality cultural offering to a broad audience base. Our audience are hugely important to us, and so as we begin to look beyond the challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic and plan for our future, we wanted to invite you to contribute to this strategic planning process.

"We want to understand your individual perspectives, your expectations, and ideas for the Courthouse to make sure

our planning is inclusive, considered and well-informed. This is your chance to help shape the next 25 years of the Courthouse in a meaningful way, and the answers provided in this survey will directly inform our planning.

"Whether you're a regular audience member, an occasional visitor or a member of the local community in Tinahely, we want to hear from you! This is a very exciting moment for us, and we would actively encourage anyone who has anything to contribute to please fill out this survey.

"The community around us is what makes the Courthouse so special, so we felt that it was very important to make sure that these voices are heard during this strategic planning process".

If you are interested in having your say and helping to shape the future of the Courthouse Arts Centre, go to surveymonkey.com/r/CourthouseSurvey2022. Printed copies will also be available at the Courthouse.

128 Trading Online Vouchers awarded as Wicklow firms continue their digital journey

Wicklow LEO providing targeted mentoring, training and online opportunities for SME community

128 Trading Online Vouchers were awarded to businesses across Wicklow in 2021 to the value of €268,000 to assist them in developing their online presence, Fine Gael Minister Simon Harris TD has confirmed.

The vouchers were awarded by Wicklow Local Enterprise Office as the digital transformation journey continues for firms looking to increase sales, reach new markets, and help create more employment opportunities.

Minister Harris said, "I am very grateful of the work carried out by the entire Wicklow LEO team in 2021 and for helping maintain momentum for many small businesses looking to trade their goods and services online.

"The Trading Online Voucher Scheme, funded by the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment, offers a 50% co-funded voucher of up to €2,500 to help businesses, which have been trading for at least six months. This assists them in developing their online trading capability and includes training sessions that cover various topics, including developing a website, digital marketing, social media for business and search engine optimisation.

"Between 1st January 2021 and 31st December 2021, on a national basis, the Trading Online Voucher Scheme had a total of 4,442 approvals

across Ireland to a value in excess of €9.6 million. This includes 128 trading online vouchers awarded to businesses in Wicklow with a value of approvals worth €268,000.

"This is strong evidence of the success of the scheme and the demand for the vouchers across the micro-enterprise sector."

Minister for Business, Employment and Retail, Damien English TD, has confirmed he is satisfied that the Trading Online Voucher Scheme, a demand led support scheme for businesses, will continue to be a key component in the suite of interventions to assist micro-enterprises to develop and flourish in the years ahead. Minister English urged local businesses to engage with their LEO about getting their business online.

The local business community in Wicklow was also offered a vast range of training, mentoring and financial support opportunities by the LEO which suited their specific business requirements.

Minister Harris confirmed that "In 2021, the Wicklow LEO matched 57 businesses with expert

guidance on their Mentoring Programme. This is a valuable and free service open to client companies of the local enterprise support agency. The programme is designed to match up the knowledge, skills, insights and entrepreneurial capability of experienced business practitioners with small firms who stand to benefit from one-to-one advice and guidance."

On the training opportunities provided by the Wicklow LEO, Minister Harris continued, "Last year, some 878 people participated in the wide range of one-day workshops, seminars and management development programmes. Many of the business owners who participated in these programmes demonstrated their determination to succeed, their appetite to grow and ultimately their ambition to create more job opportunities locally."

Minister Harris concluded by saying, "The Wicklow LEO is a very valuable first-stop shop which provides support and services for those who are looking to start, grow and develop a business in the county. I would urge early engagement by interested entrepreneurs to help get their business off the ground with the added value of the Local Enterprise Office's knowledge, networks and advice behind their venture."

Two new outdoor forest classrooms for Tinahely and Wicklow schools

Coillte and the Environmental Education Unit (EEU) of An Taisce have announced the delivery of six new An Choill Bheags (little woodlands) in primary and secondary schools across Ireland, two of which will be based in Wicklow. They are St Brigid's NS in Crossbridge, Tinahely, and Wicklow Education Together NS, Rockey Road, Wicklow.

Furthermore, there are a further four outdoor classrooms located in counties: Kerry, Offaly, Dublin and Donegal.

An Choill Bheag (AnCB) is a long-term educational programme, an initiative of LEAF Ireland and the EEU of An Taisce. The aim of the initiative is to create

small, dense native woodland habitats for biodiversity and an educational and recreational resource for the whole school community to enjoy.

Coillte is providing the native trees (including such species as oak, alder, wild cherry, rowan, scots pine, willow and

whitethorn among others) for the students to plant and is funding the programme. The staff of the EEU of An Taisce will create the little woodlands in collaboration with students and staff in the six schools. Students are encouraged to connect with woodland culture and biodi-

versity to understand their benefits to society, climate change, biodiversity and their local economy.

"We are truly delighted to be working with LEAF Ireland and An Taisce to deliver this fantastic outdoor educational resource for schools and their stu-



TY students Niamh Lynch and Aoife Hogan of Presentation Secondary, Cloonbeg, Tralee, Kerry with school principal Chrissy Kelly and Bernard Burke from Coillte planting their An Choill Bheags (little woodlands) in primary and secondary schools across Ireland.



TY student Maiya Arivas McHugh from Presentation Secondary, Cloonbeg, Tralee, Kerry; Bernard Burke of Coillte and Rachel Geary and Niamh Ní Dhúill from LEAF Ireland planting their An Choill Bheags (little woodlands) in primary and secondary schools across Ireland.

dents," said Ken Sweeney. Regional Manager, Coillte Forest.

"The 'An Choill Bheag' initiative enables students to learn about the wonderful benefits that trees and forests offer in a fabulous outdoor setting - be it tackling climate change, and providing biodiversity, recreational amenities, and wood to build our homes," he continued.

Rachel Geary from LEAF Ireland (EEU) said: "Climate change and biodiversity loss are the biggest issues facing us. This collaborative initiative will provide an

opportunity to tackle climate change and biodiversity loss at a community level by planting native trees with our schools across the country. Not only will we be planting trees, but we will also educate and raise awareness about the importance of trees and the multifunctional benefits of forests."

An Choill Bheag (little woodland) is an outdoor living classroom, which will bring small, dense, biodiverse native woodland habitats to school grounds. Furthermore, as these woodlands develop, it's

envisaged that nature trails can be fostered and managed.

The key objectives of An Choill Bheag are to: Involve students in site selection and tree planting; Encourage proactive, practical and sustainable tree planting; Provide students with the necessary skills to maintain, monitor and study essential ecosystems for long term use.

The Environmental Education Unit (EEU) of An Taisce was established in 1993. Its mission is to create a greater awareness of environmental issues through practical, action-

based, national and international educational programmes directed across the spectrum of Irish society. It works with a wide range of sectors including schools, universities, community groups, householders, Local Authorities, youth groups, businesses and the general public. The rationale of this is to effect positive behavioural change for the environment. This work is supported by funding from various government departments, government agencies, corporate funders and philanthropy.

Going green with Grangecon

As the shackles of another winter are thrown to the ground, the West Wicklow village of Grangecon has been awakening from its slumber. Over the last year, the Grangecon community has been planning for the planting of 16,000 native tree saplings. Grangecon is going greener working with partners Easytreesie.com, Reforest Nation, Crann and local community groups.

The project builds on work completed last planting season 2021 when 4,000 native saplings were planted around the village through a collaborative initiative between Easy Treesie, Go Greener with Grangecon and Grange Con Tidy Towns. Julia Glass and the Grange Con Tidy Towns group have also been very busy planting and maintaining a community orchard.

Over the last few years, thousands of trees have been planted in the locality, and the village is going from strength to strength through these and other exciting biodiversity initiatives.

Jennifer Page, with project partners Go Greener with Grangecon says "The community of Grangecon is full of people with a love and respect for trees and native tree planting.

"There is a great sense of wanting to give something back to this earth that we know have taken too much from. The tree planters here are very much aware that they are planting trees for the future, rather than just for themselves. We are thrilled to be able to

facilitate so much tree planting in West Wicklow with help from organizations like Easy Treesie, Reforest Nation and their supporting partners."

The tree planting project has sparked excitement in neighboring villages with Dunlavin emulating Grange Con's example having planted several thousand trees in and around their area.

The village of Kilmeade just over the Kildare border has planted over 14,000 saplings in the last two years, with groups such as GAA, Tidy Towns and a local CE scheme led by Johnathan Tallon, all uniting to plant trees. Kilmeade will plant a further 10,000 saplings this planting season.

Regulations have recently been changed to allow the planting of up to one hectare of land (2.4 acres) with native species without the need to go through a complicated forestry licensing system.

This has had a very positive impact on the number of people in communities who have considered planting native trees in large back gardens, using unused pieces of

ground to plant. That bit of ground in the middle of the yard that's ten feet square? Perfect for a mini-woodland or micro forest. A screen or band of trees 1 meter wide by 10 meters long? Perfect for native hedgerow. There is no end to how and where you can plant trees.

To give an idea of the scope of the collaborations, this season's tree planting project in and around Grangecon will involve Easytreesie.com in collaboration with Crann, Go Greener with Grangecon, Reforest Nation, the Tree Council of Ireland, Engineers without borders, Coillte, Trees on the Land, Artist Steven Doody, Baltinglass Golf Links, Tidy Towns, GAA, CE scheme Kilmeade, participating community members and the Museum of Everyone supported by a host of volunteers, philanthropic donors, businesses and State participants including Rethink Ireland and the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, None So Hardy Nurseries and Englishs Fruit Nursery.

Any individuals or community groups who are interested in participating in future planting initiatives can email project facilitator Steven Doody at stevendood74@gmail.com. All we'll add is the motto of the world trillion-tree project, restoring landscapes 2021-2030; "Stop Talking, Start Planting!"



Leading through example, "planting for our future"

Progress on Bray Harbour coastal defences and Green route

Green Party TD Steven Matthews met recently with Wicklow County Council and Dun Laoghaire Rathdown Council to discuss options to progress the Green route to connect Bray Harbour towards Dun Laoghaire Shangannagh lands and the coastal defences to stop coastal erosion north of Bray.

Following the meeting Deputy Matthews said "We have a great opportunity here to link Bray Harbour northerly to Shangannagh to provide coastal cycling and walking for recreational use but also for commuter use to link residential areas to the new DART station at Woodbrook or to Bray DART and Seaford. I have been working on this for years with my Green Party colleagues Cllr Erika Doyle in Bray and Minister Ossian Smyth in Dun Laoghaire and there is good commitment to this proposal from both local authorities.

"There are a number of factors to consider in selecting an appropriate route such as crossing points at the railway and the Shangannagh Stream, land ownership, proximity to serve residential areas and attractiveness of the route and we will be looking at all these matters.

Currently a route has developed across the former Bray Golf Club lands via the railway underpass to connect to Corke Abbey and Woodbrook but with the lands due for development this route may end up unavailable. I will be seeking a route to be maintained during the construction phases on the former golf club land and a condition to provide a safe central cycling route through the development if permission is granted.

"Part of the green route could possibly be incorporated into the coastal defence works underway just north of Bray Harbour. The coastal defences should be completed over the next few months and will address the serious erosion issue along these sandy cliffs due to storm surges. Many residents will be aware that this is the old



Steven Matthews TD

town dump site and has been eroding into the sea north of Bray Harbour for many years and I have been working to see this issue fixed. These works will stop further erosion into the sea from the old dump and protect water quality in the area for all our marine life and sea swimmers.

"Most of the site lies within the Dun Laoghaire Rathdown local authority area and in 2018 they

passed a Part 8 Planning application to carry out coastal defence mitigation measures to secure the site from further erosion. A small piece of the site is located within the Bray area so Wicklow CoCo has some involvement in this proposal.

"During the Part 8 process we submitted a request to include a cycle/green route incorporated into the coastal defence and this was responded to as being a possibility. There really is a great opportunity here' concluded Deputy Matthews 'both Wicklow and Dun Laoghaire are committed to the objective and this Government has ensured that local authorities have the funding and staff resources to build this. I will continue my on going work on this to see another important part of the East Coast Trail through Wicklow delivered."



Jennifer Whitmore TD with Anne Newton of Ashford Irish Countrywomen's Association (ICA)

Whitmore meets with Wicklow women's group to talk about climate action

Deputy Jennifer Whitmore recently met with the Ashford Irish Countrywomen's Association to discuss her work as an environmentalist and parliamentarian advocating for climate action and biodiversity.

Deputy Whitmore says, "I was delighted to be asked to speak to this group of women in Ashford on a range of issues in particular about the River Vartry and the East Wicklow Rivers Trust of which I am a founding member.

"It was a great opportunity to meet with a local group, and women in particular who play such an important role in their communities. As an environmentalist myself I was able to discuss how I started out in my current work and what drove me to campaign for climate action. It was also an important opportunity to discuss how we can meet the climate crisis on a local and national level and

how communities can lead on this.

"The women were all very enthusiastic to engage on a range of issues. As an Association that works hard to foster networks with women across the county and country, it will be one of the many organisations that can play a positive role in pushing for prioritising climate action as we enter a more intense period to meet our climate action goals.

"I look forward to seeing the work carried out by the Association in future and important areas like the Vartry River prioritised as we look to better preserve our environment in Wicklow," concluded Deputy Whitmore.

IFA meet An Tánaiste Leo Varadkar

IFA President Tim Cullinan met with An Tánaiste Leo Varadkar last week. Amongst the issues discussed were farming's climate targets, the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), Brexit, rising input costs and work permits.

The meeting was also attended by Minister of State at the Department of Agriculture, Martin Heydon.

Tim Cullinan said everyone understands the need to work towards achieving our sector emissions ceiling of between 16 to 18 mega tonnes of carbon, which is a reduction of between 22% and 30%.

"However, this must be achieved by continued research work to reduce methane output per animal not by using a blunt instrument to limit output. IFA is totally opposed to any imposed limits on production," he said.

"The Tánaiste was clear that there has been no discussion at Government level about restricting out-

put at farm level in any sector," he said.

"As set out in Food Vision 2030, we must strike the right balance between the three pillars of sustainability - environmental, economic and social.

"The emphasis must be on reducing methane output per animal. We need to allow time for what are

very promising scientific solutions to take effect. We cannot use a blunt instrument to address our environmental challenges, which would have significant economic and social consequences.

"Costs have surged on farms this year and farmers cannot afford to have further restrictions placed on them.

"On CAP, we made it clear that a cohort of our most productive farmers are going to have their incomes decimated. The Government must come up with additional funding to support the beef, sheep and tillage sectors. "On Brexit, we reminded the Tánaiste that there were still serious threats to Irish farming and that some sectors are already suffering the consequences. The Brexit Adjustment Reserve must be available for our sector.

"There are also labour shortages in farms and in the processing sector. While there has been an allocation of work permits for the sector, there are significant backlogs in the processing of permits which is causing great frustration," concluded Mr Cullinan.



IFA President Tim Cullinan and Tánaiste Leo Varadkar

Primary schools called on to take part in new 'Imagine the Future' competition

National Broadband Ireland (NBI), the company rolling out the new high-speed fibre broadband network under the Government's National Broadband Plan (NBP), has launched a new competition for nearly 700 primary schools across in the Intervention Area of the NBP.

Students participating in NBI's new 'Imagine the Future' art, design and imagination competition will have a chance to win a Promethean(tm) ActivPanel(tm) - a state of the art interactive flat panel display for their school, as well as a number of other individual student prizes for county and national competition winners.

The 'Imagine the Future' competition will highlight and delve into how students perceive the principle of high-speed fibre broadband and the potential opportunities that arise from it.

Students will be asked to create a piece of art responding to the simple statement, 'Imagine the Future'. Entries can take a variety of forms, including a sculpture, a photo, a painting, a song, a short movie or even a dance - making it as accessible as possible for students to participate.

Entries can focus on the following themes:

- Transportation of the future
- School of the future
- Home of the future
- Workplace of the future
- Hospital of the future
- Community of the future

- Workplace of the future
- Hospital of the future
- Community of the future

The competition will go through three phases: a school, county and national phase. Winners from each school will progress to the county phase, where a panel of judges selected by NBI will decide who will represent their county at the final national phase and be in with a chance to win an ActivPanel. As the connected hub of the modern classroom, the Promethean ActivPanel creates powerful digital learning experiences which are further enhanced through internet access.

Samantha Ecock, Territory Manager - Ireland, from global education technology company, Promethean, will be helping to judge the competition, with the winner currently due to be announced in May of this year.

Peter Hendrick, Chief Executive Officer of National Broadband Ireland, said: "NBI is delighted to launch the 'Imagine the Future' competition for primary schools in

the NBP intervention area. This affords young people across the country the opportunity to imagine the endless possibilities and opportunities afforded to them through access to high speed broadband. I would like to thank all of the schools that are taking part in the competition and I wish all of the students the best of luck in their projects."

Tara Collins, Chief Marketing Officer of National Broadband Ireland, said: "Young people and schools will see some of the greatest benefits from the introduction of high speed broadband across the country through the National Broadband Plan. We hope that this competition will engage them to think about the variety of advantages and potential uses of high speed broadband, as well as engaging their imagination through the creation of the projects."

To register and find out more about the 'Imagine the Future' competition, please visit NBIschools.ie

National Broadband Ireland is actively working across the country to design and build the new high-speed, Fibre-to-the-Home network, which will connect over 1.1 million people and over 554,000 premises in the project's Intervention Area.

Wicklow registered 2,078 new .ie domains last year

Businesses, organisations, clubs, and individuals across Wicklow registered 2,078 new .ie domains in 2021, according to new figures from .IE, Ireland's country domain manager. The number represents 10.9% growth in new .ie domain registrations in Wicklow compared to pre-pandemic 2019.

Among new .ie registrations with an active website in Wicklow in 2021, two of the most frequently used keywords were home and furniture. The 2021 .IE Domain Profile Report, which explores and

analyses the .ie database, shows that 36,875 new .ie domains were registered in Leinster and 57,530 on the island of Ireland, making 2021 the second-best year on record for new .ie domain reg-

istrations. As of 31 December 2021, there was a total of 330,108 .ie domains in the database.

Lockdown and the digital economy

According to the 2021 .IE Domain Profile Report, for most of last year, the rate of new .ie domain registrations largely reflected Government lockdown policy.

"In the months of 2021 when Ireland was in strict lockdown and non-essential retail was closed, new .ie domain registrations surged," said David Curtin, Chief Executive of .IE.

However, the pandemic's link to new .ie domain registrations appeared to 'decouple' in August as .ie domain registrations once again increased despite the Government's accelerated reopening plans.

"We believe this decoupling occurred when it did because the Irish economy has, for the most part, exited the 'acute response' phase of the pandemic. Businesses have fac-

tored-in the uncertainty of restrictions and reduced trading ability to their commercial operations and planning.

"SMEs are also no longer simply reacting to the pandemic. Instead, consumer behaviours are changing, and SMEs are changing with them. Businesses in Wicklow and across Ireland are investing in new websites, integrating e-commerce technology, and making use of productivity-enhancing tools all year round because they now recognise the huge role they play in profitability and customer acquisition."

The importance of cybersecurity

54% of all .ie websites are secured with a security certificate. A much smaller percentage of .ie domains use other cybersecurity features, such as DNSSEC (0.16%), which adds an additional layer of cryptographic security to a domain, and Registry Lock (0.03%), which protects a domain from malicious or accidental changes.

"It's encouraging to



Leinster Camogie Chairperson Linda Kenny presents Knockananna Captain Laura Hogan with the Leinster Junior B Club Championship trophy after her side beat St. Brigid's of Westmeath in Santry.

We urge all businesses in Wicklow to review their cybersecurity in 2022."

Other .ie domain figures

At the end of December 2021, the .ie domain accounted for 52.6% of all top-level domains hosted in Ireland, an increase of 1.6 percentage points compared with the same month in 2020. In comparison, .com accounted for 30.8% of all domains, followed by .uk (7.6%) and .eu (2.3%).

At 6.5% year-on-year growth, the .ie domain remains one of the fastest growing country domains in Europe, behind only .ee (Estonia, +8.8%) and .pt (Portugal, +10.2%) and ahead of .fr, .de, and .uk.

CLASSIFIEDS

THE MIRACULOUS PRAYER

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

K.H.

THE MIRACULOUS PRAYER

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

C.H.

Mark 7:14-23 GOSPEL

Jesus called the people to him and said, 'Listen to me, all of you, and understand. Nothing that goes into a man from outside can make him unclean; it is the things that come out of a man that make him unclean. If anyone has ears to hear, let him listen to this.' When he had gone back into the house, away from the crowd, his disciples questioned him about the parable. He said to them, 'Do you not understand either? Can you not see that whatever goes into a man from outside cannot make him unclean, because it does not go into his heart but through his stomach and passes out into the sewer? (Thus, he pronounced all foods clean.) And he went on, 'It is what comes out of a man that makes him unclean. For it is from within, from men's hearts, that evil intentions emerge; fornication, theft, murder, adultery, avarice, malice, deceit, indecency, envy, slander, pride, folly. All these evil things come from within and make a man unclean.'

C.J.

WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL

STEPHEN MCCANN & VAL URCHISON INTEND TO APPLY FOR PERMISSION FOR DEVELOPMENT AT THIS SITE 32 GILTSPUR BROOK, BRAY, CO. WICKLOW A98 A062. THE DEVELOPMENT WILL CONSIST OF REMOVAL OF EXISTING LEAN TO RETURN TO REAR AND NEW SINGLE STOREY EXTENSION TO CONTAIN NEW KITCHEN AND DINING ROOM (EXEMPTED DEVELOPMENT). EXTENSION OF EXISTING ROOF AND GABLE WALL FOR NEW ATTIC CONVERSION WITH DORMER WINDOW TO REAR AND VELUX DORMER ROOFLIGHT TO FRONT. TO CONTAIN NEW ATTIC ROOM AND STORAGE. ACCESSED BY NEW STAIRCASE FROM FIRST FLOOR LEVEL WITH INTERNAL ALTERATIONS TO GROUND AND FIRST FLOOR. NEW LEVEL ACCESS TERRACE TO REAR AND ASSOCIATED SITE WORKS. THE PLANNING APPLICATION MAY BE INSPECTED OR PURCHASED AT A FEE NOT EXCEEDING THE REASONABLE COST OF MAKING A COPY AT THE OFFICES OF WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL, COUNTY BUILDINGS, WICKLOW DURING ITS PUBLIC OPENING HOURS AND A SUBMISSION OR OBSERVATION IN RELATION TO THE APPLICATION MAY BE MADE TO THE AUTHORITY IN WRITING ON PAYMENT OF THE PRESCRIBED FEE WITHIN THE PERIOD OF 5 WEEKS BEGINNING ON THE DATE OF RECEIPT BY THE AUTHORITY OF THE APPLICATION.

PLANNING

WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL

Alphaplan Design (Tel: 086 2461269, Email: eugene@alphaplandesign.com) Seeks planning permission for a dwelling with connection to services, revised entrance and associated works at 3 O'Neill Park, Newtownmountkenedy, Co. Wicklow for J. And C. Nolan. 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 and a submission or observation in relation to the application may be made to the authority in writing on payment of the prescribed fee within the period of 5 weeks beginning on the date of receipt by the authority of the application.

WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL

Alphaplan Design (Tel: 086 2461269, Email: eugene@alphaplandesign.com) Seeks planning permission for a dwelling with connection to services, revised entrance and associated works at 3 O'Neill Park, Newtownmountkenedy, Co. Wicklow for J. And C. Nolan. 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 and a submission or observation in relation to the application may be made to the authority in writing on payment of the prescribed fee within the period of 5 weeks beginning on the date of receipt by the authority of the application.

WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL

Alphaplan Design (Tel: 086 2461269, Email: eugene@alphaplandesign.com) Seeks planning permission for change of use (removal of planning condition no. 1 of planning ref. no. 81/6893) from restricted use as a dwelling to use by all classes of persons and retention of revised boundaries at Glasnamullen, Roundwood, Co. Wicklow, for J. Connolly. 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 and a submission or observation in relation to the application may be made to the authority in writing on payment of the prescribed fee within the period of 5 weeks beginning on the date of receipt by the authority of the application.

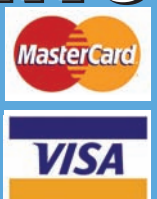
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Kia join big boys as new sportage boosts line-up

Kia made it into the Top 5 best selling car brands in Ireland in January - an amazing achievement when you consider that one of their best sellers - the new Sportage - did not start delivery until last week.

Irish new car Sales are still strong - despite serious price escalation and some delivery delays. The march towards electric is accelerating - and Kia have done incredibly well with their EV6 - and car that is winning hearts and wallets here, for those to whom all electric is a practical option.

Top Selling Car Brands January 2022 were: 1. Toyota, 2. Hyundai, 3.

by Martin McCarthy

Volkswagen, 4. Skoda, 5. KIA, 6. Nissan, 7. Ford, 8. Renault, 9. Peugeot, 10. BMW

Kia's stated goal is to get to year end in the Top 5 and after January, this is looking probable.

While Kia is a Korean brand, the new Sportage is the work of it's design centres in Russelsheim, Germany and its Slovenian

manufacturing plant at Zilina

Kia offered their first Sportage in 1993 and this new model is the fifth generation and remains the back bone of the range.

It is a big, flexible, elegant, practical and economical car - serving many different functions very well. This latest generation Sportage has grown - taller, wider and longer than the previous model - with a 20% increase in luggage space (583 litres with back seats up).

The car was given its National Launch at Barbarstown Castle near Staffan - with a test route around West Wicklow /

Kildare. Three engine options are available - petrol, diesel and hybrid - with a plug in hybrid coming in July.

Prices start at €38,000 but even the base K3 models are very well equipped with some exciting new technology. These dark days provided an early chance to test the new Intelligent Head light system which is fantastic on twisty country back roads on the Naas to Blessington upland sprint.

The petrol engine is impressive and will make sense for lower mileage commuters while the farmers will stick to diesel for torque and heavy pulling power. Styling,

inside and out, is stunning and ultra-modern.

On the way back from Barbarstown I passed by the Intel site in Leixlip, where there is a massive expansion underway. One can't help but thinking that Ireland's amazing manufacturing performance is somewhat comparable to what South Korea has achieved. Considering Kia and Hyundai only started production in 1967, it is a stupendous achievement to have got to the front rank of car making - and you can be sure that Kia will not be happy to settle for Top 5 in the years to come!



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