

LOCAL Wicklow Times

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Tuesday 6th December 2022 First Floor, The Boulevard, Quinsborough Road, Bray. A98 R6D7. Tel: 01 - 2869111 E-mail: wicklowed@localtimes.ie www.wicklowtimes.net

UPROAR OVER 'BOGUS BONUSES'

Outraged opposition public representatives around Wicklow are calling on the Government to get its priorities straight following the 'kick in the teeth' announcement that bankers are to have their bonuses restored in the midst of a cost of living crisis.

"The news that Fianna Fail, Fine Gael and the Greens are bringing us back to the bad old days of bonuses for bankers is further clear evidence of their disconnect with the lives of the plain people of Ireland," said an angered Independent councillor Joe Behan.

"They have swallowed the argument from former Fine Gael heavy-weight, now Bankers' spokesman, Brian Hayes, that top bank executives will walk off the pitch unless they are continually fed with ever

increasing salaries and top up bonuses.

"How can we ever forget how the same bankers forced many homeowners out of their homes during the last recession or sold on their loans to vulture funds instead of helping those homeowners to work through their financial difficulties and keep their homes. Banks showed no mercy then but they get special treatment now from a Government which should know better.

"The bogus argument

that bank executives need to be paid more than the existing limit of €500,000 per annum is a gross insult to a nation of hard pressed ordinary taxpayers and citizens. Most normal people have to make do with inadequate pay rates and huge cost of living increases but bankers, according to the FF,FG and Green leaders are different and should be treated as special cases.

"It should not be forgotten that when the brown stuff hit the fan in the financial crisis, the



Maeve Ullrich and Daisie Mae Hogan with Mrs Claus at the Annacurra Community Christmas Market. Pic: Michael Kelly

chief executives of the two major insolvent banks, who were on multi-million euro salaries together with bonuses, retired, one on €650,000 a year pension and the other on €5000,000 a year pension.

"The equally bogus argument that they absolutely must have their bonuses reinstated is laughable and the most pathetic reason given for the decision so far is that all bank staff will benefit. I would like to see the evidence for that particular point



Cllr Joe Behan

before I would believe it.

"The only fig leaf offered by the Government is that banks will have to keep cash services available in future...big deal!!! Banks are supposed to be serving their customers by helping them to manage their money and if the customer wants to use cash they are absolutely entitled to expect that their local bank will facilitate this.

"We know that here in Wicklow, one bailed out bank went all out to remove their local cash service in a number of local branches and only changed their mind when there was a huge outcry from the general public. However, we all know that if they got half a chance they would try it again.

"It is a sad day for this country that the banks which almost destroyed our economy and our nation have managed to outwit the political lead-

ership of the country once again. Will we ever learn?"

Reacting to the news, Sinn Fein TD John Brady said "As house-

holds continue to struggle with the cost of

Continued on page 3



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NO MIDDLE MAN, WE SELL, MANUFACTURE AND INSTALL



Stephen, Max Elvis, Aoife and Indie Hegarty at the switching on of the Christmas lights in Wicklow Town

Coffee Morning for Arklow Cancer Support

There will be a coffee morning in aid of Arklow Cancer Support at National Learning Network in Arklow (Old Methodist Schoolhouse, Briggs Lane, Ferrybank) on Wednesday 7th December, from 10am to 1pm. All donations will be greatly appreciated. Raffle tickets will be sold on the morning. The staff and students look forward to seeing you on the day.

Ukraine Support Groups in Greystones and Arklow

A new support group for Ukrainians has been started by a group of women from Greystones. The central hub is Greystones Evangelical Church on Hillside Road. The first project is the assembling of 50 welcome packs. More activities will follow. See the group's Facebook page for updates.

In Arklow, Kyiv psychologist Tetiana Tymchuk has announced a new Ukrainiann Support Group in Arklow Library. The group is open from 12:30pm to 2:30pm on Thursdays, providing psychological support to Ukrainians who are in need of it.

Greystones Camera Club exhibition

Greystones Camera Club (GCC) meets each Thursday evening at 8pm in Hillside Evangelical Church, Hillside Road. The group's annual exhibition will be held in this venue this week, from December 6th to 10th. The group's activities include outings, studio sessions and speakers. More information is available from John McGowan - crowabbey@hotmail.com

Bray photo competition

With just a few weeks until Christmas, Bray Chamber have a fabulous Christmas Photo Competition where someone could win a spectacular Christmas Hamper worth €100 from local business www.sweetToothHampers.ie. Just capture a special Christmas moment in Bray and be sure to use the #ChristmasInBray hashtag when sharing your favourite memories on social media and you'll be in with a chance to win our competition! You can also submit your photos at <http://www.bray.ie/christmasinbray/>. The closing date for entries is Friday, December 16th 2022. Full terms are available at <https://bray.ie/bray-iehttps://bray.ie/bray-ie-competition-terms-and-conditions/competition-terms-and-conditions/>.

National Learning Network Bray to hold Christmas Fair

National Learning Network Bray will hold a Christmas Fair in aid of Irish Guide Dogs at its centre on the Boghall Road on December 9th. The charity drive will begin at 11am in the Beechwood Close campus and will finish at 2pm.

Organisers expect more than 15 stalls with a great mixture of seasonal favourites including mulled wine and Christmas candles for sale, with strong rumours that a man in a red suit may also make an appearance.

Other festive fare on offer will include hand-made Christmas cards, hot dogs, crepes and fresh baked cookies.

"This promises to be a fantastic occasion as it is more than three years since we have been able to hold an event like this," NLN co-ordinator Oonagh Hodgkinson says.

"We're asking everybody who can make it along to drop in on the Bray as there is no better way of getting into the Christmas spirit."

There will also be a spin-the-wheel raffle on the day with 25 fantastic prizes on offer.

NLN provides training and specialist support to people who, for a variety of reasons, may find it difficult to gain employment and is the country's largest non-governmental education and training organisation.



NLN students Lauren, Joe and Ben

"We empower people to undertake positive learning pathways through inclusion in training, further education, higher education, and working life," it says.

Irish Guide Dogs for the

Blind is Ireland's national charity dedicated to enabling people who are vision impaired and families of children with autism to achieve improved mobility and independence.

They currently have nearly 400 Guide and Assistance Dogs Clients in Ireland and all of their services are provided free of charge.

"It costs over €5 million

to run our organisation each year, it says. "We receive over 85% of our income through voluntary donations and fundraising through our Branch network across the country."

Mince pies, tea and history at Wicklow Library

In this month's talk 'Christmas in Wicklow 1947', historian James Scannell will, using local newspaper of the time, look at how two years after the end of The Emergency, Christmas was celebrated by most.

In this year, most of Europe still lay in ruins. The unity between the wartime Allies had disintegrated, Communism dominated Eastern Europe, India gained its independence from Britain while, at the same time, Britain attempted to stop mass Jewish emigration to Palestine, the later known State of Israel.

Within Ireland, rationing was still in operation for many goods and commodities, tubercu-

losis was rampant, and emigration to Britain was the only option for thousands of skilled and unskilled workers needed to rebuild Britain's war ravaged cities and towns.

Locally Christmas was 'make or break' for traders who prided themselves on the quality of their goods and services, while for many families, the arrival of funds from family members working in the United States of America

or Britain decided the manner in which they celebrated the festive season.

The talk will conclude by recalling how different the celebration of Christmas was then compared today. Mince pies, tea and coffee will be served and a selection of historical newspapers will be on display and available to browse. The talk will take place at Wicklow Library, in the Exhibition Space on the third floor on Wednesday December 14th at 11.30am. Contact Wicklow Library on 040467025 or email Wicklowlocalstudies@wicklowcoco.ie to book your place.

Wicklow Library December events

There's plenty happening at Wicklow Town Library through the month of December.

Tuesday 13th December: Flower arranging workshop with Denise 10.30-12.00 followed by a cup of tea and a chat with Community Garda Niall Kennedy

Wednesday 14th December: "Christmas in Wicklow 1947" talk given by Jim Scallan @ 11.30 followed by tea and mince pies

Wicklow photography club 10th anniversary exhibition from 1st - 21st December every Saturday morning we have storytime for younger children at 11.00am.

To book any event just contact the library on 0404 67025 or email wicklib@wicklowcoco.ie

Christmas opening hours for library are:



Closing on Friday 23rd December at 5pm, open on Friday 30th December 9-5 reopening Tuesday 2nd January at 10.00

"We wish all our patrons a very merry Christmas and a happy new year," the Library stated.

KAVANAGH Christmas Trees

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UPROAR OVER 'BOGUS BONUSES'

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living, reports that the Fine Gael Minister for Finance plans to lift pay restriction for senior bankers is a kick in the teeth for hard-pressed families in Wicklow. It is telling that Fine Gael are using their last weeks at the helm of the Department, not prioritising ordinary workers and families hit by a cost of living crisis but increasing bankers' pay.



John Brady TD

"This move shows how out of touch Fine Gael are. Fine Gael's Minister in Wicklow, Simon Harris needs to inform the people in the county if he backs his colleague's plans to lift pay restrictions for senior bankers. Constituents deserve to know where he stands on this.

"The restrictions on pay bonuses were put in place as a result of the reckless actions of senior bankers which led to the financial crisis - bankers who prioritised their own pay above the needs of consumers and society.

"Since then, we have witnessed the tracker mortgage scandal, with €270 million in fines, meted out to banks for the harm they inflicted on their customers. This year alone, AIB and Bank

of Ireland were fined over €197 million for regulatory breaches and actions that led to families losing their homes.

"Harm was meted out even during the Tracker Mortgage Examination. To date not one banker has been held to account for the untold damage and suffering that was inflicted on families and individuals in Wicklow and across the state.

"Despite all of this, it is reported that the Minister's parting gift to the banking industry is to lift pay restrictions on senior bankers. At a time when households are struggling to pay the bills and feed their families, how can anyone conclude that half a million euros per year is not enough? Minister Harris must

come forward and confirm if he agree with colleague Paschal Donohoe about increasing bankers' bonuses?"

Social Democrats TD Jennifer Whitmore said: "The decision by Fine Gael, Fianna Fail and the Green Ministers to restore bankers' bonuses is an insult to the workers who have seen their wages fall because of the cost-of-living crisis.

"As Finance Minister Paschal Donohoe prepares to leave office, his biggest priority is rewarding bankers and restoring their bonuses, and that decision was backed by his cabinet colleagues in Fine Gael, Fianna Fáil and the Greens.

"Have our local government Ministers here in Wicklow forgotten that it



Jennifer Whitmore TD

was bankers reckless lending, for which they were richly rewarded with gold-plated bonuses, that led the country into bankruptcy and collapsed the housing industry during the financial crash?

"At a time when we have food banks across the country struggling to keep up with increase demand, and as we head into a Christmas period where people will be worried if they can keep

the lights on, it is a slap in the face to ordinary working people and decent employers in small business, to prioritize bankers' wage increases. These increases by the way are not even going to bank workers in branches like those across Wicklow, but to senior banking figures already on high wages.

"When you consider that we currently need major increased invest-

ment for local services across Wicklow in community health, public transport, and our schools are struggling to get enough substitute teachers to keep classrooms open, I would think they would have more pressing matters to see to at cabinet than this! I would invite them to seriously reassess their priorities and start making the needs of those dependent on public ser-

vices as a priority"

"Government Ministers may want us to believe that issues in the banking sector are a thing of the past, but this year alone AIB was fined more than €6 million by the central bank for its role in inflicting 'devastating consequence' on nearly 13,000 households. Meanwhile Bank of Ireland was hit with a record €100 million fine for its role in the scandal of tracker mortgages.

"These fines were issued in 2022, not 2012. This is not ancient history. These banking institutions oversaw a financial crash which cost the state billions in taxpayers money; it cost many their homes, and it even cost some people their lives. It is time this government realised that banks are there to provide for our community, not the other way round."



Deputy Principal of BIFE Gabriel Allen, Sarah King and Ruadhan Duggan pictured with guest speaker Kathy Peyton of Gifthouse.ie, who visited BIFE to speak about the importance of buying Irish.



Wicklow County Council

Bray Harbour Improvement Scheme

Non-Statutory Public Information Day - Tuesday 6th December 2022

Wicklow County Council has been successful in securing Urban Regeneration Development Funding from the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage to carry out improvement works to Bray Harbour.

These works will include:-

- Review potential for harbour wall extension, dredging of the waterbody for improved berthing and protection of boats from storms;
- Amenity and Public Realm - extend amenity area, improve street lighting, paving, cycle provision and access to recreational facilities;
- Promenade board walk linking the beach promenade with the harbour;

RPS Consultants were engaged to carry out a feasibility study and have now prepared concept drawings of proposals. Wicklow County Council now invite all stakeholders, user groups, residents and members of the public to attend a non-statutory public consultation information day to view the work undertaken to date and the programme for advancement of this project. This non-statutory consultation event also provides an opportunity for feedback and observations to be submitted by all stakeholders which may inform the further development of the project during the next stages.

The Information Day will be held on **Tuesday 6th December 2022 in the Town Hall, Main Street, Bray between 3.00pm and 6.00pm.** Members of the Project Team will be available to answer questions.

The information will also be available to view in the offices of Bray Municipal District, Civic Offices, Bray from Wednesday 7th to Friday 9th December 2022 during office opening times.

Wicklow County Council values the opinion of all stakeholders, user groups, residents and members of the public on this project and welcome all feedback which will be considered by the project team as part of the next stage of the development of the project.

Any queries in relation to the Bray Harbour Improvement Project can be emailed to BrayHarbourProject@wicklowcoco.ie

Linda Healy, District Administrator, Bray Municipal District. 30th November 2022

Jennifer

Working for Wicklow

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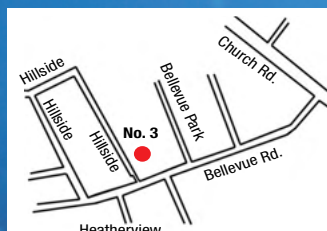
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Operation Hurdle is up and running in Wicklow



Christy Kavanagh of Kavanagh's Christmas Trees in Newtownmountkennedy

A seasonal garda operation to prevent raids on Co. Wicklow's isolated Christmas tree farms is in full swing, as growers anticipate record demand for festive firs.

By Nick Bramhill

Operation Hurdle - a hugely-successful initiative involving nightly air patrols, high-visibility checkpoints and armed support units - will run up until December 19 across the Garden County, which is home to Ireland's largest concentration of Christmas tree plantations.

The news that the operation has been given the green light has been welcomed by growers, a number of who are reporting unprecedented demand for Christmas trees.

Christy Kavanagh, a multi-award winning grower who expects to supply around 10,000 festive firs to both the domestic and export market in the run-up to Christmas, said: "Our crop's looking very good this year and the tree harvest is going extremely well. We've been very busy already with enquiries and orders, which is unusual.

"There seems to be a big appetite out there for real Christmas trees this year, and the way things are shaping up, this could well turn out to be my busi-

est year ever.

"I think there's a couple of reasons for the high demand. Firstly, it's been a difficult year for people with the rising cost of living and so on, and I think because of that people are more determined to celebrate Christmas more than ever.

"Also, the public has moved away from plastic trees and want products that are sustainable. People are far more planet conscious than ever before, and I think that has certainly pushed up demand for real Christmas trees."

Christy, a former chairman of the Christmas Tree Growers Association who farms in Newtownmountkennedy, added that the support of Operation Hurdle from would be welcomed by all growers throughout the county.

The seasonal garda ring of steel has been running every year since 2012 in the remote uplands regions of the 'Garden County', before which around 2,000 festive

first would be plundered annually from isolated farms by primarily Dublin-based gangs.

Wicklow Garda District Supt. Declan McCarthy confirmed last week that the initiative would be back up-and-running over the festive season.

In a statement, he said: "The operation has been very successful since it started. While detection is very difficult, prevention is the key with a combined effort by local growers and their security staff and improved security procedures, targeting suspects and the vehicles of those involved and focusing on the locations most likely to yield results."

He added: "Operation Hurdle was very favourably commented upon by those in the business, and they have requested that the operation be repeated again this year.

"The key to its success was that the Christmas tree growers and the gardai worked in tandem to achieve the desired result. It's an example of policing at its best, with the emphasis on crime prevention."

Burglaries up 31% across Wicklow compared to last year

Data published over the past 10 years by the Central Statistics Office reveals that on average 1 in every 10 homes in Ireland has experienced a burglary in that period, with a total of 182,609 burglaries reported nationwide with a 31% increase across Wicklow in 2022 compared to 2021 figures.

PhoneWatch has once again published their annual burglary report which outlines their research into burglary patterns over the past ten years. For the report, they looked at 10 years' worth of CSO Burglary stats along with their own data from their Dublin based Alarm Receiving Centre and some consumer research.

The 10-year data from the Phonewatch Alarm Receiving Centre shows that those with a monitored home alarm are over 4 times less likely to be burgled.

3 out of 4 (72%) Irish homeowners are concerned about a break-in in their homes, with over a third

(39%) feeling worried when home alone. The time of year has a huge impact on how safe people feel, with over half (58%) feeling least protected throughout the winter months and 64% feeling particularly unsafe at night-time. PhoneWatch urges all homeowners to take the necessary preventative measures and continue to protect their homes and their cherished items inside.

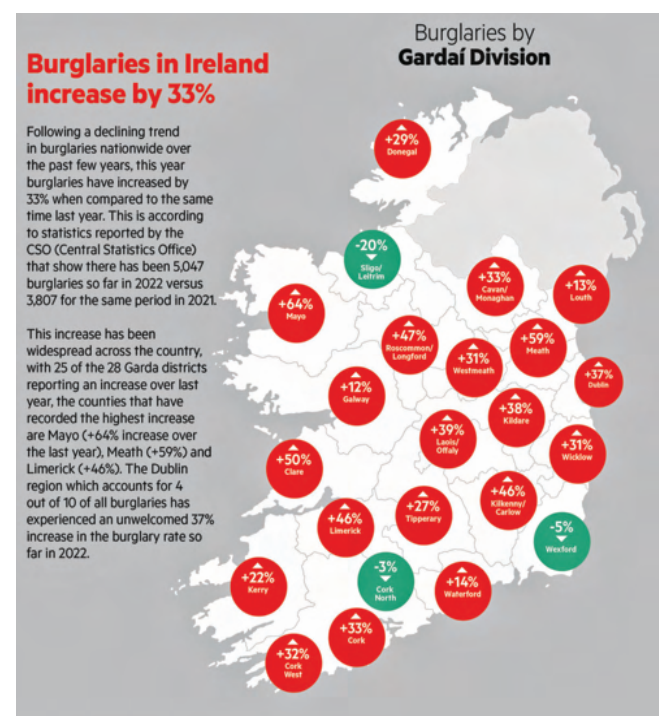
Although 80% of people have never had a home break-in, or a smoke or fire incident (87%), that doesn't stop over 40% of us regularly asking our neighbours to check in on our homes while we

are not there but this does not deter burglars, as they can be aware that a home is left unoccupied and your neighbours can't protect your home 24/7.

Eoin Dunne, Managing Director of PhoneWatch, said "It's worrying to see a 33% increase in the nationwide burglary rate and indeed an increase across most counties in Ireland. If this rate of increase was to continue until the end of the year, there would be approximately 11,500 burglaries in 2022. At PhoneWatch, our aim is never to scare or unnecessarily frighten people, but to make them aware of the realities of burglary so that they

can take the preventative measures to help prevent such occurrences. Above all else, PhoneWatch want people to feel safe in their homes. We are reminding all homeowners to take simple but effective steps to help avoid the trauma of a burglary, especially as the dark evenings close in."

Protect the things and people you cherish most with a monitored home alarm from Phone Watch. Total peace of mind with instant response to your burglar and smoke alarms 24 hours a day. Discover how Phone Watch can help by visiting www.phonewatch.ie.



Map showing the increase in burglaries across the country

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*In contentious business, a solicitor may not calculate fees or other charges as a percentage or proportion of any award or settlement



Garda Maria Curtis, Matthew Doyle, Aran Lawless and Garda Sandra Tierney at the recent College Awareness Day at Colaiste Chraobh Abham, Kilcoole

Mark Barry co-opted as councillor for the Social Democrats in Greystones

The Social Democrats have confirmed the co-option of Greystones local Mark Barry as the party's new councillor.

At a selection convention in Greystones last week, Mark was co-opted to the council seat vacated by Jodie Neary, who recently moved to a new role in the renewable energy sector. He's taking up his position as a councillor at this week's meeting of Wicklow County Council on Monday, December 5th.

Mark has lived in Greystones for the past 17 years, where he is well known in GAA circles. He is the current manager of the Wicklow minor hurling team and is vice-chair of local club Éire Óg.

Mark's passion for sport also spills into his professional life. He works for Support in Sport Pitches Ireland, a company that specialises in the construction of all-weather and natural grass playing surfaces.

He also sits on the board of management of Greystones Community National School.

A member of the Social



New Social Democrats councillor for Greystones Mark Barry with Social Democrats TD Jennifer Whitmore.

Democrats since the foundation of the party, he has been a long-time team member of Wicklow TD Jennifer Whitmore's team and has worked closely with her on a number of campaigns in the area.

Mark said: "I am looking forward to working with my fellow

councillors and Jennifer Whitmore to improve facilities and services in our local area.

"I am particularly interested in the creation of more social spaces for older and younger people. Not everyone shares a passion for team sports, so there needs to be places

for other activities where friendships can develop.

"As part of our climate action journey, I would also like to see a local country market created to provide greater connections between rural and urban communities in Wicklow."

Jennifer Whitmore TD congratulated Mark on his selection and paid tribute to Jodie Neary for her dedicated work on behalf of the Greystones community during her time as a councillor.

"While Jodie will certainly be a hard act to follow, I have no doubt that Mark is well up to the task. I am delighted to see him take on this really important role on behalf of the Social Democrats for residents in Greystones, Delgany, Kilcoole, Newcastle and Kilpedder.

"I have worked with Mark for many years on various local projects and have seen first-hand how adept he is at delivering on important initiatives for the community. Through his involvement in sport, he has always been committed to making our locality a better place for our youth and families. I look forward to working with him over the coming months and years."

No rates increases or recycling charges in 2023 Budget

Councillors last week unanimously voted to pass Wicklow County Council's Budget for 2023. A 3% increase in commercial rates had been proposed by Council officials in order to maintain key services, however a second option was devised which found a way around this. There is also to be no introduction of charges at recycling centres.

The Council's Head of Finance Breda McCarthy stated: "The Councillors met on 7th November and expressed concern about increasing the annual rate in valuation given the current economic climate, but they also were opposed to cutting any services, which really left me in a situation that I was damned if I did and damned if I didn't. The budget had to be balanced."

Option B, which councillors voted in favour of, was made possible after the Council was notified by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage on 22nd November that there would be support for loss of income following Global Valuations Appeals. The Council was then able to amend its Budget to find savings of €723,000.

The 2023 Budget is a 13% increase on the 2022 Budget. Frontline service cuts have been avoided and increases are being made to most services to address pay, energy and cost inflation. A Mid-East Energy Unit is to be established and over €1m in discretionary funding will be given to Wicklow's Municipal Districts.

Independent councillor Stephen Stokes from Greystones stated, "There is to be no increase in commercial rates. Small and medium businesses have experienced unprecedented challenges in recent years. It is important to keep Wicklow open for business. I would use this opportunity to urge people to continue to shop local where possible, especially during the festive season.

"I'm particularly pleased to see that potential recycling centre charges have been dropped. From my experience of living in Manchester, when a Council reduces this type of service or brings in charges, it can lead to increased fly-tipping. I believe we

need to encourage increased recycling centre usage. In the future I would like to see the Greystones Municipal District considered for a recycling facility."

Cllr Stokes acknowledged the hard work of Wicklow County Council officials in preparing the accounts. He said: "These are challenging economic times. Wicklow County Council staff have responded admirably in response to the Ukrainian response, let alone all the other issues throughout the year."

Cllr Derek Mitchell welcomed that the 2023 budget would provide extra council staff in Greystones: "The Budget includes two extra staff for Greystones as a result of a review of driver numbers," he said. "I have complained for years that there weren't enough staff to cope with the rapid growth in Greystones and last year voted against the budget. The street cleaning machine has remained in the depot as there hasn't been anyone to drive it. The Chief Executive has committed to ensuring it is used and it has now been sent for maintenance. Numbers of other categories of staff will be reviewed next year."

Firm commitment on DPG applications

Independent Councillor Joe Behan asked Chief Executive of Wicklow County Council Brian Gleeson to confirm that no DPG (Disabled Persons Grant) application would be refused due to a lack of funding.

Chief Executive Brian Gleeson stated: "I'm happy to confirm that is the case. No application will be refused on the basis of the budget here today. Categorically, we'd actually welcome as many applications as possible. I'd like to have a situation where we get in more applications and we have to actually

pay out more so we'd actually encourage people to get in their applications as soon as possible or early in the year so we can process them."

Climate Action

Following last week's Budget meeting, Bray Municipal District councillor Rory O'Connor (Ind), a member of Wicklow County Council's climate change and biodiversity Strategic Policy Committee, welcomed the decision taken to increase Wicklow spending on climate action by €135,000 euro. This proposal was fully supported by all councillors.

"This funding will be used to help meet the national commitments to climate action," said Cllr O'Connor. "In doing this a climate action plan will be produced by Wicklow county council. The process for this will start in the new year. The plan will further help decarbonise Wicklow and maintain its environment. The funding will also assist the mid east energy unit, which is a partnership between Wicklow, Kildare and Meath county councils. This unit works collaboratively to further each council climate migrations actions and ambitions. A fraction of the new funding will also be going to create new EV chargers across Wicklow.

"This new funding shows that Wicklow county council is committed to climate action and keeping Wicklow the garden of Ireland. The success of these projects are key to decarbonising all of Wicklow and securing a future for this lovely county of ours. In 2023, the council will have some huge projects to deliver on, such as the climate action plan and I look forward to working alongside my fellow councillors and council officials in delivering it."



Pat Nolan and Jenna Hogan at the Annacurra Community Christmas Market

Proposals sought to establish of new Youth Diversion Projects

The Department of Justice is inviting proposals for community and youth service organisations to establish new Youth Diversion Projects in:

- South Monaghan
- Claremorris and District
- South and East Co. Wicklow (which may be treated as one unit, or separate applications may be made for the distinct geographical areas)
- West County Cork (i.e. north of Bandon)

Applicants must be registered charities and demonstrate a strong track record of delivering programmes of support for challenging young people and sound corporate governance and financial management capabilities. Applications are welcome from individual organisations or from a consortium of eligible organisations (with one specified lead for governance and financial management purposes).

Youth Justice Projects (YDPs) work with young people at risk of crime and anti-social behaviour. They are a key support to An Garda Síochána in the operation of the statutory Garda Youth Diversion Programme under the Children's Act 2001. There are currently some 105 YDPs in operation and the intention (under the Government's Youth Justice Strategy) is to have the service available throughout the State by end-2023. The establishment of these new projects will mark a significant milestone in the achievement of this objective.

Details of the operational requirements for YDPs are available at <https://www.gov.ie/en/collection/1a1cd-youth-diversion-projects/>

Expressions of interest in principle from community-based organisations in establishing new YDPs in any of these areas should be submitted to yjs@justice.ie by 12 January 2023. Shortlisting may apply. Additional information for approved applicants on the youth crime profile in the specific areas and operational boundaries for the new projects will then be made available from before end of January 2023.

Completed proposals should then be sent to yjs@justice.ie by 1 April 2023.



An Roinn Dlí agus Cirt
Department of Justice



Stephen Byrne and Jimmy Belbontin at the Arklow Christmas Market in Árus Lorcaín

Wicklow awarded funding for Outdoor Projects worth nearly €1m

Wicklow County Council is set to receive €991,170 to develop four projects across the county under the Government's outdoor recreation amenities scheme.

The four projects to be funded include the enhancement of trails at Russborough Parklands and House, development of a Community Riverside Walk and Recreation Area in Glenmalure and an equestrian Trail being constructed in Coolkenno.

It is Roundwood that will benefit most from the announcement with the sum of €495,000 awarded for the development of a bike hub and the promotion of the amenities in the Vartry trail area.

In collaboration with the landowners Coillte and other stakeholders, Wicklow County Council proposes to enhance the popular Vartry recreation area with the addition

of a bike hub for beginners, intermediate and advanced bike users.

In welcoming the announcement, Cathaoirleach of Wicklow County Council, Cllr Tommy Annesley, added: "This funding will make a huge difference to the development of outdoor recreation amenities in the county and he thanked Minister Humphreys and the Department of Rural and community development officials for their continued support for Wicklow."

Councillor Shay Cullen welcomed the announcement, saying "I am particularly delighted that the project in Roundwood has been awarded €495,000 for the development

of a Bike Hub and promotion of the amenities at The Vartry Trails. This collaboration between Coillte and Wicklow County Council shows ambition and commitment to our rural economies and will hopefully be another step in making Wicklow the destination for people looking for adventure tourism."

Minister for Rural and Community Development, Heather Humphreys, last week announced

€14m countrywide for the development of 59 outdoor recreation amenities and to support outdoor pursuits such as hiking, mountaineering, kayaking, and cycling.

Public Information Day to be held for Bray Harbour Improvement Scheme

Wicklow County Council has been successful in securing Urban Regeneration Development Funding from the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage to carry out improvement works to Bray Harbour. The Information Day will be held on Tuesday 6th December 2022 in the Town Hall, Main Street, Bray between 3.00pm and 6.00pm. Members of the Project Team will be available to answer questions.

These works will include:

- * Review potential for harbour wall extension, dredging of the waterbody for improved berthing and protection of boats from storms
- * Amenity and Public Realm

provision and access to recreational facilities

- * Promenade board walk linking the beach promenade with the harbour

RPS Consultants were engaged to carry out a feasibility study and have now prepared concept drawings of proposals.

The Council invites all stakeholders, user groups, residents and members of the public to attend a non-statutory public consultation information day to view the work undertaken to date and the programme for advancement of this project.

This non-statutory consultation event also provides an opportunity for feedback and observations to be submitted by stakeholders and members of the public which may inform the further development of the project during the next stages.

The information will also be available to view in the offices of Bray Municipal District,

Civic Offices, Bray, from Wednesday 7th to Friday 9th December 2022 during office opening times.

Wicklow County Council says it "values the opinion of all stakeholders, user groups, residents and members of the public on this project and welcome all feedback which will be considered by the project team as part of the next stage of the development of the project."

Any queries in relation to the Bray Harbour Improvement Project can be emailed to BrayHarbourProject@wicklow-coco.ie.

Government approve purchase of 90 new electric Dart carriages

Potential for services to and from Wicklow Town to be increased

The Government has approved the purchase of 90 new battery operated electric DART carriages. Minister Stephen Donnelly says the move opens the way for a radically improved train service to Wicklow Town as the new carriages will not require overhead lines to be in place.

The carriages which will cost €179 million will now be put on order and in service in 2026. The new carriages are likely to replace the current older stock of 74 DART carriages in use which were built in 1983.

The purchase of the battery operated carriages, known as battery-electric multiple units (BEMUs), will allow for services to be extended along the greater DART route in places like Kildare, Maynooth and Mallow in Cork.

The BEMUs can operate in electric-only mode using overhead electric wires or, through the use of batteries, in battery-electric operation in other parts of the rail network, maximising flexibility and capacity, and helping to replace and decarbonise existing diesel-

fleet operations.

The Department of Transport stated that "The adaptable nature of the carriages means there is also potential to use them at some stage in the future between Greystones and Wicklow and/or for Cork Area Commuter Rail, serving communities between Mallow, Cork, Cobh and Middleton, subject to available funding for necessary infrastructure."

In addition, the new fleet will provide two wheelchair spaces in a five carriage train and for the first time will have an automated retractable step which will in most cases allow wheelchair users to access the train without assistance.

Minister Donnelly said: "This is a game-changer for the people of Wicklow as it significant-

ly increases the capacity of our rail service to get commuters into Dublin. These new carriages can travel both on and off the current DART network opening up the real possibility of being able to extend services to Wicklow Town.

"They are of course not only good for the environment but also will for the first time give disabled commuters the opportunity to use the DART without needing assistance.

"Having these new carriages in operation servicing Wicklow, Bray and Greystones opens up huge possibilities for the growth of the county and will help ease the commuting issues faced at peak times. I will be pushing hard to make sure we get the absolute maximum increase in capacity to ensure a better service for the people of Wicklow."

Jim Meade, CEO of Iarnod Eireann, welcomed the Cabinet's decision: "The funding for 90 additional battery-electric

carriages for DART+ is hugely welcome, as it will enable us to bring capacity and emission benefits to current and future commuters in advance of electrification. Additionally, the benefits will be felt nationwide, as existing Intercity and Commuter carriages operating in the Greater Dublin Area are freed up for use around the national network for more frequent services and more capacity on a range of routes."

Anne Graham, CEO of the NTA, said: "The procurement of these battery-electric carriages is indicative of the urgency that is being shown when it comes to providing sustainable accessible transport alternatives for communities along these lines and beyond. In the draft GDA Transport Strategy 2022-2042, we announced that Public Service Obligation bus and commuter rail fleet in the Dublin Metropolitan Area will be 100% electric and zero-emission by 2035."

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Siofra Dalton, Gabrielle Perry and Niamh Flood with Santa and Mrs Claus at the Annacurra Community Christmas Market

'Wicklow patients need delivery on community neurological services'

Social Democrats TD Jennifer Whitmore is supporting the 'Patients Deserve Better' campaign launched last week by the Neurological Alliance of Ireland (NAI) which is calling for more community neurorehabilitation teams.

Deputy Whitmore said: "I am calling on the Minister to do all in his power to deliver the desperately needed community services for neurological patients here in Wicklow. We currently have no community rehab teams available for patients in County Wicklow."

"This week I met with the Neurological Alliance of Ireland (NAI) at the launch of the 'Patients Deserve Better' - Neurorehabilitation campaign. This campaign is calling for the delivery of long promised investment to tackle the shortage of community care centres across nine CHO areas in Ireland including the two CHOs which would serve Wicklow. These teams would allow hundreds of people across the county to access rehabilitation following stroke, brain injuries, Parkinson's patients, and others in need of physical or speech therapy."

"These are essential healthcare services which we need to be delivered in Wicklow. I will continue to raise this issue with the Minister until the much need services are in place."

There are only two community neurorehabilitation teams in Ireland, despite nine teams being required. This means that only 15% of neurological patients in Ireland have access to teams that provide vital care to support their recovery.

In CHO Area 6 which includes Wicklow, Dun Laoghaire, Dublin South East funding for a community neurorehabilitation team has been in place since 2020 but no team has been established.

The shortfall was highlighted by the Neurological Alliance of Ireland (NAI) at the launch of

their new campaign seeking a commitment from elected representatives and the HSE to tackle the absence of a community neurorehabilitation team in CHO Area 6.

Speaking at the launch, Magdalen Rogers NAI Executive Director, said: "Once a person receives a diagnosis of a neurological condition, they need to be supported in their recovery and the management of their condition. That's what a community neurorehabilitation team does. It brings together health care professionals from a range of disciplines such as an occupational therapist, a speech and language therapist, a physiotherapist and a clinical psychologist to enable a person living with a neurological condition to live well."

As well outlining the positive impact a community neurorehabilitation team can have on a patient's recovery, the NAI presented a clear economic rationale for urgently establishing the teams in the seven CHOs that do not have a team in place.

Ms Rogers continued: "For every euro spent on a community neurorehabilitation team, the health service saves 11 euro. Having these teams in place is vital in reducing the length of stay and delayed discharges and therefore freeing up beds in acute hospitals. The neurorehabilitation team also prevents unnecessary admissions to hospitals and improves the overall well-being and quality of life of patients with a range of neurological conditions. We have estimated that having the teams in place could save up to 42,000 bed days annually."

"We are calling on elected rep-

resentatives and the HSE to commit to delivering the services for the people they represent in their constituency. Funding was approved for the neurorehabilitation team in CHO 6 in 2020 however there is still no team in place. Having a team in place in CHO Area 6 could have a positive impact on the lives of those living with neurological conditions in Wicklow, Dun Laoghaire and South Dublin."

At the campaign launch, Bernadette Nolan from Bray, whose husband has an acquired brain injury said, "Since he came home from hospital in 2018, my husband has had no access to a neurorehabilitation team in the community. We have been told time and time again that funding exists however the team never materialises. We have been left to our own devices to organise his rehabilitation."

"The first two years after a brain injury are the most important for rehabilitation in terms of success rates and regaining as much quality of life as possible. We finally have access to an adult speech and language therapist, but my husband needed that support much earlier than now. Neurological patients need timely access to rehabilitation. We shouldn't have to fight for these services. We need our represented electives and the HSE to take action now."

Dr Eimear Smith, consultant and rehabilitation specialist at the National Rehabilitation Hospital Dublin also spoke at the launch. The Patients Deserve Better campaign brings together over 22 non-profit organisations working with people with neurological conditions.

Proposals invited for West Wicklow Youth Diversion Projects

Minister of State with responsibility for Youth Justice, James Browne, is inviting proposals from community and youth service organisations to establish new Youth Diversion Projects (YDPs) in West Wicklow.

Youth Diversion Projects (YDPs) work with young people at risk of crime and anti-social behaviour to divert them away from criminal behaviour and towards better life outcomes. They are a key support to An Garda Síochána in the operation of the statutory Garda Youth Diversion Programme under the Children's Act 2001.

YDPs engage with young people under Juvenile Liaison Officer supervision or who have been referred by other agencies for example Tusla. YDPs provide a range of supports, including education, training and

employment support, social enterprise initiatives, as well as personal development supports such as mentoring.

There are currently some 105 YDPs in operation and the intention (under the Government's Youth Justice Strategy) is to provide full geographic availability of youth diversion services throughout the State by end-2023. The establishment of these four new projects will mark a significant milestone in the achievement of this objective.

Minister Browne said: "Having visited many Youth Diversion Projects across the country during my time as Minister of State, I have seen firsthand the positive impact they have on both the young people who they welcome through their doors and the wider communities in which they are based."

"The establishment of these new projects will mark a significant milestone in the achievement of the Youth Justice Strategy's commitment to having YDP services available in all areas. These new YDPs will be responsible for providing family support, early intervention supports for 8-11 year olds, working with harder to reach young people and supporting schools to retain children with challenging behaviour where the necessary risk threshold has been met.

"It is so important that

we give young people at risk of going down the wrong path every opportunity to correct themselves and meet their full potential. Youth Diversion Projects not only divert young people away from crime, but also work to foster young people's talents, interests and personal development. I cannot underscore enough the value of these projects in communities and I look forward to their further expansion on foot of this call."

Expressions of interest in principle from community-based organisations should be submitted to yjs@justice.ie by 12th January 2023, having regard to the operational requirements as set out at <https://www.gov.ie/en/collection/1a1cd-youth-diversion-projects/>

142 Cost Rental Homes in Delgany

142 Cost Rental homes in Archer's Wood, Delgany built by Cairn are now being offered by the Land Development Agency for €1,455 pm for two beds in Phase 1.

Cllr Derek Mitchell (FG) welcomed the news, saying "This sounds good value compared to the open market. I'm glad that this initiative will help the 'squeezed middle' who have not been able to afford a home."

"Forty eight are open for application now and 94 one-beds will be open in early 2023. Net household income should be under €53,000 and not receiving social housing supports and some other conditions. If interested register your interest on their website www.lda.ie. Selection of offers will be by lottery."

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Nursing homes deliver protest letter to Government TDs

'This will be the winter of our discontent'

A small group of concerned private/voluntary nursing homes in Wicklow last Thursday handed in a letter of protest at the constituency offices of Minister for Health Stephen Donnelly TD, Minister for Higher Education Simon Harris TD, and Steven Matthews TD.

The letter states that the government has 'abandoned' the private/voluntary nursing home sector.

It states: "We, as Registered Providers and Registered Provider Representatives of voluntary/private Long-Term Residential Care Facilities (LTRCFs) in Wicklow wish to express to the three of you in the strongest possible terms, our total frustration at the abandonment of the private and voluntary nursing home sector by you and your government."

It says that offers of financial assistance to cover the increased utility costs being faced are "derisory".

"When this is coupled with the absolute discriminatory treatment of our public and voluntary LTRCFs it is abundantly clear that the government has no understanding of the crisis that currently exists, and which is becoming more severe within the sector," the letter says.

"Public designated centres for older people in Ireland are more favourably treated under the Nursing Home Support Scheme also known as The Fair Deal Scheme. There is nothing fair about this scheme[...]

The average price paid per Resident in private/voluntary homes was €1,047 in 2022 but the average price charged in public nursing homes was €1,674 per Resident. This is an advantage of €627 per week per resident."

"Public nursing homes receive approximately 30% of the overall budget for the Fair Deal Scheme yet provide care to less than 20% of the residents covered by the scheme. Three reports into the Scheme have stated in the strongest terms that it is not fit for purpose. Yet, nothing has been done to fix a process that manages more than €1 billion of the taxpayer's money.

"The government is paying cost of living subsidies into the electricity accounts of people, many of whom are in private/voluntary nursing homes with no one living in the house. Surely with a bit of effort such payments can be identified and paid to the nursing home where the recipient is a resident.

"The amount of administrative work involved in the Covid-19 payment for qualifying staff in private/voluntary LTRCFs is incredulous. To deny administrators and contractors access to this payment is totally unfair. We could not have survived without these people during the pandemic as it was all hands-on deck and there were no demarcation lines when the hard work had to be done.

"There are 1515 people directly employed in private/voluntary LTRCFs in Wicklow. If we were a multinational/technical company employing over

1000 staff, government officials /IDA would be falling over themselves offering us grants and tax benefits. But we are not, we are mainly small independent operators who are overburdened with bureaucracy, unfairness and lack of willingness of the NTPF to negotiate a fair price for the invaluable services and good quality jobs that we provide in our local communities.

"Sixteen private/voluntary nursing homes have closed in the past two years. The domino effect is that hospitals are having serious difficulties placing patients who are ready for discharge into nursing homes resulting in serious bed blocking and putting more stress on hospitals. This will be the winter of our discontent and if you think the pandemic was challenging for the health sector, wait until you see what is coming down the road over the next six months."



David, Cillian and Kevin Wood with Santa at the turning on of the Christmas lights in Arklow

'Government has again failed the retained fire service'

Sinn Féin TD John Brady has described indications that the members of the Retained Fire Service across Wicklow have voted overwhelmingly in favour of both industrial action, and strike action by a margin of 99% and 98% respectively, as being "indicative of the scale which the government has failed the members of the Retained Fire Service".

This follows notice of intent to ballot for industrial and strike action being served on the Chief Executive of Wicklow County Council in October.

Deputy Brady said: "Results revealed today show that 99% of Retained Fire Fighters in county Wicklow have taken the decision to vote in two ballots in favour of industrial action, and in favour of strike action.

"Just a few short weeks ago, I brought a forward a motion to the Dail that sought the establishment of a Joint Oireachtas cross party committee, to sit for a period of four months and that would have heard evidence from expert witnesses and stakeholders in order to identify the key issues impacting on the Retained Fire Service. Following which it would have brought recommendations to the government.

"The Retained Fire Service are frontline workers, they are our friends, relations, and neighbours across the county of Wicklow. They are the first people that ordinary people in Wicklow see on perhaps the worst day of their lives. Their



John Brady TD

safety and our safety, the safety of the general public, is conditional on the willingness of management to give them the resources needed to do their job safely. There appears to be a reluctance by management to do this.

"With the current crisis in retention and recruitment they are forced to work extra hours to make up for staffing shortages where they forgo time off to spend with families. It is not a role conducive to family life. And the retainer money they

receive does not come close to compensating them for the sacrifices that they make.

"Current conditions offer little incentive for new recruits to the Retained Fire Service. It is seen as a thankless role with little or no personal benefit. A recent survey points to some 60% of Retained Fire Service intending to leave the service in the near future. Many within the next year.

"The strain of being on 24-hour call, seven days a week, in understaffed fire stations, with little hope of promotion is having a significant impact on morale. Many highly trained, highly motivated individuals who love the fire service, and are committed to serving their communities are being forced out of the job.

"There is an urgent onus on Minister O'Brien to bring forward proposals with the potential to resolve the difficulties in the Retained Fire Service. It is he alone who now has the capability to ensure that the Retained Fire Fighters are not forced into either industrial or strike action in order to save their service."

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Virginia Crosbie MP celebrates a decade of friendship with Holyhead's civic leaders in Greystones

Ynys Môn Conservative MP Virginia Crosbie travelled to Ireland recently to celebrate a decade of friendship between the twin towns of Greystones and Holyhead, Wales.

Virginia took the ferry with Holyhead's civic leaders for the visit along with Holyhead Santa, the Holyhead Male Voice Choir and the Magee Brothers who both took part in a sell-out concert at the Whale Theatre.

She also lost no opportunity to wear her Freeport jacket to promote her campaign for a freeport on Anglesey.

During the visit, the group visited several

Greystone facilities including the Greystones Library, the Shoreline Centre, and the Shoreline Leisure Sports Park in Charlesland.

"I had a wonderful visit and a warm welcome from the people of Greystones," said Virginia.

"This is a special relationship between two coastal towns. I invited the Greystones team over to Holyhead to celebrate St David's day next year and

I will do everything I can to make sure this twinning goes from strength to strength.

"I would like to thank Holyhead Santa Richard Burnell and Elves Sue Williams and Dewi Thomas for bringing so much joy to the local children.

"A huge shout out to Holyhead Town Council - especially Mayor Adrienne Edwards, the Friends of South Stack

Ynys Lawd Ltd, Richard Parry, Rob Henderson, Alan Williams, Hywel Williams, Robert Williams and the Stena Adventurer crew.

"I would also like to express my gratitude to the Greystones team including Mayor Gerry Walsh, Cllr Stephen Stokes, and Kathleen Kelleher and many others for looking after us so well."

Cllr Stokes thanked the

Holyhead delegation that visited Greystones to mark 10 years of twinning.

Cllr Stokes stated: "Saturday, November 19th, was a special day in our Greystones-Holyhead twinning partnership. Firstly Holyhead Santa brought joy to the children of our town, with a wonderful procession. Following this there was a remarkable sold out concert at the Whale Theatre, with the Holyhead Male Voice Choir and the Magee Brothers performing. We could not have asked for a better day."

The tour was led by Cllr Stokes and Kathleen Kelleher, and had special talks from representative of the Shoreline Centres including Eamonn Whelan.

Cllr Stokes added: "Many members to the Holyhead delegation praised the facilities in Greystones. Of course they too have many excellent amenities, so hopefully these visits help to inspire each other to look at new areas."

The Holyhead delegation also visited the Greystones Municipal District Offices where a



Virginia Crosbie MP with Holyhead Santa Richard Burnell, Elves Sue Williams and Dewi Thomas, representatives of the Garda and a friendly snowman at the celebrations in Greystones.

number of encouraging speeches were made by Virginia Crosbie MP, Cllr Gerry Walsh (Cathaoirleach, Greystones Municipal District), Cllr Adrienne Edwards (Mayor of Holyhead), Cllr Stephen Stokes, and Kathleen Kelleher (Former Mayor of Greystones).

Cllr Stokes recalled how the twinning partnership came to pass. He stated: "In 2009 the Tourism & Twinning Subcommittee of Greystones Town Council was given a remit to explore twinning options with UK towns, especially those with a maritime focus. That committee consisted of myself as Chairperson, Ciaran Hayden, and James O'Sullivan. Holyhead heard that Greystones was seeking a twinning part-

nership and wrote to Greystones Town Council. From there we had some exploratory meetings.

Both sides agreed that this was a great opportunity to promote community relations and understanding."

A formal twinning partnership was concluded between Greystones and Holyhead in 2012. Over the past 10 years numerous groups have participated in twinning activities including cultural, maritime and sporting. Cllr Stephen Stokes paid tribute to several Greystones organisers who helped to make the visit a success.

He concluded: "Tawnia Kearns and Kay Coughlan from Wicklow County Council went above and beyond to coordinate the logistics. Former

Greystones Mayor, Kathleen Kelleher is a stalwart of our twinning relations. She is consistently the key link that brings lots of groups together. Cllr Gerry Walsh was superb. His support for Santa's parade planning was invaluable. Cllr Walsh also made everyone very welcome with warm words of support for our Holyhead partners Greystones Town Team had the vision to make Holyhead Santa a reality in 2021 and 2022. Finally a big thank you to An Garda Síochána and Greystones Fire Service for their continued support which is appreciated."

Any group or school interested in twinning can contact Cllr Stephen Stokes on stephen-stokes101@gmail.com.



Cllr Stephen Stokes, Holyhead Mayor Cllr Adrienne Edwards, Virginia Crosbie MP, and Cllr Gerry Walsh in Greystones Municipal District Offices

Arklow church offers people a chance to be part of musical history with 'sponsor a pipe' campaign

As part of a conservation drive to preserve an almost 150-year old church organ, Sts. Mary and Peter Church, Arklow is inviting people to sponsor an organ pipe for €100.

The Church of Sts. Mary and Peter in Arklow has formally launched a unique fundraising appeal, asking the public to donate €100 to sponsor one of its organ's 900 pipes. This sponsorship appeal is part of a €128,000 plan to overhaul the instrument and to ensure its preservation and use for generations to come.



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Headed by the church's musical director and organist John Bonner, a long-time music teacher at the nearby St. Mary's College, this fundraising campaign should enable much-needed restoration work on the historic pipe organ, which was built in 1878 by John White of Dublin.

While some general

maintenance work was undertaken in 1995 (removal and cleaning of pipes, mechanism and releathering of bellows), additional work is now deemed necessary to address some musical and technical problems that have long prevented its use as a recital instrument and its power to inspire congregations. The conservation work will be carried out by noted organ specialist Trevor Crowe Ltd. of Co. Kildare, who in 2003 restored John White's final church organ (1908) at St. Agatha's Church, Dublin.

Speaking about the organ and the importance of the conservation work, Mr. Bonner said:

"This organ has provided loyal service for almost 150 years, leading the singing in countless church liturgies and momentous occasions (both joyful and sad). It is also a very

important part of our town's musical life and our identity. As any organ gets older, it needs extra care. While we have been able to preserve it with cleaning, and maintenance, the organ now needs further restoration work to ensure that it can continue to provide the soundtrack to our lives for the next 150 years. Besides playing a vital role in our church liturgies, it is also an important musical instrument that needs to be played and heard in recitals and other occasional events."

For more information or to make a donation directly, interested people can visit the Parish website at www.arklowparish.ie or contact the parish on Facebook. Further information about the organ, its restoration requirements and the church are available on request.



The Church of Sts. Mary and Peter in Arklow

John Patrick White (1834-1918), who built the Arklow organ in 1878, was the eldest son of John White senior (c.1809-1859), also an organ builder and organist, who had established his business in 1844 and built some fine church organs, including large instruments for Enniscorthy Cathedral, Our Lady of Refuge Rathmines, Carmelite Church Whitefriar St. and

St. Paul's, Arran Quay. His reputation would have been even greater had he not died tragically in his sleep at the age of 50.

John Patrick inherited the family business and was also highly regarded as a builder, voicer of pipes, organist and choir director. While many of his instruments have since been modified, replaced or removed for various reasons (includ-

ing closure of churches), he built instruments for St. Peter's Church Drogheda, Westland Row, Ballina Cathedral, two for Dublin's Pro-Cathedral and a large organ for Gardiner St. Church. Just before building Arklow's organ he exported one to St. Michael's Cathedral, Bathurst, Sydney, Australia. This was removed in 1960s due to damage from building works.

'Changing Places' toilets to become standard

Green Party TD Steven Matthews, Chair of the Oireachtas Committee on Housing, Planning and Heritage, has announced the change to building regulations that will provide up to 80 extra 'Changing Places' disabled facilities nationwide each year in buildings such as schools, healthcare facilities, shopping centres, hotels, museums, galleries, cinemas, roadside service stations and heritage sites.

Deputy Matthews initiated the process in 2020 when he requested that a review be carried out to examine amending the regulations. He made this request after consultation with Changing Places activists and family members. At the time no such facilities existed in Co. Wicklow.

Since then two have been installed in the county, one in Wicklow Town and one in Avondale Rathdrum, and this change to the regulations ensures that in the coming years there will be a Changing Places facility in most towns in Wicklow.

A Changing Places toilet offers larger supported facilities that address the needs of people for whom current accessible sanitary accommodation is inadequate. These facilities enable people with complex care needs to take part in everyday activities such as travel, shopping, family days out or attending a sporting event.

It's estimated that there are currently only 19 changing places toilets in Ireland. The revised

Part M Building Regulation will greatly improve community participation and social inclusion for people with complex care needs.

Speaking on the eve of International Day of Persons with Disabilities 2022 Deputy Matthews said, "I'm delighted to see these revised regulations signed into force today. I'd like to note the work of Cllr Erika Doyle and activist Aaron Daly who first brought this to me, Minister Malcolm Noonan who agreed to my request to establish a working group to examine the regulations, and of course the Changing Places Ireland campaigners. Up until now, families have had to lobby and campaign for individual facilities. This change ensures that the provision of adequate toilet facilities is now a requirement for certain public buildings.

"These revised regulations will greatly enhance the lives of many people with a disability. Changing places toilets are needed to allow equal access to social activity and

trips away from home for all citizens, and allow people with disabilities enjoy life in ways that I know many of us take for granted.

"Meaningful engagement with people with lived experience of disability was central to the approach. Much consideration went into the membership of the working group to ensure that the right people were around the table.

"The group included those with the correct design proficiency as well as users and their carers. Approximately 650 submissions were received in response to the public consultation, of which almost 95% originated from individuals on behalf of themselves as service users, their families, carers and friends."

In response to the introduction of the new regulations Changing Places Ireland campaigner Aaron Daly said: "On behalf of Changing Places Ireland we commend the Department officials for their Trojan work in coordinating and getting this progressive legis-



Deputy Steven Matthews, campaigner Aaron Daly and his daughter Sophia, and Green Party councillor Erika Doyle, Cathaoirleach of Bray Municipal District

lation so promptly over the line and Deputy Steven Matthews, Cllr Erika Doyle and Minister Malcolm Noonan for initiating the process," says Aaron, father of

Sophia, aged 16, a wheelchair user and one of many who require the additional features which Changing Places facilities provide, who adds these changes

will have a huge impact on disabled people and their families and we look forward to Ireland becoming a lot more accessible and inclusive for everyone."

'We are in an absolute nightmare of a situation'

A distraught Greystones mum has pleaded with health chiefs to prioritise her daughter's urgently-needed spinal surgery so she can finally be reunited with her family for Christmas.

Miley McKee, 12, whose complex needs have left her in constant pain, has already faced a tortuous wait of over two years for a scoliosis operation.

Her parents Ann and wife Charlene had previously been informed the procedure would take place in early October at Children's Health Ireland (CHI) at Crumlin - only for medical chiefs to then cancel the operation due to a shortage of specialised nursing staff.

By Nick Bramhill

Agonisingly, there has since been no progress in re-scheduling the surgery for Miley, with Children Health's Ireland representatives admitting in subsequent correspondence that "a shortage of bed availability for elective surgeries" has added to the delay.

To make matters worse, the close-knit family - including Miley's younger sister, Porter - now faces spending Christmas apart,

unless the procedure is given the green light in the coming days.

Three months ago Charlene took the difficult decision to temporarily move out of their Greystones home with five-year-old Porter, in order to protect Miley from picking up an infection from her younger sibling in the run-up to her surgery.

But now Ann, 45, fears that her dream of reuniting her two daughters after three months apart for Christmas is looking less



Sisters Miley and Porter McKee with their parents Charlene and Ann McKee

and less likely.

She said: "We are in an absolute nightmare of a situation. The worst thing about all this delay is the constant pain our daughter is going through. Her ribs are sitting on her pelvis, and her spine is crushing her lungs."

"She desperately needs this operation to stabilise her spine and straighten up her back. The procedure will stop her lungs being crushed and ease her pain. Basically, it will massively improve her quality of life."

Health authorities have refused to comment directly on Miley's case, but in recent correspondence CHI insisted that the decision to cancel the youngster's surgery was due to "a shortage of paediatric nurses with specialised airway training who are required

to care for highly complex patients with tracheostomies".

The letter, signed by CHI chief operations officer Joe Gannon, continued: "It is not safe to proceed with her surgery with the volume and complexity of the patients currently on the ward and the staffing challenges being experienced."

In addition to these challenges, as the winter season approaches, CHI at Crumlin are experiencing high volumes of patients through their emergency department, and this has also impacted bed availability for elective surgeries and intensive care unit supports."

However, in a later response to a parliamentary question from Wicklow TD Jennifer Whitmore, CHI appeared to contradict itself when it

stated it "has a large number of tracheostomy trained nurses across CHI at Temple Street and CHI at Crumlin".

Deputy Whitmore, who has known Miley and her family for a number of years, insisted any further delays for the youngster's procedure would be unacceptable.

She said: "I know how serious and painful Miley's condition is, and it is just heartbreaking. No child or family should be put through this, and the fact that such a vulnerable child has been let down so badly is an illustration of how broken our health system is."

"The Minister and the HSE must immediately find a solution to ensure that Miley gets her operation. Any further delay is simply not acceptable."

Meanwhile, Miley's parents have told how the ongoing delays have left her hopes of reuniting her family for Christmas in tatters.

Ann added: "We've been apart for so long now to ensure Miley doesn't pick up a virus before her surgery, and now we're facing the unthinkable situation of being separated at Christmas."

"Charlene and Porter come to the window to wave to us, but the girls haven't been physically together for months. It's so heartbreaking to have to say to a five-year-old that she can't come into her own home."

"But that's the awful reality we're living with at the moment. It'll be devastating if we can't all be together at Christmas."

Bone Marrow for Leukaemia Trust

We are proud to reintroduce our 'Light a Star for a Loved One Tree'. This year you can light a star for a loved one or in memory of a loved one and send this star to them.

We are also selling our Christmas Cards online. Visit our website for more details.

Bone Marrow for Leukaemia Trust
HOPe Directorate, St. James's Hospital,
Dublin 8. Phone: 01 428 4412
www.bonemarrowtrust.ie

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BRAY TOURISM KIOSKS AT BRAY SEAFRONT

Bray Tourism Ltd invites Expressions of Interest from Individuals seeking to lease the Kiosks at Bray Seafront from February 2023 to October 2023. There are a total of 6 Kiosks available running from North to South with No. 1 being nearest to the Aquarium building.

An Expression of Interest application form is available on www.bray.ie or by emailing braytourism@wicklowcoco.ie

Expressions of Interest should be made in writing to the undersigned not later than 12 noon on Friday 20th January 2023

Bray Tourism Ltd, Block A, Civic Offices,
 Main Street, Bray, Co. Wicklow.
 Phone: 01 2867128
 Email: braytourism@wicklowcoco.ie
 Website: www.bray.ie

Bray Soroptimists help to 'Orange the World'



Bray Soroptimists members on Bray seafront supporting the 'Orange the World' campaign

25th November marked the UN International Day of the Elimination of Violence against Women and the start of 16 Days of Activism against Gender Violence, ending on 10th December (Human Rights Day). During this time, Soroptimists across Ireland are taking action and calling for the Elimination of Violence against Women.

In Ireland, violence against women is a significant issue that has worsened since the pandemic and this year Soroptimists throughout Ireland will be working with their local communities to highlight the UN Orange the World Campaign.

Soroptimists are placing Orange high heel shoes in windows of shops and businesses for the campaign's duration with the simple message to women that "you are not alone".

They have also created posters and information cards with the same message highlighting the Women's aid Freephone number to enable women to gain help and support as needed.

The Bray & District branch of Soroptimists International launched their campaign in Greystones on Friday 25th November, in conjunction with Greystones Resource Centre, Bray Women's Refuge, ANU Wicklow Domestic Violence Supports, and AkiDwa (an organisation which supports all migrant women experiencing domestic abuse).



Orange shoe in the window of Ashanti Gold boutique in Greystones

Santa's sleigh has arrived to NCBI HQ and he's ready to write to you!

The most wonderful time of the year is nearly upon us and Santa is as busy as always, but not so busy that he can't make time for the children who are linked in with NCBI (National Council for the Blind of Ireland)



Santa has returned to NCBI HQ once again, with the help of An Post, to respond to letters from children who are blind or vision impaired.

What makes our team up with Santa so special is that he will respond to each child's accessibility requirements with a letter of his own in whichever format suits each child best - audio CD, Braille or large print.

Lina Kouzi, NCBI Library Access Service Manager, explained: "Santa has become a brilliant friend to NCBI and each year he works with us, he is becoming even

more of an expert in written material accessibility for children with sight loss!

"This project is always a special one as it allows Santa and the children connected to NCBI to share special moments that will hopefully become a Christmas memory that lasts a lifetime.

"We hope that children who are blind or vision impaired all around Ireland will get involved once again. Let's keep Santa busy!"

If your child or a child you know would like an accessible Santa Card, you can email your letter to: Santa@ncbi.ie. If you would prefer to send a physical letter, please send it to Santa, C/O NCBI Library, Unit 29 Finglas

Business Centre, Jamestown Road, Finglas, Dublin 11.

To make sure that Santa and his elves get it right during the busy festive season, please let Santa know if you would like an audio, Braille or large print response and please provide your address and Santa will write back!

Please also keep in mind that Santa gets lots of post this time of year so he needs to have your letters in by the 14th of December! Let's make this Christmas an unforgettable one, for all children.

NCBI provides practical and emotional support, rehabilitation services, and other training designed to help people with sight loss live independently and confidently.

Wicklow named second most generous county

International women's rights organisation ActionAid has named Wicklow the second most generous county in Ireland, for the second year running. Wicklow ranked second in terms of donations to ActionAid per percentage of the population, after Kerry.

Karol Balfe, CEO of ActionAid Ireland, said: "2022 presented huge challenges for human rights- from war, climate change, and unfair economic practices. The cost-of-living crisis is affecting everyone, both here in Ireland and overseas. The climate crisis is having a devastating impact on communities in the global south, particularly in the Horn of Africa where hunger is a daily reality for people.

"We've also seen unjust economic policies having a heart-breaking impact on children around the world, with global education now in crisis. We're very grateful to the people of Wicklow, many of whom have been supporting us to work with women and children around the world for decades."

The ongoing support of people in Wicklow is particularly valued this year, this Christmas ActionAid is highlighting the global crisis in education, with almost 244 million children and young people now out of school around the world. There are a further 69 million more teachers needed by 2030 to achieve the sustainable development goal for education. However, low-income countries are still being advised to cut their public sector wage bills by international financial institutions that impose austerity, reducing teachers," pay and the overall number of teachers. ActionAid is campaigning against these cuts, as well as setting up catch-up clubs in Kenya as an immediate response to the crisis.

Council launches Accessibility Toolkit for community groups

A 'toolkit' which shows how local community and sports groups can be more accessible and inclusive to people with disabilities was launched by Wicklow County Council's Disability and Inclusion Steering Committee (DISC) on Friday 2nd December.

The toolkit offers practical advice for sports and community groups about how to make their facilities and meeting spaces as accessible as possible. It also gives tips on how to make communication clear for everyone, and how best to include people with disabilities in the management of clubs and societies.

Cathaoirleach of Wicklow County Council, Cllr Tommy Annesley, said: "We hope that this toolkit will be a useful resource for all community and voluntary groups and help them to become as welcoming and as

inclusive as possible."

Mr Brian Gleeson, Chief Executive, Wicklow County Council, agreed saying: "This event reflects the Council's strong commitment to making Wicklow a more accessible place for all. As far we know, we are the only local authority in the country with a committee like DISC.

"It brings together the Council, community services, elected members and people with disabilities to work on disability issues in a coordinated way. We're very proud to be leading the way."

Helen Howes,

resource worker for Wicklow's Public Participation Network, which has a membership of over 400 groups, is part of the Committee who worked on the toolkit and said: "Our members are usually very open to including people with disabilities. Often knowledge is the key barrier.

"Community groups just need support and advice and then they'll run with it! We hope this toolkit goes some way in providing that support."

As well as launching the toolkit, DISC hope that the event will promote their work across the county.

Cllr Miriam Murphy, who is a member of the group, explained that DISC was set up during

the pandemic and has never met face to face, stated: "We've been working hard together for over two years, but we've never been in the same room! We're really looking forward to finally meeting and making it a celebration."

The launch event included short presentations as well as music to celebrate everything the group has achieved so far. A choir of people with Parkinson's from Ashford and a session group from Sunbeam House services in Arklow were on hand to entertain the attendees.

Anyone who would like a hardcopy of the toolkit or to find out more about DISC, please contact Laura O'Callaghan at disability@wicklowcoco.ie



Olivia and Isabel Phillips are pictured getting ready to dash! In the run up to Christmas this year, why not do something to support your own well-being whilst helping people impacted by depression and bipolar disorder by taking part in the 17th annual Aware Christmas 5K. From Friday 9th to Sunday 11th December, people in Wicklow and all over the country are being encouraged to come together physically or virtually to be part of this fun, festive and healthy event to support Aware's vital services. You can walk, jog, run or hike in your favourite 5k route anywhere at a time of your choice over the event weekend, and share your efforts and your support on social media using the hashtag #WeAreAware. Those who want to get into the festive spirit of the Aware Christmas 5K are encouraged to dress up. So, whether it's a nod to Santa with a hat, a Christmas jumper to keep you warm, or a full-on costume with bells and lights, you'll be guaranteed to bring some fun to your run! Online registration is now open at aware.ie/christmas5K at a cost of €25 per person.

Older People's Council gathers in Laragh for first seminar in three years

Over 150 people from across County Wicklow travelled to the Brockagh Resource Centre, Laragh, on Friday 25th November for the Older People's Council annual seminar and Open Day. This is first such event to be held since pandemic restrictions forced the postponement of the 2020 gathering.



Chair of County Wicklow Older People's Council, Mai Quaid, and Alice Corbett, Southeast Regional Manager for Age Friendly Ireland

Chair of County Wicklow Older People's Council, Mai Quaid, and Chair of the Wicklow Age Friendly County Alliance, Brian Gleeson, welcomed the gathering of older men and women (over 55s) and representatives of older adults from a wide range of support organisations.

Mai Quaid said that it

had been a challenging few years for older people. "Due to the pandemic in early 2020 our annual seminar had to be postponed. In 2022 in consultation with our Older People's Council Executive, we agreed that there was a huge appetite to bring back the seminar event, given the dreadful

events of the previous two and a half years. It's great to be back this year, with an event designed to provide people with information to help meet the challenges ahead, to reconnect with each other socially, share experiences and have some fun too!"

Keynote speakers at the event included Michelle

O'Hara, Regional Manager, South Leinster, MABS; Patricia Rickard-Clarke, Sage Advocacy Services & Safeguarding Ireland, and Conor Geoghegan, Head of Services (South), ALONE.

In addition to staff from MABS, Sage and ALONE support services, members of the Wicklow Age Friendly County Alliance also had staff attending the event, to provide information on service and supports for older people, including: An Garda Síochána, Fire Safety Services, Citizens Information Services, County Wicklow Libraries Services, Healthy Ireland, Local Sports Partnership, County Wicklow Partnership, Bray Area Partnership, and also the Public Participation Network. Many projects and supports also come from the community & voluntary sector that have worked tirelessly to support older people.

Music at the event was provided by the 'Barn Ensemble', a group of people over 55 who started playing music together in 2020, and 'The Wicklow Man'.

Speaking after the event, Chief Executive of Wicklow County Council and Chair of the Wicklow Age Friendly County



Storm Piper O'Neill, Cllr Pat Kennedy, Cathaoirleach of Arklow Municipal District, Pam McDonagh, Criona McCarthy, Denise O'Shea, Minister Simon Harris and Clodagh Whelan at the Wicklow Older Person's Council seminar and Open Day at the Brockagh Centre.

Alliance, Brian Gleeson, said: "Wicklow County Council has made significant progress in embedding an age friendly approach to all of its work, since the launch of the first Wicklow Age Friendly County Strategy in 2017. Taking the challenges of recent years into account and working in consultation with older adults and other stakeholders, the Wicklow Age Friendly County Alliance, are currently in the process of developing a new Wicklow Age Friendly County Strategy for 2023-2027, which we will be delighted to launch early in the New Year."

Cathaoirleach of Wicklow County Council, Cllr Tommy Annesley,

stated: "It is important that as a society we recognise and acknowledge initiatives that support older people and make Wicklow a great place to grow old. I would commend all the individuals and organisations here who contribute to making Wicklow and Ireland a more age-friendly and inclusive place to live."

Senator Pat Casey, Age Friendly Ambassador for County Wicklow, said: "The Older People's Councils are representative groups of older people who work together and with key state and voluntary agencies to make Ireland a better place in which to grow old. I would also encourage older people in

Wicklow to engage with the County Wicklow Older People's Council and join the OPC to have their voice heard at the next AGM, in 2023. The OPC represents the voice of older people on the Wicklow Age Friendly County Alliance, which will be responsible for delivering on the actions in the new Wicklow Age Friendly County Strategy."

The World Health Organisation 'Age Friendly Cities and Counties Programme' has been running for nearly 15 years and has been implemented by all 31 Local Authorities in Ireland.

The programme is built on the recognition of the valuable role that older

people can and should play in shaping their communities for the better and it aims to make Ireland a truly great place in which to grow old.

Alice Corbett, Regional Manager Southeast, for Age Friendly Ireland, provided an update on activities at the seminar including some projects in Wicklow, in recognition of the county's innovative and creative approach to making Wicklow a great place in which to grow old.

For updates on County Wicklow Older People's Council events and/or to subscribe for Age Friendly Ireland Newsletter, please email: agefriendly@wicklowco-co.ie



Michael Nicholson, Director of Services, Wicklow County Council, Clodagh Whelan, Pauline Fahy, Fifi Bentley from St. Mary's College, Minister Simon Harris, Storm Piper O'Neill, Cllr Pat Kennedy, Cathaoirleach of Arklow Municipal District, Eva Duffy from St. Mary's College, Alice Corbett and Senator Pat Casey at the Older People's Council Seminar in Laragh

Agriculture Minister takes Wicklow tour



Senator Pat Casey, Minister for Agriculture Charlie McConalogue TD, and Cllr John Mullen with the team from None-So-Hardy nurseries in Shillelagh

Productive meeting with Wicklow Cheviot Sheep Farmers and None so Hardy Nursery

Senator Pat Casey brought his colleague Minister for Agriculture Charlie McConalogue TD on a tour of South and West Wicklow recently where they engaged with several key players in this key industry in the County.

Commenting on the trip Senator Casey remarked that "We began with a meeting with None-So-Hardy nurseries from Shillelagh where we discussed the massive boost to the forestry sector of the new deal coming through the revised CAP. This has given a much needed boost for one of the strongest aspects of the Irish Forestry Sector which as we know is based in Wicklow.

"There are also significant benefits for all Wicklow Farmers in this new scheme whereby Farmers can set aside relatively small pieces of non-productive land for forestry and get an immediate financial return from doing so. The licensing requirements will also not be an issue for these small parcels of land.

"Charlie and I then met with the Wicklow Cheviot Sheep farmers at Carnew Mart for a meeting to discuss the ongoing challenges and the new ACRES results based scheme. The local farmers led by Pat Dunne and Peter Behan reported on the successful conclusion of the SUAS pilot scheme in Wicklow which was not being reflected in these farmers being included in the co-operation element of the

new scheme. This was deeply unfair as it was local Sheep farmers in South Wicklow who took part in the scheme and are now being excluded from potential benefits from the outputs from SUAS. The Minister agreed that there was a lack of consistency in the allocation of the co-operation and general schemes and committed to ongoing dialogue with the farmers on this matter."

Senator Casey continued "I was delighted to then arrange the first ever visit by a Minister for Agriculture to Pilgrim Meats in Shillelagh which employs over 700 people and is one of the largest employers in all of County Wicklow. We toured the plant and met the hard working team that produce many of the leading brands in cooked meats such as Denny.

"We finished the day in Baltinglass where the Minister was invited to open the new Grain bagging plant at Quinns Grainstores. The Minister was deeply impressed by the breadth, depth and innovation involved in Wicklow's vital Agri-business sector and is continuing to work with me to ensure the future sustainable growth of all areas of Agriculture in Wicklow."

Improvement works carried out at Kilcoole Train Station

Independent councillor Tom Fortune has welcomed the current improvement works underway at Kilcoole Train Station.

Irish Rail are upgrading the crossing, creating wheelchair access and installing new lighting in the car park.

"I have, with some local residents, been meeting and talking with Irish Rail for over six years," said Cllr Fortune, who says Irish Rail have also helped to keep the breeches from flooding on a number of occasions.

"At a meeting a few months ago they confirmed that they would start by year end. It is great to see this happening. This is great news."

Cllr Fortune explains that to get work of this extent done always takes time: "It does not happen with one meeting, it takes years. I have many examples of this during my time as a public representative. At our meetings we continually discussed the work they are now doing, the train service and the flooding threat at the Breeches.

"At the same time that they commenced this work they announced that more trains will be stopping at Kilcoole. They have also committed to keep the train service under review. We will keep working with them on this. They expect that our community has grown, we now have a population of 4,500 people. I will continue to communicate and work with Irish Rail to further improve the train service."



Irish Rail crew at work at Kilcoole Train Station

Applications now open for Community Monuments Fund

Minister Simon Harris is encouraging Wicklow community groups to apply for the 2023 Community Monuments Fund. In 2022, projects in Wicklow received €152,000 in funding from Wicklow County Council.

The Fund aims to invest in essential capital works to help owners and custodians of archaeological monuments safeguard them into the future for the benefit of communities and the public.

There are three different types of grants. Stream 1 will offer grants up to €85,000 aimed at essential repairs and capital works for the conservation and repair of archaeological monuments.

Stream 2 will offer grants of up to €30,000 for development of Conservation Management Plans/Reports that are aimed at identifying measures for conservation of archaeological monuments and improving public access.

Stream 3 will offer grants of up to €30,000 for enhancement of access infrastructure and interpretation (including virtual/online) at archaeological monuments.

Minister Harris said "The deadline for application to the Community Monuments Fund is at 4pm on the 27th of January 2023. I would like to urge community groups to apply as this opportunity is not one to miss.

"This fund is investing vital capital into Wicklow's archaeological heritage. The impacts that climate change is having on our monuments are increasingly evident, and the Community Monument Fund will go towards safeguarding these important sites for local communities and future generations."

Applications should be returned by e mail to wicklowheritage@wicklowcoco.ie or by post, clearly marked Community Monument Fund Application c/o Heritage Office, Wicklow County Council, County Buildings, Wicklow Town by no later than 4 pm on January 27th 2023. Hard copy application forms are available by request.

Eligible archaeological monuments are those identified on the Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) by National Monuments Service and those included on Record of Monuments & Places (RMP) under the National Monuments Act 1930.



Taylor Cullen with Santa and Mrs Claus at the Annacurra Community Christmas Market

Children get creative with recycled materials

SSE announces winning entries for its 'Design a Christmas Decoration from recycled materials' competition

School goes throughout Arklow Municipal District showed their commitment to an eco-friendlier festive season as they took part in the inaugural SSE Renewables competition to design their very own Christmas decoration from recycled materials.



Overall competition winner Eva Belle Bradshaw, from Carysfort National School, with Deirdre Keogh from SSE Renewables

Eva Belle Bradshaw from Carysfort National School was selected as the overall winner and was chosen as the guest of honour to help Santa switch on the Christmas tree lights in St. Mary's Park, Arklow on Saturday.

SSE Renewables was delighted to partner with Arklow Municipal District to bring some festive cheer to the district

over the Christmas season by sponsoring low energy street lighting for this year's festival. The big switch-on by Santa took place on Saturday, 26th November in St Mary's Park, Arklow.

overwhelming response to the competition this year and our young people really pulled out the stops to come up with inventive and imaginative creations. Adjudicating on the competition was both a pleasure and a difficult task for ourselves and the staff in Arklow Municipal District because of the high quality and variety of entries submitted this year. It was fabulous to see children coming into Arklow Library with their decorations over the past few days and sincerest thanks to the schools who encouraged class groups to get involved, and to the library staff and Festival team. Whilst it was difficult to select an overall winner to be Santa's guest of honour at the big switch on, we did find a worthy overall winner in Eva Belle Bradshaw. Eva's entry was selected because she displayed exceptional talent for her age in using recycled materials to create a wonderfully joyous Christmas decoration which we hope will adorn her family's tree for many years to come."

Eva Belle Bradshaw from Carysfort National School, Arklow, won the age 7 and under, category for her angel entry. The angel was made from recycled materials including: an Aldi yoghurt glass and lid; snowflakes made from pearls salvaged from a broken bracelet, string, ribbon and old packaging sprayed gold. The angel was made from a cork with wings created from an old CD.

In the age 8-10 category, Hanna Kennedy from Our Lady's National School, Rathdrum, fashioned an elf's head made from an old lightbulb with a beard from remnant fur from an old teddy bear. Its hat was upcycled from a banana shaped sweet box and the string used to hang the decoration was from an old banjo.

Cian Murphy from Gaelscoil an Inbhir Mhuir, Arklow, won the aged 10-12 category with his Christmas tree decoration. This entry was unique not only for the effort taken by Cian and his dad in sourcing the fallen twigs for the project, but also for the detailed planning invested in what Cian described himself as 'my invention'. He planned every detail, using lids from recycled cans, old



Dominka Ilecko, Glenart College, joint winner in the age 13 and over category, pictured with Deirdre Keogh from SSE Renewables

string, glue and cotton buds to create a warm and earthy decoration worthy of any festive tree.

Leah (Hayes) Keogh from St Mary's College, Arklow, and Dominka Ilecko, Glenart College, jointly won the age 13 and over category. Leah designed a Christmas wreath-style decoration made exclusively from a variety of recycled paper materials including recycled cardboard, left-over Christmas festive wrapping, upcycled crepe paper and shredded paper salvaged from her family's home office. The mix of textures and tones blended beautifully to create a festive decoration in reds and browns, that would adorn any tree or door.

Dominka's decoration was a carefully crafted

decoration, unique in its design simplicity and made from salvaged egg cartons. The egg cartons were carefully cut and stacked to create a 3D effect and held together with threading, an old button and sprinkled with glitter for that truly festive effect.

A special mention goes to Carysfort National School, Arklow, for the overwhelming response of entries submitted to a high standard and also to sisters Ava (age 4) and Ellie (age 6) whose Christmas forest displays demonstrated a real family commitment to this year's competition.

All competition entries will be displayed in Arklow Library and our category winners will receive a €50 'One for All' voucher as their prize.



Cian Murphy from Gaelscoil an Inbhir Mhuir, Arklow, winner in the age 10-12 category



Leah (Hayes) Keogh from St. Mary's College, Joint Competition Winner in the 13 and Over category



In the age 8-10 category, Hanna Kennedy from Our Lady's National School, Rathdrum, fashioned an elf's head made from an old lightbulb with a beard from remnant fur from an old teddy bear.

Winter Gathering at Louise Cherry Gallery

Bringing contemporary art to Wicklow Town

In December 2020, Wicklow Town got a great new addition with the exciting arrival of a new contemporary art gallery. Founded by local artist Louise Cherry, The Louise Cherry Gallery, located on Mortons Lane, Wicklow Town opened its doors for the first time on the very first day the end of country's second lockdown on December 4th of that year.

Up till now, the gallery has continuously showcased new work by Louise herself. Louise divides her time between painting, photography, teaching and her gallery, with her new studio workspace now in the same building above the gallery. Louise has exhibited nationally and internationally in solo and group shows and her contemporary paintings and photography are held in private and public

collections in Ireland and abroad.

Two years on, her gallery is about to entre a new stage in it inception and as Louise has curated a group show of 10 local contemporary artist. "I am very excited about how the the gallery is progressing and as my own work moves further afield, I am keen that the gallery will show and support other local artist working in an interesting and contemporary manner. It is an honour to work with all these interesting and creative people and show their work in my gallery."

The Winter Gathering will showcase an exciting variety of selected artists who were invited by Louise to submit work. "This was not an open submission show, I carefully

handpicked a group of local artist whose work interested me and whose work I felt, together would compliment one another and yet produce an interesting and varied show".

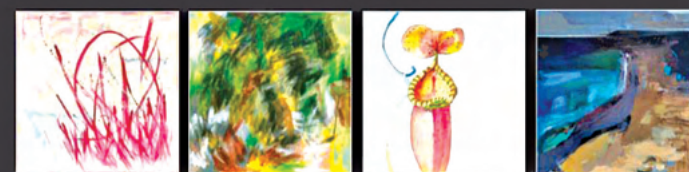
The show will include contemporary paintings, limited edition screen prints, ceramics wall hanging, sculpture, wood turned bowls, drawings, embroidered works and watercolour paintings.

The following artists will be exhibited, Stephanie Sloan; Stephanie is an illustrator and printmaker. Influenced by her studio's coastal location and the surrounding Irish landscape, she creates contemporary print compositions exploring depth, light, texture and pattern. Louise Shearer; whose abstract landscapes are influenced by her surroundings in Wicklow, the land, the sea and the skyscapes. Vibrant colours, rich and intuitive drawing and mark making combine to make for a lively and satisfying composition. Sarah Eva Manson; who's beautiful large and colourful abstract paintings are inspired by her current studies as a Forest

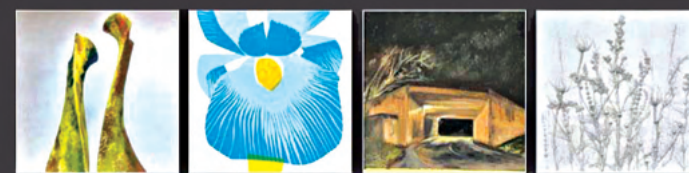
Bather in her surrounding wicklow countryside, Zoe Dillon; currently a mature student in the RHA school of art, creates fascinating oil painting studies of the familiar, unfamiliar, influenced by her daily moonlit walks in her surrounding semi rural/suburban area. Erica Devine; preoccupied with the natural world, seeks to capture its

ephemeral beauty and intelligence. Her primary medium is plaster, and in her beautiful set plaster casts she aims to capture the most infinitesimal botanical detail. Other artists included in the show are Fergus O'Conchobhair, Isobel Marinot, Cathy Burke, Kathleen Walsh and work by Louise Cherry herself.

The Winter Gathering opened on Friday December 1st and continue until the end of January 2023. Opening hours and Christmas open days can be viewed at www.louisecherry.com. Visit this new gallery, support local, you won't be disappointed. The gallery offers a range of great original gift ideas including sculpture, original canvases, limited edition prints and beautiful designer lamps.



Louise Cherry Gallery Winter Gathering



Winter Gathering at Louise Cherry Gallery

FEATURED ARTISTS

Cathy Burke
Louise Cherry

Erica Devine
Zoe Dillon

Sarah Eva Manson
Isobel Marinot

Fergus O'Conchobhair
Louise Shearer

Stephanie Sloan
Kathleen Walsh

2nd December - 29th January

For full opening days and times visit www.louisecherry.com

Sponsored by RONAN ROSE ROBERTS ARCHITECTS

Louise Cherry Gallery, Mortons Lane, Wicklow Town, A67 TF44. 086 804 4747

On the Road Again with Fiachna Ó Braonáin, Tom Dunne & Alan Connor



Fiachna Ó Braonáin, Tom Dunne & Alan Connor

Whale Theatre, Sunday 18th December, 7pm (doors 6pm). Tickets €35 and available at www.whaletheatre.ie or call the booking office on 01 2010550 to book.

Following the trio's sell-out show at the Whale Theatre earlier this year, Fiachna Ó Braonáin of Hothouse Flowers, Tom Dunne of Something Happens & multi-instrumentalist Alan Connor are back again due to phenomenal demand! "On The Road Again" promises to be a fun evening of songs and stories in a uniquely intimate setting.

Despite having shared stages across the world over several decades, Tom Dunne and Fiachna Ó Braonáin had never actually performed together until they were invited to do so on RTÉ Radio 1's Ray Darcy show where they performed a Christy Moore song, John O Dreams, and a Willie Nelson song, On The Road Again. Ray D'Arcy loved it, Fiachna Ó Braonáin and Tom

Dunne had a ball... and were joking they should do more of it! Or perhaps... only half-joking. Since then several coffees were had and they decided to make it happen! Their respective bands were from different musical worlds but Tom Dunne and Fiachna Ó Braonáin were always united by a love of performance and songwriting and were very taken with what those different

schools of thought could bring to their coffee table. Since then they have been working on what songs they could perform together including some new songs neither have performed publicly before.

Multi-instrumentalist Alan Connor was then drafted in to add some piano, guitar and percussion to the dynamic duo. Alan Connor has toured with Sharon Shannon for

over ten years and regularly performs with Something Happens and Frances Black. He is also a member of RTÉ's The Late Late Show House Band since 2021.

Approx Duration: 2 hours (including interval)
Sunday 18th December 2022 @ 7pm (doors 6pm). Tickets are €35 and are available at www.whaletheatre.ie or call the booking office on 01 2010550 to book.

Christmas Crooners - featuring The Stolen Chicken Band



Whale Theatre, Saturday 17th December, 9pm (doors 8.30pm). Tickets €30 and available at www.whaletheatre.ie or call the booking office on 01 2010550 to book.

The Stolen Chicken Band are back for a very special Christmas show featuring singer Simon Morgan, saxophone player Richie Buckley, guitarist Drazen Derek, and other musical guests.

Kicking off at 9pm, this is the perfect pre-Christmas night out, with top-class entertainment and five-star hospitality.

With a combination of styles including jazz, folk, and world music, Stolen Chicken is an eclectic mix of accomplished musicians who have performed across Ireland and around the world. In the lead up to Christmas, why not settle in for a unique and intimate evening of uplifting music and festive favourites.



Neil Delamere is back with a brand new show, Delamerium, at Whale Theatre in Greystones on Friday 16th December at 8pm (doors 7pm). Expect the usual hilarious stories, wry observations and quick-witted improvisation as our comedy hero tries to make sense of the world around him. The event is SOLD OUT but you can register for the waitlist at www.whaletheatre.ie or call the booking office on 01 2010550 to book.

Andy Irvine and Dónal Lunny

Mermaid Arts Centre, 16th December, €26 Full Price / €24 Concession Price

Two giants of the Irish trad scene, Andy Irvine and Donal Lunny are uniting for an evening of great music, a mixture of traditional songs, and originals composed by Andy.

Between them, Irvine and Lunny have been at the helm of legendary bands like Sweeney's Men, Planxty, The Bothy Band, Mozaik, LAPD and recently Usher's Island. Their unique style of accompaniment is an ongoing influence in the wider world of Irish music.

Andy Irvine and Dónal Lunny, in their separate ways, have contributed to a veritable renaissance in Irish traditional music. Between them, Dónal Lunny and Andy Irvine have careers that read like a 'Who's Who' of popular music.

Lunny has produced albums for Elvis Costello, Paul Brady, Clannad, and The Indigo Girls, and composed the sound-

tracks for Eat the Peach, and Teardrops. As a musician, Lunny has performed on more than a dozen Christy Moore albums and was an integral part of such notable ensembles as Planxty, the Bothy Band, Mozaik and Moving Hearts. He has appeared on the BBC TV series, Transatlantic Sessions alongside the likes of James Taylor, Eddi Reader, Diana Krall and others. Donal was MD of the House Band on the "Céiliúradh" concert in the Royal Albert Hall, part of President Michael D. Higgins' state visit to the UK. Andy Irvine also performed at this prestigious event. Andy Irvine is an accomplished multi-instrumentalist, singer and songwriter with several solo albums to his

credit. Formerly of Planxty & Sweeney's Men, Andy is a member of Mozaik, and Usher's Island along with Donal. He has played & recorded with Paul Brady, Christy Moore, Bill Whelan and Davy Spillane, and shared the bill in Dublin with Billy Bragg, celebrating the Woody Guthrie Centenary. He also took part in the Imagine concerts in the National Concert Hall, Dublin and the Royal Festival Hall in London. Lunny and Irvine will present a programme of Irish music and Andy's songs with a bit of Eastern European music. Don't miss this unique opportunity to see these two legends of Irish music on stage together.



Andy Irvine and Donal Lunny

Ballet Ireland Presents Nutcracker Sweeties

Mermaid Arts Centre, 22nd-23rd December, €30 Full Price, €25 Concession Price, €100 (Family of 4), Duration: 1hr 45mins including interval. 2pm & 7pm

This holiday season, the curtain rises on Ballet Ireland's Nutcracker Sweeties, a re-telling of one of the world's favourite Christmas ballets. It's a magical Christmas Eve. Ciara and her brother Fionn are on a shopping trip to a famous department store in Dublin. They wander off from their parents and the magic of Nutcracker and Christmas begins.

The two are rescued by the Nutcracker doll who comes to life before they are surrounded by a glorious blizzard of snowflakes. The Sugar Plum fairy greets them leading Ciara into the kingdom of the sweets where the beautiful Christmas windows come to life.

Choreographed by Morgann Runacre-Temple, this exciting production of the festive classic performed by a cast of world-class dancers will appeal to audiences of all ages with its fairy-tale magic, beautiful costumes and a re-imagined Tchaikovsky score. A tale of wondrous adventure that combines to form one of the most delectable Christmas confections imaginable.



Gather with friends all, Christmas only and family to experience begins once you've seen Ballet Ireland's ballet live on stage. After Nutcracker Sweeties.

Creative Team Credits

Choreography: Morgann Runacre-Temple
Music: Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky
Additional music and sound composition: Tom Lane
Set & Costume Design: Jack Scullion

Phil Coulter at Eighty

Mermaid Arts Centre, Saturday 17th December, €35 full price



To celebrate his 80th birthday and fifty five years at the very top end of the music industry, Phil Coulter is returning to Mermaid Arts Centre.

A show with a difference, a personal journey through an outstanding career, from classic songs to Piano favourites. Phil's story telling has become one of the highlights of his concerts and this show will give him ample opportunity to regale the audience with some hilarious tales.

To add a new twist he has assembled a video compilation of some never before seen footage of his famous collaborators, from Liam Neeson to Billy Connolly. Priceless.

Between Worlds - an exhibition by Liz Levey

Signal Arts Centre, Monday, 20th February to Sunday 5th March 2023

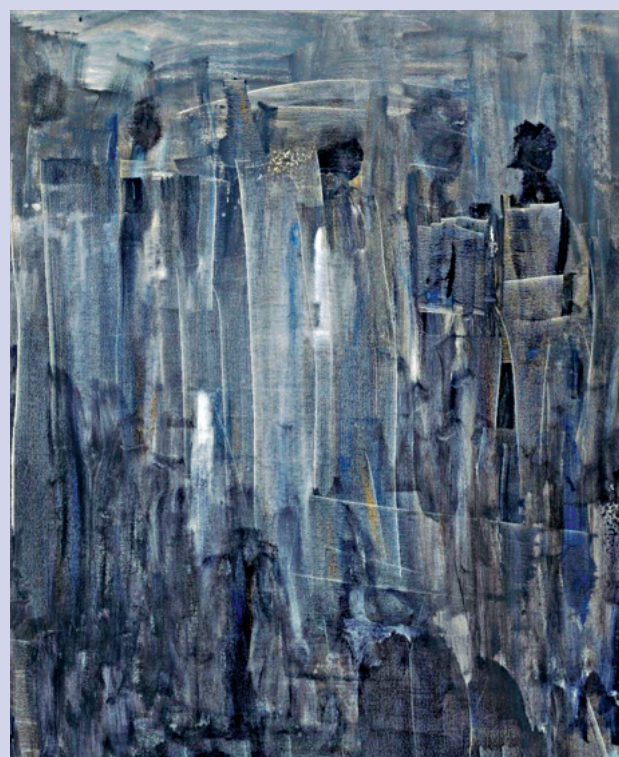
This is an exhibition of paintings where Liz Levey explores and hopes to raise awareness around the distress Acquired Brain Injury/Stroke and Non-verbal Autism can cause to families and home life.

The working of the brain is so complicated and so intricate we take all it manages for granted when everything is working right.

"Brain responses are connected to the heart and soul of the body," says Louise. "When one part gets damaged it affects every other part: movement, speech, emotions. These are just words. You cannot see any of them or notice but if one does not work properly, it has so many implications to fitting into society."

This work is informed by parts of Liz's own life highlighting the isolation, loneliness and sometimes overwhelming fear that accompanies medical expertise.

"Working through trauma is an uncharted part of life. No one gets through it without support. We are all caretakers of each other. Walk gently in the lives of others. Not all Worlds are visible."



Andrew and Sarah Eva Manson with Tony Strickland at the launch of Sarah's exhibition 'Wander and Wonder' in Arklow Library

There's still time to make a child smile this Christmas

If you want to really capture the spirit of Christmas and make a child smile, there is still time to take part in the Team Hope Christmas Shoebox Appeal and build a shoebox online.

Bringing joy and hope to children for whom poverty is an every-day reality in 13 countries across Africa and Eastern Europe is just a click away at www.teamhope.ie.

So, if you missed the deadline to fill a shoebox at home - don't worry! Team Hope's partners in their destination countries are ready and waiting to fill it on your behalf and make sure it goes where it is needed most.

As well as bringing joy to so many children, the Shoebox Appeal also sends hope by making sure these children know that people are thinking about them this Christmas.

Local Wicklow Team Hope co-ordinator Brigitte Hart said, "We know people are busy and are juggling so much at this time of year, so we are especially grateful to all those who have donated already. We just want to let

people know - there's still time to build a shoebox online and make a child smile this Christmas."

It has never been easier to build a shoebox. All you have to do is find an empty shoebox, wrap it in Christmas paper and fill it with gifts for a boy or girl aged between 2 and 14, give online or attach a E4 donation and bring it to a local drop off point before the deadline of Tuesday November 8th or you can build-a-box online by donating at www.teamhope.ie. One of Team Hope's local partners will build a box on your behalf on-the-ground and make sure it goes where it's needed most.

When considering the best items to gift, think of the 4W's: Wear - Gloves, Hat, Scarf, Socks, Top, Underwear; Wash - Comb, Soap, Sponge, Toothbrush & Toothpaste, Washcloth; Write - Colouring Pencils, Notepad, Writing accessories; Wow - Think of items like musical instruments, puzzles, a ball, a skipping rope, a soft toy or a toy car.

Donate a shoebox online at www.teamhope.ie until December 23rd 2022.



Khaya Conboy-Thwabi, aged 6 pictured at the Team Hope Christmas Shoebox Appeal 2022 launch. The Appeal aims to send 200,000 gift filled shoeboxes directly to children facing poverty in 13 countries across Africa and Eastern Europe. To find out how to get involved see www.teamhope.ie and help to make a child smile

RECRUITMENT

BUS ESCORT REQUIRED

to assist students with special needs while travelling to and from school. (Bray area). Department of Education and Skills regulations apply.

Childcare qualification/experience an advantage.

Applications by Tues 20th December please including C.V. to: office@marinoschool.ie or

The Secretary, Board of Management, Marino School, Church Rd, Bray, Co. Wicklow.



An Roinn Coimirce Sóisialaí
Department of Social Protection

Bray Area Partnership Ltd. Local Area Employment Service (LAES) –

Caseworkers - Full Time

Local Area Employment Services (LAES):

The LAES is a new service, funded by the Department of Social Protection (DSP), which primarily supports long-term unemployed clients who are most distant from the labour market with a focus on their progression into employment.

Bray Area Partnership wishes to create a panel of suitably qualified people to fill current and future LAES Caseworker vacancies. The Caseworkers will work across offices in Bray, Wicklow and Arklow and may also be required to provide cover in the Athy, Kildare, Leixlip, Naas and Newbridge LAES offices and any other offices which may be developed over the lifetime of the LAES.

Reporting to:	LAES General Manager
Salary:	Salary scale €28,438 - €47,717 (15 point scale)
Hours of work:	35 hours per week
Probationary period:	6 months
Nature of contract:	1 year fixed term contract with possibility of renewal dependant on performance and availability of funding
Other:	The position requires Garda Vetting

Please forward a letter of application and Curriculum Vitae by post to:

Mary O'Carolan, LAES General Manager
Bray Area Partnership Ltd., First Floor, The Boulevard,
Quinsborough Road, Bray, Co. Wicklow
or by email to: maryocarolan@brayareapartnership.ie with "Caseworker" in the subject line

Closing date for receipt of applications: **5 p.m. on 9th December 2022**

Canvassing will disqualify
Shortlisting will apply and initial interviews are planned for the week commencing Monday 19th December 2022
For Job Description see www.brayareapartnership.ie

CLASSIFIEDS

PRAYER TO SAINT JOSEPH OF CUPERRINO

O St Joseph of Cupertino, who by your prayer obtained from God to be asked at your examination, the only preposition you knew. Grant that I may like you succeed in the (here mention the name of Exam e.g., history paper 1) examination. In return I promise to make you known and cause you to be invoked. O St Joseph of Cupertino pray for me. O Holy Ghost enlighten me. Our Lady of Good Studies pray for me. Sacred Head of Jesus, Seat of divine wisdom, enlighten me. Say this prayer and promise publication. **R.W.**

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. **P.D.**

PRAYER TO ST. PEREGRINE, PATRON OF CANCER PATIENTS

Glorious wonder-worker, St Peregrine, You answered the divine call with a ready spirit and forsook all the comforts of the world to dedicate yourself to God in the Order of His Most Holy Mother. You laboured manfully for the salvation of souls; and in union with Jesus Crucified you endured the most painful sufferings with such patience as to deserve to be healed miraculously of an incurable cancer in your leg by a touch of his divine hand. Obtain for me the grace to answer every call of God and to fulfil His Will in all the events of life. Enkindle in my heart a consuming zeal for the salvation of souls; deliver me from the infirmities that afflict my body (state your intentions here). Obtain for me perfect resignation to the sufferings it may please God to send me, so that imitating our Crucified Saviour and His Sorrowful Mother I may merit eternal glory in heaven. Amen. St Peregrine pray for me and for all who invoke your aid. **R.W.**

THE MIRACULOUS PRAYER

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

ATTENTION Architects, Planners & Builders

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WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL

Permission is sought for construction of a dormer roof to the rear roof of the dwelling at 17 Oaklands, Church Lane, Greystones, Co Wicklow by Emmet McNamee.

The planning application may be inspected or purchased for 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. The planning application may be viewed online at www.wicklow.ie under planning online enquiries. A submission or observation in relation to the application may be made on payment of €20 within a period of 5 weeks from the date the application is received by the planning authority.

WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL

I, John Power, intend to apply for retention permission for development at this site, Cloghlea Manor, Kilbridge, Blessington, Co. Wicklow. The development will consist of pre 63 shed unit for stable, toilet and washand basin / septic tank and percolation and circular training track for horses. The planning application may be inspected or purchased at a fee not exceeding the reasonable cost of making a copy at the offices of the planning authority during its public opening hours. A submission or observation in relation to the application may be made in writing to the authority on payment of the prescribed fee, €20, within the period of 5 weeks beginning on the date of receipt by the authority of the application and such submissions or observations will be considered by the planning authority in making a decision on the application. The planning authority may grant permission subject to or without conditions, or may refuse to grant permission.

WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL

I, Conor Murray, intend to apply for permission for development at this site: 2 Oldcourt, Vevay Road, Bray, Co. Wicklow. The development will consist of: The provision of a new vehicular entrance gate to the Lauderdale Estate and for the lowering of the existing boundary wall to a height of 1.8m. 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.



COMHAIRLE CONTAE CHILL MHANTÁIN
WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL

Applications are invited from suitably qualified persons to form a panel from which future permanent and temporary vacancies may be filled:

• TEMPORARY & PERMANENT EXECUTIVE ENGINEER

Salary € 53,626.00.00 – €74,544.00 per annum gross (Includes 2nd LSI)

REF: 42/2022

• EXECUTIVE QUANTITY SURVEYOR

Salary €53,626.00 – €74,544.00 per annum gross (Includes 2nd LSI)

REF: 46/2022

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.

CLOSING DATE FOR RECEIPT OF COMPLETED APPLICATION FORMS IS 12 NOON on THURSDAY 12TH JANUARY, 2023 SHARP.

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

Wicklow County Council Is an Equal Opportunities Employer.

Lorraine Gallagher
Director Of Services
Enterprise & Corporate Services
Wicklow County Council
County Buildings
Wicklow

Phone: 0404 20159
Fax: 0404 20112
e-mail: recruitment@wicklowcoco.ie

Wicklow craft makers launch 'Made Local' campaign

Craft makers and designers have launched the 'Made Local, Made to Last' campaign celebrating the quality and value of the design and craft sector in County Wicklow.

The campaign highlights the local contribution of craft makers and designers and encourages anyone looking for that special gift or purchase to consider original craft products from local makers in Wicklow. The

'Made Local, Made to Last' campaign is being run with the support of Design & Crafts Council Ireland (DCCI).

This year's 'Made Local' campaign is highlighting the quality and originality of Irish designed and craft-made products. The campaign seeks to remind consumers that buying locally designed, well-crafted products can be a more meaningful experience. It hopes to inspire consumers to think of Irish made crafts products both for themselves and as gifts this Christmas which will support jobs and makers and designers in County Wicklow.

1,355 makers and 350 retail outlets for Irish craft and design are participating in the 'Made Local, Made to Last' campaign, including bespoke furniture designer and maker,



Pictured at the launch of the Wicklow 'Made Local' campaign by Design & Crafts Council Ireland which encourages consumers to support local craft makers is bespoke furniture designer and maker, Stevan Hartung at his workshop overlooking Blessington lakes.

Stevan Hartung in West Wicklow. Each maker is listed in DCCI's online directory at www.made-local.ie where consumers can search for makers and the products they want, by location.

Commenting on the County Wicklow campaign launch, Design & Craft Council Ireland Chief Executive Officer, Rosemary Steen, said: "Made Local celebrates the skill and originality

of our local craft makers and the retail outlets that support them in County Wicklow. This year, we have an important message for consumers that recognises the cost of living challenges we are all facing into. We focus on the quality and sustainability of Irish designed craft products. We are asking consumers to be mindful in their purchasing decisions and to support their local craft makers wherever and whenever they can.

"Made Local products in textiles, fashion, ceramics, jewellery, or any of the many other craft disciplines, deliver excellent value for money. They are truly 'Made to Last' and will provide years of enjoyment and pleasure for buyers."

For more information on Irish craft and design visit: www.dcci.ie or join the conversation by following @dcciireland and #MadeLocal.



Gabrille Kavanagh, Amiyah Kavanagh and Conor Roche with Santa at the switching on of the Christmas lights in Arklow

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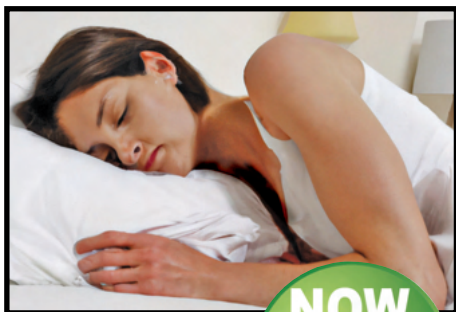
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