

LOCAL Wicklow Times

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Tuesday 3rd May 2022 First Floor, The Boulevard, Quinsborough Road, Bray. A98 R6D7. Tel: 01 - 2869111 E-mail: wicklowed@localtimes.ie www.wicklowtimes.net

HOUSES..HOUSES..HOUSES!

Wicklow County Council last week issued an appeal for emergency shelter and accommodation facilities in County Wicklow for Ukrainian Nationals fleeing the conflict in Ukraine. Vacant properties are “urgently required” and can include privately owned, publicly owned, commercial and community facilities, the Council said.

“The primary focus at this stage is to identify properties that may be brought back into use easily and quickly. If you are interested in pledging your property for consideration, please forward details including address and eircode, description of property and owner contact details, including email address to Wicklow County Council by emailing community-forum@wicklowcoco.ie.”

A Community Response Forum, Wicklow County Council told *Wicklow Times*, “has been established to coordinate the community-led response in the provision of assistance and support to Ukrainian Nationals as they are accommodated in County Wicklow. The Forum, chaired by the Chief Executive Brian Gleeson, will bring together state, private, community and

voluntary organisations acting at local level in response to this emergency. An Internal Response Team has also been set up by the Council to respond to the crisis locally.”

Mr Gleeson said “There has been great commitment from people across the board, everyone wants to put their shoulder to the wheel. We have seen the images of the conflict,



Jimmy Fennelly, ‘One decent man’, enjoying one decent day last week on Bray Promenade, where he often likes to take his customised vintage messenger bike for a spin. Photo by Shayne Phelan.

they are harrowing. It is important to do the best we can, and the community forum is meeting on a weekly basis to keep on top of everything.”

Saturday 23rd April saw the opening of a Ukrainian support hub in Wicklow Town, in the former library. Another hub was recently opened in the Bridgewater Centre in Arklow.

Speaking at the April meeting of Wicklow County Council, Chief Executive Gleeson said “This is an unprecedented humanitarian crisis and local authorities have been asked to take on board a lot of the work.”

The Council has been sourcing accommodation and accommodation has been sourced directly from International Protection Accommodation Services (IPAS). Arklow Coral Leisure Centre was recently used to accommodate refugees as well as hotels around the county.

“I want to place on record my thanks to the Wicklow County Council staff and the Civil Defence,” said Mr Gleeson. “They put in trojan work in preparing the leisure centre. It is not ideal accommodation, but this is what we are facing.”

“Every local authority is providing similar facilities to address this unprecedented event due to the lack of traditional accommodation that’s out there. This is an unprecedented situation, changing on not just a daily basis but an hourly basis, and the staff of Wicklow County Council has to react to that.”

Mr Gleeson said that vacant properties pledged from the public are being examined on behalf of the Red Cross to see if they are suitable.

Pledges of Shared Accommodation should

continue to be made through the Red Cross at registerofpledges.red-

cross.ie. Other information relating to available Ukrainian refugee support services can be found on the Council’s website.

port services can be found on the Council’s website.

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NO MIDDLE MAN, WE SELL, MANUFACTURE AND INSTALL



Cousins Amy and Chloe Doyle with Niamh, Grainne and Roisin Murphy at the Leinster GAA Football Senior Championship Round 1 Match between Wicklow and Laois at the County Grounds in Aughrim. The final score was Wicklow 5-15 to Laois 4-12. Pic: Michael Kelly

Exhibition on Treaty of 1921 continues in Wicklow library

A major exhibition on The Treaty of 1921 is running in Wicklow Town Library & Archives until the middle of May.

Marking the centenary of the signing of the Anglo-Irish Treaty, the exhibition - 'The Treaty 1921: Records from the Archives' - has had a hugely successful three-months run at Dublin Castle where the Treaty went on public display for the first time. The exhibition is presented by the National Archives in association with Wicklow County Council.

'The Treaty, 1921: Records from the Archives' has been developed in partnership with the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media, Royal Irish Academy, the National Library of Ireland with records from the collections of the Military Archives and University College Dublin Archives.

The exhibition in Wicklow Library & Archives, which runs until May 17th, was formally opened on Monday April 25th by the Cathaoirleach of Wicklow County Council, Cllr Shay Cullen, along with Cllr Gail Dunne, Wicklow Municipal District; Chief



Karen Downey, County Librarian Brendan Martin, and Orlaith McBride at the official opening of 'The Treaty 1921: Records from the Archives' exhibition in Wicklow Town Library

Executive, Brian Gleeson and Director of the National Archives, Orlaith McBride.

The papers of Wicklow's Robert Childers Barton, who was one of the plenipotentiaries of the Treaty, will also feature in the exhibition, as well as other

local records from the Wicklow County Archives collections. The Military Archives has also kindly loaned items from their collections for the Wicklow exhibition. To mark the exhibition coming to Wicklow, a series of public talks will take place in

County Buildings, commencing with a talk by Dublin City Historian-in-Residence, Dr Cormac Moore on the Anglo-Irish Treaty. Talks can be booked on Eventbrite or by contacting Wicklow Library on 0404-67025. The exhibition is free to enter.

Remembering Archbishop Edward Byrne

There will be a fundraising talk for the Remembering Archbishop Edward Project on Tuesday 10th May at 8pm in Aras Lorcaín, Arklow. The speaker will be Historian Pat Power and the topic will be Archbishop Daniel Murray from Sheepwalk.

Edward Byrne was Archbishop of Dublin from 1921-1940. He was the son of a tenant farmer from Kilahurler and a member of the O'Byrne clan, a Celtic clan synonymous with Co. Wicklow's heritage.

Commencing his role as Archbishop of Dublin in 1921, Edward made an immense contribution to the newly formed Irish state. The government of the day had no money for education, health or social care. In his position as Archbishop, Edward used church funding to support the cash strapped state by; the establishment of schools in all parishes in his diocese.

He fostered the establishment of health clinics throughout the diocese.

He was responsible for the expansion of Dublin's public hospitals including the National Children's hospital in Crumlin and the establishment of St Vincent's in Elm Park.

In an era which was without social welfare support Archbishop Byrne was a staunch advocate of organisations like St Vincent De Paul and the Legion of Mary in their charitable works for Dublin's poor and homeless.

The organising committee believe that the immense contribution made by Archbishop Edward should be acknowledged in his hometown. They plan to repair the headstone and grave where the archbishops father, infant brothers and grandparents are buried in St Gabriel's cemetery. They will place a plaque to commemorate the Archbishop on the grave.

Greystones community invited to expo and networking event

Would you like to know more about the wide range of community and voluntary groups that offer support and services in the Greystones area?

On Sunday 8th May, to celebrate Greystones' winning of the highly prestigious International Liveable Communities award in 2021 (LivCom), Greystones Town Team supported by Greystones Municipal District Council is organising a LivCom Community and Voluntary Groups Expo to showcase the range of community and voluntary groups operating in Greystones town.

The event will run from 11am to 5pm in the main hall in Temple Carrig School, Blacklion, Greystones (A63 KT20). It is open to the public throughout the day and no pre-booking is necessary. Local groups will have an opportunity to network and recruit new members and volunteers whilst the wider community can browse the range of stalls and information tables to find out a little more about

the types of groups operating in the community.

Dermot Dwyer, Chairman of Greystones Town Team said "Greystones has grown significantly over the past

number of years. The Expo will afford the people of Greystones - 'old and new' - an excellent opportunity to connect with our wonderful voluntary and community organisations and

their work. We welcome everyone to come along on the day".

Please contact Greystones Town Team at events@greystones.ie if you have any questions or



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Alzheimer's Tea Day

ICA Delgany Guild are hosting a tea morning on the 6th May at 10am at the Presbyterian hall Trafgar road Greystones in aid of Alzheimer's Association.

Open Weekend at Bray Bowling Club

This coming weekend 6th and 7th May sees Bray Bowling Club in Failte Park, Bray, host an Open Weekend where everyone is welcome to visit the club and try their hand at lawn bowling. The sport which is played by both men and women is

a lovely way to build on your fitness and meet new friends. If you drop down to the club on Friday 6th May between 2.00pm and 5.00pm and on Saturday 7th May between 11.00am and 1.00pm and 2.30pm and 4.30pm you will get a warm welcome and can try your hand at the game and tour the clubhouse. All equipment will be provided. All you need to bring is soft shoes or trainers. If you need any further information contact Frank Devlin on 086/3534673.

Forest Immersion Walk

This event is on Saturday 14 May, 6pm in Glendalough and it is a chance for people to slow down and connect with nature in a different way. Refreshments included. 6-8.30pm. To book contact us at hello@walkofleaf.ie or phone us on 089 257 8210. This event takes place under permit from the Wicklow Mountains National Park and will cost €28 (early bird/unwaged) - €35. Facebook: @walkofleaf.

Free webinar on clinical trials

A free webinar on clinical trials is being organised by Cancer Trials Ireland. Taking place on International Clinical Trials Day on Friday May 20th from 2-3pm, the webinar aims to promote public awareness and understanding of clinical trials. The webinar will feature clinical trial expert, Professor Seamus O'Reilly, on how trials work and how to access them, while previous trial participants will share their experiences of what to expect. There will also be an opportunity to answer any questions that registrants may have about trials. For a booklet on cancer clinical trials, to find out about the trials currently taking place in Ireland, or to register for this free webinar, email info@cancertrials.ie.

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'Urgent action needed to address rental and housing crisis'

Sinn Féin TD John Brady has described the new quarterly rent index report issued by the Residential Authorities Board (RIB) as "devastating". "It is another stark illustration of the absolute crisis that exists in the property market across Ireland. With rents in parts of Wicklow now exceeding €2,000 a month, the average rent has doubled in the decade since 2011," he said.

"Renters in Wicklow already find themselves under extraordinary pressure, and yet the latest report from the RIB, show that in County Wicklow, new renters are facing a year-on-year increase of 9% on what were already excruciatingly high rental costs. Official figures for homelessness suggest that we are now coming close to the pre-Covid peak of 10,000.

"Many people, some of whom are at the risk of becoming homeless as a

result of what is nothing more than a national disgrace, find themselves marginally above the threshold for receiving housing supports, yet are deemed to be earning too little to qualify for a mortgage, forcing them into a rental market that is set up to fleece them. Combined with the unprecedented increases in the cost of living a lot of people are faced with a very uncertain and worrying future.

"We have a situation in this country where hous-

es are ceasing to be homes in the traditional sense, and more and more are taking on the identity of a business venture, increasingly becoming the preserve of vulture funds. Yet the government offer nothing but platitudes, as the mental health of a whole generation in this country is pushed to the limit as they struggle with the day-to-day battle of keeping a roof over their heads.

"There was a time that the state built homes for

its citizens. There was a time when a family with an average income could get on the property ladder with an affordable albeit challenging mortgage. But today, it is all about speculation, it is about what profit that vulture funds can extract from families on the edge.

"I believe that this government of Fianna Fail, Fine Gael, and the Green Party will become just as synonymous with homelessness, with removing young families from the housing market,

as the Fianna Fail governments of the mid twentieth century became associated with emigration.

"The reality however is that the housing crisis can be solved. But it will require a commitment from the government to do so. We need to see more social housing being built. We need to see the introduction of a tax rebate that would put €1,500 back into the pockets of renters. Rent increases need to be frozen for three years."

Zero pesticide exceedances in Wicklow public drinking water supplies last year

Public urged to continue to consider the environment and alternatives to pesticides when gardening, farming and maintaining sports grounds

There were no exceedances for pesticides in the public drinking water supplies in Co Wicklow in 2021, Irish Water has confirmed. However, the utility is urging domestic gardeners, farmers, grounds keepers and other users of pesticide products to consider the environment and whether pesticide use is necessary in the first instance.

MCPA is still the most commonly detected pesticide in drinking water sources and is present in many commonly used herbicide products used to control thistles, docks and rushes. However it often ends up in drinking water supplies. Irish Water is asking users of any herbicide or pesticide products in Co Wicklow to consider the vulnerability of the water supplies to pesticide contamination and the importance of these supplies to the local homes and businesses in the community.

Irish Water, working in partnership with a range of organisations involved in the NPDWAG, is asking the farming community, greens keepers, grounds keepers, and also domestic users of pesticides, to consider in each case whether they need to use pesticides at all. Minimising pesticide use not only helps to protect water quality but also has wider environmental benefits. For example, leaving areas unsprayed can help native flowering plant species to grow and support a range of insects including bees and other vital pollinators. One third of Ireland's bee species are threatened with extinction and by helping the bee population survive and thrive we are also helping to protect our precious water sources. For more information on practical ways to help bees and



other pollinators, check out the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan at www.pollinators.ie. Farmers should also bear in mind that application of herbicides reduces sward species diversity and could negatively impact on payments in future agri-environmental schemes.

Where pesticide use is considered necessary, the NPDWAG is working with local communities to ensure that best practice measures to protect drinking water sources and biodiversity are always followed. Farmers and

other landholders dealing with the challenge of rushes should note Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM) guidance on the sustainable management of rushes. This approach is based on the concepts of containment or suppression, and aims to minimise the use of pesticides. More information on this can be obtained from your local farm advisor or on www.pcs.agriculture.gov.ie/sud/waterprotection

The NPDWAG is chaired by the DAFM and involves key stakeholders from a range of

Government departments and agencies, local authorities, industry representative bodies, farming organisation, water sector organisations and amenity sector organisations.

Andrew Boylan, Irish Water's Regional Drinking Water Compliance Specialist said: "In Co Wicklow, there have been no exceedances for pesticides in the past three years which is good news."

"While our consultation with the HSE has concluded that the levels of pesticides that are being detected in drinking water supplies across the country do not represent a threat to public health, it is however undesirable and therefore imperative that users of pesticides are mindful of best practice when using herbicides or pesticides and seek out alternatives."

Adding to this, Dr Aidan Moody, DAFM and Chair of NPDWAG commented: "We need the continued engagement of all stakeholders, working in partnership, make further progress. Users of pesticides must always consider alternatives in the first instance and if the application of pesticides is considered essential make sure that they follow best practice measures to protect water quality."



Beth and Adam Myers at the Leinster GAA Football Senior Championship Round 1 match between Wicklow and Laois at the County Grounds in Aughrim.

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Bray Flower Club blooms again

Bray Flower Club has announced that their Club is now up and running for the coming season with their committee headed by incoming Chairman, Bredie Fox.

They have been unable to meet for the past two years because of the pandemic so it is with great delight that they welcome back all their members, friends, visitors and indeed new members.

Bray Flower Club has been in existence for over 40 years and their large membership has enjoyed many memorable meetings, outings etc. during that time.

The club meets on the first

Thursday of the month in the Little Flower Hall behind the Holy Redeemer Church on Bray Main Street at 8pm from September to June and they take a break in July and August. The meeting is opened by their Chairman who gives a short talk on events that are happening relating to the flower arranging and gardening world followed by a flower arranging demonstration by a qualified instructor whose arrangements are raffled at the end of the evening. The demonstration is followed by tea and biscuits and a chance to have a chat and meet old friends and new members.

Each year the Club arranges outings to places of interest, e.g. Flower Festivals, Gardens open to the public, competitions etc.

The Club is welcoming new members and would be delighted if you would join or alternatively you are welcome to come along as a visitor. Their next meeting is Thursday 5th May at 8pm.



Investment in Arklow and Wicklow Harbours

Government funding of €672,000 will see improvement works carried out in Wicklow and Arklow Harbours. The announcement of the funding to Wicklow County Council was made by the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Charlie McConalogue under the Brexit Local Authority Marine Infrastructure Scheme 2022-2023.

The projects awarded funding include: Inner Harbour Arklow Pontoon - €170,000; Arklow Harbour Welfare Facilities - €38,250; Wicklow Harbour Navigation Aids - €42,500; South Quay Wicklow Harbour Pontoon - €44,200; South Quay Arklow Storage Facilities - €276,250.

Commenting on the funding, Cathaoirleach of Wicklow County Council Cllr Shay Cullen said that "this investment of over €102,000 for Wicklow and €570,000 for Arklow will enhance and improve the facilities in both Arklow and Wicklow Harbours". He noted that the works include "harbour pontoons in both Arklow and Wicklow, navigation aids for Wicklow harbour and welfare and storage facilities in Arklow."

Chief Executive of Wicklow County Council, Mr Brian Gleeson, welcomed the funding saying: "I am delighted that five of the six projects submitted were successful. The investment is intended to help to drive economic diversification and will complement other planned investment in the harbours including that from the offshore renewal sector."

Adding that the scheme arose from a recommendation of the Seafood Taskforce which was set up in March 2021 to look at the impacts of Brexit on the fishing sector and coastal communities, he noted: "the projects will be delivered and managed by Wicklow County Council as owner of the relevant marine infrastructure".

The Department of



Steven Matthews TD

Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM) is administering the scheme, while individual local authorities will be responsible for governance and delivery of the projects.

Welcoming the news, Minister Simon Harris said: "I am happy to confirm that five projects in Arklow and Wicklow Ports have been approved for Brexit adjustment funding totalling €571,200".

The five projects to receive government grants are:

Arklow Harbour: Development of pontoon and safety works; Construction of storage facilities; New welfare facilities.

Wicklow Harbour: Refurbishment of navigation aids; Installation of a new pon-

toon at the South Quay.

Minister Harris continued: "I am delighted Wicklow's ports have been successful in the first round of applications to the Brexit Adjustment Marine Infrastructure Scheme. This investment is intended to help to drive economic diversification of our Ports to address the consequences of Brexit - especially on our fishing industry."

"The development of Wicklow Ports is a key driver of future economic growth in Co Wicklow to create quality local employment for both fisheries and our emerging off-shore renewable energy industry".

Green Party TD, Steven Matthews said: "I am delighted that both Arklow and Wicklow Harbour will benefit from the

Brexit Adjustment Local Authority Marine Infrastructure Scheme 2022-2023. The funding will contribute significantly to the total value of the projects, which is €672,000.

"Wicklow County Council submitted applications for six projects and to see that five have been successful is a huge credit to the work and dedication of the local authority."

"This investment will transform our marine landscape in Wicklow and support our coastal communities following Brexit and the Covid-19 pandemic. The allocations for both improvements to infrastructure and for additional safety and welfare facilities are necessary and will support the development of Arklow and Wicklow Harbours."

"This is the right time to invest in our marine infrastructure. Arklow and Wicklow Harbours will be central to the development of offshore wind energy, which will create massive employment opportunities and have a long-term positive impact on our coastal towns and villages. I will continue to advocate for Government funding in these areas to support this vital infrastructure."

"The funding announced today will benefit both our marine and fisheries industries and the emerging renewable energy sector in Wicklow. I meet frequently with the senior management in Wicklow County Council, and I look forward to continuing to work with them on these projects and offering any support that I can," Deputy Matthews concluded.



Pictured at the Leinster GAA Football Senior Championship Round 1 match between Wicklow and Laois at the County Grounds in Aughrim were Wicklow Scor na nOg representatives James, Padraic and Darragh Lambert from Aughrim with Abbie Doran from Carnew who took part in the 2022 All-Ireland Finals' set for the Gleneagle, INEC, on the 1st May

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Millvale solar farm connected to national grid



Millvale solar farm

Renewable energy producers Neoen announced on Friday that its 15MWp Millvale solar farm near Rathnew has been connected to the Irish national grid, just nine months after completing financing for the project. The farm will be fully operational this month.

Millvale forms part of a portfolio of three solar farms fully owned by Neoen. The other two - Hilltown (18 MWp, County Meath) and Hortland (25 MWp, County Kildare) - are currently under construction. The solar farms were among the winning projects in the first auction of the Irish government's Renewable Electricity Support Scheme (RESS 1) in 2020. The energy generated by the solar farms will be sold under PPAs (purchase power agreements) supported by the Irish government via a CFD (Contract for Difference) mechanism valid until 2037.

The construction of the solar farms has created around 100 jobs, with 11 local firms involved in the work. Sheep grazing will be used to control the growth of vegetation in the solar farms.

The second of the three solar farms is set to be commissioned in the coming weeks, with the third to follow in the third quarter of this year. Together, they will generate enough electricity to power 12,700 homes and will prevent over 17,000 tonnes of CO₂ emissions per year.

A financial contribution to community projects will

support local development initiatives worth around €100,000 a year for the duration of the RESS support.

At an event in Druids Glen on Friday, Eamon Ryan, Minister for the Environment, Climate and Communications, welcomed the announcement, saying "I am delighted to see Millvale connecting as Ireland's first grid scale solar project. This is a momentous occasion for Neoen, all those involved in the delivery of the project and particularly for the Irish electricity system and ESB Networks. This is the first of many solar projects expected to energise under the Renewable Electricity Support Scheme (RESS) this year and an important starting point on our journey under the Climate Action Plan of reaching up to 2.5GW of solar on the electricity system by 2030.

This government is 100% committed to switching at scale and at speed to renewable energy systems. The Renewable Electricity Support Scheme is one of the primary policies set out in the Programme for Government and the Climate Action Plan to address Ireland's climate challenges over the coming years. RESS supports

the growth of the green economy, creates sustainable work opportunities, and benefits citizens as renewable energy becomes more cost effective and replaces our reliance on fossil fuels."

Cyril Perrin, Managing Director of Neoen Ireland, commented: "We are proud to be the first to supply the Irish national grid with solar energy, a milestone in Ireland's strategy to diversify its energy mix. We are delighted with the speed at which we have been able to deliver this first project. I would like to thank Wicklow County Council and the main contractor Omexom, as well as its subcontractors and the local stakeholders - the farmers who own the land, the residents of Millvale, ESB Networks and our partner BNRG - for the trust they have placed in us. The three new plants provide a solid foundation for actively pursuing further solar, wind and storage projects to drive our growth in Ireland."

Nicholas Tarrant, Managing Director, ESB Networks, added: "ESB Networks is working to connect and facilitate up to 80% renewable electricity generation by 2030 as

set out in the Government's Climate Action Plan. This will be achieved by enabling new renewable generators connect to the electricity network, with the growth of grid scale solar playing an important part in delivering this target. We are proud of the excellent teamwork between our customer Neoen and everyone working for ESB Networks that has brought Ireland's first grid scale solar projects from inception to final energisation.

We congratulate Neoen on this historic achievement and wish them every success for their future projects."

Xavier Barbaro, Neoen's Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, concluded: "Our team in Ireland has been present in the country since 2019 and I would like to congratulate them for achieving the commissioning of this first solar farm in record time. It once again shows Neoen's ability to deliver on our commitments. Our long-term strategy, based on our develop-to-own model, will allow us to actively contribute to the Republic of Ireland's energy transition with reliable, locally generated and above all affordable green energy."

APOLOGY: EDDIE SHEEHY

In our edition of 8 November 2016, we referred to legal actions arising from the tragic deaths of two **Bray Firefighters**. Our article incorrectly stated that former County Manager, Eddie Sheehy, had been charged with failures leading to the men's deaths. We take this opportunity to correct that erroneous report. We regret the hurt and upset that this allegation caused to Mr Sheehy and we apologise to him.

APOLOGY: EDDIE SHEEHY

In our edition of 10 March 2015, we stated that allegations of planning corruption had been made against former County Manager, Eddie Sheehy. These allegations were defamatory and should not have been repeated by us. We take this opportunity to apologise to Eddie Sheehy and regret the hurt and upset that our report caused to him.



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Deirdre Whitfield, Avril Hill and Richella Wood at the recent County Wicklow Breakfast Briefing in Druids Glen Hotel.

Masterplan for Ballywaltrim Recreation Park

A proposal by Cllr Dermot 'Daisy' O'Brien to put together a Master Plan working group for the Ballywaltrim Recreation Park was fully supported at the recent meeting of Bray Municipal District.

Cllr O'Brien said, "There are major changes happening and proposals being developed for this area both in terms of the Ballywaltrim Recreation park and the southern cross. We have a unique opportunity now to gather the relevant stakeholders and create a collective vision which is responsive to the needs of all who use the area, live in the area and have ideas and ambitions about the potential for the area."

According to Cllr O'Brien there are funding streams being activated that have the scope to deliver a major positive impact in the short term that could also be the basis for implementing an exciting long-term vision.

"The last thing we need here is for pockets of activity to kick off that are disconnected and not part of an overall vision. Similarly, we must be mindful that for some people the park is where they play football, for others it's where they go for a walk or a jog, others use it as their connection to nature and of course many see it as a space to bring children for open space enjoyment. Within all of those activities are ideas for improvement and also to be fair, some barriers to full enjoyment when we consider the prevalence of anti-social behaviour, littering, dog fouling etc. If we gather people who are invested in the idea of realising the huge potential for this valuable space, then I believe we will be able to make meaningful and productive contributions to the development of this area. I look forward to working with local Councillor colleagues and other stakeholders."



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'Review of Rathdrum speed limits is a win for local residents'

Green Party TD Steven Matthews has welcomed a commitment from the District Engineer of Arklow Municipal District that a full review of speed limits and an assessment of the safety and adequacy of footpaths adjacent to Rathdrum Girl's National School near St. Mary & Michael's Church on the R755 into Rathdrum.

Deputy Matthews said: "I visited Rathdrum recently to meet with residents and discuss their concerns surrounding excessive speeding and safety issues around Rathdrum Girls National School. There is a very narrow footpath serving the children and parents walking to the Woods/Woodpark residences and there appears to be cars travelling at excessive speeds at this point. This is a 50kph zone but there is no speed limit sign in place.

"Following my meeting with residents, I contacted the District Engineer to raise these issues and she has agreed to carry out a speed survey/traffic count after which they will assess the safety and adequacy of footpaths in the area. I recommended that Wicklow County Council introduce a 30kph 'slow zone' at this location, placing a speed indicator board on approach from Laragh direction and improvement works to widen the footpath at the pinch points.

"This review will be carried out in the weeks following the Easter school holidays to give a more accurate description of the speeding issues at this location. It is very important that we address this soon as it impacts the safety of children and parents walking to and from school in the area. I welcome the positive response from Wicklow County Council, and I look forward to continued engagement with local residents on this issue.

"This review is part of my wider efforts to improve pedestrian and cycling infrastructure across Wicklow with a particular focus on providing Safe Routes to School for our children. In recent months I have met with a number of schools and resident groups to flag areas of concern with the council. If there are any specific locations that residents wish to have assessed for safety concerns, I would be more than happy to liaise with the council on their behalf", concluded Deputy Matthews.

Long awaited bus shelter for Kilmacanogue

The National Transport Authority (NTA) has confirmed that an application for a road opening licence has been lodged with Wicklow County Council in order to allow for the commencement of works to erect a bus shelter installation at bus stop on the northbound side of the N11 at Kilmacanogue.

It is hoped that the installation of the shelter will be able to commence over the summer or early Autumn period, once Wicklow County Council issues a road opening licence.

Welcoming the news, John Brady TD said: "I

now go ahead, over the summer or early Autumn at the latest. I think that this is an important development for the local community who use the bus stop here. This is not just a matter of being able to shelter from the wind and rain, but it will also provide a degree of safety for bus users, who would have previously had to wait by the side of the road.

"A large number of school children use this bus stop to get the bus

into Bray or further. I've spoken to many parents about their children arriving in school having waited in the rain for a bus from Kilmac. So the installation of the shelter will be warmly welcomed by all users.

"All that is now necessary is for Wicklow County Council to grant the road opening licence to the NTA to allow for works to begin. I look forward to seeing the installation of the shelter in the near future."

'Redford junction redesign is wrong'

Greystones Councillors have been informed by Wicklow County Council officials about a planned redesign of Redford Park Junction. Their priority for the junction is to make it better for cyclists in particular and walkers, however Cllr Derek Mitchell has said the design is 'wrong'.

The priority should be for bus transport, Cllr Mitchell believes, as the road is the main access road for the town of 20,000 people which has the highest commuter load of any town in Wicklow. "The plan will create congestion for buses and traffic, reducing the attractiveness of buses, especially express buses," he said.

"From 7am to 8am, the peak hour, there are six 84X buses and four others making ten bus services. Previously I counted the bus passengers at Lidl on the 84X at 240, as well as a significant number also got off to go to school.

"The 84x is listed as having a 70-minute journey time, an increase on a decade earlier. The other buses are listed at 90 minutes. Aircoach is listed at 83 minutes but can take longer, a substantial increase from when it started and went via the toll

bridge. These are very long journey times and only the 84X is competitive with cars. They need to be encouraged, especially here and all the way to the N11 if they are to attract more people from cars.

"There is a need to encourage cycling which replaces car use, such as going to school, work, & DART. Few people are going to cycle to work over Bray Head however and bus use is much more effective at reducing cars. Buses must be given more priority here.

"The plan is to stop buses in the single straight on bus/car carriageway. The road is very busy and a lot of people get on/off resulting in long stops. The stops are opposite each other creating further jams.

"A previous design had a left & bus lane & stop northbound. There



Cllr Derek Mitchell

seems room for a pull in bus stop southbound. A decade ago consultants wanted to stop buses in the main carriageway at Greystones Station but Councillors said no. That would have created major congestion. I note that a new design for Rock Road Booterstown has a car lane and a separate bus & left turn lane. That is required here too."



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New analysis charts fortunes of Wicklow's wintering waterbirds

The fortunes of Ireland's wintering waterbird species have been published for 97 lakes, rivers and coastal estuaries across Ireland. Fifteen waterbird species are stable or increasing, but twenty are declining, including six species that have decreased by over 50% since the mid-1990's.

Wetland sites surveyed in Co. Wicklow were Arklow Ponds, Poulaphouca Reservoir, the Avoca River, Buckroneys Fen, North Wicklow Coastal Marches, and Bray Harbour.

Every winter, hundreds of dedicated bird surveyors count the waterbirds in their localities as part of the Irish Wetland Bird Survey (I-WeBS). The survey has been running since 1994, funded by the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) and coordinated by BirdWatch Ireland. A recent study examined the changes in 36 wintering waterbird species at 97 of the most closely-monitored wetland sites, spanning 15 counties across Ireland.

At Arklow Ponds, the largest decline was in the Coot population, which has declined by 62% over the last five year period. There have also been moderate declines in the mute swan and mallard populations, which have dropped by 11% and 21% respectively over the last five years. The Little Grebe, Grey Heron and Teal populations at Arklow Ponds were all stable or increasing.

At Poulaphouca Reservoir, the largest decline was in the Lapwing, with over half the population disappearing over the last five years. The Curlew has suffered a moderate

decline, with only a small percentage being lost over the last five years, however the longer-term trend over the last 23 years shows that almost half the population has been lost.

At Avoca River the news was more positive, with all of the main species that inhabit this area (Mallard, mute swan, cormorant, grey heron and turnstone), showing stable or increasing populations. The Turnstones population in particular has increased almost 2000% over the last quarter of a century.

At North Wicklow Coastal Marshes, 28 separate species were recorded. Twelve of them were found to be in large decline, four in moderate decline, one in intermediate decline, and 11 with stable or increasing populations. The most significant decline has been in the Pochard population (Over 85% over the last five years), while the largest percentage increase being the Greenshank. Over the last 23 years, 99% of the Pochard population has been lost, along with 86% of the Goldeneye and 84% of the Grey Plover. Over half the populations of the Lapwing, light-bellied brent goose, shelduck, Coot, Pintail, Turnstone, Gadwall, Oystercatcher and Dunlin have also been lost over the last 23 years.

At Bray Harbour there was no

species in 'large decline', however the Oystercatcher is in moderate decline (19% over the last five years). Again, however, the longer-term trend is more worrying with an almost 50% loss over the last 25 years. The Turnstones, Mallard, Mute Swan and Cormorant populations however are all either stable or increasing.

National Declines

The greatest declines were seen in 'diving duck' species, namely Goldeneye, Pochard and Scaup, which dropped by 65-90% on average since the mid-1990's, across the 97 sites analysed. Climate change and warming winter temperatures are undoubtedly one of the drivers of these declines, allowing these birds to spend the winter closer to their breeding grounds in northern Europe. At a more local level in Ireland, loss of habitat, changes to water quality, increased disturbance on lakes and in estuaries, and poorly situated developments all worsen the situation, meaning fewer and fewer of these birds return to us each year.

Wading birds of the plover family have also undergone huge declines of over 50%. Lapwing, traditionally referred to as the 'Green Plover' or Pilibín and often considered Ireland's national bird, declined by 64% since



A Curlew in flight. Photo by Neal Warnock

the mid-1990's. Their close relative the Golden Plover, which feeds on grasslands in every county in Ireland in the winter, has declined by a similar amount, as has their rarer coastal relative the Grey Plover.

Ireland's breeding Curlew population is well known to be teetering on the edge of extinction, with only around 100 pairs nesting here in recent summers. Our wintering population is much larger though, as Curlew from northern Europe migrate to Ireland from late summer to early spring, but these birds face similar threats throughout their range. Our wintering Curlew have declined by 43% since the mid-1990's.

Health Check

"We regularly do this sort of analysis at national level, providing a 'health check' to see how Ireland's wintering waterbirds are doing but

now we're delving a bit deeper to see precisely where the problems are", said John Kennedy of BirdWatch Ireland, who led this research. "Ireland's waterbirds are indicators of the health of the wetland environment they use. These are sites that we depend on too - for drinking water, flood relief, agriculture, tourism, aquaculture and industry. As is always the case with this sort of research, it has answered some questions but poses many more, and we'll be scrutinising these results in the months and years to come to decipher some patterns of change that might not be so immediately obvious."

National Increases

Black-tailed Godwit, a member of the same family as the Curlew, has increased by 92% since annual monitoring began in 1994. Species such

as Mute Swan, Little Grebe and Grey Heron, which breed on Irish lakes and rivers are all stable or increasing in number. One of Ireland's most recent arrivals, the Little Egret, has shown a steady and significant increase since it arrived into Ireland 20 years ago and is now widespread across the entire country.

Species with a mixed report card include the Light-bellied Brent Goose, which has increased overall but is now showing a recent decline. Numbers of Sanderling, the species on which the Pixar short movie 'Piper' was based, are 85% higher than they were when monitoring began, but have decreased by 24% in the last five years. Recent declines of this magnitude are cause for concern and there is a risk that longer term increases for some species could be quickly undone in a few short years.

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Rialtas na hÉireann
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New strategic vision for Ireland's forests

Coillte has announced a new forestry strategic vision which aims to deliver multiple benefits from its forests and bring more focus to climate action, setting ambitious new targets on biodiversity and recreation, while continuing to deliver for the forest and wood products industry. 204,000 hectares of Coillte's estate will be managed primarily for biodiversity in the long-term. This equates to the size of County Wicklow.

The new approach aims to sustainably balance and deliver the multiple benefits from Ireland's state forests across four strategic pillars: climate, wood, nature, and people. Coillte intends to consult widely with key stakeholders on its new strategic vision.

Coillte is responsible for the management of 440,000 hectares of Ireland's forests, which represents 7% of the country. Since its establishment in 1989, it has enabled the development of a vibrant forestry and wood products sector that supports rural employment throughout Ireland. While sustainability has always been central to the way in which Coillte manages the forest estate, Coillte believes that the

growing climate and biodiversity crises, as well as societal demands for housing, jobs and wellbeing, are driving a need for greater change.

A Red C survey conducted for Coillte in 2021, shows that the company's view on the need for change is supported by public opinion, with 84% of respondents believing

that Coillte has a role to play in meeting Ireland's climate action commitments; 82% saying biodiversity is important for Ireland's future; 82% believing forestry is an important sector in the Irish economy; and 86% agreeing that wood producing forests are important.

Over the coming weeks

Coillte will engage extensively with key stakeholders and the public, to seek their views on its forestry strategic vision, to ensure it is aligned with the needs of Irish society. This consultation process will further inform the development of Coillte's detailed strategic plans over the coming months.

Bernie Gray, Chairperson, Coillte, said, "This marks an important day for Coillte. Over the last few years, we have been exploring ways in which Coillte can play an increasing role in Ireland's climate action and biodiversity agenda, while recognising that financial sustainability is integral to Coillte achieving its purpose, so that the multiple benefits from our forests and land for the people of Ireland can be delivered.

"I'm delighted that Coillte's new strategic vision emphasises climate action, biodiversity and aims to increase development of wonderful recreation spaces for people to enjoy while continuing to deliver sustainable wood products to support building new homes."

Imelda Hurley, Chief Executive, Coillte, said "In the face of the climate emergency, there is an urgent need for Ireland to meet stretching climate action targets and we recognise the critical role which Coillte can play in the achievement of these targets. We are delighted to communicate our new forestry strategic vision for Coillte, one which is rooted in science and is focused on optimising the multiple benefits from forestry across the entire estate. We have developed a comprehensive strategic vision that, among other things, would see us



growing new forests, managing our existing forests for greater carbon capture, delivering valuable wood products, enhancing biodiversity, and creating more incredible recreational spaces for the enjoyment of our citizens and tourists.

"Having outlined our ambition, we will now commence a series of consultations with key stakeholders and the public on our new forestry strategic vision, ensuring that our ambitions for both the existing Coillte estate and new forests under management are aligned with the needs of society."

Among the actions that Coillte proposes to deliver as part of this new forestry strategic vision are:

For Climate

- Enable the creation of 100,000 hectares of new

forests by 2050, supporting the delivery of the national afforestation target; and create a carbon sink of 18 million tonnes of CO₂

- Manage its existing forest estate to capture an additional 10 million tonnes of CO₂ in its forests, soils and wood products by 2050

- Redesign 30,000 hectares of peatland forests by 2050 through a programme of rewetting or rewilding for climate and ecological benefits

- Produce sustainable wood products that in 2050 displace 2.7m tonnes of CO₂ per year from fossil-based products such as concrete, steel and plastic

- Enable the generation of an additional one gigawatt of renewable wind energy by 2030, enough to power half a million homes in Ireland, via its joint venture

company FuturEnergy Ireland.

For Wood

- Produce a sustainable supply of 25 million m³ of Irish certified timber that can help Ireland achieve its housing ambition of 300,000 new homes by 2030

- Promote the use and benefits of wood products to help increase the level of timber homes from 20% to 80% by 2050

- Develop innovative wood products to meet the growing demand for sustainable materials to support the bioeconomy.

For Nature

- Enhance and restore the existing biodiversity on the estate (90,000 hectares; 20%) to improve its ecological value

- Increase the area of its forest estate to be managed primarily for nature from 20% to 30% (an

additional 44,000 hectares) by 2025

- Transform and redesign an additional 70,000 hectares of existing forests, to create new semi-natural woodlands, providing valuable habitats, targeting that 50% of Coillte's estate is managed primarily for nature in the long-term.

For People

- Support the creation of 1,200 direct and indirect new jobs in rural communities to enable the just transition to a low carbon economy in Ireland

- Enable the investment of €100 million to create world class visitor destinations by 2030 to support the growth in tourism and recreation in Ireland
- Double the number of recreation areas to 500 nationally, enhancing local communities and contributing to people's wellbeing.

Bray woman attacked on her own doorstep

A Bray woman is fighting to get her sister transferred to emergency accommodation after she was attacked outside her home in Bray on the morning of Wednesday, April 20th.

The woman, who doesn't wish to be named, told *Wicklow Times* that her sister, who is disabled and in her early 50s, was attacked "on her own doorstep" and now fears for her life.

"She has no use of her legs, she was repeatedly kicked. It's appalling," she said. She notified the police of the incident, but says she's been frustrated in her dealings with the Council so far in trying to get her sister transferred to different accommodation where she feels safer.



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Greening the Garden County: Council trials alternatives to weedkiller use

Wicklow County Council is aiming to green the Garden County by trialling alternatives to chemical weed control, and whenever possible, managing vegetation for pollinators.

This work is in response to public concerns about the overuse of Glyphosate products in the environment and the need to support biodiversity in all of our communities as part of the Council's commitments as a partner to the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan.

All over the county each Municipal District has identified sites in Council ownership that are suitable for reduced mowing, ie: 'Cut-and-lift' on either a six week or a once-a-year regime.

Holding off on the first cut until after mid-April allows dandelions and daisies to flower as vitally important early food sources for pollinators including bees, bumble bees and hover flies. A reduced mowing regime throughout the year allows other

flowers such as clover, buttercups, speedwells and vetches to thrive, providing a seasonally constant supply of pollen and nectar and a welcome splash of colour to our roadside verges and open spaces.

Tidy Towns and residents' associations are also managing many sites for pollinators. Managed for pollinators signs are often used to highlight the work being done. Householders can play their part by reducing mowing or leaving part of the garden uncut.

Wicklow County Council is also piloting new weed control techniques which avoid chemical use, mainly on hard services where the growth of wildflowers would be undesirable.

A new product called Foamstream has been purchased that delivers a spray of hot water

and natural oils which can be used to kill off vegetation where it is not wanted. It relies on heat rather than chemicals to kill weeds. The natural oils help to bind the heat into the plant for longer increasing the impact of the hot water.

The technique will be used across all five Municipal districts. A second technique that has been used in several towns is metal brushes which scrape roads clean removing any growing vegetation above ground. Weed eaters and trimmers are being used for clearing vegetation in smaller sites and more difficult to access areas.

Cllr Lourda Scott, Chairperson of the Climate and Biodiversity Special Policy Committee, welcomed the trials stating: "Providing space and opportunity for pollinating insects is vital for building resilience of our biodiversity to Climate Change. I welcome the investment in new non-chemical techniques for weed control and the focus on reduced

mowing early in the season."

It is hoped that the trialling of these alternative techniques will demonstrate that weed control is possible without the use of hazardous chemicals being released into our environment and this will help to protect our communities, the staff of Wicklow County Council and our wonderful biodiversity.

Wicklow County Council is committed to promoting a landscape where biodiversity can thrive and encourages householders and communities alike to make space for nature in our gardens, towns and villages. If your community is managing an open space for pollinators, you can record your good work on www.pollinator.ie. The Council also can provide 'Managed for Wildlife' signs suitable for outdoor use. Drop an e mail with your postal address to wicklowheritage@wicklowcoco.ie to place your request.

Positive drinking water results welcomed

New data from Irish Water indicate that previous issues regarding drinking water in North Wicklow have been resolved.

Social Democrats TD Jennifer Whitmore asked a series of follow-up questions to Irish Water following a previous Boil Water Notice for some parts of North Wicklow in December 2021. The boil water notice affected around 12,000 homes and business in North Wicklow including Bray, Enniskerry, Greystones, Kilmacanogue, Kilcoole, Newcastle and NTMK.

Speaking on the issue, Deputy Whitmore says "Many residents across North Wicklow will remember experiencing a Boil Water Notice last December. The notice was issued by Irish Water as a

precaution following high turbidity at a treated water reservoir at Vartry Water Treatment Plant. This had affected the disinfection process and as a result the EPA had put North Wicklow on its Remedial Action List. There were major issues around communication with residents at the time. A lot of confusion was caused as a result and so I have been keeping in touch with Irish Water on water testing practices to see if the quality of water and disinfection has been resolved over time.

"I asked a series of questions to Irish Water who responded to say the

EPA has since removed North Wicklow from its Remedial Action List which is positive news. Irish Water also completed a separate monitoring programme to verify that the elevated levels of trihalomethanes (THMs), which resulted in high turbidity in the water, and this testing showed that the risk of THMs has been resolved.

"For example, in Bray, the level of THMs was at a high 109 level as of November 2011. By the 19th January this level had drastically dropped to 49. In Greystones, the level was 97 in November 2021, dropping to 51 by

January of this year.

"I'm happy to see that previous issues have been resolved for 2022 and that drinking water has returned to normal levels. I hope that we don't see a repeat of last year and welcome the continued monitoring being carried out by Irish Water in the meantime," concluded Deputy Whitmore.



Happy Wicklow supporters Frances O'Connor and Fintan Fanning with unhappy Laois supporters Sgt Pat Carroll and Garda John O'Neill at the Leinster GAA Football Senior Championship Round 1 match between Wicklow and Laois at the County Grounds in Aghrim.

This summer let's enjoy and protect our coast

Irish environmental charity Clean Coasts released resources to help communities protect our coast

The Irish coast offers breath-taking views, beautiful beaches, epic cliffs, and more, and its unique beauty and character have been attracting visitors from all over the world. Furthermore, it provides its visitors with numerous opportunities to have fun, by taking part in water sports and coastal activities.

The Clean Coasts programme works with over 1,800 communities and over 37,000 volunteers nationwide to help protect and care for Ireland's waterways, coastline, seas, ocean and marine life.

"With the nice weather on the way, more people are expected to visit the beautiful coastal areas around the country, whether it is for sea swimming, water sports, or simply to enjoy the stunning landscape," says Clean Coasts. "With our 'Enjoy and Protect' campaign, we are asking people to enjoy and celebrate Ireland's stunning coastline, beautiful beaches, epic cliffs and all outdoor areas, but also to protect these natural treasures for future generations to enjoy too, by making more sustainable choices, taking part in beach cleans or even do something as quick and simple as a #2minutebeachclean.

"This is an opportunity for beach users, outdoor enthusiasts and hundreds of other communities in Ireland to make

a tangible difference for our marine environment and marine life while doing something they enjoy.

"Clean Coasts released three guides containing tips and guidance on how to enjoy our coast while doing your bit to protect it. Two of these guides - Outdoor Living and A Day at the Beach - will be available to download on our website and will focus on activities such as camping, eating outdoors and spending a day discovering marine biodiversity. A third guide, our Community Guide, will be available exclusively to registered Clean Coasts groups and will include guidance on organising beach cleans, building a network, attracting new volunteers and promoting your work.

"Another guide about outdoor photography will be launched at the end of the month, so Clean Coasts are inviting people to keep an eye on their social media channels and website. To find out more, visit www.cleancoasts.org."



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Aidan White of Living Earth Photography pictured with Tara McEvoy of An Post in Wicklow Town last Wednesday, when Postmasters at Rathnew Post Office and Wicklow Post Office invited local business and SME's to a breakfast event to discuss the products and services available to help them grow their Business.

'Urgent action needed to tackle illegal parking in Deerpark and Ard naGreine estates'

Residents in Deerpark and Ard na Greine estates in Bray have been experiencing an illegal parking nightmare since the opening of the new Super Valu on Southern Cross, Sinn Féin councillor Dermot 'Daisy' O'Brien has said.

Cllr Dermot 'Daisy' O'Brien has been talking to residents. "Local residents have tried contacting the Council, the Gardai, the site managers of nearby developments and sadly it hasn't worked. Cars are parking daily on the road, the grass verge and all the way up and around the corner at times preventing access for buses collecting children with special needs in the area. On some days if there's no space on the road some cars have been brazen enough to park inside the estates, taking up resident's spaces!"

"Traffic cones were put in place but are casually moved out of the way or thrown in the ditch. When residents speak directly to those who are parking they are dismissed. We have simply failed to prevent this illegal parking and unfortunately for a community who had to adapt to the major changes that came with the new supermarket, instead of settling into a new and mostly positive scenario with a supermarket amenity on their doorstep, they are instead dealing with this daily nuisance."

Cllr O'Brien has raised the issue at recent Bray Municipal District meetings and has been assured that the Council are taking action on this and will liaise with the local Gardai and the management of local building sites and businesses.

"If we can't resolve a very basic issue in our local community which is very clearly a straightforward legal issue then how can we hope to build confidence around tackling the bigger issues in our communities?"

Stylebawn homes will 'seamlessly integrate into the community in Delgany', says Ronan Group



CGI image of the completed development

What's our vision for our local community?

Co Wicklow PPN and Wicklow County Council are asking community groups and individuals what their vision is for the wellbeing for their community so it can inform the development of the new Co Wicklow Local Economic & Community Plan (LECP)

Helen Howes, Resource Worker for Co Wicklow PPN said "Although we sometimes think about 'wellbeing' in terms of good physical and mental health, it can also describe the wider conditions we need as individuals and communities to have a better quality of life, a healthier environment and increased prosperity. So, we will be asking people what their Vision is for their community under 6 different, but interconnected themes. Wellbeing is seen as a good measure to show how a community is thriving. It can help us to monitor and identify actions that can be undertaken by local and national government as well as by communities to work towards a shared vision. Co Wicklow PPN worked with communities to develop a Vision for Community Wellbeing

for each of the Municipal Districts and the county as a whole in 2018 but we want to go back and find out if that Vision is still relevant or how priorities have changed over the last four years." Deirdre Whitfield and Chistine Flood, Wicklow County Council are hoping that many people become involved: "Plans are underway for the development of the new County Wicklow Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP). The plan will set out a number of High-Level Goals, Objectives and Actions for the social, economic and community development of the county for the next six years. The LECP will include issues such as community resilience and well-being, economic activity and jobs, town and village regeneration, climate change and addressing

disadvantage, but this is not an exhaustive list. The first step in developing the plan is identifying what our collective Vision and priorities are for the county and we want to hear the views of as many people as possible.

"Public consultation began with an online survey, and we are grateful to those who submitted their thoughts. We are now running workshops in each Municipal District and hope that people will come out and chat to us".

Workshops will run as follows: Wicklow Municipal District: **Monday 9th May** in An Tairseach Wicklow Town, Greystones Municipal District: **Wednesday 11th May** in The Old Schoolhouse Delgany, Baltinglass Municipal District: **Monday 16th May** in The Parish Centre

Bray Municipal District: **Monday 23rd May** in Árus Lorcáin. All workshops will begin at 7pm and run until 9pm. Light refreshments will be available. Online workshops will run and additional physical workshops may be added. People are asked to keep an eye on Wicklow County Council & Co Wicklow PPN Social Media pages for up to date workshop scheduling and information.

For more information contact Co. Wicklow PPN by Emailing: info@countywicklow-ppn.ie or contact the Office of Community, Cultural & Social Development of Wicklow County Council by Emailing: lecp@wicklowcoco.ie.

Whitmore meets with Go Ahead to discuss concerns over North Wicklow bus services

Social Democrats TD Jennifer Whitmore has met with officials in Go Ahead to discuss service issues on a number of bus routes in the North Wicklow area.

Go Ahead is a bus operator in Dublin which provides the popular bus routes, the 45a to Kilmacanogue and 185 to Enniskerry.

Speaking about the meeting, Deputy Whitmore said, "A number of constituents raised with me the issue of gaps in the 185 services to Enniskerry and the 45a to Kilmacanogue. During Covid there were a number of last minute cancellations or no shows and this had caused a lot of anxiety for people. While Covid had caused many staff

to be absent, some gaps in the service continued after restrictions were removed.

"A few months on from the pandemic and there are still concerns about the service. So I arranged a meeting with Go Ahead to discuss this further and see if there were any solutions to resolve the matter.

"Go Ahead confirmed these problems were down to an ongoing resource issue but have indicated they are prioritising recruitment at the moment, to increase the number

of staff available.

"At the meeting, we discussed the need to focus on these particular bus routes. It is important that Go Ahead prioritise these bus routes especially at peak times to ensure constituents have a reliable service and are able to make plans around any ongoing internal company issues.

"I hope these issues will be resolved shortly and will continue to work with them to ensure there are no more delays so that services on both bus routes can resume normally in the near future," concluded Deputy Whitmore.

including a 'green roof' and façades harmonised to the surrounding terrain. The landscaped areas will benefit from the use of quality materials to define the character of the space along with an extensive planting scheme including feature tree planting, shrub and herbaceous planting, lawns and meadows to enhance the biodiversity of the site."

The majority of Stylebawn will be available for private sale to families, while 20% will be allocated to social and affordable housing. The application includes plans for the sensitive restoration of Stylebawn House which is a listed structure dating back to the 1700s. The developments at Stylebawn will feature communal amenity spaces including children's play areas, a courtyard, and a nature trail.

Delgany Community Council said they were 'horrified' by the plans. "We were extremely disappointed to see a planning application proceed without any engagement with the community", they said, and "We have grave concerns regarding the loss of biodiversity as well as the impact on the Three Trouts Stream with increased flood risk and run off from construction. This plan would see the removal of more than two thirds of the trees on the site. We sincerely hope that Wicklow County Council will do the correct thing and completely reject this application."

Submissions are due by May 12th and the planning files can be viewed online on Wicklow County Council's website under planning reference 22380

A spokesperson for Ronan Group Real Estate has said the planned residential development at the Stylebawn site in Delgany has been "carefully designed to high quality specifications and taking account of its surroundings", and "will seamlessly integrate into the well-established community in Delgany."

Once construction is complete, the development will consist of a mix of dwellings including 60 four-bed houses, 14 three-bed houses, and one two-bed house. Furthermore, there will be two apartment blocks constructed in four and five storey developments, consisting of 38 two-bed units and 28 one-bed units mixed across the buildings.

The spokesperson for RGBE stated "This development will provide much-needed homes in a sustainable and highly desirable neighbourhood, where residents will have access to some of the best amenities in the Garden of Ireland."

RGBE say that "The proposed buildings respond to the topography of the site and provide a modern response to the setting, with notable features

Roundwood student is Farm Safe Schools Champion

St Laurence O'Toole NS is celebrating after one of its students was named the Agri Aware Farm Safe Schools regional champion for Leinster and another was a runner up.

Niamh Lowe, a 5th class pupil in St Laurence O'Toole National School, Roundwood, was chosen after her name was put forward for the award. Her classmate, Eoin Davis was also announced as a runner up. So double celebrations at St. Laurence O'Toole NS.

St Laurence O'Toole National School is currently taking part in the Farm Safe Schools programme which aims to kickstart farm safety conversations in classrooms nationwide.

Over the course of the programme, Champions

are selected from each region and awarded a certificate of achievement and a family pass to Dublin Zoo, kindly sponsored by the Department of Agriculture, Food and Marine.

Champions are those children who are demonstrating excellence, innovation and commitment

to improving farm safety awareness as part of the programme.

The Regional Champions have gone above and beyond what is expected of them within the programme. They are passionate not just about farming but about making sure the message of farm safety is included and very much part of the conversation in their classrooms, at home and in their community.

Farm Safe Schools coordinator and AgriKids founder, Alma Jordan explained what made Niamh stand out from the crowd.

"We received a huge volume of entries for the Regional Awards and it proves the ability and capability of our children to change the culture around farm safety."

"Niamh has really gone above and beyond to share her farming knowledge with her class. We have seen her presentations to the class about the countryside code as well as her own farm safety video, which she created, informing the wider school of animal care and general safety around the farm."

"Niamh's mother said that she loves going up with her uncle during lambing season especial-

ly and really loves to gets stuck in. Her teachers commented that she is a fantastic help on the farm and has been an exemplary farm safe student in their school.

"Niamh's willingness to share on the topic of farm safety is tremendous, this is exactly what Farm Safe Schools is all about."

The Farm Safe Schools programme is a collaboration between Agri Aware, AgriKids, the IFA and is supported by the Department of Agriculture, Food and Marine in Primary Schools across Ireland.

Agri Aware Chairman, Alan Jagoe expressed his delight to all the regional winners.

"The Agri Aware Farm Safe Schools programme sets out to create learning and understanding on the topic of farm safety to younger children."

"These regional award winners are a testament to the talent, tenacity and potential our children have in creating a safer future on Irish farms. I want to thank their teachers for bringing the programme into the classrooms and for recognising the champions in their class."

"I would like to thank the Department of Agriculture and Minister Martin Heydon, for their support of this dedicated farm safety programme."



Niamh Lowe and Eoin Davi, Leinster Regional champion and runner up for Farm Safe Schools



Niamh Lowe, Leinster Farm Safe School Regional Champion

Wicklow students can apply now for enhanced student grants for the new academic year

Fine Gael Minister for Further and Higher Education Simon Harris TD has reminded Wicklow students to apply to the Student Grant Scheme for the 2022/23 academic year.

Minister Harris said: "This year I introduced a number of changes to the student grant scheme including: An increase in the annual maintenance grant 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."

These changes will deliver much-needed assistance to students and families across County Wicklow. The deadline for SUSI applications for 2022/23 is, June 9th for renewal applications and July 7th for new applications."

Further information is available at susi.ie/grant-process/or please contact my office at simon.harris@oireachtas.ie

Minister Harris said: "I will continue to make changes to assist students. We strongly believe there is a need to reduce the cost of education for families and we are working with Government colleagues to outline our priorities on how we can help people with these significant costs. For any student experiencing difficulties currently, there is a significant allocation to the Student Assistance Fund and I would encourage students to contact their access offices to avail of these funds."

Appeal for volunteer English teachers for Ukrainians

The call has been made by eTeachers Global, an international online English teaching business for adult students based in County Roscommon.

Usually, the company stipulates that all teachers on the platform are qualified primary/secondary teachers, are registered with the Teaching Council and hold English Language Education qualifications. Teachers are individually verified and vetted by the eTeachers global recruitment team.

Company CEO, Joan Gilligan, said "Covid has negatively impacted on schools with both pupil and staff absences so understandably not everyone is in a position to help. Usually, a small commission fee and an annual token subscription fee is charged on each class taught but these fees are waived as part of our efforts to support the Ukrainian community".

Anyone willing to support or help with this project please contact Joan directly by email at joan@eteachersglobal.com

'Significant investment in schools needed'

ASTI General Secretary Kieran Christie has called for significant investment in education so that schools are able to provide the necessary supports for students coming from the Ukraine.

Mr Christie was speaking at the ASTI's annual convention.

"This crisis and its impact on the education system is evolving on a daily basis," he said.

Mr Christie also said the ongoing lack of

investment in schools, coupled with innovation overload, has led to an occupational stress crisis in teaching: "Inadequate CPD, limited staffing and inadequate resources, implementing new curricular models, and teaching overcrowded classes are some of

the contributing factors that have sapped the morale and energy of our members."

The ASTI General Secretary also called on the Department of Education to revise and improve assault leave for teachers.

Mr Christie said assault leave arrangements for teachers must cover "violence in all its forms and particularly that directed against people because of their gender or sexual orientation".



Minister for Education Norma Foley pictured during a recent visit to Avondale Community College with Jimmy O'Shaughnessy, Ken Scully (KWETB), Patricia Gahon (Deputy Principal), Elaine Fitzgerald (Principal), Senator Pat Casey, Cllr Pat Kennedy, and Cllr Patsy Glennon.



AXA Insurance has launched a new €1m initiative called AXA Parks. This new environmental grant programme will support local community projects that demonstrate a real commitment to improved outcomes for our environment and our communities' wellbeing. It is envisaged that projects will include community gardens, wildlife habitats, walking trails and other community-led initiatives in towns and villages. The fund is aimed at voluntary and charitable groups and is designed to be accessible to local communities. Interested parties can log on to www.communityfoundation.ie to find out more details and how to enter. Applications will be reviewed, and grants awarded by The Community Foundation For Ireland. The fund will support projects both large and small with grants ranging from €3,000 up to a maximum of €20,000. Applicants have until May 20th to apply, and it is envisaged that successful applicants will be informed in early August. Pictured are Antoinette Customer and Marketing Director AXA Insurance Ireland, Rian Ledwidge, Frida Maguire and Philip Bradley CEO AXA Insurance Ireland.

100K in 30 days for breast cancer research

Following the success of last year's 100K in 30 Days event, which raised €1.7 million for Breast Cancer Ireland, organisers are calling on the people of Wicklow to join the 'pink army' and take part in the June event. Registration is now open at www.100kin30days.ie.

The event, sponsored by Sherry FitzGerald, is open to everyone - runners, walkers, those in wheelchairs, families, colleagues, schools, community groups, and sports teams. 100K in 30 Days was founded by Co. Louth couple Niall Carroll and Cara McAdam and launched in 2020 after Cara was diagnosed with breast cancer. Over the last two years, 38,000 people in 36 countries have taken part raising €3million for Breast Cancer Ireland.

Niall Carroll, Founder of 100K in 30 Days, said: "The success of the event over last two years, throughout a pandemic, has spurred us on to make 2022 the biggest year yet. Over the last two years, we've seen €3 million raised which has gone into various research projects but it doesn't end there. We want to keep raising money to continue these trials so we'll continue to fund finding a cure for breast cancer."

100K in 30 Days, in aid of Breast Cancer Ireland sponsored by Sherry FitzGerald, takes place over the month of June. For more information and to register, see www.100kin30days.ie. Those who register for 100K in 30 Days and log their distances are also in with a chance to win prizes such as a €5,000 Holiday Voucher, numerous weekends away, children's prizes, fitbit smart watches and shopping vouchers.



Wicklow people walk the Camino for community air ambulance fundraiser

The first overseas event for the Irish Community Air Ambulance has exceeded its fundraising goal, as a group of 48 supporters, including Dermot Dwyer and Helen O'Sullivan Dwyer from Greystones, traveled to Portugal last week to bike and hike the Camino into Santiago de Compostela in Spain.

The Helicopter Emergency Medical Service (HEMS) is Ireland's only charity Air Ambulance and works in partnership with the National Ambulance Service. The helicopter is based in Rathcool, Co. Cork with critical care teams on the ground in Dublin, Mayo and Donegal.

The organisation set a fundraising target of €50,000 for the week-long event, which was surpassed. Participants took on the 130km walk or 338km cycle along the Portuguese Coastal Route.

George Blackshields from Cork City opted for the cycle and raised almost €6,000. He has first-hand experience of the charity, and he said, "We were on holiday in Kerry in June 2020, spending the day at the beach with family when my wife collapsed. There was a huge emergency response. It was a relief to hear from the ambulance paramedics that the helicopter was on its way, I knew that it would be important to get Jean



Supporters of the Irish Community Air Ambulance at Santiago International Airport in Spain. The group walked and cycled the Camino to raise funds for the charity.

to hospital quickly. The crew did everything they possibly could to bring Jean back but sadly it didn't work out for her. We really appreciate the efforts they took. The Irish Community Air Ambulance is badly needed, it's an essential service especially in rural parts of the country. I cycle regularly and the Camino is another adventure for me and I'm so grateful to everyone who has donated over the last few months."

CEO of the Irish

Community Air Ambulance, Micheál Sheridan says, "We're lucky to have such dedicated supporters right across the country. They have put huge effort into training and fundraising ahead of the Camino, hosting coffee mornings, a dip in the nip, fire-fighter car wash, cycles and signed jersey raffles. They have done exceptionally well, especially in the current climate when fundraising is challenging. Local businesses and entire communi-

ties have also come on board to support them and we are very thankful. Their generosity ensures that we can bring hope to people when they need it most, whether that's responding with our HEMS Air Ambulance or our team of volunteer Critical Care Doctors across the country."

The walking group began in Oia last Monday and walked 130km to Santiago de Compostela along the coast around the Vigo

estuary. Walkers stayed in the beautiful coastal cities of Baiona and Vigo before rejoining the traditional Camino Portuguese from Redondela to Santiago de Compostela.

The cycling group began their 338km route from Aveiro in Portugal, following the road less travelled to Santiago de Compostela. They cycled along some of the most amazing sandy beaches of North Portugal and Spain, such as those near Povoas de Varzim.

'Get Wicklow Growing': Reinvigorating communities post lockdown

This year the Energia and GIY 'Get Ireland Growing' initiative aims to sow the seed of community food growing by giving away 300 community growing starter kits across Ireland worth €42,500.

Due to COVID-19 people re-evaluated how important local communities are for physical and mental wellbeing. Green spaces became a sanctuary for most people during the pandemic, particularly in the height of lockdowns and for those without a garden. As Ireland continues to reopen and normalise, Energia and GIY hope to encourage communities to regenerate green spaces in their local areas and further re-ignite community spirit and connection.

If you are already part of a community group, for example, a resident's association, a Men's Shed, a Tidy Town Association, a parent's association, or an environmental community network, now is your chance to bring food growing into your group activities. If you are not yet part of a community group, you can still take part. Bring the idea to the friend group - bring seeds along to the coffee morning or evening book club. Then, plan your activities. You could plant in each other's gardens or

host a growing morning together to swap seedlings. You could go one step further and see if there is a local vegetable patch in your community or a local star grower that you can learn from. For your local community groups, consider your local sports groups, and residents associations, and connect with your county council.

To register with 'Get Ireland Growing' and be in for the chance of winning a Community Growing Kit that contains seeds to share with your group, please visit www.getirelandgrowing.ie

Energia Get Ireland Growing was first launched in 2016 to promote community food growing projects nationwide. Through this initiative, Energia has supported over 250 community groups with grants totalling €220,000. The recipients include schools, NGOs and Not for Profits, community gardens and allotment groups, GIY groups, hospitals, crèches, direct provision centres and men's sheds across the country.



Irish author and wellness advocate, Caroline Foran

Proposals sought to improve rural wastewater needs

The Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage, Darragh O'Brien TD last Thursday announced the commencement of a new funding scheme targeting the waste water collection and treatment needs of villages and settlements without access to public waste water services. The scheme is funded by a €50 million commitment under the National Development Plan.

The announcement by the Minister follows the completion of a review of villages and settlements that do not have access to public waste water infrastructure.

This work included consultation with stakeholders and a detailed survey completed by local authorities of villages and settlements in their area not serviced by waste water collection and treatment systems.

The scheme will now open to Local Authorities for application and will stay open for applications until September 15th. There will also be an information workshop for Local Authorities.

Local authorities now have the opportunity to develop early and comprehensive applications for funding under this new scheme which will be included in the Department's overall Multi-Annual Rural Water Programme 2022-2025. This will allow the villages and settlements that will ultimately be approved for funding to have a real and

meaningful prospect of a speedier and successful outcome.

It is expected that at least ten demonstration projects will be supported under this first round of funding.

The principal policy drivers of this new initiative are to provide opportunities to support the provision of housing in smaller villages which are not currently serviced by collective waste water treatment systems, while reducing the risk to public health and preventing water pollution.

The Minister said, "The improved waste water services will enable local authorities to work in partnership with the community to enable villages and settlements to be better places to live, work and visit, to support overall Government objectives under Housing for All and give practical effect to our vision for a vibrant rural Ireland under Our Rural Future."

This new measure will provide 85% exchequer

funding through the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, with the remaining 15% in funding coming from the relevant local authority.

The Minister also said: "I am delighted to be in a position to allocate funding to allow this important work to be progressed in rural areas, providing a boost to local economies and allowing for sustainable development through compact growth, including housing that is proportionate to the village".

The first phase of funding announced today will focus on areas of most need based on housing and environmental criteria.

Local authorities are now being invited to submit proposals for consideration for funding under this new measure.

Green Party TD Steven Matthews said, "This is a crucial investment which will reduce water pollution, improve public health and enable rural communities to thrive. It is very welcome that

Wicklow County Council will have the opportunity to make two funding applications, in order of priority, for wastewater treatment projects under this scheme. At least ten projects nationally will be supported in the initial cycle of this measure. 85% of the value of the successful projects will be provided by the Exchequer, with the remainder coming from local authorities.

"I recognise that there are many rural villages and settlements in Wicklow that would benefit from investment in wastewater collection and treatment. I look forward to the opportunity to engage with the local authority and offer any advice/ support I can to potential proposal applications. Separately, I am always happy to meet with residents/ groups to discuss their concerns and if there are any specific issue in relation to water treatment, I would encourage people to get in touch with me directly to discuss it," concluded Deputy Matthews.



Chief Executive of Wicklow County Council Brian Gleeson, Fianna Fail Senator Pat Casey, and Independent Councillor Gerry O'Neill at the 1921 Treaty Exhibition in Wicklow Library. 'The Treaty, 1921: Records from the Archives' exhibition is running until 17th May.

Deal reached to buy site for Greystones Primary Care Centre

A deal has been reached in principle to purchase a site for the new Greystones Primary Care Centre.

The 1.33 acre site on Mill Road is being separated out from the wider development of the site being undertaken by Wicklow County Council. The deal is expected to go before the HSE Board for final approval at the end of May paving the way for the project, which could be opening its doors within three years, to proceed.

Minister for Health Stephen Donnelly said: "It's fantastic news to see real progress being made on the Greystones Primary Care Centre site which has been in the pipeline for years but has struggled to move forward until now. All sides from the council to the HSE have recognised the vital importance of getting the new PCC in place as soon as possible. Across Wicklow we have seen the transformative impact the opening of new centres are having on care in the community. The push now is to have more services and better integrated avenues for treatment in the community to reduce the need for people to have to go to hospital. There is an enormous need for this facility in Greystones as the town has seen huge growth in recent years but now needs the health infrastructure to be in place to service it."

The Minister added: "All the pieces are now in place to get this project delivered. I'll be working with the HSE and local community to make sure we get a PCC that is right for the town in place as soon as possible."

Minister Simon Harris said, "I am delighted that the site for Greystones Primary Care Centre has finally been purchased. We have already seen the opening of the Bray, Baltinglass and Rathdrum Primary Care Centres and I look forward to the Greystones Primary Care Centre being added to Wicklow's network of community based care. This is a substantial investment in local health services for Greystones and I look forward now to the construction and opening of the Centre."

Greystones residents urged to send in submissions on Coolagad Application

Social Democrats Cllr Jodie Neary has called on locals in Greystones to send in submissions to An Bord Pleanála on the new Cairn Planning Application for the Coolagad area. The application was submitted by Cairn in April and is seeking permission for 586 housing units, a community facility, creche, open green spaces among other proposals.

Speaking on the application, Cllr Neary said "Greystones won't have seen a larger development than this since Charlesland was built over a decade ago. Nearly 600 housing units are being proposed in North Greystones, right up near the top of Kindlestown Hill. The proposal consists of 63% more density than the maximum suggested for in the Local Area Plan. This huge development will have a massive impact on the already inadequate road, public transport and community infrastructure in the area.

"We all know how congested the N11 and all routes in and out of Greystones is, let alone the lack of current capacity on the Dart and commuter services as well as on bus routes at peak times.

"School capacity is already struggling to meet existing demand yet Cairn have presented a flawed and outdated School Demand Report to support their application, using 2016 Census figures and statistics which are misleading. They have overestimated the capacity of our local schools and underestimated the demand this large development will create.

"Our community infrastructure is also in need of investment with existing recreational facilities not catering to growing demand. Cairn is presenting the

bare minimum for the community by way of a grass pitch which will remain unfenced and unlit - essentially unusable during the winter months. A recent Community Audit for Greystones, which I had called on the Council to carry out, identified the need for more community facilities, funding to maintain them and more diversity in what's being provided.

"I also have concerns regarding the environmental aspect of this large-scale development as Kindlestown Hill is one of the last refuge for local wildlife with many species such as bats, swifts and other animals using it as a wildlife corridor through Greystones. The best of protections need to be afforded if the development is going ahead and the maintenance of existing hedgerows and retention of trees as much as possible.

"The Social Democrats have heavily campaigned for an end to the SHD system - 'Strategic Housing Development' - and we are glad to see it go. It was a very undemocratic process brought in by Fine Gael to shorten the planning application process for developers. It has led to unsustainable development in areas like Greystones that can't catch a break to keep up with the demands on its road, transport and community infrastructure. Furthermore, the decision-making process bypassed local councils meaning communities don't have a say.

"That's why I'm calling on locals to send in an observation so that their voices are heard as much as possible in what is a landmark application that could drastically affect Greystones, if not carried out sustainably. People can contact me for a list of points to include in their application and if they need any assistance" concludes Cllr Jodie Neary.

Funding for Community groups

Over 100 community groups across County Wicklow are to share in €282,686 funding received by Wicklow County Council under a special Government scheme.

County Wicklow received the funding as part of a €9m fund allocated by the Minister for Rural and Community Development, Heather Humphreys TD, and Minister of State with responsibility for Community Development and Charities, Joe O'Brien TD.

This funding is being used to support community groups impacted by COVID-19 by providing small grants for community groups affected by the Pandemic and will support facilities such as community centres, men's and women's sheds, parish halls and youth centres.

The Community Activities Fund is

supporting groups, particularly in disadvantaged areas, with their running costs such as utility or insurance bills, as well as with improvements to their facilities.

Groups will also be able to use the funding to carry out necessary repairs and to purchase equipment such as tables and chairs, tools and signage, laptops and printers, lawnmowers, canopies and training equipment.

The once-off fund is allocated under the Department's Community Enhancement Programme and is administered locally by the Local Community Development Committees (LCDCs).

At the Wicklow LCDC meeting last week, under the chairmanship of Cllr Pat Kennedy, the full amount of €282,686 was allocated to 122 community groups across the county.

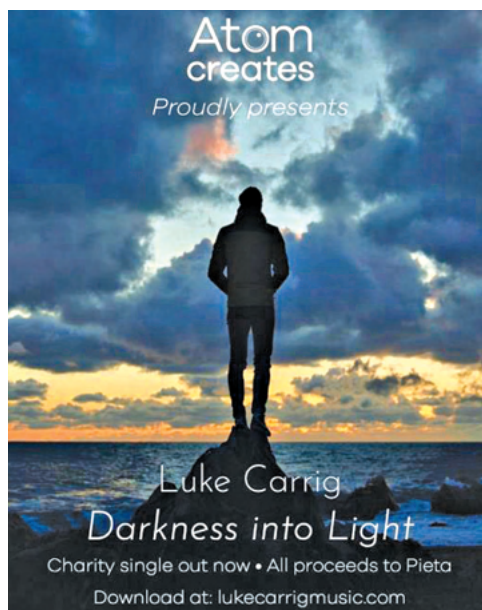
Cllr Kennedy welcomed this significant dispersal of funding to so many diverse groups across all the Municipal Districts and thanked all the groups for their continuing work to enhance their areas.

Chief Executive of Wicklow County Council, Mr Brian Gleeson, added his own thanks to the myriad of community groups doing such valuable work in their neighbourhoods and thanked the Minister for Rural and Community Development Heather Humphreys TD and all her officials for their continuing support for the county.



Mary Lawlor pictured laying a wreath at the Kilmacanogue 1916 Garden of Remembrance on Sunday 24th April (The 106th anniversary of the Easter Rising).

Greystones singer-songwriter releases charity single 'Darkness into Light'



A Greystones based singer-songwriter has released a new song with the aim of raising funds for the charity Pieta as part of their Darkness into Light campaign for 2022.

Luke Carrig wrote the song Darkness into Light in honour of his sibling, Anto, who he tragically lost to suicide in 2010. The song is a heartfelt reflection on living with the loss, whilst also emphasising the universal hope brought by moving from darkness into light.

All of the money raised from the single will be donated to Pieta, the national charity whose mission it is to support those experiencing the challenging realities of self-harm and suicide.

Luke, once a founding member of the Irish band Raglans, has been on something of a hiatus in recent years whilst completing his education and nurturing his own young family. However, the talented musician is now back to share his passion and there are plans to release a new EP later in 2022.

The Darkness into Light single can be downloaded exclusively from: lukeycarrigmusic.com. For a short excerpt of the song, please see: <https://youtu.be/PyIxQoAqzjE>



Greystones singer-songwriter Luke Carrig

Jade Phoenix returns to Greystones

Whale Theatre, Saturday 14th May, 8pm (doors 7pm)



Jade Phoenix is a Soprano lyric opera singer from Greystones and is returning to the Whale to sing some beloved Opera classics and Irish songs, including Puccini, Mozart, Strauss and many more. Jade's most recent production was with Wexford Festival Opera singing the role of Giulietta in 'I Capuleti e i Montecchi' by Bellini, where she was described by the Irish Times to have 'An aptitude for Bravura that is quite impressive' and by OperaWire Magazine to have 'shone in the role of Giulietta.' If you've ever wanted to dip your toe into the world of opera this concert is perfect for you!

<https://www.jadephoenix.net/>

Tickets €20/€18 available at www.whaletheatre.ie or call the booking office on 01 2010550 for tickets.

The Visit by Deirdre Kinahan

Mermaid Arts Centre, Friday 27th May

Rose has washed and ironed her cowgirl shirt and skirt. She carries it on a hanger. She likes the way the fringe swings when she wears it. Makes her feel glamorous. Adventurous. Brave. She stands on the empty stage and looks out into the auditorium. Imagining what it will be like when it is full. Which it will be. Tonight. When the choir perform.

In the quiet of the theatre, she finds herself thinking back on the events of that morning, the events of last year, the last twenty years. When did she stop being her? Rose thinks about her dead husband Stephen, and her sons, and the man who knocked on her door.

A funny, heart-warming, touching new play that explores a hidden social reality we are only beginning to understand.

The Visit is written by Deirdre Kinahan, one of Ireland's foremost playwrights. It is based on her play YES written as part of Draíocht's groundbreaking HOME THEATRE (Ireland) Project in 2018. YES was inspired by the time Deirdre spent with Maureen Penrose, her HOME THEATRE host.

Produced by Draíocht Blanchardstown, 'The Visit' was

originally funded by an Arts Council Theatre Project Award with significant additional support provided by Draíocht, and presented at Dublin Theatre Festival 2021. In 2022 The Visit will tour nationwide, thanks to a Touring Award

from the Arts Council, as part of Draíocht's 21st Birthday Celebrations.

Cost: €18 Full Price/ €16 Concession Price. Age Suitability: 14+. Duration: 70 minutes (no interval)



Cinema at Mermaid: The Eyes of Tammy Faye

Monday 9th May,
€9 Full Price/ €7 Concession Price
Duration: 102 minutes. Cert: PG

The Eyes of Tammy Faye is an intimate look behind the extraordinary rise, fall and redemption of televangelist Tammy Faye Bakker.

In the 1970s and '80s, Tammy Faye and her husband, Jim Bakker, rose from humble beginnings to create the world's largest religious broadcasting network and theme park. Renowned for her message of love, acceptance and prosperity, Tammy Faye became inseparable from her indelible eyelashes, her idiosyncratic singing, and her eagerness to embrace people from all walks of life. However, it wasn't long before financial improprieties, scheming rivals, and scandal toppled their carefully constructed empire.



Kilrush Drama Group - A class act on the way to All Ireland Open Drama Finals

The draw for the 2022 All Ireland Festival took place in Athlone on Easter Monday and Kilrush Drama Group's production of *Class* by Iseult Golden and David Horan and directed by Pat Whelan and featuring Michael Dunbar, Catherine Stafford and James Whelan will be performed on Wednesday May 11th in the Dean Crowe Theatre in Athlone.

The final results from the Festival Circuit came from Wexford Festival where the group had their 4th win, adding to their wins in Castleblaney, Portadown and Kilmuckridge Festivals. They also came second in New Ross, South Wicklow and Ballyduff Festivals and 3rd in South Leinster Drama Festival. Also in Wexford, congratulations to Pat Whelan on winning Best Director, to Michael Dunbar on winning Best Actor, to Catherine Stafford on winning Best Actress, to James Whelan on winning Best Newcomer.

This adds to the tally of awards with Catherine Stafford winning 5 Best Actress and 1 best Supporting Actress Awards. Michael Dunbar won 4 Best Actor Awards and 1 Best Supporting Actor Awards, and with his first outing on the Drama Circuit, James Whelan won a Best Supporting Actor and Best Newcomer Award.. Pat Whelan won 4 Best Director Awards and Tommy Kavanagh won a Best Stage Manager Award, and Kevin McEvoy won a Best Lighting Award. The group also won an

award for their Dance scene in South Wicklow Drama Festival and for Best overall Comedy in Kilmuckridge.

The journey started when a member of the Cast saw the play in 2018 in the Peacock Theatre and felt it was a suitable play for the group. During the pandemic group members read up to 20 plays and *Class* was chosen for production, never having been performed on the Amateur Circuit before. The issues of the play have a very strong contemporary relevance in the Ireland of today. It is also very exciting to be a group performing the amateur premiere.

Pat Whelan spent a number of years acting and like many amateur participants gave a contribution to lighting, set design, sound and general dogsbody. When he got the opportunity to direct in 2005 it became his passion.

Pat treasures the National awards he won, including awards for Best Lighting at the All-Ireland Confined Finals in 2009, Best Director at the RTE All-Ireland Finals in Athlone 2013, Best

Director again in the All-Ireland Finals of 2016 and for the design of the Best Set for 'Lost in Yonkers', also in the 2016 Finals.

Michael Dunbar started his acting career with Enniscorthy Theatre Group and was part of the group when they won the Open All Ireland finals in 1996 with 'Poor Beast in the Rain, and in 1997 with Moonshine, and with the Cripple of Inishmaan 1999. The group were British All Winners in the Drama finals from 1997 to 1999.

Michael has directed many of Carnew Musical Society's musicals since 1996 and is a long time member of Kilrush Drama Group, Michael won Best Actor award for his role in KDG's Steward of Christendom in the Open Drama All Ireland in 2019.

Catherine Stafford Catherine played a number roles with Kilrush Drama Group, including the role of Rita Shanahan in The Salvage Shop in 2020, she also played the role of Valerie in The Weir. Catherine has been a long time member of Carnew Musical Society and won an AIMS Best



The cast and crew of *Class* with their awards

Supporting Actress Award for her role as Katy Brown in Carnew Musical Society's production of Calamity Jane.

James Whelan A school teacher by day, James caught the acting bug while in Australia, after a chance encounter led him to working as an extra on a couple of films and TV shows, including Home & Away. On his return to Ireland James trained at the Bow Street Academy in Dublin. He is currently

studying with voice and acting coach Helena Walsh and hopes to pursue a career in acting.

If you would like a chance to see this award winning production, the group will have three pre-All Ireland performances. The first performance will take place on the May 1st in the National Opera House in Wexford (booking through the Opera House Website); and there will be two performances in St. Bridget's Hall Carnew on the

Sunday and Monday the 8th and 9th of May.

Kilrush Drama Group send their best wishes to both Kilmuckridge and Camross Drama Groups the very best of luck participating in the Confined All Ireland Drama Finals in Ballyshannon, County Donegal this week and to our neighbours Buncloody/Kilmyshal Drama group who have also qualified for the Open All Ireland Drama Finals in Athlone.

Ian Waite & Vincent Simone: ACT 2 - The Ballroom Boys

Mermaid Arts Centre, 2nd & 3rd June

The Ballroom Boys double act Ian Waite and Vincent Simone are set to return with their brand new show - Ian Waite and Vincent Simone...

ACT TWO, after the roaring success of their 5 star rated 2019 tour! The fabulous Strictly Come Dancing stars promise another wonderful evening of old-fashioned variety - dance, comedy and song! With beautiful costumes, gorgeous lighting and world class routines, including the Viennese Waltz, the Foxtrot, the Rhumba... and of course... there has to be another incredible Argentine Tango routine by the master! The boys will be joined by their stunning dance partners and a world class singer. If you enjoyed The Ballroom Boys, then make sure you don't miss the hilarious dancing duo when they bring you....ACT TWO!

VIP Meet and Greet information - The VIP ticket includes show ticket, plus a pre-show Meet & Greet with Ian & Vincent, a signed photo & VIP Lanyard. The meet and greet is PRE-SHOW, 90 minutes before the show begins. All VIP ticket holders must arrive at least 10 minutes before the meet and greet is due to start. Anyone arriving late may not be permitted.

8pm. Cost: €75, Regular - €39, concession €36 euro

Duration: 2 Hours. Age Recommendation 14+. May contain haze, smoke, pyrotechnics and flashing lights.



Mergeemerge: a collaborative drawing project by Michael Geddis and Joanna Kidney 2016-2021

Mermaid Arts Centre Gallery, Exhibition opens Saturday 7th May & runs until Saturday 18th June

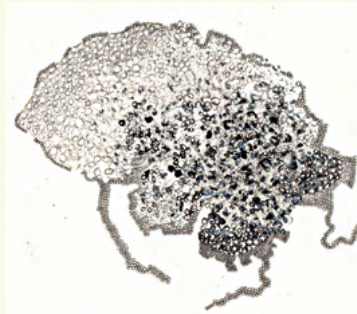
After meeting during a Residency at Ballinglen Arts Foundation, Co. Mayo, their collaboration began in 2016 in response to the shared similarities of their work. As the collaboration has evolved over five years, the tensions arising from the differences in their approaches to drawing have come to energise their work. Taking cues from patterns and forms from science and the natural world, they passed drawings back and forth, adding a part-drawing to each one sequentially.

Their joint drawings grew organically until each one reached its conclusion. What has emerged from their combined memory, intuition and imagination are intertwined otherworlds...worlds which speak of the minutiae, connectivity and slowness.

This project has been funded by Arts Council of Northern Ireland; Wicklow County Council Ards and North Down Borough Council and supported by Mermaid Arts Centre, Co. Wicklow, Ballinglen Arts Foundation, Co. Mayo and Outpost Studios Residency Programme, Co. Wicklow.

Northern Irish visual artist/retired veterinary surgeon Dr Michael Geddis specialises in very finely detailed drawing. He delights in the elegance of natural forms/patterns and finds microscopic structures particularly inspirational for his intuitive work. His degree show (2013) drew acclaim at national level (James White Prize for Drawing at the RDS s Annual Student Awards).

Since then, his practice has developed steadily through several awarded artist residencies/bursaries, collaborations with other artists and a series of Arts Council Lottery Funded projects. His work is included in the collections of the National Gallery of Ireland, Northern Ireland Civil Service, Arts Council of Northern Ireland,



Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council, Ballinglen Museum of Contemporary Art and Ulster University.

He has exhibited widely across Ireland as well as Finland, Sweden, London and Washington DC. Geddis has been awarded the Royal Ulster Academy's Drawing Prize (2019) and the Anna Cheyne Biennial Award (2017).

Joanna Kidney is an Irish Visual Artist. Her practice considers the sensory, temporal, interconnected and holistic aspects of being human. It is concerned with the non-

material, that which is not visible and concrete. Using a language of abstraction, her work is an enquiry of the mark and the line through drawing, painting and physical space.

She is the recipient of a William J. Cooper Foundation Grant (USA); Arts Council of Ireland and Wicklow County Council funding; an RHA Studio Award; a Ballinglen Arts Foundation Fellowship and a DIT Award of Excellence. International residencies include Swarthmore College, Philadelphia (upcoming), Kidjager, Iceland and Brigham Young University, Utah. Her collaborative practice includes mergeemerge, a collaborative drawing project with Michael Geddis (2016 to date); Placelab Collective, 18 artists from USA, UK and Ireland (2019- to date); Skimming Stones, a collaborative video work with dance artist Liadain Herriott (2015-2016); Hexagon, a collaborative printmaking project in Cork Printmakers, Cork (2014) and The Tellurometer Project, a collaborative collective of 8 Irish artist. She is a founding member of Outpost Artists Studios, Bray, Co. Wicklow (2014).



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Tara McEvoy and Shauna Kelly of An Post in Wicklow Town pictured with the Fishman Alan Hegarty and Veronica O'Reilly. at Aidan White of Living Earth Photography pictured with Tara Last Wednesday, Postmasters at Rathnew Post Office and Wicklow Post Office invited local business and SMEs to a breakfast event to discuss the products and services available to help them grow their Business.



COMHAIRLE CONTAE CHILL MHANTÁIN
WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL

Applications are invited from suitably qualified persons to form a panel from which future permanent positions may be filled.

- **PERMANENT CRAFTWORKER FITTER**
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REF: 16/2022
- **PERMANENT CRAFTWORKER PLUMBER**
Salary €672.63 - €785.41 gross per week
REF: 17/2022
- **PERMANENT TECHNICIAN GRADE 1 (ARCHITECTURAL)**
Salary €41,814 - €49,935 gross per annum (includes 2nd LSI)
REF: 18/2022
- **PERMANENT TECHNICIAN GRADE 1 (CIVIL)**
Salary €41,814 - €49,935 gross per annum (includes 2nd LSI)
REF: 19/2022
- **PERMANENT TECHNICIAN GRADE 1 (ENVIRONMENTAL)**
Salary €41,814 - €49,935 gross per annum (includes 2nd LSI)
REF: 20/2022
- **PERMANENT EXECUTIVE TECHNICIAN**
Salary €44,755 - €53,675 gross per annum (includes 2nd LSI)
REF: 21/2022

**CLOSING DATE FOR RECEIPT OF COMPLETED APPLICATION FORMS IS
12 NOON ON THURSDAY 26TH MAY 2022 SHARP.**

Application Forms and further details may be obtained from
Enterprise & Corporate Services at 0404 20159 or by emailing
recruitment@wicklowcoco.ie and on the Wicklow County Council
website www.wicklow.ie

Wicklow County Council reserves the right to shortlist candidates in
the manner it deems most appropriate

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Creative Café Taster Workshops

If you've ever wanted to try out singing, still-life drawing, smartphone photography or painting on silk scarves, check out the free Creative Café starting in Bray on Tuesday mornings from 17th May.

The Creative Café is being run for four weeks by Social Prescribing for Bray and North Wicklow. There will be a free workshop each week followed by a friendly cuppa - all in a relaxed atmosphere - so why not come along and give it a go.

Creative Café kicks off with a fun and informal singing session with Dara McMahon. The remaining three sessions will be led by tutors from Signal Arts Centre.

You have to be living in Bray or North Wicklow to take part and must book in advance. Call 01 286 8266 to find out more and book or see www.brayareapartnership.ie for more information.

Social Prescribing for Bray and North Wicklow is a Bray Area Partnership service that supports people with their health and wellbeing by connecting them with services and activities in their local community. The service is funded by Sláintecare Healthy Communities and Healthy Ireland.

PLANNING • PLANNING

WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL

Emerald Towers seeks permission for the erection of a 27m high lattice telecommunications structure together with antennas, dishes and associated telecommunications equipment all enclosed by security fencing and extend existing access track at Kiltegan Td, Kiltegan, Co. Wicklow. The planning application may be inspected or purchased at a fee not exceeding the reasonable cost of making a copy at the offices of Wicklow County Council, County Buildings, Wicklow during its public opening hours and a submission or observation in relation to the application may be made to the authority in writing on payment of the prescribed fee within the period of 5 weeks beginning on the date of receipt by the authority of the application.

WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL

We, Gareth Keenan & Adele Cocchiglia, intend to apply for permission for development at this site: 11 Avondale Park, Killarney Lane, Bray, Co. Wicklow. The development will consist of: (1) The provision of a new single storey extension to the rear of the existing house. (2) Alteration to the front boundary wall to provide a new vehicular entrance. The planning application may be inspected or purchased at a fee not exceeding the reasonable cost of making a copy at the offices of Wicklow County Council, County Buildings, Wicklow during its public opening hours and a submission or observation in relation to the application may be made to the authority in writing on payment of the prescribed fee within the period of 5 weeks beginning on the date of receipt by the authority of the application.

Wicklow people can avail of free counselling sessions

Turn2Me, a national mental health charity, has announced that all people from Wicklow can avail of six free counselling sessions, run by mental health professionals.

The charity stated that it is able to reach people across rural Ireland because all of its services are run through its website, Turn2Me.ie.

The national mental health charity is keen to support people suffering from anxiety, grief, depression or who just need a supportive online community from time to time. Turn2Me.ie is a safe, moderated online platform which runs 365 days a year.

"We are very keen to reach people from Wicklow and to offer them free counselling sessions," Fiona O'Malley, CEO of Turn2Me, said, "People can avail of up to six free counselling sessions with us. The counselling sessions are conducted by fantastic, qualified mental health professionals, and they can be done via video format or via the chat function on our website, Turn2Me.ie. If people want to talk about pressures, stresses, anxieties or any frustrations they're experiencing, we're here to listen, 365 days a year."

As well as up to six free one-to-one counselling sessions, people from Wicklow can sign up to the free support groups which Turn2Me run, including support groups on grief, anxiety, depression and relationship issues.

To book your free one-to-one counselling sessions, or to sign up to any of the free support groups, simply go to Turn2Me.ie and create a free account.

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Clean Coasts coastal workshop and beach clean

On Saturday 7th May from 1.30pm at The Cove, Greystones, Clean Coasts are teaming up with 'Clean Coasts North Wicklow' group to run a coastal workshop and beach clean.



Members of Clean Coasts North Wicklow

Clean Coasts Officer Aidan Gray will go through several interactive coastal topics and finish with a short beach clean. The event is family friendly and will be finished around 3pm. All equipment for the clean-up will be provided. Clean Coasts North Wicklow coordinator Cllr Lourda Scott welcomes this event. "We are incredibly lucky to live beside such a wonderful coastline, but we also have to work to clean and maintain it. The North Wicklow Clean Coasts group is new and I'm very excited that we are joining the Clean Coasts Roadshow this year. I encourage everyone to come along as it will be a great chance to meet and learn together about our amazing marine resource."

If you want to get in touch about this event, please contact Aidan on agray@eeu.antisce.org or Clean Coasts North Wicklow Cllr Lourda Scott on lscott@wicklowcoco.ie

Clean Coasts works with communities around Ireland to help tackle the coastal issues like marine litter and erosion and supports local action through lots of ways like grants, awards, competitions, campaigns, events, and general facilitation. To find out more about Clean Coasts and local action, please visit www.cleancoasts.org



John Goodman and Lisa Dolan at the official opening of the 'Treaty 1921: Records from the Archives' exhibition in Wicklow Town Library.

New survey details average farmland prices

SCSI auctioneers and valuers say that following strong price growth in 2021, particularly for good land, the price of agricultural land in general looks set to increase by 6% on average this year.

In a major new survey, boosted by the exit from chartered surveyors, auctioneers, and valuers, operating in the agricultural and rental markets say sales activity was

boosted by the exit from covid restrictions and they predict prices will continue to rise, underpinned by strong demand and a continuing low

supply of land for sale.

The price of good land showed the biggest increase in 2021 - up by an average of 17% nationally from €9,381 to €10,962 per acre.

The price of all non-residential land, on holdings of less than 50 acres also showed significant increases. In Leinster prices were up 12%, in Munster they rose by 14% while the increase in Connacht / Ulster was 5%.

In Leinster the price of a good acre of non-residential land on holdings less than 50 acres ranged from €15,350 in Kildare - the most

expensive land in both the province and the country - to €11,600 in Offaly. The average price of an acre of good land in Wicklow was €12,170 - up from €11,200 in 2020.

While Leinster counties made up the first 8 places on last year's most expensive list Cork has shot up into second on €15,070 on the current list with Louth next on €14,500, Meath on fourth on €14,230, Tipperary on €14,000 and Wexford making up the Top 6.

The average price of an acre of poor-quality non-residential land on

less than 50 acres in Leinster ranged from, €9,125 in Louth - the highest in the province for this land type - to €4,970 in Longford. The average price of an acre of poor-quality land under 50 acres in Wicklow is €6,830 up from €5,900 in 2020.

However, the upward arc of prices was not uniform. While the average price of poor-quality land may be up on smaller holdings in the three regions, nationally, the average price for poor-quality land dropped from €5,900 in 2020 to €5,308 last year, a fall of 10%.

CLASSIFIEDS

THE MIRACULOUS PRAYER

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

THE MIRACULOUS PRAYER

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

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