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15th & 22nd March 2022 First Floor, The Boulevard, Quinsborough Road, Bray. A98 R6D7. Tel: 01 - 2869111 E-mail: wicklowed@localtimes.ie www.wicklowtimes.net

FURY AT FUEL GOUGERS

Public representatives in County Wicklow have lashed out at the Government saying it was 'asleep at the wheel' as fuel companies 'gouged' Wicklow residents with price fixing and carelism.

Independent councillor, Joe Behan said "The thousands of hard-pressed commuters travelling from County Wicklow to work every day are now facing savage hikes in their fuel bills. This is because of the inadequate response of the Government to the escalating and horrific situation in Ukraine.

"It was obvious for at least the past week that fuel prices were rising rapidly but the

Government seem to have been totally unprepared for this; asleep at the wheel again.

"They then flagged, days in advance, a small reduction in excise duty which allowed the major fuel suppliers to gouge the hard-pressed motorists by increasing the price at the pumps by exactly the same amount.

"We are now back to where we started and in fact we are worse off as

the fuel prices continue to rise.

"The advice to commuters in County Wicklow by the Green Minister for Transport, Eamon Ryan, for everyone to slow down and save fuel is ironic and indeed insulting to the thousands of commuters on the N11 every day as it would be hard to go any slower and he has blocked the finance needed to improve journey times for County Wicklow



Naoise Henderson, Caitlin Curley and Amy McDonald at the Bray Institute of Further Education Career Day last Tuesday. Pic: Michael Kelly

motorists.

"The Government currently take almost half of the cost of fuel in various taxes and in fact they tax the tax already on the fuel, because VAT is calculated on the already taxed price so as the price goes up the tax take also goes up. It is another example of the powers that be pretending they are doing something when in fact they are doing very little.

"It is clear that the price of fuel for driving and home heating needs to capped for as long as the fuel crisis continues. This also means getting rid of a little known levy of 2% on every litre of fuel which is added on to the price and goes to a Government agency, the National Oil Reserves Agency, which is charged with monitoring the supply and price

of fuel in the country.

"While the fuel crisis cannot be compared to the horrors of war being suffered by the people of Ukraine, it is nevertheless a serious concern for Irish motorists, hauliers, farmers and businesses.

"The rapid rise in the cost of living is now a crisis and the Government needs to get a grip fast and address the situation before it gets out of control."

Social Democrats TD Jennifer Whitmore called for an investigation into price-gouging at petrol pumps in Wicklow and across the country. Deputy Whitmore wrote to the Competition and Consumer Protection Commission (CCPC) requesting that it opens an investigation into reports of price gouging and cartelism by motor fuel suppliers in the

wholesale and retail markets.

Deputy Whitmore

said, "We cannot tolerate a situation in which certain retailers or suppliers may be engaging in cartel behaviour or

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John Condren, Jackie Olohan, and Maurice Corr at the launch of the Wicklow Writers book 'All at Sea', in Wicklow Gaol. Proceeds from the sale of the book will go to the Wicklow RNLI and Wicklow Lions Club.

Bray Cualann Historical Society

Lectures of the Bray Cualann Historical Society will resume on Thursday March 24th at 8pm in the Royal Hotel, Bray, at which Brian White will present his lecture looking at 'The Newcourt Townland of Bray'. Members are free - non-members/visitors €6. The Society is open again for membership - membership March to December 2022 is €25 and can be taken out at the March meeting or future meeting of the Society.

Commemoration project for Archbishop Edward Byrne

The Archbishop Edward Byrne Commemoration Committee in Arklow, formed to commemorate the hundredth anniversary of the installation of Wicklow man Edward Byrne as Archbishop of Dublin in 1921, will be placing a commemorative plaque to Archbishop Edward Byrne on the grave of the archbishop's parents and infant siblings in St Gabriels Cemetery Arklow. To help fund this, they have organised a fundraising heritage walk hosted by local historian Pat Power in St Gabriels Cemetery on Sunday 20th March at 2.30pm. Weather permitting all support welcome. The walk was due to take place last month but was cancelled due to weather.

Junior Laragh Tidy Towns

This year Laragh & Glendalough Tidy Towns are looking to start a Junior Tidy Towns to get children more involved. Funding has also been announced in February with Wicklow County Council receiving €175,000 from the Creative Ireland Programme for

non-profit organisations. Local community groups, arts, heritage and cultural groups, venues and societies can apply for this funding which will support the development of creative projects. If you have an interest in either of these items you can contact Tidy Towns Laragh & Glendalough at laraghglendaloughtt@gmail.com with any questions or advice.

Rathdrum going blue and yellow for St. Patrick's Day

For this year's St. Patrick's Day Parade in Rathdrum, organisers are asking that everybody wear blue and yellow instead of green, in solidarity with the people of Ukraine. The suggestion was made by Stephen Kearon at last week's meeting of the St. Patrick's Day committee. The parade will start at 12 noon.

New bins for Southern Cross

A budget proposal by Cllr Rory O'Connor to install new dog waste bins and a refuse bin on the Southern cross in Bray was accepted at the Bray municipal district meeting. Speaking on the matter Cllr O'Connor said "More dog waste bins and refuse bins have constantly been asked for by local residents. It's great to finally be able to deliver on this as the southern cross is desperately in need of greater amenities for an area of its size."

Greystones Active Retirement Association

As most Covid restrictions have now been removed, Greystones Active Retirement Association (GARA) are happy to welcome members back to classes and activities, taking place at Kilian House Family Centre.

Art takes place on Mondays from 2.30pm to 4.30pm. This is a relaxing afternoon of Art with Guidance by Anne O'Neill; Short Mat Bowling takes place on Tuesdays 10.45am to 12.45pm; Bingo is on Thursdays 2.30pm to 4.30pm.

New for 2022: A series of workshops on Cardmaking continues on Friday mornings at 10am to 11.30am; March 11th; April 1st, 8th and 22nd; May: 6th, 13th and 20th. Do come along to Kilian House Family Centre for this interesting and fun activity. Create cards for special occasions for your loved ones. They are sure to be impressed! Fee: €4 per session. All materials and equipment will be supplied.

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 re-registration of existing members.

Together with Greystones Cancer Support, GARA will host this year's big Coffee Morning For Daffodil Day in aid of Irish Cancer Society. Come along to Kilian House 10am to 12 noon to support this wonderful cause.

Male-only 'Dip in the Nip' to take place in April

Our Lady's Hospice & Care Services is calling on the men of Wicklow to bare all and take part in its third male-only Dip in the Nip, at 10am on Sunday, 3rd April at North Beach, Brittas Bay.

Joining the brave men on the day will be Wicklow Hospice ambassador, former Irish rugby player Shane Byrne. He said: "We're asking those taking part to raise €100 for Wicklow Hospice through sponsorship from friends, family, clubs, workplaces or online. And we're asking the women of Wicklow to help out by sponsoring their friends and family and encouraging the men in their lives to sign up."

Eleanor Flew, Director of Fundraising and Communications with Our Lady's Hospice & Care Services said: "We've moved Dip in the Nip to April to make it more of a challenge to take to the chilly Irish sea. There will be music and refreshments to keep the spirits high though the temperature may be low!"

"We know there is great support from the community for the work of Wicklow Hospice and we're calling on everyone in the county to get behind this fun project. Your sponsorship will support essential services, provide specialised medical equipment and improve facilities for patients and their families."

For more information or to register <https://olh.ie/dip-in-the-nip/>

During 2021, OLH&CS cared for 4,629 patients; made 10,226 specialist palliative care visits to patients' homes and there were 6,731 clinical interventions delivered by phone and video. There were 127 inpatients in Wicklow Hospice in 2021. The team made 1,622 specialist palliative home care visits and did 1,776 virtual reviews (phone or video).



JJ O'Byrne from Arklow launching this year's male-only Dip in the Nip. JJ has taken part in the last three 'dips' and encourages everyone to support it.

Fundraiser for therapy pool at St. Catherine's

A GoFundMe campaign has been set up by St. Catherine's Special School, Wicklow. The unique special school in Newcastle educates 93 students between the ages of 4 - 18 years who have moderate, severe and profound learning abilities.

The Department of Education is in the process of building a state of the art school in Kilcoole and the school community is fundraising for a therapy pool for the new school. The campaign organisers use the GoFundMe page to write, "A therapy pool is fundamental to our student's education and wellbeing, as it supports their pain management, behaviour, mobility and sensory needs. We need your help to raise €500,000 needed to put a therapy pool in our new school. Please donate, and share our video to help spread our message."

To donate, go to <https://www.gofundme.com/f/therapy-pool-for-our-students>



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Council to seek urgent meeting with Transport Minister

Wicklow County Council has agreed to a request by Independent Councillor Joe Behan to seek an urgent meeting with Minister for Transport Eamon Ryan TD to discuss the suspension of the N11/M11 Improvement Scheme.

Cllr Behan made the request at last week's meeting of Wicklow County Council. Cllr Behan requested that the need for noise mitigation measures in Kilmacanogue also be discussed with the Minister. Councillors agreed that the Council must 'put the pressure on' the Government to reinstate the funding.

"I also ask that this be an item on the agenda from now on, and that we get an update at every meeting on what is happening with regard to the N11/M11. It affects everybody on the east coast," said Cllr Behan.

Councillors learned in January that funding is not available to Wicklow County Council to



Cllr Joe Behan

advance the N11/M11 Junction 4 to Junction 14 Improvement Scheme to the next phase of development at this time.

Government funding for new national roads for the first half of the National Development Plan (NDP) will be

€1.1b. From this budget, 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.

Chief Executive of Wicklow County Council Brian Gleeson said "I have asked and arranged a meeting with the Chief Executive of Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) to discuss both matters, both the improvement scheme and also the noise mitigation measures at Kilmac. That will happen later on this month so I'll keep the councillors informed of developments."



Staff and pupils at Wicklow Educate Together National School were out planting trees last Thursday on their school grounds, as part of their goal to create a mini-forest and outdoor classroom area. The week before they planted just over 300 trees and last week saw them continue the work. The trees were donated by An Cramm, Easy Treesie and a scheme for schools that they were accepted onto called An Coill Bheag.

FURY AT FUEL GOUGERS

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price gouging. I have received dozens of representations from all over the county including, telling me the same thing - fuel prices in their respective localities are increasing in forecourts, a number of times a day, in unison. Home heating suppliers are increasing prices in the same fashion.

"Meanwhile, we have all seen prices in forecourts increase overnight, following the government announcement that it was cut-

ting excise duty in fuel, leading to accusations of price gouging.

"We cannot tolerate a situation in which certain retailers or suppliers may be engaging in cartel behaviour, or price gouging, during a period of great peril for the country - when ordinary workers and families are already struggling to cope with the cost-of-living crisis. People in Wicklow must be protected from unnecessary rises in petrol and from the rising cost of

living as a result.

"I have also raised it in the Dáil with the Taoiseach, and despite him agreeing it was a concern, he did not commit to ensuring an investigation was undertaken. In the absence of the government taking firm action on this matter, I myself wrote to the CCPC requesting that it opens an investigation into potential price-fixing and cartelism by motor fuel suppliers in the wholesale and retail markets.

Alarm at the failure address reduction of dentists in dental treatment service scheme

Sinn Féin TD John Brady has expressed alarm over the continuing decline of dentists available to treat patients under the Dental Treatment Services Scheme (DTSS) in the county. Since 2016 Wicklow has witnessed a drop of 72% of dentists withdrawing from the scheme.

Deputy Brady said: "For over two years now I have been raising the issue of the DTSS in Wicklow with the Minister. It is an absolutely outrageous situation, where the Minister is flagrantly ignoring the wellbeing of people not only here in Wicklow, but also across the country.

"Since 2016 there has been a remarkable drop of 72% in terms of the dentists here in the county signed up to the scheme. Wicklow has one of the highest figures in the country - where the national average suggests that

there is one dentist available under the DTSS for every 2,000 people in the state. A figure of approx. 27,000 people are currently waiting for dental and oral surgery. With over 80% of patients on orthodontic waiting lists currently waiting for more than a year - with a further 40% waiting more than three years.

"Since I have last raised this with the Minister in October, a further nine dentists have left the scheme. The result of this is that the number of dentists available to treat medical card holders is dwindling by the month.

With only 16 dentists left in the scheme in the county, by this rate of going by next Christmas there will not be a single dentist left in the DTSS in Wicklow.

"While the current situation is not only leading to delays, and patients having to travel further distances, at even greater personal costs, in many instances it is ruling out access to a dentist for a great many people. This is not acceptable.

"I am yet again calling on Minister Donnelly to do what needs to be done to resolve this situation. If this means he needs to sit down with the Irish Dental Association and sort this mess out, then that's what he will have to do. He cannot allow the current situation cannot be allowed to continue."

New campaign demands an ecologically robust Marine Protected Area network

A new campaign called Fair Seas is demanding rapid expansion of a robust ecological network of Marine Protected Areas in Irish waters.

Comprised of leading environmental organisations and the Irish Environmental Network, the Fair Seas campaign is calling for at least 10% of Irish waters to be designated as 'Fully Protected' by 2025 and at least 30% by 2030.

Fair Seas aim is to see Ireland, with a renewed appreciation of the ocean, become a world leader in marine protection, giving our species, habitats and coastal communities the opportunity to thrive.

Chris Corrigan, Acting CEO of

BirdWatch Ireland, a partner in the campaign, says: "Ireland is a really important country for international seabird populations, but they are very vulnerable to climate change and to activities in the marine environment that threaten their survival. Underpinned by the best available science, Fair Seas will campaign for long-overdue effective marine protected areas for all.

"A Marine Protected Area (MPA) is a part of the ocean that

is protected by laws to conserve species, habitats and ecosystems. MPAs are a vital tool in improving ocean health. Currently, there is no definition of MPA in Irish law. Fair Seas is urgently asking our government to create robust and ambitious legislation so that our waters can be effectively protected, managed and monitored right out to the edge of the continental shelf.

"Ireland has not met its previous target of 10% protection by 2020. Fair Seas will hold the government to account so it does not miss its upcoming targets. Ireland's maritime area is seven

times the size of our landmass and is home to spectacular wildlife including endangered basking sharks, humpback whales, blue whales, otters, seals, puffins and even deep-sea coral reefs. Fair Seas will publish its first expert report underpinned by scientific data in summer 2022, which will identify where we need MPAs in Irish waters. The vision of Fair Seas is to see Ireland, with a renewed appreciation of the ocean, become a world leader in marine protection, giving our species, habitats and coastal communities the opportunity to thrive."





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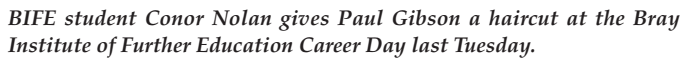
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Bray Councillors have voted 7-1 in favour of a proposal by Cllr Joe Behan and seconded by Cllr Dermot 'Daisy' O'Brien to stop the Swan River Greenway project in Bray before it reached design stage.

"I believe in assessing all potential developments on their merits, and to do that I need all available information before making a decision. I will continue to vote in the interests of the people I represent by pushing for the development of public land to be brought before the public for consultation."

Sinn Féin TD John Brady has welcomed the progress that has been made in the possibility of transferring the Old Ashford Garda Station into community ownership.

A man in a dark puffer jacket and blue jeans stands in front of a two-story terraced house. The house has a grey stone facade, a white door with a blue letterbox, and a small porch. There are windows with white frames and flower boxes under the windows. A large, round, stone planter with various plants is in the foreground.

Deputy Brady outside the vacant Ashford Garda Station


OPW and asked him to ensure that the Garda station is transferred to Wicklow County Council with minimal costs so that it can be utilised for the community of Ashford."

Deputy Brady conclud-

ed "I welcome the progress that has been made on turning this vacant property into potentially a community hub, I also commend the work that has been done in progressing it by

Wicklow County Council. I will continue to work with all the stakeholders in turning this derelict building and site into a fantastic community facility for a quickly growing Ashford."

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'Gap between mortgage payments and rent widening at an alarming rate'

Social Democrats TD Jennifer Whitmore has responded to reports that the gap between mortgage payments and rental costs over time are widening.

Deputy Whitmore notes with concern, a report recently published by the Irish Independent, that the gap for Wicklow is now over €100,000 over the lifetime of a 30-year mortgage.

Speaking on the issue, Deputy Whitmore says, "The report shows that in Wicklow the average cost to rent a property in Wicklow is €1,630 while the monthly mortgage payment of a home is approximately €1,320. That means that over the lifetime of a 30-year mortgage, people renting in Wicklow will be paying €111,552 more over that time period.

"This is a huge concern for those currently renting in Wicklow and who simply cannot save



Jennifer Whitmore TD

money for a deposit as they continue to pay high rents. The lack of rental supply in areas like Bray where there are currently only approximately six rental properties being advertised on Daft.ie, all for €1,000/month and above shows the reality for people renting here,

and the lack of options for them going forward.

"This is an unsustainable situation for people currently renting. It is clear that ordinary workers and families are also increasingly being priced out of the rental market. Even the dribble of supply that is coming onto the market, is priced out of the reach of most ordinary workers.

"The Social Democrats have continually called for a three year ban on rent increases and a dramatic increase in the supply of public, affordable and cost rental homes. Regrettably, the government is refusing to act - and ordinary people are suffering as a consequence."

Matthews seeks urgent review of waiting lists for children's mental health supports

Green Party TD Steven Matthews has sought an urgent review of waiting lists for mental health supports for children in Wicklow.

Deputy Matthews sought an initial report following a series of queries from concerned parents from across Wicklow who have children on a waiting list to see a child psychologist and other related childhood mental health supports. The HSE report indicated that 664 children in the Wicklow catchment area, as of January 2022, had been waiting for over 3 months for an appointment with some waiting over a year.

Discussing the report's findings, Deputy Matthews said: "I am extremely concerned by the report issued by the HSE, by any estimation, waiting 3 months for an appointment is too long but when it concerns the mental health of a child, it is completely unacceptable. We all accepted extra delays and hurdles during the pandemic, but we are on the other side of that, and this is an area that clearly needs immediate and significant intervention.

"I have written to both Stephen Donnelly as Minister for Health but also Mary Butler as Minister for State with Responsibility for Mental Health seeking an urgent review of the waiting lists and investment in Wicklow services to deal with the back log. These are children who have already attended their GP, been referred formally to seek further specialist mental health services and they and their families are left in limbo for at least three months and in some cases over a year.

"The report did outline that additional funding had been provided in recent months in recognition of the significant wait times, but this needs more than budgetary increases, this needs a full in-depth assessment as to where the shortcomings in services are; how we can go about assigning experts in children's mental health care to roles in the areas required and immediately go about the challenging task of reducing wait times. This is also about future proofing the system so that once the backlog is cleared, it isn't allowed build up again.

"Unfortunately, this report doesn't exist in isolation and the lack of mental health support for younger people in particular in Wicklow is something that I have raised with the Ministers both in writing and in the Dáil previously. During the pandemic, I had the opportunity to meet remotely with a group of GPs from across Wicklow who were despondent by the lack of expert care for their patients and judging by the waiting lists, their genuinely held concerns continue to go unanswered.

"This is not an issue that we can afford to continue to put on the long finger and the delays brought about by the pandemic are no longer an excuse that people are willing to accept. I hope that this matter is treated with the urgency it requires and if there are any specific cases/ issues that I can bring to the attention of the HSE, I would be more than happy to do so. I would encourage any family in that situation to get in touch with me directly," concluded Deputy Matthews.



BIFE Business Management & Administration Co-ordinator Sarah King with the BIFE Event Team at BIFE's Career Day last Tuesday.

'Citizens Information Service must be reopened in Wicklow Town immediately'

Sinn Féin TD John Brady has sharply criticised the Department for Social Protection and the Citizens Information Board for creating the situation which has led to the closure of the Citizens Information Service in Wicklow Town.

"I am extremely angry at the complete failure of the Minister for Social Protection and the Citizens Information Board (CIB) which has led to the closure of the Citizens Information Service (CIS) in Wicklow Town. The Citizens Information Service provides a vital and badly needed service to the Wicklow public," said Deputy Brady.

"Unfortunately, the decision that the CIS have been forced to take by the failure of the Minister and the CIB to provide the funding to move to a new premises has led to closure of the doors of the Wicklow Town service.

The requirement to move was due to serious concerns identified in Safety Risk Assessments on the old premises.

"I have been working on this issue for the last 8 months and trying to get the CIB and the Dept to provide the funding to move to more suitable accommodation. At the request of the Citizens Information Board Safety Risk Assessments were carried out on the old premises in Wicklow Town, these assessments identified serious health and safety issues. A considerable amount of work was done to secure a new building, including obtaining planning per-

mission. This was all done with the approval of the Citizens Information Board. Unfortunately, at the last moment funding was pulled for the move.

"Since July last year I have been in direct contact with both the Minister for Social Protection and the Citizens Information Board to urge them to stop the foot dragging and

to allow the move into the new premises proceed, unfortunately the failure to address the issue has now led to the decision to close the office.

"It's vital for the people of Wicklow Town and surrounding areas that there is a Citizens Information Service in the Town. I have written to the CIB and the Minister again to express

my anger and frustration at their handling of this situation. Their decision to pull funding from the project when it was at an advanced stage is nothing short of reckless and has led to the closure of the service. It is a decision that needs to be immediately reversed, the Minister must act and ensure that it's reopened without delay."

Employers and employees encouraged to download Connected Hubs App

FMinister Simon Harris TD has encouraged Wicklow employers and employees to download the new Connected Hubs App.

Minister Harris said: "The growth in remote working has presented both opportunities and challenges. The Government's Connected Hubs initiative has gone from strength to strength with over 200 hubs registered nationally to date.

"Now workers will be able to book office or desk space in their local hub through a new mobile app called Connected Hubs. I would encourage anyone who has the option of remote working to download the app".

The new app and Connected Hub is part of a new awareness campaign run by the Department of Rural and Community Development and further information is available at connectedhubs.ie.

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Heritage projects receive funding boost

Eleven heritage projects across Co. Wicklow will benefit this year from €4m in funding through the Built Heritage Investment Scheme (BHIS) administered by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

The Built Heritage Investment Scheme funds conservation works to historic buildings and the Wicklow structures to be supported by the scheme include: Wicklow Gaol, Wicklow Town; St. Kevin's Church, Laragh; Ballyarthur House, Arklow; Ballinatone Church and St. Saviours Church in Rathdrum.

Minister Simon Harris said "Through grants of up to €15,000, the BHIS assists owners of heritage structures - including those on the local authorities' Record of Protected Structures and those in Architectural Conservation Areas - to meet their obligations to care for their properties. The funding can be used to undertake repair work, contributing to the upkeep and maintenance of heritage structures. Examples include roof, wall and joinery repair, draught-proofing windows, lime rendering and the repair of stained-glass windows."

"The funding will allow for conservation and help safeguard it for future generations. These awards also provide employment to small businesses, skilled conservation specialists and tradespeople, ensuring a continued focus on the traditional crafts - all of which help us to deliver on Heritage Ireland 2030, the new national heritage plan."

Green Party TD Steven Matthews said, "This funding is a vital aspect of maintaining our built heritage across the county. Much of the funding announced today will go to specialist tradespeople who have the expertise required to carry out the work while maintaining the historic nature of these locations. As a society, and in Wicklow in particular, we have inherited some truly remarkable built heritage and this funding will allow for the necessary conservation works to help safeguard it for future generations."

"Some of the 11 projects announced for Wicklow included the much-needed repair of windowsills in Wicklow Gaol, funding to repair the windows in St. Saviour's Church in Rathdrum and repairs to the front porch in St. Kevin's church in Laragh."

"This funding is part of multi annual funding plans regarding the preservation of our heritage under - Heritage Ireland 2030. If there are any local groups involved with the preservation of any period buildings in Wicklow, I would encourage them to get in touch with me directly as they may be in a position to support an application for future rounds of funding, concluded, Deputy Matthews."

The Wicklow projects being funded are:

- * Darraghville, Kilcoole: Removal of inappropriate external render and replacement with lime - €11,000
- * Wicklow Gaol, Wicklow Town: Repair of window cills - €8,000
- * St. Kevin's Church, Laragh: Repairs to front porch - €2,000
- * Ballyarthur House, Arklow: Investigative and consolidation works to gable wall - €11,000
- * 2 Bayswater Terrace, Greystones: Repair of sash windows and renewal of roof - €10,000
- * Ballinatone Church, Ballinatone lower, Rathdrum: Repair of window frames and cleaning of stained glass - €10,000
- * Talbotstown Fort, Kiltegan: Renewal of roof and rainwater goods - €13,000
- * 2 Millward Terrace, Meath Road, Bray: Repair of gutters and window repairs to basement flat - €3,000
- * 1 Claremeount Terrace, Meath Road, Bray: Repair of 5 sash windows and repair of original front iron railings - €8,000
- * Clermont House, Rathnew: Repair of half door and all sash windows in four rooms - €10,000
- * St. Saviours Church, Rathdrum: Repair of Windows - €10,000

Minister of State for Heritage and Electoral Reform, Malcolm Noonan TD said These awards will provide an economic stimulus across all 31 local authorities, and I'm delighted to see 11 projects in Wicklow have received funding approval. The investment will provide employment to small businesses, skilled conservation specialists and tradespeople, ensuring a continued focus on the traditional crafts - all of which help us to deliver on Heritage Ireland 2030, the new national heritage plan which I launched last month."

Guided walk for Wicklow Town Heritage Trail

Plans have now been put in place to hold the inaugural guided walk of the Wicklow Town Heritage Trail. The walk will commence at 11am on Saturday 19th March from the first stop on the Heritage Trail, which is at St. Patrick's Church, Wicklow Town.

The walk will be led by local historian, John Finlay, whose detailed knowledge of local history was central in creating the Wicklow Town Heritage Trail.

To complete the Heritage Trail, it will take around 2 hours, allowing participants to spend some time at each location.

The Heritage Trail features 24 points of interest - detailing the history of Wicklow Town, from the landing of St. Patrick in 432, to the end of the Civil War in 1923.

There are 7 story-boards (lecterns) with beautifully illustrated artwork showing the following:

- The construction of St. Patrick's church, which commenced in 1839.
- The story of the Franciscan Abbey, which dates back to the 12th Century.
- Robert Halpin's achievement in laying the first Trans-Atlantic cable.
- The story of Billy Byrne and the 1798 rising in Wicklow Town.
- The history of the Black Castle.

- The attempted landing by St. Patrick at the Travelahawk Beach.
- The history relating to the Barrow Green, including stories of the secret burials that took place there.
- The history relating to the Barrow Green, including stories of the secret burials that took place there.

On each storyboard, there is a QR code, which enables participants to watch a video on their phone, telling them the story of each key location. The actors featured on each video are members of the local dramatic society.

The Wicklow Town Heritage Trail was officially opened on 30th August by Heather Humphries T.D. - Minister for Rural and Community Development and Social Protection.

The project was delayed several times owing to numerous lockdowns, which to date has hindered the further development and promotion of this new key tourism product. Now with the threat of Covid being

lifted and the abolition of restrictions, it is proposed to ensure that the Wicklow Town Heritage Trail is promoted strongly. The Wicklow Town Heritage Trail has introduced a significant addition to the Tourist offering in Wicklow Town.

In developing the trail, the promoters were anxious to ensure that there was a real economic benefit to the town and have ensured that the trail follows through all of the Main Street and finishes in Wicklow Gaol, which is currently the leading tourism attraction in Wicklow Town.

Currently, all of the second level schools in Wicklow Town and District are being encouraged to ensure that the local history, as illustrated in the Wicklow Town Trail, becomes part of their history curriculum. It is intended also to promote this local trail to the senior classes in the primary schools.

After the inaugural guided walk, plans are now being put in place to have a weekly guided walk of the Wicklow Town Heritage Trail with effect from Saturday 16th April 2022.

For further information on the Wicklow Town Heritage Trail, visit www.wicklowtown.ie.



Gabriel Allen, Deputy Principal of BIFE, with BIFE Principal Ray Tedders and David O'Gorman at BIFE's Career Day last Tuesday.

'Phones should be easier to fix'

Ireland South MEP Deirdre Clune is looking to make it easier for people in Wicklow to fix their phones.

Clune is a member of the European Parliament's Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety, which is putting forward measures to make portable batteries in appliances including smartphones easy and safe to remove and replace. A recent Eurobarometer poll found that 77% of consumers would rather repair their devices than replace them, but the cost of fixing problems is often cited as a major obstacle.

MEP Clune said, "this Battery Directive is a good step forward in strengthening consumer's 'Right to Repair', to help them save money and also to reduce waste. On a wider scale, the Battery Directive aligns with the current proposals outlined in the EU's Circular Economy Action Plan. If adopted, these would require manufacturers to make products more durable and repairable, while ensuring spare parts, repair manuals, software updates and upgrades are available. All of these initiatives will play an important role in advancing the EU's commitment to help people live more sustainably and reduce their impact on the environment."



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New bill seeks to address 'the blight' of vacant housing

Steven Matthews TD, Green Party Spokesperson for Planning and Local Government, and Chair of the Oireachtas Housing and Planning Committee, recently launched the 'Vacancy, Dereliction and Regeneration Bill 2022'. The Bill seeks to amend existing legislation in relation to vacant and derelict property, taxation measures and the processes of upgrading existing property.

A recent report on the number of registered derelict properties and sites in Wicklow produced by the Department of Housing, raised questions, says Deputy Matthews.

The report indicated that the derelict sites register for Wicklow has 23 vacant buildings and 3 derelict sites registered in the whole county. Discussing the report, Deputy Matthews said, "Addressing dereliction and vacancy in residential properties and potential properties is critical to solving the housing crisis. Before solving a problem, it is vital to know the extent of the issue in front of us. Anyone who has spent any time in towns and villages across Wicklow could tell you that 23 derelict properties and 3 derelict sites doesn't begin to cover the extent of the problem and we are kidding ourselves if we think otherwise. You only need to walk around a see for yourself, these buildings and sites aren't hidden, and they create a blight in areas across Wicklow.

"We are in the middle of a housing crisis and of course, there needs to be a focus on building and new units, but the quickest, cheapest and most environmentally sustainable way of increasing housing supply is by returning vacant and derelict units to the housing stock. We must use every means we can to increase housing supply - there's no one solution but a range of measures that together will alleviate the problem.

"The recent funding increase announced by the Department of Housing that increases the funding for a Vacant Homes Officer for all Local Authorities is very welcome but the requirement for councils to employ someone in that specific role is vital.

These roles will be integral in highlighting sites and properties and ensuring the necessary actions are carried out to try to bring these sites back to use.

"I requested this report from the Department of Housing as follow up research after the launch of my new Bill that seeks to tackle dereliction and vacancy through taxation of the owners of these sites. I will be releasing full details closer to the time, but it has been thoroughly researched and has the backing of several experts in the field of architecture and town planning. I look forward to the opportunity to introduce it in the Dáil and working closely with both my Government colleagues and Wicklow County Council to tackle vacancy and dereliction."

According to a GeoDirectory Report published in January, in Q4 2021 the vacancy rate in Wicklow stood at 3.1%. This was lower than the national vacancy rate of 4.4%. GeoDirectory defines a derelict building as one which has typically been dormant for several years and requires structural work or reconstruction before it can be re-occupied. A total of 244 derelict residential units were located in Wicklow in December 2021.

Discussing the 'Vacancy, Dereliction and Regeneration Bill Deputy Matthews said; "Housing, along with the cost of living, is the most critical issue in Ireland at the moment, spanning every sector of society and every age group. We know there are at least 90,000 vacant homes left idle across the country and our villages, towns and cities are blighted with neglected and derelict buildings. Time is of the essence; we must do everything we can to

ensure that as many of these buildings can be added to our housing stock and once again become homes."

Under the Bill, homes that are vacant for at least 180 days in the preceding year would be subject to a new vacant home tax at 3% of the market value of the property, to be collected by revenue as part of the local property tax. This would be re-paid to the local authority where the vacant property lies, to fund housing needs in the area. The tax would not apply to the principal private residence of the owner and includes a number of key exemptions, including if an owner is in care; if the occupant has moved temporarily for work purposes; if the property is a holiday home; or if the property is undergoing major renovations. An initiative introduced in Vancouver has seen a 25% decrease in vacant property since introducing similar tax measures in 2017.

Deputy Matthews added "For decades we've seen decline in our communities across Ireland, in urban and rural locations. We need to reimagine our existing built environment to create vibrant, liveable villages and towns that will also bring jobs and enhance security and safety.

"The Green Party is committed to rejuvenating our towns, villages and cities and ensuring they are fit for purpose for individuals and families to live, work and play. In addition to addressing vacant property, this bill also simplifies the planning process and makes it easier for 'over the shop' units to be brought back into residential use.

"This bill is in line with the objectives for the Government Housing for All and Town Centres First strategies."



Aine Byrne, Shannagh Goetelen, Emily Hadden, and Laura Hogan celebrate Knockanna's victory over Derrygloughan of Tyrone in the All-Ireland Junior B Camogie Championship which was played in Drogheda

No planning permission needed for conversion of vacant Wicklow pubs

The Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage, Darragh O'Brien, TD, has signed Planning Regulations that will exempt the conversion of former pubs into residential units from requiring planning permission.

The new exemption is contained in an extension of 2018 Planning Regulations that allow a change of use of certain vacant commercial premises - including vacant areas above ground-floor premises - to residential use such as 'above shop' living. The exemptions aim to increase the re-use of vacant commercial buildings in Wicklow and elsewhere to increase much-needed housing supply and renew urban areas. Since 2018, 24 residential units have been provided in county Wicklow through 14 notifications of exempted developments. The regulations signed by Minister O'Brien extend the exemption to the end of 2025.

For the conversion of former pubs into a home/homes in Wicklow: the pub's license must have lapsed; a limit of 9 residential units can be produced under an exempted development.

The review and extension of these planning regulations fulfils a commitment made in Housing for All, the Government's

national plan on housing to 2030. The plan contains a range of actions and measures to ensure over 300,000 new social, affordable, cost rental and private homes are built by 2030, backed by over €20 billion in guaranteed State investment to the end of 2026. Data shows that the construction of almost 31,000 homes commenced in 2021, a 42% increase on the numbers constructed in 2020.

Commenting after signing the regulations, Minister O'Brien said:

"Turning vacant properties into occupied homes is a major element of Housing for All. Unfortunately towns and villages in Wicklow have seen pubs close their doors for the last time in recent years, not least over the last two years. This new planning regulation will ease the planning burden for those who want to convert small and medium-sized pubs that are no longer viable and have ceased to operate, into residential housing for Wicklow. The regulations will

also continue to make it easier to get other forms of vacant commercial premises in Wicklow, including vacant spaces over ground floor premises, back into use for residential purposes such as 'over the shop' living."

The Minister of State for Planning and Local Government, Peter Burke, TD, who also worked on these planning regulations, added: "Since 2018, 24 homes have been provided from exempting the conversion of certain vacant commercial premises in Wicklow. I believe there is great potential for even more vacant properties to be converted into residential units through these regulations. Increased awareness of these exemptions, including through the work of Wicklow County Council, will help get more vacant properties back into use.

"This measure supports the Government's other measures to tackle vacancy, including increased funding for full-time Vacant Homes Officers in Wicklow County Council and other local authorities, and the launch of a Town Centre First policy, which will revitalise town centres and their buildings."

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Blessington Greenway funding 'might be lost'

Withdrawing the plans for the Blessington Greenway from An Bord Pleanála so that they can be amended could put the funding for the Greenway at risk, according to Chief Executive of Wicklow County Council Brian Gleeson.

The Council is to seek a second legal opinion as well as clarification from An Bord Pleanála (ABP) with regards to withdrawing the plans submitted to ABP for the Greenway.

Acting on the Section 140 resolution from councillors, which directed that the plans for the Blessington Greenway be withdrawn from ABP, does not appear to be something that the Local Authority of Chief Executive can lawfully do, according to the legal opinion from the Council's law agent.

Independent councillor Joe Behan has called this legal advice 'very weak'. "Just because advice is given doesn't mean it has to be accepted," he said, "and I'm not a bit convinced by this legal advice. It only says that it doesn't appear... to be something that can be done."

A Section 140 resolution gives elected representatives the power to require of the Chief Executive of the Council "any particular act, matter or thing specifically mentioned in the resolution and which the Local

Authority can lawfully do or effect in the performance of the executive functions of the Local Authority."

On Friday 25th February a Section 140 signed by several Councillors was delivered to Chief Executive of the Council Brian Gleeson. It directed Mr Gleeson to withdraw the proposals submitted to ABP for the Blessington Greenway so that certain elements of the plan can be removed that would "cause serious negative impacts on the lives of the people living in the areas surrounding the Blessington Lakes."

Such elements include the installation of traffic lights on Knockeiran, Baltyboys and Vallemount Bridges, and the proposed new parking restrictions on Blessington Main Street. "At the stroke of a pen a number of parking spaces outside businesses have been removed and none of the businesses were consulted," said Cllr Edward Timmins. Locally, there's also been safety concerns expressed about a section a narrow public road



Cllr Joe Behan

being made to serve as part of the Greenway, with farmers who own land on either side of the road not being informed about it until recently.

Councillors and Council officials debated the matter for two hours at last week's Council meeting. While some Councillors wished to have the plans withdrawn and amended, others were confident that flaws in the plan would be ironed out during the regular planning process. Chief Executive Brian Gleeson warned that withdrawing the plans would put the funding for the Greenway at risk.

"What we are being asked here today is to

withdraw an application without an alternative, viable and safe solution. We don't have anything to replace it with at this moment in time. There is a list of other local authorities out there dying to get money for Greenways. We've seen the funding for the N11 suspended, so there is precedent there, it is not scaremongering."

Cathaoirleach of Wicklow County Council Shay Cullen, said "There's no doubt that mistakes have been made along the way and the public have legitimate concerns."

However he went on to say, "I think the majority of West Wicklow councillors here today articulated that they would prefer not to see the process halted. They want to continue with the application with An Bord Pleanála. We have been given assurances by the management and the engineers and the council that they are looking to resolve the issues and can resolve the issues. They are not insurmountable."

"This is 15 years in the making and the economic



Helen Smirnova, Colette Talbot, and Alisa Lurchenko at the collection point in Greystones for the 'From Wicklow With Love' donations appeal for the people of Ukraine. Donations flooded in at Greystones Tennis Club, which soon reached capacity. Two rooms in Shoreline Leisure Centre Charlesland Greystones were then used to store the donated medical supplies.

benefit to West County Wicklow and to the county is unbelievably high. The tourism potential is just massive for us. I am concerned that if we withdraw the application or ask the Chief Executive to withdraw it, that we could be pushed down the list. I don't want us to be in a position where we lose funding to the tune of €15 million and maybe not have a Greenway. It is not scaremongering, it is a legitimate concern that I have."

Cllr John Mullen agreed that it would be



Cllr Gerry O'Neill

"a strategic and tactical mistake" to withdraw the application.

The plans for the traffic lights on the bridges

and other elements of the plan which have raised concerns, were first brought to the attention of Cllr Gerry O'Neill when they were discussed at a Town Team meeting in December. He then brought the matter to the attention of other councillors who had also been in the dark about it. Cllr O'Neill contacted ABP just before last week's Council meeting and said he had been assured by them that the plan can be withdrawn.

"It was a shock to me to learn this application had gone from Wicklow

County Council to ABP without any consultation," said Cllr O'Neill at last week's meeting. "We're pro-Greenway, but for this to land on us the way it's landed is totally unacceptable. I make the plea: we can withdraw it and make a better job of this, we really can make a better job of this if we sit down and tackle it together."

The deadline for submissions/observations to An Bord Pleanála in respect of the proposed development of a Greenway in Blessington was Friday, March 4th.

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Basking sharks to be given status of 'protected wild animal'

Minister for Heritage and Electoral Reform, Malcolm Noonan TD, has announced that the basking shark is to be protected under the Wildlife Act with the status of a 'protected wild animal'.

Studies have indicated that Ireland is home to between 10pc and 20pc of the world's basking shark population, and the creature is no stranger to Wicklow's waters. Basking sharks are historically and culturally significant to Ireland, but as of 2019 have been considered endangered. The National Parks and Wildlife Service under Minister Noonan's Department has been working on this issue for a number of months following a major public campaign.

Welcoming the news, Social Democrats Climate Spokesperson Jennifer Whitmore TD, who introduced the legislation, said, "It is hugely welcome that basking sharks are finally going to be a protected species in Ireland. Providing basking sharks the protection they deserve was the first piece of legislation I introduced in the Dáil last year. It was of particular significance to me given my background as a marine scientist."

"Basking sharks are the world's second largest fish and they are

regular visitors to our shores. Every summer, we can catch glimpses of these majestic creatures as they slowly meander up our western coast.

We need to treasure our natural heritage, our biodiversity and our own iconic species. It was therefore vital that the government addressed a huge gap in the law and provided them legal protection.

"I am grateful to Minister Noonan for moving forward with my legislation and working to protect this endangered species."

It is now essential that these new protections are implemented with sufficient resources to ensure the population of basking sharks is not only protected, but afforded the potential of increasing in numbers and thriving in Irish waters."

Green TD for Wicklow Deputy Steven Matthews said "As a Wicklow resident, I know how much marine protection matters to coastal communities. This move

by my colleague Minister Malcolm Noonan will support the



Jennifer Whitmore TD

protection of this species, and the Code of Conduct he's developing will help everyone who enjoys the sea - whether for tourism or recreation - to ensure they're helping to protect it too.

"The basking shark is an important part of our Irish maritime area biodiversity. Our environment on land and at sea is threatened and I am determined with

my Green Party colleagues to halt the decades of decline and put measures in place to protect habitats, species and the complex ecological web of life that supports us all.

"I am delighted to have had the opportunity to work with my colleague Green Party Minister Malcolm Noonan on many environmental issues affecting Wicklow and across the country. As Chair of the Oireachtas Housing, Local Government & Heritage Committee I have had the privilege to work on legislation and policy around the National Parks and Wildlife Service, the National Biodiversity Plan and Marine Protected Areas and these are all progressing well.

"Protecting our environment is what the Green Party does well and have done for many years. I'll continue this work with determination and with the support of Wicklow residents for our children and future generations," concluded Deputy Matthews.

Minister Noonan stated, "Work



Green Party TD for Wicklow Steven Matthews with Green Party Minister Malcolm Noonan and some of the letters from children asking for the Basking Shark to be protected.

has been underway in my Department for a number of months to progress protections for the basking shark and I'm delighted to be able to announce today that they will be finalised in the near future. Basking sharks are extraordinary creatures and they're facing increasing pressures from a range of sources, including disturbance. This move will confer legal protections on them in the short term and enhance their protection in the longer term through the collaborative development of a Code of Conduct to support best practice in sustainable eco tourism.

"The forthcoming review of the Wildlife Act, as per the Programme for Government, will also enable further consideration of aspects of protection. I'd like to thank my colleagues Minister McConalogue and Minister Coveney for their support in progressing this important work, and to the many members of the public - particularly the young children - who have been so passionate in calling for basking shark protection."

Tree Council and Coillte officially launch National Tree Week

National Tree Week 2022 was officially launched last week in Sacred Heart Senior National School, Tallaght by the president of the Tree Council of Ireland Eanna Ní Lamhna and Coillte CEO Imelda Hurley with Caoilainn Finn Costigan, Charlie McGuirk, and Josh Rhys, from the school.

Running from Sunday 20th March until Saturday 26th March, this year's theme is 'More Forests for a Greener Future' which aims to highlight the many benefits of forests for Ireland's climate and biodiversity

agendas, for green recreation spaces and for sustainably grown wood.

The Tree Council of Ireland and Coillte are encouraging people from every corner of Ireland to get involved. President of the Tree Council of

Ireland, Eanna Ní Lamhna explained: "It's great to have the people of Ireland come out once again in their communities and celebrate the beautiful benefits trees have to offer. Trees are one of the most important

resources we have to tackle climate change. Tree Week is all about communities coming together to celebrate trees. If you are thinking of getting involved, we would encourage you to do so with simple activi-

ties like hosting walks, discussions, or community planting. These important events we hope will encourage everyone to play their part in planting more trees for a greener future."

Coillte CEO Imelda Hurley added: "Coillte is delighted once again to sponsor National Tree Week and to support the

events across Ireland. Tree Week gives people the opportunity to learn more about the importance of trees and their important contribution to Ireland's climate and bio-

diversity agendas. We'd encourage people to check out the list of events happening across the country and to get involved in what promises to be a fun week of

tree-based activities for families to enjoy."

To find out about events happening in your area and to get involved, please visit www.treecouncil.ie



President of the Tree Council of Ireland and broadcaster Eanna Ní Lamhna and Coillte CEO Imelda Hurley were joined by students from the Sacred Heart Senior National School, Tallaght to announce the launch of National Tree Week

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Wicklow teaching graduates receive top awards



Sarah Joyce, a teacher at Temple Carrig Secondary School in Greystones, and Maeve Duffy, a teacher at Loreto Secondary School Bray, at their Hibernia College conferring ceremony.

Three Wicklow students - all Masters graduates in Primary or Post-Primary Education - had double cause for celebration after achieving 'top of their class' status at the annual Hibernia College conferring ceremony which was held at Dublin's Convention Centre recently.

Maeve Duffy, a teacher at Loreto Secondary School Bray, was honoured with the overall Student of the Year Award - presented by the College to the student in each cohort with the highest grade across the Post-Primary programme.

Sarah Joyce, a teacher at Temple Carrig School, Greystones, was honoured with the Research Award, awarded to the student in each cohort who achieves the highest grade in the Research module on the College's Post-Primary programme.

Ciara Man, a teacher at St Cronan's BNS in Bray, was honoured with the overall Student of the Year Award and Research Award on her Primary programme. In addition, Ciara also received the INTO Vere Foster Medal - awarded by the Irish National Teachers' Organisation (INTO) for 'Outstanding Performance in School Placement'.

The Wicklow graduates were amongst 900 from all 26 counties to graduate with Primary or Post-Primary teaching qualifications from Hibernia College. Congratulating them and other graduates, who she described as 'innovative, collaborative and highly competent,' Dr Mary Kelly, Academic Dean at Hibernia College, said all in attendance "will make a valuable contribution to their chosen profession and to the students they teach."



Ciara Man, a teacher at St Cronan's BNS in Bray

Regulations to improve grant scheme for students

Minister for Further and Higher Education Simon Harris TD last week signed new regulations to improve the student grant scheme for the new academic year.

The changes, introduced in Budget 2022, will see: Income grants increase by €200; Increase the income threshold by €1,000; The distance for the higher non-adjacent student grant will be reduced from 45km to 30km.

Minister Harris said: "I'm delighted today to sign these regulations, which will deliver much-needed assistance to students and families across County Wicklow."

"The €200 increase in the maintenance grant will offer direct financial assistance to over 62,000 students nationally, and increasing the eligibility cut off point by €1,000 will ensure even more students qualify, and more Wicklow families can access support."

"Reducing the distance for the higher non-adjacent student grant also means more Wicklow students who are living away from home or travelling to college will qualify for the higher grant."

The student grant system is open now for renewals, and will open for new applications on April 28th.

Call for school-based mental health supports for primary school children

At its AGM, Bray & District Council of Trade Unions adopted a motion submitted by the executive committee noting a call by the National Parents Council and St. Patrick's Mental Health Services for the establishment of school-based mental health supports for primary school children.

The motion stated that "The Council acknowledges that schools are considered appropriate and valuable settings for delivery of such supports. Over the past two years it has been well documented how the mental health needs of children have seriously intensified during the pandemic."

"The importance of early intervention and prevention cannot be overstated. It is well recognised that if the social-emotional, behavioural and mental health needs of children are not met in a timely and appropriate manner that this has far-reaching consequences not only for their school engagement and academic progress but also for children's future

well-being.

"Teachers and school communities have been trying to draw attention for years to the lack of support and resources and in particular the lack of clinical support, available to primary school age children with social, emotional and behavioural needs. They also point to the lack of training and continuous professional development available to equip them in supporting pupils whose mental health needs can be complex and sometimes extremely challenging. Therefore, this Council calls for a radical overhaul of the liaison structures between children's community mental health services and schools the putting in place of clear and definite pathways where

supports are readily accessible to schools seeking advice and referral in relation to children with significant social, behavioural and emotional needs adequate staffing of all agencies working in the area of community mental health for children a recognition of the urgent need to put in place a school-based clinical support system which is adequately staffed and properly resourced appropriate training and CPD to be made available immediately for school staff."

Proposing the motion, Council Secretary, Kieron Connolly also stated; "While incoming Governments have over the years committed to improving integration of services for vulnerable children and adolescents with mental health difficulties there is little evidence that this has been seen as a real priority by governments during their terms of office."



Let's Develop our Vision for our Community



Co. Wicklow Public Participation Network (PPN) & Wicklow County Council want to hear about your vision for the wellbeing of our community.

To help us plan for the future of Co. Wicklow and all its citizens we need you to tell us what you want for future generations in Co. Wicklow

Access the survey online on www.countywicklowppn.ie/news or www.wicklow.ie/living/consultationhub or pick up a hard copy in your Local Library or Municipal District Office.



Pictured at the Conferring Ceremony for Waterford Institute of Technology were Lauren Murphy from Youghal, Katie Norris from Carrick on Suir, Niamh Murphy from Carnew, and Emily Nolan for Portlaoigh, who graduated from the Bachelor of Arts Hons Degree in Exercise and Health Studies.

Have your say in local community wellbeing and economic plans

Wicklow County Council and County Wicklow Public Participation Network (PPN) want to hear the public's views about the economic and community development and wellbeing of the county.

There are two plans being developed at present - both interlinked. These are the Co Wicklow Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) and the Co Wicklow PPN Vision for Community Wellbeing Statement.

The LECP will drive a series of goals and actions to lead an inter-agency approach to economic development and supporting community resilience in the county. The plan covers areas such as the regeneration of towns and villages, the promotion and main-

streaming of equality, building on our strengths and natural resources for economic development, supporting enterprise and innovation.

The second plan, the Co Wicklow PPN Vision for Community Wellbeing Statement, reflects the views and priorities of communities and is seen as a good measure of how well we as communities are doing. The consultation will help the PPN to monitor and identify actions that can lead to stronger and more resilient communities. It will also help

the PPN to participate in decision making in the county.

The first step is to seek the public's views. These will feed into both plans where relevant. Therefore we need people to tell us what they consider to be important priorities based on, but not exclusive to: Economy and Resources - Economic Development, Enterprise and Job Creation; Social and Community Development; Environment and Sustainability; Health (Physical and Mental); Values Culture & Meaning; Participation

Democracy and Good Governance.

Mr Brian Gleeson, Chief Executive, Wicklow County Council, is hoping that people and community groups become involved in the process: "We are delighted to be working with the PPN on the consultation for these two very ambitious and extensive plans that will ultimately make the county a better place to live, work and visit".

Helen Howes, Resource Worker for Co Wicklow PPN, explained: "Although we sometimes think about 'wellbeing' in terms of good physical and mental health, it can also describe the wider conditions we need to have a better quality of life. Some of these are things that we can easily measure, like the number of school places, jobs, or the speed with which an ambulance can get to a sick person. Others are

less easily measured, such as our pride of place, our heritage, and the way in which we all look after each other."

There are two ways to participate in the consultation: an online survey is now open to feed into both the LECP and the Vision for the PPN Community Wellbeing Statement. Access the survey online on www.countywicklow-ppn.ie/news or www.wicklow.ie/living/consultationhub

Or, alternatively, pick up a hard copy in any local library or Municipal District Office. Written submissions can be made to: Office of Community, Culture & Social Development, Wicklow County Council, County buildings, Wicklow or emailed to: lecp@wicklowco.ie

Closing date for written submissions is 5pm Thursday 21st April 2022.



Eimear O'Sullivan and Aobha Harmon celebrate Knockananna winning the All-Ireland Junior B Camogie Championship which was played in Drogheda. Knockananna beat Derrylaughan of Tyrone

Surveying for National Broadband Plan continues

National Broadband Ireland (NBI) has announced that surveying works in Wicklow are well underway.

In Wicklow, there are 15,781 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 made substantial progress in Wicklow, where Baltinglass has now been surveyed.

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.

In advance of the Fibre-to-the-Home roll out, the NBP provides for the delivery of Broadband Connection Points (BCP's) nationwide. 512 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.

Updated guidelines to help integrate environmental issues into Wicklow's future development plans

The Minister of State for Local Government and Planning at the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, Peter Burke, TD, has published updated Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) guidelines that will assist Wicklow planners in carrying out efficient and effective SEAs.

The guidelines will help Wicklow County Council integrate environmental issues into Development Plans and contribute towards achieving national and international sustainable development goals, important in the context of national and international action against climate change and biodiversity loss. The Department has now written to Wicklow County Council and all planning authorities, advising them of the updated SEA Guidelines.

Both the European Commission and the Environmental Protection Agency have reviewed the operation of the SEA process and its guidelines, first issued in 2004. The updated guidelines address some of the weaknesses in the SEA process that were highlighted by these studies. For example, the Guidelines provide clarity on the statutory requirement for monitoring the effects of implementing the relevant plan (e.g. County Development Plan) on the environment. This aspect of SEA has been implemented with limited effectiveness in Ireland

and in other Members States.

SEA guidelines must be taken into account by Regional Assemblies and Planning Authorities during the preparation of Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies, County Development Plans and Local Area Plans.

The SEA process also provides the public with greater opportunities to participate in the plan-making process. It provides transparency into how certain decisions are made. SEA has been an important process in ensuring that plans and programmes produced in Wicklow are compliant with the relevant national, regional and local environmental objectives and targets.

Under Housing for All, the Government's national housing plan to 2030, the Government committed to updating guidance on Strategic Environmental Assessment. This is to improve the functioning of the planning system in order to increase new housing supply in a sustainable manner.

Publishing the updated SEA guidelines, Minister

Burke said:

"These updated SEA Guidelines will help ensure Development Plans and other important planning frameworks for Wicklow protect both Wicklow's and the national environment. With these guidelines the learn-

ings of national and European evaluations of the SEA process are being put into practice in our planning system. Given European and international focus on actions against climate change and biodiversity loss, SEA will continue to

have an important role in ensuring that Wicklow's Development Plans and programmes comply with relevant environmental objectives and targets, therefore contributing towards a more environmentally sustainable future."

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Selection of Ice-cream <small>Mint, Chocolate, Strawberry & Vanilla</small>	€7.90		
Mains			
Castle Surf 'n' Turf <small>10oz 28 Day Dry Aged Sirloin of Beef with Tempura of Atlantic Prawns Grilled tomato and our house peppercorn & brandy sauce</small>	€34.90		
10oz 28 Day Dry Aged Sirloin Steak <small>With battered onion rings, grilled tomato and house pink peppercorn & brandy sauce. Served with fries</small>	€29.90		
Oven Baked Hake Fillet <small>Served on a cheese mash with pan fried Atlantic Prawns in a lemon and butter herb sauce</small>	€25.90		
Crispy Boneless Half Roast Duck <small>Served on creamed potatoes with a garlic & star anise sauce</small>	€27.90		
Roast Chicken Supreme <small>With a Black Pudding and herb stuffing. Served with a Whiskey cream sauce topped with crispy Pancetta</small>	€24.90		
Pan Fried Monk Fish Fillet <small>With shallot, dill and tomato cream sauce, tossed with fried samphire</small>	€29.90		
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Lara Emanuelle Simões Braga and Sam O'Neill with some of the donations for Ukraine

Rathdrum rallies for Ukraine with 'staggering' amount of donations

A local Rathdrum worker said she's been overwhelmed by the generosity of the local community after a local appeal went out for donations for the people of Ukraine.

Lara Emanuelle Simões Braga, who works in Casey's Centra in Rathdrum, said "The amount of support, assistance, generosity, and charity the people of Rathdrum donated and supplied was unfathomable; our transport convoy was absolutely packed to the brim of supplies, and it was all for a good cause."

Lara was one of the driving forces behind a large-scale collection of donations which saw a convoy of three vans and one car make its way to Dublin where the donations could be shipped overseas. The project worked in conjunction with the Polish and Lithuanian embassies to support and provide Ukrainian families with food, clothing, and necessities.

The project began when Lara, originally from Brazil, and her fiancé Sam were approached by local Brazilian friend Lúcia Brandão and her husband Ciaran Byrne, who told them about a volunteer group being run by another Brazilian by the name of Monaliza Ferreira Milisaukas, owner of Fitwoman, and her husband Irmantas Milisaukas.

"They asked me and Sam to help with spreading the word around our area and ask the people of Rathdrum for any donations that they could afford to provide to the Ukrainian people. We jumped at the chance to be able to help," explains Lara.

"I reached out to my workplace, Casey's Centra, and asked if we

could use the facility as a collection point, which they happily agreed to. We had great collaboration and assistance from all the staff members."

Donations were collected over one week, with Lara and other volunteers meeting each evening to separate them into clothes, food, and medical supplies and packing them into boxes.

On Saturday 5th March the convoy of donations left Rathdrum and made its way to Dublin, first stopping off at Wicklow Town where more donations were collected from Spotlight Studios. Phloor, a floor covering company based in Park West in Dublin, helped to organise the shipment.

"We are so glad to the people in Rathdrum for



The donations collected at Centra in Rathdrum

opening their hearts in this difficult time. The quantity of donations is staggering and we see other business' such as the Spotlight Studios in Wicklow Town who did an amazing effort to accept and help the pro-

ject with their endeavour. We can't thank enough everyone and just know that everything is going to people in desperate need. We are extremely glad for all generosity to the people of Ukraine."

Ways for migrants to overcome barriers into politics to be discussed at webinar series

The Immigrant Council of Ireland is calling on potential political candidates from a migrant background in Wicklow to attend a webinar series exploring diversity in politics.

The Immigrant Council, in partnership with Dublin City University, is running the series throughout March and April. The series will feature contributions from former election candidates and currently sitting councillors of migrant backgrounds, as well as experts in the political system and campaigning.

The webinar series - entitled 'Promoting Democratic Participation: An Active Citizenship for Migrants' - aims to introduce potential candidates to the Irish political system, covering topics such as: party systems in Ireland, mobilisation of migrant voters, migrant women in politics, party affiliation, electoral campaign organisation, outreach strategies, and social media campaigning. The first session in the series took place on Wednesday, 9th March.

According to research carried out by the Immigrant Council on the experiences of migrant election candidates in 2019, migrants experience additional campaigning barriers that other candidates do not have to face. In order to combat these barriers, the Immigrant Council has delivered a number of projects including voters' education workshops and internship schemes for migrants.

The webinars will be jointly coordinated by Teresa Buczkowska, Immigrant Council of Ireland and Dr Valesca Lima, Dublin City University. Confirmed speakers include:

- Yara Alagha, board member of Women for Election, named one of 22 activists to watch in 2022 by the Irish Independent.
- Councillor Abul Kalam Azad Telekdar (FF), Former Deputy Mayor of Limerick.
- Councillor Uruemu Adejinmi (FF), Lord Mayor of Longford.
- Sandra Ruiz, expert on migrant integration and 2019 local election candidate.

Commenting on the upcoming webinar series, Teresa Buczkowska, Integration Manager at the Immigrant Council of Ireland, said: "Migrant political participation significantly increased in recent years. Currently we have 12 local councillors from a migrant background, and we are working with a number of potential election candidates. The local councillors are the best trainers and role models that can provide knowledge and encouragement to migrants who are considering running for local elections in Wicklow in 2024. There are many capable migrant community leaders in Wicklow

and across Ireland who would make excellent local councillors and we hope we can reach them with our webinars."

Also commenting on the upcoming series, Dr Valesca Lima, Assistant Professor in Politics at Dublin City University, said: "Active citizenship

is an important part of migrant integration and a healthy democracy. Having diverse voices at the decision-making table supports equality and ensures the success of all of our communities and a cohesive society. We are hoping that the webinar series will help migrant

candidates to run successful election campaigns in 2024 and beyond."

The webinars are part of the New Foundations project funded by the Irish Research Council. All webinars are free to attend and people interested in attending can register on immigrantcouncil.ie

Concert for Ukraine

A Concert for Ukraine will take place on Sunday 20th March at 7pm in St Patrick's Church, Greystones.

A wonderful evening of music with opera, musical theatre, pop and jazz, featuring well-known local musicians and choirs including Unity Gospel Choir, Dara MacMahon and Mike Nielsen, plus a host of local talented youth performers, including St Patrick's NS choir, Kate and James Fennell, Emily Gaines, Matt Fallon, Tiarnan Shortt, Liam Andrews, Grainne Shortt, Tom DePaor, Sophie Clarke, Charlotte Fortune, Isibéal Boylan, Ruby Held, Emily Carrick, Rhyia Hamilton-Felton, plus other special guests!

Performers from many local schools are represented such as Temple Carrig School, St Patrick's NS, Colaiste Raithin, Greystones Community School, Loreto Bray and St Patrick's National School.

Organised by James Fennell, a Transition Year student at Temple Carrig School, Greystones, all funds raised on the night will be donated to the Irish Red Cross appeal for the humanitarian crisis in Ukraine. James said "I think this will be a great chance to gather together as a community and show our solidarity with the people of Ukraine."

Tickets €10/€5 (students) available at the door or from Eventbrite. Information 086-8146926

Ceremonies of remembrance

National events will take place across the country on the weekend of 18th-20th March in Dublin.

This will represent an opportunity for the nation to pause and reflect, take time to remember all those who have lost their lives during the pandemic and pay tribute to everyone who has contributed to how we have faced and are facing the challenges together.

Wicklow communities will be given the opportunity to enable individual and collective remembrance and commemoration of all those who died and who have been bereaved, whilst acknowledging the scale and impact of the end-of-life care that individuals gave to the dying and their families in each community during the Pandemic.

There have been 6,569 deaths in Ireland as a result of COVID, with 186 of those relating to residents of County Wicklow (as of March 5th 2022).

The County Wicklow events include: Saturday, March 19th - Garden of Bray library, Florence Road at 12 noon

Saturday, March 19th - Wicklow library, The Mall, Wicklow town at 2.30pm

Saturday, March 19th - Tinahely

Market Square at 5.30pm

Sunday, March 20th - Burnaby,

Greystones at 12 noon

Sunday, March 20th - Arklow library, (Main Street) at 3pm

All are welcome, especially those who have lost family members and friends to the COVID pandemic.

Each event will be introduced by the Cathaoirleach of the particular Municipal District and will include a violinist and an orator reading poetry/prose. A wreath laying ceremony will also feature.

The Cathaoirleach of Wicklow County Council, Cllr Shay Cullen, said: "This will represent an opportunity for Wicklow and the nation to pause and reflect, take time to remember all those who have lost their lives during the pandemic, and pay tribute to everyone who has contributed to how we have faced and are facing the challenges together".

If there is inclement weather, the indoor venue of the relevant library will be used, or Tinahely Courthouse Arts Centre in the case of Tinahely.



Margaret Kennedy from Greystones (pictured) has organised a collection of disability equipment and medical supplies for the people of Ukraine, including crutches, sticks, wheelchairs, splints, boots, bandages, urinals, incontinence wear, colostomy bags, and all things which disabled, elderly or sick people might need. People can drop off their donations to Brennanstown riding stables in Hollybrook, Kilmacanogue, (Eircode A98 C2F1) before 5pm. As a disabled person herself, Margaret says she wanted to reach out to disabled Ukrainians.



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Tourism Minister Catherine Martin; Gerry Ginty, Powerscourt Distillery; and Niall Gibbons, Chief Executive of Tourism Ireland – in Abu Dhabi, on day one of Tourism Ireland's 2022 sales mission.

Tourism Ireland's biggest ever sales mission to the Middle East

Tourism Ireland's biggest ever sales mission to the Middle East took place recently. A record 17 tourism businesses from Ireland, including Powerscourt Distillery, took part in the targeted mission to Abu Dhabi and Dubai.

The busy programme included a series of workshops and networking events, with the tourism companies from Ireland meeting, and doing business with, more than 200 tour operators and travel agents. The final workshop involved meetings with luxury travel buyers from Saudi Arabia. The aim was to encourage the influential tour operators and travel agents in the Middle East to include Ireland in their programmes for 2022 and beyond.

Tourism Ireland's message was that Ireland is open for business again and we cannot wait to welcome back visitors from the Middle East. The organisation is telling all prospective visitors that a warm welcome awaits them when they travel here, despite the disruption of the last couple of years.

Network Ireland Wicklow announce newly appointed President for 2022

Network Ireland Wicklow has announced that Christina Clarkin of MX-3.IE has been appointed the President of the branch for the coming year.

Commenting on her appointment, Christina said; "I'm truly honoured to be the President of the Network Ireland Wicklow branch for 2022. It's a privilege to be surrounded by such inspirational businesswomen, many of who I now call my friends.

The theme I've selected for 2022 is "Ignite". Each and every one of us has demonstrated extraordinary grit and determination - true Power Within. However, if we are not nourishing ourselves and fuelling that fire, then our businesses will struggle to thrive. With that, our conversations this year will centre around these 3 areas:

Business Stories to Inspire Us; Business Workshops to Empower Us; Self-Care Workshops to Nurture Us.

As part of the

Presidential run, Network Ireland have also appointed Jigsaw Wicklow as their charity partner for the year.

Christina continues, "As part of my president year, I also have the opportunity to select a local charity to partner with for the year and I'm thrilled to announce that our charity partner is Jigsaw Wicklow. A wonderful organisation dedicated to the mental health and welfare of our youth. There is no doubt that the last two years have been difficult for us all - no more than for our younger generation. Jigsaw's mission is to create a more supportive environment for young people giving both them and their parents, access to the information they need to support their mental wellbeing"

Commenting on the



Christina Clarkin, newly appointed president of Network Ireland's Wicklow branch

Wicklow. This is an incredible honour for us and we have no doubt that this will have such a positive impact on the work we do to support the mental health and wellbeing of young people across Wicklow.

"We are so excited to work with Christina, the members of Network Wicklow, their families and communities as we raise funds and vital awareness of how we can all better support them mental health of our young people.

"If you would like to join a growing group of tenacious, dynamic, ambitious women in business who lead, support and collaborate, you can get in touch with our Membership Officers Jean and Dawn wicklow@networkireland.ie."

You can also follow Network Ireland Wicklow on your preferred network; Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and LinkedIn for all event details.

charity partnership, Service Manager of Jigsaw Wicklow, Nicky Russel said, "We are so genuinely delighted and

thankful that Christina has selected Jigsaw as her chosen charity for her year as president of Network Ireland

Wicklow Chamber celebrates Wicklow Business Endeavour Awards

After two years of virtual events, Wicklow Town & District Chamber of Commerce was delighted to celebrate in person the achievements of outstanding local businesses and organisations for 2021.

On February 25th, Wicklow Town & District Chamber of Commerce were joined by Wicklow business owners, local government, chamber members and community leaders to celebrate the achievements of outstanding local businesses, organisations and individuals at the

Wicklow Chamber Endeavour Awards Ceremony. Recipients of the 2021 Chamber Business Awards were selected by their peers and the public and were chosen out of a robust list of finalists and nominees from across Wicklow Town & Environs.

The 2021 Chamber Business Awards Recipients are:

Best New Business: Winner was Firehouse Bakery. Runner ups were Mad Hatters Dessert Emporium and Opera.

Best Retail Award: Winner was The Shoebox. Runner ups were

Heels & Wardrobe and Bridge Street Books.

Best SME: Winner was King Hair & Beauty, Runner ups were Ray of Sunshine Morning & Afterschool Care and MD Design.

Best Eating/Pub/Hospitality Award: Winner was Firehouse Bakery, Runner up were Mariner Bar & Eat House and Blue Seafood & Bistro.

Honouring Innovation & Entrepreneurship Award: Billy O'Reilly, Wicklow Hire & Sales Ltd

Honouring Community Award: Meals on Wheels, Wicklow

Special Recognition Award: Frank Curran

"The Wicklow Endeavour Business Awards gives us a chance to showcase some of the amazing business talent that we have here in Wicklow Town & District," says Matt Forkin, President of Wicklow Town & District Chamber of Commerce. "This annual event is a great opportunity to recognize and reward our business community who continually achieve a remarkable level of business excellence, while continuing to encourage the entrepreneurial and community spirit of our Town & District."

Matt thanked all of our generous sponsors: AIB, Bank of Ireland, Burke Oil, Herbst Software, Wicklow County Council, Wicklow Enterprise Park and Wicklow Hire & Sales for their continued support to the Chamber and to the wider Business Community.

He also paid special thanks to Stephen Delaney for acting as master of ceremony for this years event. He finished by thanking Wicklow Library for hosting the venue for our awards and to Natalie and her team in Sorrell & Eve who provided the catering for the awards ceremony.



David Lott of Burke Oil presents Maura Kavanagh of the Wicklow Meals on Wheels with the Community Award



Former Chief Executive of Wicklow County Council Frank Curran is presented with the Special Recognition Award by Eimear O'Connell from Wicklow Enterprise Centre



Master of Ceremonies, Stephen Delaney from The Shoebox, is presented with the Best Retail Award from Chief Executive of Wicklow County Council Brian Gleeson

Maritime licensing business wins top County Enterprise Award

A maritime licensing business from Arklow is this year's winner of the Wicklow Enterprise Award for 2022, Local Enterprise Office Wicklow has announced.

Kate Dempsey of Aqualicense Ltd. and the Irish Mussel Seed Company will represent Local Enterprise Office Wicklow at the 22nd National Enterprise Awards at the Mansion House in Dublin on the 2nd June.

Aqualicense Ltd. will now be competing against 30 other finalists from every local authority area for a share of the €35,000 winners prize fund as national judging gets underway in May. Categories this year include 'Best Export Business,' 'Best Start-Up' and 'Innovation,' in addition to eight regional awards. There are also two new National Enterprise Awards this year with a "One to Watch" award and a "Sustainability / Green" award.

Speaking during Local Enterprise Week, Vibeke Delahunt of Local Enterprise Office Wicklow said: "We are so proud to have the amazing Kate Dempsey representing us this year. In addition to maritime licensing company, Aqualicense Ltd., and a mussel farm (The Irish Mussel Seed Company), Kate owns two other maritime related businesses and employs over 100 people in total. She has achieved all this since starting her first business less than ten years ago. It is a superb achievement and we wish her every success!"

Among the guests at the event to formally nominate Kate were Minister Damien English, Minister of State at the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment; Brian Gleeson, CEO of Wicklow County Council; Vibeke Delahunt, Head of Enterprise at LEO Wicklow, and Louise Fleming, Senior Enterprise Development Officer at LEO Wicklow.

The National Enterprise Awards are organised every year by the Local Enterprise Offices and supported by Enterprise Ireland, local authorities and the Government of Ireland.

The 2022 National Enterprise Awards take place on Thursday, 2nd June in the Mansion House in Dublin and are organised by the Local Enterprise Offices.



Vibeke Delahunt of Wicklow LEO, Kate Dempsey of Aqualicense Ltd, Minister Damien English, Louise Fleming of LEO Wicklow, and Chief Executive of Wicklow County Council Brian Gleeson

Wicklow attractions feature in leading French trail running magazine

Wicklow's famous running trails and mountain paths made the front page of a leading French Trail Running magazine securing valuable media coverage for the county's attractions.

'Nature Trail' is one of France's leading Trail Running magazine, and with the support of Tourism Ireland's office in Paris, Wicklow welcomed its writers and photographer for a short but intense weekend in November of last year.

They spent their time running and discovering the mountains of Wicklow. Following their visit, Wicklow made it to the front page of the latest edition of "Nature Trail" magazine with a 10-page article inside illustrated by fabulous photos.

Fred Verdier from Wicklow Tourism said of the coverage: "The weather we got over the two days was amazing and gave some stunning images showcasing the incredible playground that is Wicklow for outdoor activities. The exposure we are getting on the back of this Press trip is quite incredible both on print and online around France and beyond!"

Josephine Brilland, Editor of "Nature Trail", said: "We had a fabulous time over the three days. The diversity of the terrain and many great climbs make the Garden of Ireland a perfect trail running destination with stunning sceneries, great food and lovely people."

Mr Brian Gleeson, Chief Executive, Wicklow County Council and Chair of Wicklow Tourism, commented: "It is great to see the international market opening up again. We look forward to welcoming more French visitors to enjoy what Wicklow has to offer on foot of this excellent feature."

Have a look at the full weekend itinerary at <https://visitwicklow.ie/nature-trail-mag-visits-wicklow-trail-running/>. A copy of the magazine is available in Wicklow Town Library.



The cover of "Nature Trail" showing Editor, Josephine Brilland, along with husband Romeo running up the Spinc in Glendalough

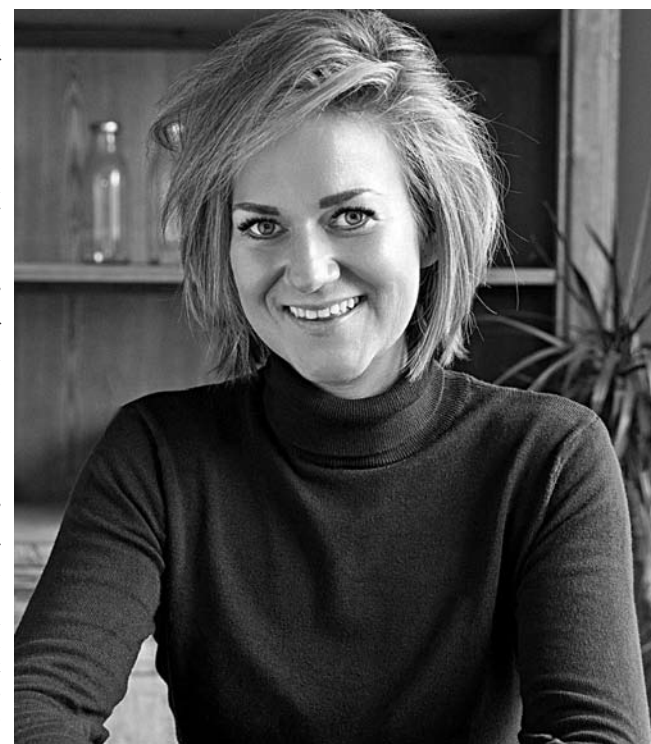
Wicklow athlete launches high performance coaching business for work, rest and play

"If you can crack success in one area of life you can transfer those skills and that mindset to other areas of life," is Anne Marie's maxim as she launches Amella Neuro Performance Coaching & Consultancy, a new business aiming to coach healthy high performance in work, sport, lifestyle and relationships. "You can make success your norm", she says.

Anne-Marie Doran has achieved success in many areas of life. She was Wicklow Camogie Player of the year, won an All Ireland Ladies football title and the same year was voted by her peers as player of the year, was a member of the Irish International Camogie Team in 2008 (months after her daughter was born). Add to that winning 13 football and camogie championships and two Leinster titles, being the gym manager of the K club, and you have a track record of elite performance. Almost as an afterthought she ran the Dublin City Marathon in 2016. These days Anne-Marie is training for Ironman Youghal!

"My passion is health and wellness," she says. "Over the years, whether working with Carlow Regional Youth Services, Traveller Youth Projects, Mental Health and Wellbeing Projects, and one to one coaching programmes I have seen time and again how with effort and guidance people can make vast improvements in their lives. This is where I get my satisfaction ... seeing people make lasting changes and setting off successfully in the direction they want to go. There is so much potential to be developed."

After Anne-Marie's outstanding sports career she took courses in Trinity College Dublin, where she was awarded an Advanced Coaching Diploma; Carlow IT, where she studied Family Support & currently Digital Strategy; Munster Technology University, where she gained a B.Sc (Hons) in Health, Fitness and Leisure Studies, and The Health Sciences Academy where she trained as a nutritional therapist. In launching Carlow based 'Amella Neuro-Performance Coaching & Consultancy', Anne Marie believes that with her unique range of qualifications it is time to focus this experience and training, with a particular emphasis on business and sport clients, working both with organisations and on a one-to-one basis.



Anne-Marie Doran

Anne Marie believes that "Developing greater resilience is not necessarily about avoiding pressure, rather it's about noticing when you might be experiencing pressure and then being able to take proactive steps to prevent the pressure manifesting as unhealthy stress."

Anne Marie uses a strengths based approach in her Workplace Programme through the WRAW psychometric tool. WRAW (Workplace Wellbeing and Resilience) is trusted by leading organisations worldwide and is the first well validated psychometric tool and survey to measure resilience and its impact on wellbeing for working people. WRAW provides live data insight into resilience at every level of the organisation.

The 'Amella' current client list includes Lidl, Youth Work Ireland, The Ladies Gaelic Football Association, The K Club, Youth Sports Trust UK, Stryve and the GAA. Anne-Marie also has a 1-1 service for individuals who are looking for results

"Small changes in a business can bring about big successes but it often takes an outsider to spot the potential and set them in the right direction. We collaborate with our clients or develop healthy high performance in the workplaces. Likewise athletes can benefit from a new mindset to unlock potential. My work with young people, families and businesses has given me daily evidence of the benefits of coaching for people who have the desire to get more from life," says Anne Marie.



Pictured at the UCD Agriculture, Food Science & Human Nutrition Careers Day was special guest Minister of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Charlie McConalogue TD with students Viola Callaghan from Longford, Yvonne Kavanagh from Roundwood, and Conor Kehoe from Wexford.



Eamonn Doran, Philip Howlin, Mick Byrne, and Mary Doran are pictured at the recent launch of the South Wicklow Drama Festival in Jim Byrne's, Carnew. The festival will run from March 20th to 26th in St. Brigid's Hall, Carnew.

Mermaid & Once Off Productions Present: Looking For America

Mermaid Arts Centre, Friday 25th and Saturday 26th March / 8pm €18/16

Directed and co-written by Janet Moran (A Holy Show, Swing), Looking for América is the real-life story of writer and performer Federico Julián González.

Following his father's arrest by a Military Junta, at the age of five, Fede and his family were forced to flee the Salvadoran Civil war. There followed years of continuous moving throughout Latin America with his mother and brother as they sought sanctuary.

In 2019, Fede and his 74-year-old mother set off on a quest through Havana



to look for América. Shared memories, conflicting recollections and offline maps led them

through their past. A past peopled with ghosts scattered among grand avenues, dark lanes and

to shop-keepers, taxi drivers, old ladies and more importantly to each other. When they were about to give up, they found her.

Looking for América charts two journeys. The journey of that night in Havana looking for a Salvadoran ex-Guerilla fighter called América, and the journey of escaping the catastrophe that had engulfed his country decades before. A catastrophe whose after effects still resonate today.

Sometimes the idea of home has to be remade. And remade. And remade

Netflix confirms seasons 2 & 3 of Vikings:Valhalla

In good news for Co. Wicklow's film economy, Netflix has confirmed a Second and Third season of Vikings: Valhalla.

Production of Season Two has wrapped, with the series expected to return to Netflix audiences around the world in 2023. Season Three begins production in Ireland this spring. The drama series was previously announced as a 24-episode pickup, this announcement confirms a total of three, eight-episode seasons.

Season 1 Film Locations include Ashford Studios, Ashford; Luggala Estate (Lough Tay/ Viewing Point/ Meadow/ Duck Pond); Cloragh Farm, Ashford; Avondale; Nuttall's Farm, Newtownmountkennedy; Childer's Woods, Lough Dan; The Rookery, Newcastle and Coolnawinna.

Vikings: Valhalla Season One premiered February 25th and ranks #1 on the Netflix Top 10 for the week of 2/28 with 113.38M hours viewed, making the Top 10 in 90 countries. The series garnered 80.5M hours viewed during its first two days the week prior bringing it to an impressive 194M hours viewed in its first nine days.

Season One of VIKINGS: VALHALLA - now streaming on Netflix - chronicles the heroic adventures of some of the most famous Vikings who ever lived - the legendary explorer Leif Eriksson (Sam Corlett), his fiery and headstrong sister Freydis Eriksdotter (Frida Gustavsson), and the ambitious Nordic prince Harald Sigurdsson (Leo Suter). As tensions between the Vikings and the English royals reach a bloody breaking point and as the Vikings themselves

clash over their conflicting Christian and pagan beliefs, these three Vikings begin an epic journey that will take them across oceans and through battlefields, from Kattegat to England and beyond, as they fight for survival and glory.

Jeb Stuart, Vikings: Valhalla Creator, Showrunner, Executive Producer, said "Thank you to the millions of you who have watched (and rewatched!) Season One. The numbers have been mind-boggling and beyond my wildest expectations. I'm thrilled to be able to confirm that we wrapped and are already editing Season Two and that production will start soon on Season Three. While the storylines for Leif, Freydis, Harald, Olaf, Canute and the rest of our amazing cast are secret, I can say without hesitation that their journeys will be even more epic than what you've seen so far. SKÁL!!!"

Peter Friedlander, Head of US/Canada Scripted Series, Netflix, said: "The fans have spoken and we couldn't be more thrilled than to bring them more of the epic adventure and heart-pounding action they love. Jeb Stuart has masterfully taken this beloved saga 125 years into the future and introduced a whole new generation of Vikings and stories that have resonated with new and existing fans all over the world. There is plenty more to avenge and more battles to fight!"

Vikings: Valhalla is based on the series Vikings created by Michael Hirst.

30th Business to Arts Awards calls for Wicklow entries & businesses to support their local cultural community

Business to Arts launched the call for Wicklow nominations for the 30th annual Business to Arts Awards (2022) to join previous local winners Bray Municipal District with Bray Credit Union, Megazyme & Platform Pizza, recipients of the Best Use of Creativity in the Community award (2018).

The Awards, now in its 30th year, champion businesses, artists and arts organisations across the country that work together in areas such as sponsorship, commissioning, philanthropy and CSR programmes, and more. 2022 is a landmark year in the Awards history and also represents the highest level of monetary support to the arts offered with €25,000 available through bursaries and awards across the country.

The Awards celebrate the power of partnerships between two sectors that can generate learning, wellbeing, joy and innovation during times of hardship. At the awards launch, Business to Arts and the awards partners encouraged businesses and philanthropists to look to the cultural sector for inspiration and support in providing engaging, insightful and enjoyable experiences both within and outside of the workplace. Most recent research conducted by Business to Arts in 2020/21 among corporate sponsors of the arts in Ireland reveals that:

- 2019/2020 saw a huge €9.68m invested in the arts
- The majority of sponsors now cite staff engagement as their primary reason for sponsoring the arts (70%)
- Commitments to multi-annual (3 - 5 year) partnerships more than doubled during Covid-19 rising from 9% to 22%
- The average spend on an arts partnership has increased 33% year-on-year

Now in its 13th year, the €10,000 Jim McNaughton/TileStyle Bursary, is open to emerging artist(s) in any art form. The inaugural year of the 'Accenture Digital Innovation in Art' Bursary will offer €10,000 to an artist whose work is created digitally and showcases how harnessing the combination of technology and human ingenuity can pro-

duce new perspectives and approaches to art. The daa €5,000 Arts Award honours an arts organisation in recognition of its effective and imaginative collaboration with a business. Additionally, the Best Philanthropic Support to the Arts award, supported by the Arts Council, recognises outstanding examples of sustainable and impactful arts philanthropy.

There are 11 categories in total focusing on sponsorship, commissioning, CSR initiatives and community engagement as well as mentoring, training, philanthropy, and staff programmes. The online application form can be accessed through www.busstoaarts.ie/awards. Previous award winners include Iarnród Éireann/Irish Rail, An Post, Flogas, Grant Thornton, Dublin Port Company, Irish Film Institute, and the Naughton Foundation.

As well as arts sponsorship and philanthropic support to the arts sector, the Awards recognise examples of arts and business organisations working together in other areas such as mentoring, training, events, staff engagement or development, commissioning artists, CSR initiatives, community engagements etc.

1. Best Large Sponsorship (value over €25,000 cash or in-kind) supported by Arthur Cox
2. Best Small Sponsorship (value under €25,000 cash or in-kind)
3. Best Long-Term Partnership (3 years or more) supported by The Irish Times
4. Best Use of Creativity in the Community supported by Irish Life
5. Best Use of Creativity in the Workplace supported by ESB.
6. Best Philanthropic Support to the Arts supported by the Arts Council
7. Jim McNaughton Perpetual Award for Best

Commissioning Practice supported by TileStyle

8. Jim McNaughton/TileStyle €10,000 Bursary for Commissioned Artists

9. Accenture Digital Innovation in Art €10,000 Bursary

10/11. Judges' Special Recognition Award for Portfolio of Arts Sponsorship supported by Accenture and the daa €5,000 Arts Award will also be awarded on the evening of the awards.

Clare Duignan, Chair of this year's judging panel and Board Member of Business to Arts said: 'The

30th anniversary of the Business to Arts Awards ceremony will combine physical with virtual to celebrate the very best in creative partnerships from the last 18 months. As we emerge and recover from the effects of pandemic it is vital to celebrate new, innovative, and sustained corporate partnerships that support artistry, creativity, and society. In our work, we are increasingly seeing business organisations connect with important issues around sustainability, equality, technology, and wellbeing by engaging with the arts, and we hope to see this reflected in this year's nominations.'

The closing date for applications is Tuesday, April 26th 2022 at 5pm. Go to www.busstoaarts.ie/awards for information on the application process and to complete the online application form.



Bray Municipal District with Bray Credit Union, Megazyme & Platform Pizza with Chris Judge and Donna Carroll for 'Brave Maewee Children's Myth & Art Trail' are previous winners of the Best Use of Creativity in the Community award at the Business to Arts Awards.

Jazz & Blues man Nigel Mooney returns to Hot Spot

Wicklow resident, Nigel Mooney and the Johnny Taylor Trio finally return to the Hot Spot Music Club in Greystones on Friday, March 18th. Nigel is widely regarded as one of Ireland's leading jazz singer and guitarists with three albums under his belt, and a fourth album - 'Mooney's Blues', due for release this year.



Nigel Mooney

A charismatic figure on the Dublin jazz and blues scenes since the early 1980's, his Gripewater Blues Band spearheaded the blues movement in Ireland and drew many fans of both jazz and the blues. A self-taught musician, Mooney was influenced by the blues from an early age and his hard-bop style of guitar playing is expressive and melodic with a bluesy groove. He possesses a warm and rich tenor voice and has an almost flawless sense of pitch. His first album, "All My Love's In Vain" (Rubyworks) was released in 2005 to critical acclaim and has become one of Ireland's highest selling albums by a jazz artist. The single, "Beautiful Day" charted on the Irish hit parade and still receives regular airplay.

"Mooney's Blues" is Nigel's new album, his fourth, is due to be released this year. Album musicians include the great Jean Toussaint (ex-Art Blakey's Jazz Messengers) on tenor saxophone, Ben Cauley (ex-Bar-Kays/Otis Redding band) on trumpet, Lannie McMillan (ex-Ike Turner and Buddy Guy) on tenor saxophone, Deborah Swiney and Carolyn Chatman (ex-Al Green) on backing vocals and many, many more great musicians from Ireland and overseas. Nigel believes this album comprises his finest work.

FRI March 18th. Doors 8pm | Show 9pm.
TICKETS Online: www.thehotspot.ie/tickets | By Phone 087 291 7519 | In venue when open

Callan's Kicks - A Live Rehearsal!

Whale Theatre, Friday 25th, Saturday 26th March @ 8pm (doors 7pm) and Sunday 27th March @ 4pm (doors 3pm). Tickets €20 and Concession €18 available at www.whaletheatre.ie or call the booking office on 01 2010550

Impressionist Oliver Callan brings his award-winning Callan's Kicks comedy show to life on stage for the first time in seven years.

Aiken Promotions and the Co-Taioiseachs are totes excited to announce RTÉ's award-winning show Callan's Kicks Live on stages across Ireland in April and May 2022 (at long, long last).

Oliver Callan brings his huge cast of characters to the stage for the first time in seven years. A delay thanks in part to the dude who ate bats for breakfast and gave the world a pandemic (allegedly).

It's the first live Callan's Kicks show in the age of Co-Teeshes Micheál and Leo the ledgebag, Boris and Biden and celeb scientists like Luke O'Neill. Callan deconstructs the leaders and stars of politics, sport and entertainment in a special night of comedy.

Callan's Kicks Live promises to be an effective vaccine against Covid-news saturation, ish. Join the Marty Party and the Two Tommies, hear an alternative history of Ireland, a whirlwind tour of county accents, movie stars and GAA legends.

Ever wanted to see the Rose of Tralee in five minutes? Why is Enda Kenny riding trains? What does Mary Lou really want? Why is Michael D Higgins running a zoo at the Aras? Why is Bertie back? Can Dermot Bannon be stopped and brought to justice?

Oliver Callan brings his most ambitious live show to the stage yet, with dozens of impressions, sketches and voices kicking our leaders and legends into the next decade.



Oliver Callan

Social Fabric Present a special event to celebrate Irish Rugby

Thursday 24th March @ 8pm (doors 7pm). Tickets €20 and Concession €18 available at www.whaletheatre.ie or call the booking office on 01 2010550

"Talk about my generation" looks at discussing how Rugby has changed in the past 40 years.

"We'll be looking at various aspects of the game, from amateur to professional, how rules and regulations are shaping the game, players' wellbeing and a lot more.

"We'll also discuss historical moments that shaped the Irish game and hear from those that were part of them. As always it will be an interactive evening with audience participation and Q&A."

"Talk about my generation"

RUGBY

SOCIAL FABRIC PODCAST

Special guests:
Tony Ward, Reggie Corrigan
plus more to be announced

24th March 2022
8pm (doors 7pm)
€20/€18
www.whaletheatre.ie



Sean Olohan of the Wicklow Lions Club, Jimmy Balbontin of the Wicklow RNLI, and author Martin Swords at the launch of the Wicklow Writers book 'All at Sea', which was held in Wicklow Gaol. Proceeds from the sale of the book will go to the Wicklow RNLI and Wicklow Lions Club.

Bray man wins bathroom design award

Congratulations to Christian Tamayo of Bray who recently won the SONAS Bathrooms and TU-D (Technological University Dublin) 2022 SONAS Bathroom Design of the Year in a competition held in association with the Interiors Association of Ireland.

Students of the Honours Bachelor of Arts Degree in Interior Design, led by one of Ireland's best known Interior Designers Neville Knott, were tasked to create a luxury bathroom for a contemporary hotel. Third year student, Christian Tamayo who won the Award, will now see his winning bathroom design featured at SONAS exhibitions in 2022 Spring including the permanent Ideal Homes Show.

Neville Knott said "This has been a really exciting competition for our students. As SONAS Bathrooms are the largest supplier of bathroom products in Ireland, there has been great opportunities to explore a variety of themes and styles in bathroom design with products from their extensive range. Working on real life projects is always a great experience for tomorrow's designers and these students have really risen to the occasion with a wide range of amazing designs. I extend my congratulations to Christian."

Richard Sloan, MD of SONAS Bathrooms said "There has been an extraordinarily high standard in entries to the competition and we really enjoyed the creativity of these students. SONAS Bathrooms are proud to support the next generation of designers. Sustainability, wellness, and technology all have a role to play in the modern bathroom. It will be wonderful to bring the winning bathroom to life in

our showrooms." Jackie Carton, President of the Interiors Association of Ireland (IA) said "It is wonderful to see Irish companies, like SONAS Bathrooms investing in the designers of the future. And what a future that is - I have been blown away by the design talent I witnessed as part of the judging panel. The Interiors Association also appreciates SONAS Bathrooms sponsoring

student membership for this entire class." Christian, a former pupil of Woodbrook College says "This bathroom was inspired from the style, Japandi, the fusion between a classic Japanese and Scandinavian style hence, bringing natural forms and materials to portray a calm and serene atmosphere.

"The design is composed of various interpreted

tations of forms derived from stones that are rounded & organic-like or rough & raw. The main goal for this bathroom was to create a balanced space for a public or private bathroom that brings a fresh and breathable atmosphere to relax in, to feel like 'home'. A home that can be described as a place where one feels safe, a place of comfort.

"The matte black structures like the toilets, lighting, taps and basins break up the elements of softness and rawness to the natural materials; marble stone and wood. A consistent amount of organic shapes and forms have been used to bring the user a contrast of visual interest between the horizontals & verticals and the curved or rounded features.

"Picture a beach, the line of the horizon against the free-flowing waves that eventually become ripples and closer to shore, that has a cluster of rocks of all shapes and sizes, all are of significance in the harmony of what nature can bring to a person and make them feel. The overall colour scheme and use of raw materials is simple and brings a classic timeless look. The use of the colour green throughout the space gives it a fresh feel, perfect for users that seek that slice of colour. The space is full of muted tones making it pleasing to look at and be easily varied into a different colour scheme of what the user desires."



Christian Tamayo with his winning design.

Valleymount LGFA Club receives €5,000 funding

Wicklow's Valleymount LGFA Club is to receive €5,000 funding under this year's Texaco Support for Sport initiative hosted and organised by Valero Energy (Ireland) Limited, the company that markets fuel in Ireland under the Texaco brand.

Under the scheme - similar to that which proved successful last year when the Wicklow county award was presented to Roundwood and District Athletic Club - a

fund of €130,000 is made available by Valero for distribution in equal amounts of €5,000 to a successful applicant in each county. Amongst the community in West Wicklow, the Valleymount LGFA club has an important role to play most notably in providing a sporting outlet for young girls and for the advancement of ladies' football.

This year, the club marks a quarter of a century since its ladies team was first established. The €5,000 award made to it under the Texaco Support for Sport initiative will be invested in coaches and equipment to help keep the club operational following some challenging years during the pandemic. Overseeing the judging process was Texaco Support for Sport ambas-



Former Irish rugby international Donncha O'Callaghan

sador, former Irish rugby international and well-known broadcaster, Donncha O'Callaghan who, in his comment, noted the 'stimulus' the award would give to the club and to the continued advancement of ladies' football in what is its Silver Jubilee year.

James Twohig, Director of Ireland Operations, Valero Energy (Ireland) Limited, congratulated the Wicklow club saying, "Special to us, and the purpose for which our Texaco Support for Sport initiative was introduced, is the opportunity it presents to ease the financial pressure on members by providing new and additional funding so often required to help clubs achieve their objectives and play a pivotal and positive role in their communities."



WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL

Significant Information/ Revised Plans

I hereby give notice of the submission of significant further information to Wicklow County Council in relation to planning application ref no: 21/1447 for Gary Egan and Sandra Kiely who are applying for permission at Keshamore, Davidstown, Donard, Co Wicklow for demolition of rear extension and construction of new single storey extension to rear and all ancillary site works. Significant information/revised plans have been furnished to the Planning Authority in respect of the proposed development and are available for inspection or purchase at a fee not exceeding the reasonable cost of making a copy at the offices of Wicklow County Council during its public opening hours. A submission or observations in relation to the further information or revised plans may be made in writing to the planning authority within the period of 2 weeks beginning on the date of receipt by the authority of the revised notices. A submission or observation must be accompanied by the prescribed fee except in the case of a person or body who has already made a submission or observation.



Ned Byrne with Wicklow County Archivist Catherine Wright at his book launch

Byrnes of Knockatemple Roundwood

A history of the Byrne family of Knockatemple was formally launched on Saturday 5th March at Wicklow Library. The Byrnes have been in continuous occupation of the 73-acre farm at Knockatemple for more than 200 years.

The Byrne family history was compiled by Ned Byrne, who has spent many years of meticulous research, tracing back his family for 5 generations to the beginnings of the 1800s. The work involved researching many of the available genealogical sources, including the General Register Office, the National Library, the National Archives, the Valuation Office, national and local newspapers and many other sources, both in-person and online as well as visits to a number of local cemeteries.

The book was officially launched by Wicklow County Archivist Catherine Wright, who commended Ned's dedication and the meticulous nature of his work. It was also noted that this book will be a rich source of information for future Byrne family historians.

Speaking at the event, Ned's nephew Karl Ó Broin said "The depth of work on the Byrne family history will provide insight and a wealth of knowledge for generations to come. On behalf of the next generation of Byrnes, I would like to thank Ned for his years of work in creating this marvellous resource."

A copy of this family history is available from Wicklow library.



Melissa and Mya O'Donnell at the Bray Institute of Further Education Careers Day last Tuesday.

CLASSIFIEDS

Matthew 6:1-6, 16-18 GOSPEL

Jesus said to his disciples: 'Be careful not to parade your good deeds before men to attract their notice; by doing this you will lose all reward from your Father in heaven. So, when you give alms, do not have it trumpeted before you; this is what the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets to win men's admiration. I tell you solemnly, they have had their reward. But when you give alms, your left hand must not know what your right is doing; your almsgiving must be secret, and your Father who sees all that is done in secret will reward you. 'And when you pray, do not imitate the hypocrites: they love to say their prayers standing up in the synagogues and at the street corners for people to see them. I tell you solemnly, they have had their reward. But when you pray go to your private room and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in that secret place, and your Father who sees all that is done in secret will reward you. ' When you fast do not put on a gloomy look as the hypocrites do: they pull long faces to let men know they are fasting. I tell you solemnly, they have had their reward. But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, so that no one will know you are fasting except your Father who sees all that is done in secret; and your Father who sees all that is done in secret will reward you.'

C.J.

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DIAS calls on Wicklow's astronomy and photography fans

The Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies (DIAS) astrophotography competition 'Reach for the Stars' is back for its second year and is calling on people in Wicklow with an interest in photography and astronomy to submit their images.

The competition, which is now open for entries, is seeking the best astro-photographs taken in Ireland over the period 1st April 2021 to 30th April 2022. It is calling for submissions under two distinct categories:

1. Out of this World: Images depicting scenes / features or elements of astronomical interest. For example, deep space images or images of the solar system.

2. Back on Earth: Astro-landscape images that depict a feature or element of astronomical interest and capture elements such as nature, cityscapes, buildings or monuments, land, or water.

Entries to the 'Reach for the Stars' competition will be judged by Brenda Fitzsimons, Picture Editor, The Irish Times; John Flannery, Vice-President, Irish Astronomical Society; Peter Gallagher, Senior Professor and Head of Astronomy and

Astrophysics at DIAS and Niamh Breathnach, Account Director, Alice PR & Events.

Entrants may submit up to two images per category to the competition. The deadline for entries is 5pm on Saturday, 30th April.

All entries to the competition will be screened by a shortlisting panel to ensure they meet the eligibility criteria. The shortlisted images in each category will then go forward for consideration by the judging panel and for an online public vote.

Prize Package

The winning photographers in the two main categories, as selected by the judging panel, will receive a prize package that includes:

- Publication of their images on the DIAS and Irish Times websites;
- A VIP tour of DIAS Dunsink Observatory - with the opportunity to peer through Ireland's largest refractor telescope.

- One pass for up to four guests for 'Race to Space', a fully immersive escape room experience, hosted at DIAS Dunsink Observatory.
- A €500 voucher for photographic / telescopic equipment; and
- A 12-month Premium Digital subscription to The Irish Times.

Two runners up in each category will also be selected by the judges, and will each receive a €200 voucher for photographic / telescopic equipment. The winner of the Public Choice category, as voted for by the public, will also receive voucher to the value of €150 for photographic / telescopic equipment.

It is DIAS's intention that the winning and highly commended images will also be included in an exhibition at DIAS during 2022. Furthermore, all shortlisted images will be included in an online exhibition - for the purposes of the public vote - on DIAS's website, www.dias.ie.

DIAS's 'Reach for the Stars' competition is being run in partnership with The Irish Times, and is sponsored by Alice PR & Events. The Irish Astronomical Society are initiative supporters.

Further information, including the competition guidelines and entry form, is available at www.reachforthestars.ie.



Cumann na mBunscol Chill Mhantáin hold AGM

Cumann na mBunscol Chill Mhantáin held their AGM on the 1st March in the Parkview Hotel, Newtownmountkennedy. Sinead Ni Chrean Loinsigh, Cathaoirleach, thanked those involved in facilitating Cumann na mBunscol activities in Wicklow, the teachers, retired teachers, clubs, County Board, G.D.A's and the Cumann na mBunscol Cóiste. The voting of officers then took place, which saw officers old and new returned to the cóiste: Ciara Fagan, Cathaoirleach; Jim O'Riordan, Leas-Cathaoirleach; Brian Cornyn, Rúnaí; Pamela McDermott, PRO; Eamonn Hughes, Cisteoir; Billy Cuddihy, Quiz Co-ordinator; Gary McGillicuddy, Boys Football Officer; Brendan Doyle, Hurling Officer; Ronan Keddy, Girls Football Officer; Ciara Fagan/Emer Fahy, Camogie Officer; West Representative (to be confirmed); Padraig Murphy, South Representative and committee member Paddy Mullen. Apologies were sent from Bridget Kenny, Wicklow County Board; Garrett Doyle, GDA and Breda Donnelly, Wicklow Camogie who unfortunately were unable to attend.

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