

LOCAL Wicklow Times

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Tuesday 31st January 2023 First Floor, The Boulevard, Quinsborough Road, Bray. A98 R6D7. Tel: 01 - 2869111 E-mail: wicklowed@localtimes.ie www.wicklowtimes.net

WHEN'S THE NEXT TRAIN?

The National Transport Authority (NTA) has confirmed it is working on a proposal with Irish Rail for a Terminal Charging Point at Wicklow Town railway station. This is a necessary component for charging the Battery Electric Trains for Wicklow which are currently on order. It is one step closer to bringing the DART to Wicklow Town.

The NTA's Greater Dublin Area Transport Strategy has now been published and a briefing with the NTA for Oireachtas members on the strategy took place on 24th January. Along with providing electrified train services to Wicklow Town, the plan also contains the objective of enhancing the level of DART services to Greystones by partially double

tracking the line as recommended in Cllr Derek Mitchell's 2018 Plan and validated by a subsequent Jacobs Study. Consultation was to have been done in 2022 but has been delayed to 2023. Implementation is to be done before 2030.

The plan also contains the objective of bringing the Luas to Bray, creating Park n Ride sites at Fassaroe,

Kilpedder and Ashford before 2030, and improving bus services on the N11 and N81.

Cllr Mitchell said "I welcome these improvements but don't want to see any further slippage in the timetable for Greystones DART+ and Luas to Bray."

Green Party TD Steven Matthews, who has been working throughout his political career to bring the



Rathdrum's Eábha McKenna competing in the girls slalom event during day two of the 2023 Winter European Youth Olympic Festival at Friuli-Venezia Giulia in Udine, Italy. Photo by Eóin Noonan/Sportsfile. See more, page 8

DART to Wicklow Town, said "I am confident that I will deliver a battery electric DART to Wicklow Town. I have worked on this consistently for the last five years, liaising with the NTA and the Minister for Transport and will continue to work in the background to bring this to fruition.

"The people of Wicklow Town need a far better rail service than currently exists and I am confident it will be delivered by the Green Party."

During last week's briefing, Social Democrats TD Jennifer Whitmore once again raised the need for DART services to be extended south of Greystones to Wicklow Town. She also asked if any of the newly ordered battery operated DART carriages will be used on the line to Wicklow. Following the brief-

ing Deputy Whitmore said: "The importance of proper public transport for commuters in Wicklow cannot be understated. We have seen a massive growth in population in recent decades with many residents being forced to move further south due to housing costs.

"This impacts on people's pockets, work life balance, and of course our climate emissions. Public transport to meet the needs of people in Wicklow needs to be a top priority for government.

"I raised this issue with the NTA during the briefing and I welcome their confirmation to me that work on the infrastructure needed for the use of battery operated carriages is progressing and that significant work should be seen on this over the next year such as on charging

points. The provision of battery operated carriages on that line would

be a game changer for the town.

"Unfortunately, how-

ever, there has been no formal decision as to if

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Fian Hannon, Ivan Jackmand and Denis Gherman at the recent BIFE Open Day

Shankill Bridge Club

Shankill Bridge Club meets in St. Anne's Resource Centre on Monday afternoons at 2pm except on Bank Holiday Mondays. New members are welcome - no playing partner needed.

First Saturday Book Sale

The February First Saturday Book Sale which supports the Shankill Old Folks Association will take place in the Shankill Day Care Centre, Lower Road, Shankill, on Saturday February 4th from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. and all are welcome to attend. The First Saturday Book Sale continues to adhere to strict safety guidelines with all precautionary health measures in place. Donations of books, which must be in a clean and good condition appreciated.

Rathmichael Historical Society

Paul Gosling will be the guest speaker for the Rathmichael Historical Society's Wednesday February 1st meeting at which he will present 'River Fords' at 8 p.m. in Rathmichael School, Stonebridge Road, Shankill. All are welcome - admission / Zoom fee €5.

Wicklow Active Retirement

Wicklow Active Retirement Association are holding a Valentine's Dance on Sunday, 12th February from 3pm - 5.30pm in the De la Salle Pastoral Centre, St. Patrick's Church. Admission €10.00. Music by The Wicklow Man. Light refreshments will be available and there will be a Raffle. On Wednesday, 15th February they are taking a coach to the Bord Gais Theatre to see Blood Brothers. They are planning a trip to Wales in May. They meet every Tuesday in the Pastoral Centre from 10.45 - 12 noon. New Members are always welcome.

Baltinglass park works

The work on the Park has finally commenced in Baltinglass. "This is part of the RRDF funding of €3.5m which was announced over three years ago," said Cllr Edward Timmins. Last week the council cordoned off part of the park (town/northern end) and commenced clearing some of the old wooden structure. "Over the next few weeks works will continue and subcontractors will come on site to put down new surfaces and build new walkways," added Cllr Timmins.

Aid for orphans

Colette Talbot has created a GoFundMe page for orphans in Ukraine, where children are coping with plummeting temperatures, bombs, and are going for days without electricity, water and food. The fundraiser has raised over €7,000 so far. "It's time to go back in and help the most vulnerable and that's the beautiful children in the orphanages," says Collette. "We have been supporting them with aid over the last few months, and now we are travelling to get more aid in to the children and the other most vulnerable people who stayed in Ukraine. We will be using all funds raised to purchase vital supplies food, medicine, etc. Throughout the trip we will be keeping everybody updated with photos and videos so please keep an eye on the Wicklowaid4ukraine page." See gofundme.com/f/3q2a4-aid-for-orphans

John Hughes Photography Exhibition

Baltinglass is getting used to hearing about the young local photographer / film-maker John Hughes. Those on social media often see images by him. Now he is having his first Photography Exhibition, in Baltinglass Library. The launch of the exhibition is from 6pm to 8pm on Tuesday, 7th February, and it runs during library opening hours until the same time on the following Tuesday, 14 February. All are welcome. John has a liking for 'dark' themes. This is reflected in his Gothic take on St. Joseph's Church, the McAllister monument clouded in fog and the bleak 'Covid Street'. But the sun shines forth on his images of the Rathcoran House complex, Davidstown Church and Pilsworth's House, Graney. As well as a growing number of local scenes, he has captured an array of Carlow, Dublin and Galway streetscapes.

John has long had a fascination with the camera but he started taking photographs in earnest during the Covid period. He then took a Film Making and Directing course in Carlow Institute of Further Education.

He decided to devote this year to gaining greater experience in both photography and film making. Last summer he co-directed and filmed the video Wicklow Marketplace - an online platform for crafters for Baltinglass Matters, available on YouTube.

Since then, under the Parkmore Studios banner, he has made a short film, The Tin, and has been working on a number of documentaries, still in progress.

Hospice Half Marathon returning to Avondale

Wicklow Hospice will host its ninth annual Half Marathon and 10km race on Saturday 25th February. This event returns to Avondale Forest Park and is the first half marathon taking place in county Wicklow this year.

Speaking about the event, Emily Barton, Senior Fundraising Manager, said, "We are asking people to put on their runners and take on the half marathon or 10km on this beautiful, looped course along wooded trails and country roads. We're delighted to return to Avondale Forest Park for the race, which has always been well supported by our community. We hope to see old friends back and welcome new faces to jog or run the course."

"We encourage participants to set €100 sponsorship target, the money raised by participants provides crucial funding for Wicklow Hospice. The fundraising team can help with sponsorship cards, setting up an online fundraising page and other advice. If you can't take part, perhaps you could sponsor a friend or help us spread the word about this event? Money raised will fund outstanding bank loan of €840,000, on-going enhancements to the Hospice and the purchasing of specialised equipment," she said.



Wicklow Hospice ambassador and Olympian Fionnuala McCormack

Wicklow Hospice ambassador and Olympian Fionnuala McCormack will be there on the day with words of encouragement for runners, she said "I'd encourage starters and serious runners to take part in this race to support a great cause. It's an enjoyable route taking in forest tracks and quiet roads and I hope to see

many of you on the day."

The entry fee is €35 for the half marathon and €20 for the 10km race. Entry is open to individuals and club members of all ages. Children under 16 must be accompanied by an adult and are not permitted to enter the half marathon. Thanks to generous support and sponsorship from Coillte there will be prize

vouchers for Avondale Sports, Rathdrum for the top three men and women finishers and medals for all participants.

Full details are available on <https://olh.ie/half-marathon10km/>, runners can sign up at myrunresults.com or by contacting Wicklow Hospice fundraising on 01 406 8868

Alzheimer Society to hold face-to-face family carer training in Newtown

The Alzheimer Society of Ireland (The ASI) welcomes family carers of loved ones with dementia to attend its upcoming Face-to-Face Family Carer Training Course in Parkview Hotel, Newtownmountkennedy. Insights into Dementia provides positive and practical training that aims to develop family carers' knowledge of Alzheimer's and other dementias and their caring skills to enable them to respond more confidently to their family members' needs.

The ASI's Family Carer Training course will take place every Wednesday from 15th February until 22nd March 2023, inclusive, from 7pm to 9.30pm. This is the first time in three years Face-to-Face Family Carer Training will be held in Wicklow. The in-person training was suspended and subsequently moved online due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Topics covered:

- Dementia and Looking After Yourself
- Changing Relationships and Accessing Information
- Communication and Staying Active
- Responsive Behaviours and Safety at Home
- Personal Care and Nutrition & Eating Well
- Course Review and Next Steps

An estimated 1,838 people live with dementia in Wicklow, and 64,000 people live with the condition in Ireland.

ASI Family Carer Training Coordinator Christine Carr said: "Carers often must navigate the consequences of a dementia diagnosis in their families with little or no practical information to support them. This training aims to help carers understand the condition and increase their confidence in their ability to care. We look forward to seeing the Family Carer Training take place in Newtown Mount Kennedy and welcome family carers of people living with dementia in the region to sign up for the course."

A previous participant of Face-to-Face Family Carer Training said: "The tutor was very knowledgeable and engaging and gave very practical examples

from her vast experience. The course was excellent; I was very satisfied with the content and delivery of the course."

For more information or to sign up for ASI Face-to-Face Family Carer Training in Wicklow, contact: 1800 341 341 or familycarertraining@alzheimer.ie

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Frustration at failure to respond to Grand Hotel overcrowding

Sinn Féin TD John Brady has expressed his concern at the failure of the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth to respond as promised to a number of concerns which he had put forward, regarding the safety and welfare of residents at the Grand Hotel in Wicklow Town.

Deputy Brady says that Green Party Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth, Roderick O'Gorman, "is ultimately responsible for the welfare of the residents in the Grand Hotel".

"We have a situation where residents of the Grand Hotel, Wicklow Town, are being kept in wholly unacceptable conditions," said Deputy Brady.

"I have raised the issue several times with Minister O'Gorman, yet I have yet to receive a reply outlining what action that the Minister intends to take to address the serious problems at the hotel.

"Approval was given prior to Christmas to increase the capacity

from 111 residents to 255, resulting in residents being kept in cramped overcrowded conditions.

"Wicklow County Fire Service had not been informed in advance of what was in effect a private agreement between the Grand Hotel and the International Protection Accommodation Service (IPAS) to use the hotel for emergency accommodation. This is a serious oversight, potentially endangering the lives of hundreds of people.

"Residents at the hotel also run the risk of not just Covid, but of TB, following an alleged outbreak at the hotel. With gross overcrowding, poor ventilation, and minimal washing facilities. I have been

informed that there are only four showers available - one for every sixty odd people. These showers are in a portacabin in the carpark.

"With four showers going flat out, and each resident taking a maximum of five minutes per shower, it would take almost five and half hours a day for all of the residents to shower. This is not acceptable. Particularly when they have to que outside in the middle of winter to gain access to the shower area.

"I find it very frustrating that the Minister has yet to reply to me. This despite the fact that I both wrote to him, and spoke to him in person on this issue, where he assured me that his department would be in contact as soon as possible.

"This is not acceptable. And while there is no doubt of the pressures that the Minister is under, we simply cannot allow this shameful treatment of human beings to be allowed to continue.

"I believe that there is a role here for the Green Party Minister's government colleagues here in Wicklow to intervene to inject urgency in this matter, before matters deteriorate even further."



Grand Hotel, Wicklow Town



Siofra Byrne with Caoimhe and Michael Murphy at the Annacurra GAA/Camogie Dinner Dance in the Arklow Bay Hotel.

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Protection of Wicklow Courthouse welcomed

Green Party TD Steven Matthews has welcomed positive progress regarding the preservation of the Wicklow Town Courthouse and in particular of the building's roof following constructive engagement with the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform and the Office of Public Works (OPW).

Speaking about the Wicklow Town Courthouse, Deputy Matthews said: "In recent months I have had the opportunity to meet the Wicklow Town Community team on a number of occasions to speak about the most pressing issues facing the area. One issue which was raised with me was the condition of the Wicklow Town Courthouse which is prominently located in the town square in recent years. I understand their concerns completely and agree that the preservation of this beautiful and historic building should be prioritised. I was extremely disappointed to hear recent negative comments made by one of my

Dail constituency colleagues regarding the courthouse and I believe that we must do all we can to protect its heritage and structure.

"I am aware that following my requests, the OPW had previously carried out maintenance works on the Courthouse last April. These works included painting of the rails, windows and doors on the front elevation, cleaning the facade of the building and removal of weeds around the building. I am continuing to engage with Wicklow County Council and the OPW to secure the provision of subtle up-lighting for the front of the courthouse so

as to not detract from the overall rejuvenation of the town square.

"As part of the review into the condition of the building which I called for, it has been discovered that significant works will be required to fix the roof in a number of areas to stop the leaking of water which has occurred.

"I have been assured that the process of these repairs is being prioritised. I will continue to engage with the OPW and the Court Service to ensure that these necessary works are carried out as soon as possible to ensure the future survival of this historic building," Deputy Matthews concluded.



Deputy Matthews outside Wicklow Courthouse

Council to get report on new homeless outreach service

At the January meeting of Bray Municipal District, a motion from Sinn Féin Councillors calling for a report on the new homeless outreach service was agreed.

Speaking on the motion, Cllr Grace McManus (SF) said "The new homeless outreach service for Bray is going to have a significant positive impact for people at risk of, or suffering, homelessness.

"We have seen that understanding the causes of homelessness is vitally important. The rise

in Notices to Quit nationally was causing large amounts of homelessness. This resulted in the current ban on evictions.

"There could be other factors in our town that we need to have a specialized response to. For example, if we see a significant number of domestic violence presentations, we may need to look

at options such as calling for step down facilities for the refuge.

"We have called for this homeless outreach support since 2020, but we are not content with sitting back now that it is in place. We believe we have an obligation to continue to be informed on the situation, and take action on the issues as they present, to be acting on this issue every day to play our role in making a difference.

"This report will support us to

do that, and I'm looking forward to the discussions it will bring."

Cllr Dermot O'Brien (SF) said "We have called for this report to be given in 6 months, at our June meeting. This is a significant time, as the ban of evictions will have lifted in the Spring. No doubt this will be a significant and challenging time, one we need to plan for now strategically.

"Data must inform every decision we make at a council level. We must capture the stories, the causes and the policy gaps, and then be able to respond accordingly. This report will assist us in this work, and is another positive step for us responding to the housing emergency in Bray."



Cllr Grace McManus



Cllr Dermot 'Daisy' O'Brien

€70,000 fund for environmental sustainability projects

ChangeX has launched the Accenture Sustainable Community Challenge, supported by Accenture. The initiative, designed to enable community groups to kickstart sustainability projects in their own locality, is now open for applications. Successful applicants will receive the resources, seed funding and support needed to start a project in their local community, empowering them to build thriving and sustainable communities.

Groups can choose from a portfolio of proven ideas that have already had a positive impact in other communities in Ireland and around the

world. Ideas include Community Fridge, which supports the sharing of surplus food and the reduction of food waste, and Open Orchard, which

connects communities through the planting of fruit trees in public places.

This is the second Accenture Sustainable Community Challenge

launched by ChangeX in Ireland. It builds on the success of the 2021 Challenge, which supported 22 local groups to start environmental sustainability projects, benefiting over 2,200 people in communities across Ireland.

Sustainable Skerries community group received funding in 2021 to start an Open Orchard project in North County Dublin. "Over 50 people, adults and children, took part and planted 20 trees in our first Open Orchard, right in the middle of Skerries," said Sabine McKenna, Chair of Sustainable Skerries. "The day - and the wider project - was very much about community building, working on the planting together and then sharing some tea and cakes and chatting."

Deirdre Murphy, Corporate Sustainability Lead at Accenture in Ireland added, "All of us are more aware than ever before of the responsibility we have to take action to address the climate and biodiversity crises. At

Accenture, we're working to embed sustainability into everything we do, and with everyone we work with, including in our communities and when crowdsourcing innovations that will help drive sustainable impact globally. Communities truly hold

the power to be catalysts for real change, and we're excited to be able to play a small part in empowering community action in Ireland through our partnership with ChangeX."

Groups, individuals, and organisations who are passionate about building a

thriving community are encouraged to apply to roll out one of the six initiatives for their community at www.changex.org. Seed funding will be allocated to qualifying applicants on a first-come, first-served basis.

To date, more than

20,000 community projects have started through the ChangeX platform, with local groups across Ireland, Europe, the United States and Latin America accessing the ideas, support and funding needed to have a measurable impact in their local area.



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Nicola and Daryl Hobbs with Ciara McCarty O'Brien and Amelie O'Brien at Andrea Daly's Operation Transformation walk in Arklow.

€1.68m for Wicklow communities that welcomed refugees

An initiative to support communities that have welcomed people from Ukraine and other countries will see €1.68 million being made available for Co. Wicklow. It will fund community organisations, local groups, sports clubs and transport infrastructure. Every local authority in the country will benefit under the €50 million Community Recognition Fund.

Cllr Steven Stokes stated: "This is good news. Wicklow has contributed positively to welcome Ukrainians to the county. Many local people have shared their homes with those fleeing the awful invasion of Ukraine. Of course the Tiglin team have done amazing work in Greystones, opening up their facility. Plus many local people have donated items, with several groups bringing crucial supplies to Ukraine, or the border areas. From Day 1 the people of Wicklow have been right behind the Ukrainian people. I saw this first hand with the turnout at Rally for Ukraine in Greystones, that was co-organised with Viv Collins."

This initiative is the first of its kind. It is designed to specifically support communities across the country that have welcomed and are hosting families and citizens from Ukraine and other countries. The first €30m of the Fund will be available in 2023. The next €20m will come on stream in 2024. A minimum spend of 60% must be incurred by Irish local authorities in 2023, with the remaining 40% in 2024.

Among the projects that will be supported under the fund include:

- The refurbishment of local sports clubs and facilities.
- The upgrade of community facilities such as play areas and commu-

nity gardens.

- The purchase of equipment to benefit arts organisations, clubs and festivals.

- The enhancement of school or parish facilities that are open to the wider community after hours or on weekends.

- Transport infrastructure such as community vehicles and bus shelters.

Cllr Stephen Stokes concluded: "This funding will provide a boost for local communities. There are many key areas that need investment. I am glad that the Government have acknowledged the contribution of local people across the country."

Funding available for community and voluntary groups

Community and voluntary organisations across Wicklow are being encouraged to apply for funding from Wicklow County Council.

The Wicklow Community Awards Scheme 2023 has opened for applications and will provide grants of up to €500 for arts, sporting and cultural organisations to undertake community projects in their area.

Welcoming the launch of the scheme, Deputy Steven Matthews said: "I am delighted that community and voluntary organisations across Wicklow will be able to apply for

funding to support their activities. Local groups have been negatively impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic and the cost-of-living crisis, and it is important that we continue to recognise their invaluable contribution to the sustainable development of our communities.

"I would encourage all organisations that are eligible to apply for the Community Awards Scheme. The funding can

be used to assist with running costs or to develop a project that benefits well-being and quality of life in the local community. Social inclusion is at the heart of the Community Awards Scheme, and projects targeted at reducing the impact of marginalisation and disadvantage will be particularly welcome.

"The work of our local groups impacts so many people across Wicklow. I am inspired by the generosity and dedication of volunteers who give up their time to help others and make a positive con-

tribution to our community. As TD for Wicklow, I will continue to advocate for the extension of financial supports for community and voluntary organisations.

"The closing date for applications to the Wicklow Community Awards Scheme is **Friday 24th February at 4pm**. If anyone has any questions about the process of applying for this funding, I would encourage them to get in touch with me directly and I will offer any support I can," Deputy Matthews concluded.

Funding for locally led biodiversity projects doubled to €3m

Malcolm Noonan TD, Minister of State for Heritage and Electoral Reform at the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, last week announced a doubling of funding to the Local Biodiversity Action Fund to €3 million for 2023.

Local Authorities can now apply to the National Parks and Wildlife Service to avail of this funding to deliver local biodiversity projects. Over €32,000 in funding was allocated through the Wicklow Local Authority in 2022.

First launched in 2018, the Local Biodiversity Action Fund offers funding to help Local Authorities achieve actions identified in the National Biodiversity Action Plan, recognising the important role they plan in addressing the biodiversity emergency. This funding stream enables the development of projects that address biodiversity loss in Local Authority areas by helping to create new habitats, restoring existing ones and by tackling invasive alien species.

The scheme, operated by the National Parks and Wildlife Service of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, has proven hugely popular, with 109 projects funded in 2022. A wide variety of projects were financed including in the areas of Wetland Restoration, Bird Surveys, Dune restoration, Biodiversity Awareness and Invasive Alien Species.

Commenting on the announcement, Minister Noonan said: "I'm delighted to be able to double the funding for this vital biodiversity funding scheme, which has proven immensely popular with Local Authorities, who have carried out really impactful projects with the funding. We have seen increasing participation in biodiversity and invasive species projects year-on-year, and the benefits of this are shared by all of us, not least local communities.

Reversing biodiversity loss is among the greatest challenges of our times. Locally-led initiatives can be extremely impactful - supporting them is an important part of the response. Local Authorities play an important role in these efforts. Combined with our announcement last year of the appointment of Biodiversity Officers in the Local Authorities, today's funding increase will allow the Local Authorities to play an ever more active role in our plans to address biodiversity loss. The State has increased its funding to the NPWS in light of the biodiversity crisis and I'm delighted that we're able to in turn increase funding to important initiatives such as this."

Examples of projects that received funding in 2022 include the Brittas Bay Conservation Project. In addition to conservation management and monitoring, this project plans to develop enhanced community engagement and address onsite interpretation and messaging.

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'Urgent change needed to reform children's mental health services'

Sinn Féin TD John Brady has called for urgent action to address damning failures in Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) identified in a report by the Mental Health Commission.

The Sinn Féin TD said that these steps must be taken without delay to ensure that patients are not left at risk locally.

Deputy Brady said: "The publication of a damning Interim Report into CAMHS has shown that we have now gone way beyond crisis point when it comes to our children's mental health. Children in Wicklow deserve better and urgent changes must be delivered to end the risks they face.

"One of the major concerns identified in this report is lost children which involves patients with open cases, who have been referred to services but then failed to receive the follow-up appointments

they need such as a review of prescriptions or monitoring of medication.

"The Mental Health Commission also found that lack of governance in many areas is contributing to some inefficient and unsafe CAMHS services, including the failure to manage risk, failure to fund and recruit key staff.

"It is clear that CAMHS is not working and that an urgent strategy is needed to tackle the crisis. Sinn Féin have outlined the key steps needed to ensure that CAMHS is reformed to give patients the high-quality and timely care they need.

"The immediate prior-

ity is to locate all the children who have been lost to follow up and to ensure that they have the appropriate mental health supports in place. We are calling for ring-fenced funding for Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services within the health budget. We are also calling for the development of national standards for monitoring the use of antipsychotic medications by children and young people. We also need to see an increase in education and training places in higher education to give us a pipeline of staff for our CAMH services. This will ensure safe staffing levels are delivered.

"The solutions are



Andrea Daly supporters at Andrea's Operation Transformation walk in Arklow

there if the political will is there. The government must now urgently consider Sinn Féin's proposals. Children in Wicklow and across the state must get access to high-quality mental health support when they need it, without delay or excuses. Sinn Féin in government would prioritise delivering change in our health-care system, so that mental health services are fit for purpose."

'Govt asleep at the wheel on NCT'

Jennifer Whitmore TD has described as 'totally unreasonable' the waiting periods for access to NCT appointments for people living in Wicklow. Deputy Whitmore has called for practical solutions to bring down waiting times for NCT tests in Wicklow, and around the country.

Deputy Whitmore said: "The fact is in Wicklow we only have one test centre in Arklow for the whole county. There is currently a seven month wait for a test with the next available test in July 2023 according to the NCT booking portal today.

"Other test centres such as Nass and Deansgrange, used by Wicklow car owners for their NCT, both have no availability

until August of this year. I have been told of people in Wicklow registering for NCTs in counties outside Leinster in the hopes of being seen to sooner. The vast majority of motorists are responsible road users and want to comply with the regulations for NCT testing, but that is becoming increasingly difficult when they are being asked to wait for eight months.

"It is totally unreasonable to expect motorists to meet this standard while not ensuring that the service being provided is delivered in a timely manner. This cannot continue for much longer, or we may find ourselves in the position of a year long waiting list for an NCT.

"While the triggering of sanctions on Applus for their failure to meet their service level agreement is welcome, those will not see cars tested faster or a reduction in waiting times. The Minister needs to get all relevant parties around the table and work to find a practical solution for motorists."

WHEN'S THE NEXT TRAIN?

Continued from page 1

the newly commissioned battery carriages will be made available to the Wicklow line. Of the carriages that have been ordered to date, the majority are going to the northern line and won't be available until after 2025.

"We need now for the government to formally commit to allocating some of these carriages to the Wicklow Town line. Government promises are no longer cutting it and residents in Wicklow deserve clarity on what transport plans are being made for their town and the rate of progress for those plans.

"In 2021 I started a campaign in Wicklow encouraging people to engage with the NTA on their consultation for the new strategy including calls for the extension of the DART to Wicklow town. I was proud to hear the NTA mention at the briefing that there had been a large campaign from Wicklow for this extension of this service to Wicklow Town.

"I want to thank everyone who did make a submission to the new strategy. I will con-

tinue to put pressure on the government to deliver public transport for Wicklow that meets the needs of Wicklow residents."

Cllr Stephen Stokes from Greystones welcomed the Wicklow objectives in the strategy but said he wants to see more action to make them happen.

Cllr Stokes stated: "Extending public transport in County Wicklow is vital. I will be supporting the NTA, but I am also pressing for much more. East Wicklow has seen phenomenal population growth. In addition there is often a lag between what is needed, and the arrival of infrastructure."

Cllr Stokes expressed concern over the timeframes. The Luas to Bray is planned for 2029, provided that there are no unexpected delays. Meanwhile extending the Luas to UCD is not planned until after 2042.

Cllr Stokes added: "Two decades is a long wait, considering that we probably needed these things two decades ago. I would urge the Government and the NTA to prioritise these projects. If we want people to use public transport it needs to be reliable, efficient and affordable.

"Some simple improvements needed are

little things, like allowing contactless payments on all modes of transport."

Cllr Stephen Stokes has also welcomed the positive impact that these initiatives can have to lower emissions and fumes. But he is not convinced that the Government will hit emissions targets.

Cllr Stokes noted: "Overall transport emissions should be halved by 2030, under the Climate Action Plan published recently. People cannot get magic trains."

This announcement follows a recent presentation from the NTA Park & Ride Team to Wicklow County Council. Three new park & ride facilities are due to be built in Greystones, Ashford, Bray.

Cllr Stokes said the ultimate goal should be to link park & ride facilities with light rail services. He added: "I lived in the Manchester region for 6 years. They have transport interchanges that often link trams, rail services, buses and car parks. It's common sense.

"I have also advised the NTA that capacity will be key. Good services are always popular. So we need to plan early for further expansion."

Meridian on the market

Meridian Point Shopping Centre in Greystones has been put on the market for a guide price of €5.5 million.

The retail scheme, being offered by Avison Young on behalf of Cosgrave Property Group, is expected to attract much interest as it comes fully occupied with 20 tenancies, anchored by An Post and Sports Direct, and also including Costa coffee, Grafton Barbers, and Indian restaurant Chakra by Jaipur. Meridian also has 181 car parking spaces.

Avison Young are calling it "a high yielding retail investment opportunity" located in a "key commercial hub in North Wicklow", which enjoys rising footfall.

The centre currently generates a rental income of €607,652 p.a., producing a Net Initial Yield of 10.5%.

"Meridian Point is 100% let and a modern, well managed and maintained centre," say Avison Young.

Meridian was developed by Cosgrave in 2004.

One Thousand Pieces in a co-production with Mermaid Arts Centre, Project Arts Centre & The Ark present



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Personal best for Wicklow alpine skier

Team Ireland's Eábha McKenna hit the slopes in Tarvisio, Italy last week to compete in the Girl's Slalom and Girl's Giant Slalom events at the European Youth Olympic Festival (EYOF). In the Giant Slalom, she achieved a personal best and her highest-ever FIS (Fédération Internationale de Ski) points.

The 16 year old from Rathdrum, one of the youngest alpine skiers at the EYOF, stepped up in her first major competition, finishing 38th out of 88 starters in the Girl's Slalom last Wednesday with 1:46.58. McKenna had a solid first run, on a course with over 20 athletes marked as DNF. Determined to improve her ranking in the second run, the sixteen-year-old focused on a cleaner execution.

"It was more rutted than this morning so I knew if I kept the line and if I stayed on top I would be faster, and it worked out!", she said. "I'm happy with that, these are the best in Europe, at the moment in my age group, and it's one of the better races I've had. I'm glad I put down two solid runs. It's quite a change competing here at this level, absolutely everyone here is trying to get

into the World Cup eventually."

For the past five years McKenna has been working with Team Ireland head coach Giorgio Marchesini, who has been working with Irish development athletes since the Pyeongchang Winter Olympics. The Italian coach works on the Snow Sports Association of Ireland pathway programme, and highlights the importance of events like the EYOF for the develop-

ment of young athletes.

"When they are young it is important to bring the athletes to competitions at the international level. At the EYOF, the race is the same as what they know, but the big difference is everything that surrounds it. It is more professional, there are TVs, interviews, and all the stuff the athletes meet when they go to big events like World Cups and Olympic Games."

Marchesini emphasises the importance of creating a consistent high-performance environment for these athletes, saying, "The path I take with the young athletes is very progressive, there is not much difference between what I said to Eábha today at the race, and what I say when we are in Andorra together. It is very important for us to start working with them when they are children. For instance, with Eábha she knows me well, she knows when it is time to talk, and when the moment is that we get more serious and concentrate. It is really important that this pathway is there for them, so they can prepare to move into the senior races."

Eábha returned to the slopes on Thursday to compete in the Girl's Giant Slalom (GS) event and finished 42nd with a time of 3:02.79, her highest-ever FIS (Fédération Internationale de Ski) points.

Pleased with McKenna's



Eábha McKenna of Team Ireland competing in the girls slalom event during day two of the 2023 Winter European Youth Olympic Festival at Friuli-Venezia Giulia in Udine, Italy. Photo by Eóin Noonan, Sportsfile

performance on the second day, Marchesini was surprised with the length of the course, which challenged the field of 87 athletes. The Irish skier scored 129.33 FIS points on a day where over twenty athletes were DNF. FIS points are used to score athletes internationally, which helps with rankings and establishing start orders.

"I'm happy because Eábha held both courses pretty well, she did well in terms of the technical aspect. A pretty good number of girls in the middle went down. Some found it difficult because it is unusual to have a GS that is so long. The 1:27.00 we saw this morning is something I've never seen before in a competition. Usually, a GS is between 1:05.00 and 1:15.00."

The light made it difficult for the athletes between some of the gates, which was one of the aspects that Marchesini was working on with McKenna.

"We saw two or three points where it was difficult to see after the pitches, I was signaling to her to the gate. Before the race I made a POV, I went down the course and did a video and sent it to her so that she could repeat the run."

Delighted with her personal best FIS points, McKenna stepped up again to compete in the Girl's Giant Slalom, a race that was longer than the competitions in which she ordinarily competes. Embracing the challenge, and pushing her limits, Eábha commented, "Giorgio told me to ski more dynamically because he knows I can ski a bit faster. I think I did better in the top section this time. The course was quite long, in previous competitions, we usually complete each run in under a minute but, today's course was 30 seconds longer."

The Olympic Federation of Ireland had two athletes competing in the multi-sport event that plays a key role in the pathway of athletes, providing valuable learning experiences for athletes in a high-performance setting. The EYOF was hosted by the Friuli Venezia Giulia region of Italy and ran from 21st-28th January.



Eábha pictured during a team walk before the 2023 Winter European Youth Olympic Festival. Photo by Eóin Noonan, Sportsfile

Hurling and camogie young whistlers fully trained

Cumann na mBunscol Chill Mhantáin held a Young Whistlers referee course for Hurling and Camogie on Thursday January 19th in Kilcoole Primary School.

There was a great turnout, with ten different schools represented on the day. The participants were made up of mature, responsible 5th and 6th class boys and girls who share a passion for hurling and are interested in learning more about refereeing.

The coaching session was led by North East GDA (Games Development Administrator), Conor Daly, who engaged the group in discussion about the basic rules of the game and how best to communicate those rules to players, coaches and spectators alike. There was a high level of genuine interest from participants, as evident from the very pertinent questions asked. "It is heartening to see the next generation of young whistlers begin their refereeing journey, as without referees, we have no game!", said Cumann na mBonbscol Chill Mhantain.



3rd and 4th class girls descended on Roundwood Hall on the 19th January for a great day of indoor camogie. Schools represented included Roundwood (2 teams), St. Brigid's (2 teams), St. Fergal's (2 teams), St. Pat's, Kilcoole Primary School and St. Peter's (2 teams). All really enjoyed the day. Pictured is the Kilcoole Primary School team.



The course participants: Fionn Crean Nic Oireactaigh, Caoimhe Finnerty, Etain Finnerty (Greystones Educate Together), Ruairí Nolan, Eabha Finucane (St Fergal's NS, Bray), Dexter Whyte, Tadhg Fry (Delgany NS), Alex McKenna (St. Joseph's NS Glenealy), John O'Boyle, Orianna McGuigan (St. Laurence's Greystones), Ryan Keane, Alanie Flood (Kilcoole PS), Finn O'Sullivan, Susie Cleere (St. Brigid's NS, Greystones), Conor Eglinton, Nessa Ní Chonchubhair (Scoil Chualainn, Bray), Ciarán Kenny (St. Cronan's, Bray), Úna Cooper (Gaeilscoil Clocha Liatha).

EV charge point meters for Blessington town centre

Electric Vehicle Charging points will finally be connected in Blessington town square.

Speaking on the subject, Deputy Jennifer Whitmore says, "There have been a lot of false starts with the connection of the charge points in Blessington but I am delighted to finally see that the EV charge points will be up and running in the coming weeks in Blessington."



Jennifer Whitmore TD

"Speaking to the ESB on site who were fitting the meters for the chargers, I'm told that there should be power at the site within two to three days which means the chargers should finally be up and running in two weeks' time."

"It's been a year since the funding of €100,000 was announced for the development of plans to upgrade Blessington Town Centre and it's great to see the progress and development of the town centre to include EV charging points for residents and visitors to the town alike."

"Throughout last year and early this year, I

have been keeping a close contact with the County Council and the ESB to make sure that the connection comes on stream and when a constituent raised the issue again with the office this week, I was delighted to inform him that the delays that had been holding up the connection are now resolved, certificates have been issued and the charge-points will be operational in the coming days."

"The installation and

connection of these charging points in Blessington is a much-needed amenity for the area which has seen huge population growth and a lack of public facilities to go along with it. I hope that the charging points will make charging of EV's more convenient for residents of the town and pave the way for more visitors. I will continue to keep contact with The County Council and The ESB for the planned installation of further charging points across the county."

A planned investment of A100 million in Electric Vehicle Charging Infra-structure forms an important part of the Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure Strategy 2022 - 2025.

However Cllr Stephen Stokes has expressed concern that the €5,000 electric vehicle purchase grant is to be slashed by Government. The cut is due to be implemented in Summer 2023, as part of the Budget.

Cllr Stokes stated: "It is a positive step forward

that more charging points are to be supplied. However the ambition is moot if people cannot afford electric cars. We need to be innovative when it comes to electric vehicles, and look at increased incentives, to encourage people to purchase them."

Currently electric vehicle users can obtain a grant of up to €5000 when purchasing an electric vehicle. However Minister Eamon Ryan recently reiterated that this is to be cut. Cllr Stephen Stokes is urging the Government to reconsider this choice.



Cllr Stephen Stokes



Charge point meter being installed in Blessington

Cllr Stokes has also written to Minister for the Environment, Eamon Ryan, about the potential impact of slashing the electric vehicle grant.

In July 2021, the European Council submitted the Fit for 55 package. It considered several policy areas, such as economic, energy, energy and transport. Within the Fit for 55

package, the EU Commission sought to revise rules on CO2 emissions, for cars and vans. The proposal increased EU wide reduction targets for 2030, and sets a new target of 100% by 2035.

Cllr Stephen Stokes noted: "Effectively the European Union wants to ban the sale of petrol and diesel cars, or vans, in

the EU from 2035. This will only work if people have real alternatives. Now is the time to invest in public transport, and electric vehicle grants."

Cllr Stephen Stokes pointed to France as a positive example. The maximum electric vehicle grant in France was €6,000. However President Macron boosted this to €7,000 from

January 2023.

Cllr Stokes concluded: "If the Government proceeds to cut the grant, electric vehicle sales may be slower than expected. In turn this could be counter productive to reducing emissions. If we want to reduce our dependence on petrol and diesel, the Government needs to be decisive, and bold."

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Telling It Like It Is: Combatting Ageism

Alliance of age sector NGOs latest report calls for an independent commissioner for ageing and older people

Last week The Alliance of Age Sector NGOs launched its 2023 Report, 'Telling It Like It Is; Combatting Ageism', which sets out why Ireland needs to take ageism seriously and take meaningful action to counteract it. The report highlights the nature and impact of ageism in Ireland and offers several evidence-informed strategies to reduce it.

Ageism arises when age categorises and divides people in ways that lead to harm, disadvantage and injustice. Ageism is ever-present and has considerable harmful effects, including a shorter lifespan, diminished mental and physical health, isolation, lost commitment to the workplace, cognitive decline, and reduced quality of life.

The report includes nine actions which, when implemented, will reduce the stigma and ill effects associated with ageing. The most pressing of these actions is the appointment of an Independent Commissioner for Ageing and Older People - similar to that in place in both Northern Ireland and Wales. The Alliance believes that the establishment of a Commissioner for Ageing and Older People would support our ageing population by actioning a programme for government which prioritises older people. It would ensure that all the commitment to main-

streaming ageing is kept to the fore of policy and decision-making and that there is enhanced investment in programmes and services to combat ageism nationally.

On behalf of The Alliance ALONE, CEO Sean Moynihan said: "The Alliance is urging the Government to establish an Independent Commissioner for Ageing and Older People. This would help to ensure that Ireland's various policy commitments relevant to older people are meaningfully monitored and that older people are treated with respect and on an equal basis with the rest of the population."

Chief Executive of Community Foundation Ireland Denise Charlton said: "This research underlines the critical need to combat ageism which is not only pervasive but also largely unrecognised and unchallenged. True equality means everyone's voice is heard, no matter what, regardless of age or back-

ground. The Foundation remains committed to working with older people and their supporters to end this."

The Alliance Member and The Alzheimer Society of Ireland CEO Andy Heffernan said: "The pandemic, in many ways, created a simplified view of older lives in public discourse - as homogeneous, vulnerable, isolated units readily cut off from families, friends and activities. Since joining the sector, I have found Minister Butler to be engaged and proactive regarding the lives of people affected by dementia. The Minister worked with us to find innovative solutions to isolation for people living with dementia during COVID-19, and I look forward to continued engagement as we move forward to ensure people affected by dementia are active and valued members of their communities."

Greystones resident, Alliance member and Communications Manager



CEOs of Alliance members outside Leinster House for the launch of the report 'Telling it Like it is: Combating Ageism'

of Third Age, Anne Dempsey said: "Our report was launched in Leinster House this week and we had an excellent all-party response from Ministers, TDs and Senators. We now have 768,900 over 65s in Ireland, one person in every six. As Ireland is ageing, there is growing recognition that this issue needs to be addressed in terms of services and inclusion, and most of all,

in the combatting of ageism, which damages people of all ages.

"This latest report is the second from the Age Alliance to raise awareness on issues affecting older people, with the first collating the views of many over 65s on how they were represented and treated during the pandemic. The pandemic arguably, created a simplified view of older lives in public discourse.

"It characterised all older people as needy and vulnerable who could readily be cut off from families, friends, activities, and, in many cases, their worthwhile contributions to society.

"Many active older people holding down jobs, childminding, helping out in the community told us they felt insulated and marginalised in being seen as frail and vulnerable. The response to the pan-

dem seems to have increased a prevalent ageism, with older people bearing the brunt of COVID-19 in language, loneliness and in death rates, she says. However, she suggests this new awareness offers new opportunities.

"The voices and lived experience of older people must now be heard by those responsible for policy development and implementation. And we

are calling on decision-makers to listen. Unless we change now the way we treat older people, we may create the future that we fear for our older selves. So, there is a healthy degree of self-interest in making the changes now that will benefit all our futures."

Telling It Like It Is; Combatting Ageism is available at <https://tinyurl.com/combatingageism>.



Pictured at the Irish Cancer Society's Daffodil Day Supporters Launch 2023 in Croke Park were Wicklow volunteers Sean and Lucy Hayes, Irish Cancer Society CEO Averil Power and Father Ted star and launch host, Pauline McLynn. Daffodil Day takes place on Friday, March 24th. Take part and take back, so that one day cancer can take no more. For more information, please visit www.cancer.ie

Our Lady's Hospice: Providing specialist care for 140 years

In operation for 140 years, Our Lady's Hospice & Care Services is a 200 bed facility providing specialist care for people with a wide range of needs from rehabilitation to end-of-life care in Harold's Cross Hospice and Blackrock Hospice and Wicklow Hospice.

"We are committed to realising our vision to provide the highest quality in person-centred palliative care for all who need it across South Dublin and Wicklow. As Ireland's largest specialist palliative care provider, since 1879, we have taken a holistic approach to end of life care, looking to the needs of both our patients and their families. 140 years later that charitable ethos remains unchanged. What has changed, however, is the population we serve. People are living longer and have more complex care needs, so we must provide specialist facilities and services of the highest quality to meet these requirements."

Palliative Care

"Our Lady's Hospice & Care Services strives to offer world-class professional, loving and person-centred Palliative Care to people with advanced life-threatening illnesses who are approaching the end of life."

Community Rehabilitation Unit, CRU

"The Community Rehabilitation Unit (CRU) is a unique intermediate care programme, specially designed to help those 65 years of age and over in the local community."

Anna Gaynor House Residential Centre

"Anna Gaynor House is a modern purpose-built HIQA registered designated centre for older persons on our Harold's Cross campus."

Rheumatic & Musculoskeletal Disease Unit, RMDU

"Our expert team offer a unique service to people with chronic rheumatologic and musculoskeletal conditions requiring specialist medical management and rehabilitation."

Bereavement Services

"Our Bereavement Service is available to adults and children who have had a loved one die in our care. It is free and non-denominational. The bereavement service will try to offer the support that would be helpful to meet your particular needs."

Ulster Bank announce update on phased withdrawal

Remaining 63 branches will cease transactions on 31st March 2023 and close on 21st April

Ulster Bank last Tuesday made a number of updates to progress in its phased withdrawal from the Republic of Ireland.

Branches

Ulster Bank's 63 remaining branches in the Republic of Ireland are to cease transactions on 31 March 2023 and close on 21 April 2023. This means customers will no longer be able to make cash or cheque lodgements either at the counter or through internal automation devices or make any form of a withdrawal at an Ulster Bank branch (except for ATM services). In the period from 1st to 21st April, colleagues in branches will be fully focused on supporting any remaining personal and business customers to move to a new banking provider and close their accounts. These 63 branches, and ATM services, will permanently close on 21 April 2023. In January, 25 Ulster Bank branches closed as part of the transaction with Permanent TSB, and are reopening as Permanent TSB branches.

Ulster Bank also confirms that customers will no longer be able to access Ulster Bank services through An Post outlets after 31 March 2023. This means that customers will no longer be able to make lodgements or payments through their Ulster Bank accounts in any of An Post's network of post offices and outlets across the country.

There will continue to be a range of customer services available through the dedicated Customer Support Hub on www.ulsterbank.ie to support customers through this

change. Ulster Bank's Telephony service can be contacted on 0818 210 260 (00 353 1 8047475 if calling from abroad). Lines are open 8am to 8pm, 7 days a week. Online, app and telephone banking is also available until customers' accounts are frozen).

Colleague Redundancy Programmes

In November, Ulster Bank opened two redundancy programmes and as a result, c600 colleagues will now leave the Bank via redundancy over the coming months, the timeframe is aligned to the business need.

Other colleagues have left and will continue to leave the Bank through TUPE transfers as part of the Bank's transactions with Permanent TSB and AIB. Ulster Bank also expects to open another voluntary redundancy programme in February 2023 with further redundancy programmes later in 2023 and beyond as the work continues to reduce or cease.

Moving to Freeze and Close Higher Reliance Current and Deposit Accounts

Ulster Bank is also encouraging customers who have not yet taken action, to begin the process of choosing a new provider, moving their transactions and closing their

current and deposit accounts within their notice period. All current and deposit accounts that have passed their six month notice period are now queued for closure, with the exception of known vulnerable customers and customers in receipt of Social Protection payments and we will continue our outreach to those customers to support them to move. The Bank will commence the freezing of personal and commercial customer accounts with higher levels of activity on or after 02 February 2023.

An account is frozen for a period of 30 days and unless a request is made by the customer to access the account, it is then closed. Ulster Bank have received minimal requests for customers to access their accounts once frozen. This careful and controlled approach of freezing accounts for 30 days before it is closed, means that customers who haven't already closed their account are given another final opportunity to engage and where a customer needs more support, Ulster Bank can still provide it at that stage. This phased approach to the closure of accounts is managed to maintain an orderly process for customers, the industry and other key stakeholders.

90% of Ulster Bank personal current accounts, are either closed, or with customers having materially wound down the level of activity in their current account to five or less transactions, or left it inactive.



The Fitzgerald family at Andrea Daly's Operation Transformation walk in Arklow

This increases to 94% when personal deposit accounts are included. This trend continues to increase every day for customers approaching their six month deadline. 77% of Ulster Bank business/ commercial accounts have either closed, materially wound down the level of activity in their current account to five or less transactions, or left it inactive. 59% of personal current accounts are already closed; and 41% of business/ commercial current accounts are closed.

"Our focus remains on supporting all customers in moving to a new banking provider," Ulster Bank said. "Customers can contact Ulster Bank on 0818 210 260 or 00353 1804 7475 if calling from abroad or 1800 656 001 if they have vulnerabilities. Business customers can call us on 1800 818 375 or can call their dedi-

cated relationship manager for assistance with moving their accounts."

Throughout this process, Ulster Bank also reminds customers that Ulster Bank will never ask you for passcodes or online banking details in a phone call, email or text - so be alert, as scammers and fraudsters may try to take advantage of the situation.

Ulster Bank Chief Executive Jane Howard said: "Today is another significant day in our phased withdrawal as we communicate the closure dates of our remaining branches to colleagues, customers and other stakeholders. I know that our branches and colleagues have been a central part of these communities for many years and these final months of helping customers to move to new providers will be poignant for all

involved. I would like to unreservedly thank all of our colleagues for their continued support of our customers and of each other.

"By the time we close our branches, we know that the closure of current and deposit accounts will have materially concluded. If any customer has not yet moved their current and deposit account, I strongly urge them to act swiftly to find a new provider and move their accounts. Our colleagues are on hand to support, and customers can contact Ulster Bank on 0818 210 260 or 00353 1804 7475 if calling from abroad or 1800 656 001 if they have vulnerabilities. Business customers can call us on 1800 818 375 or can call their dedicated relationship manager for assistance with moving their accounts."

Wicklow businesses meet thousands of buyers at local enterprise showcase

Businesses from Co. Wicklow had the opportunity to meet buyers from all over the world last week as part of the Local Enterprise Showcase at Showcase 2023 in the RDS in Dublin. There were over 100 Local Enterprise Office supported businesses from across the country present at the event with fifteen in attendance from Co. Wicklow.



Kylie Maher of BeKind Industries

Kelly Hood (print artist), BeKind Industries (hand rolled incense) and Eriu (Wicklow made woollen blankets), were all exhibiting at the Local Enterprise Showcase, part of Showcase 2023, that saw over 4,000 buyers from retailers across the globe attend the three-day event in Dublin looking to secure new sales and partners for the year ahead. Upwards of €20 million in business was expected to have been transacted across the three-day event.

Dara Calleary, T.D., Minister of State at the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment officially opened Showcase 2023 at the RDS, Dublin. The show, which marked its 47th edition this year and ran until Tuesday 24th January, is one of Ireland's largest and most important international

trade fairs. Showcase is presented on behalf of Design & Crafts Council Ireland, with support from Enterprise Ireland in promoting the trade show internationally, and the Local Enterprise Offices nationwide.

Minister Calleary said: "It's great to be here and see some of the incredible products on display. Ireland is globally renowned for its craft and design, and Showcase is the international launchpad for so many Irish makers to achieve this recognition. Craft plays an integral part in Ireland's economy, and I wish each maker the best of luck during Showcase."

The Wicklow companies were selected by Local Enterprise Office Wicklow to take part in this year's Local Enterprise Showcase at Showcase 2023. They have been



Eoin Shanley, of Copperfish Lighting Company won the prestigious Sustainability Award at Showcase this year.

working closely with them in recent months to ensure they are in the best possible position to maximise their appearance at the event including sales technique, marketing materials and stand production.

Vibeke Delahunt, Head of Enterprise at the Local Enterprise Office Wicklow said "Showcase is now in its 48th year and we were delighted to welcome buy-

ers from Ireland and all over the world who play a vital role in creating a stage for Irish craft and design. This year was a really busy show with orders higher than last year for our fabulous Wicklow exhibitors who worked so hard over the three days of this Tradeshow."

Eoin Shanley, of Copperfish Lighting Company won the presti-

gious Sustainability Award at Showcase this year. Copperfish are based in Rathnew, Co. Wicklow.

For more information on Local Enterprise Showcase 2023 and supports available to those operating in the design and crafts sector, log on to www.LocalEnterprise.ie and for more information on Showcase 2023, log on to ShowcaseIreland.com



Minister Simon Harris, Jennifer Whitmore TD and Principal Rachel Harper with Wicklow's award-winning Young Scientists Jack Walsh, Fifi Bentley, Isabel Ramirez, Emma Seckington, Grace Delaney, Alannah Lynch and Eva Duffy.

Young scientists congratulated



Cllr Stephen Stokes with SEK student Smaren Pandey, who came up with a system to alert people about Best Before dates.

An evening to celebrate the achievements of Wicklow's winners at the recent BT Young Scientist & Technology Exhibition, was organised by Jennifer Whitmore TD and Principal of St. Patrick's National School Rachel Harper.

It took place on Friday, January 20th in Greystones Youth Cafe. Local Independent councillor Stephen Stokes stated: "It was lovely for local people to see many of the exhibitions, and hear from the students first hand. Well done to Jennifer and Rachel. They brought the community together for a very positive evening."

Some of the exhibitions ranged from youth sport injuries, to preventing food waste, to an analysis of litter on Wicklow beaches.

Cllr Stephen Stokes added: "We should be proud of the young people in County Wicklow. One interesting thing that I learned is that the biggest waste on Greystones beaches comes from abandoned coffee cups. It is imperative that we urge people to take their waste, but also that we work to ensure there that there is enough bin coverage."

'Answers needed over delay of new Greystones school'

In June last year, Jennifer Whitmore TD tentatively welcomed the announcement from Government of the commencement of the next phase for the new school build for Greystones Community College adding then, that she hoped that there will be no delays in progress.

With news last week of a delay in the target completion date from September 2024 to mid-2025, and with no answers forthcoming from Minister Foley despite two different letters sent in November 2022 and January 2023, once again the Social Democrats TD raised the issue in the Dáil last Thursday.

"The building on the site and the construction was meant to start now and there is still no news about whether a tender has been put in place or not" said Deputy Whitmore. "It is simply unacceptable. And it appears that this is the case with a lot of schools with only some schools gone out to tender with Greystones Community College being left behind. This is an important school for Greystones. There is great pressure and demand for places in the area and this school would go some way to relieving that pressure."

"Pupils and teachers have been waiting a very long time to have a permanent place to work and learn and since its sanctioning, Greystones Community College has been in temporary accommodation at three different sites including a tennis club - where the principal's office was situated in the bathroom, a rugby club and a GAA club. The students are being taught in old, prefabricated buildings at a cost of thousands of Euro with no PE facilities or sports hall. And the lack of facilities also impacts on the curriculum available with not all subjects being provided."

"All across Wicklow, we have had years of instances where demand has built up and students cannot get into a



Jennifer Whitmore TD

school within their locality. Where students and parents have had to fight for a place in school or campaign for basic facilities in which their children can learn. It's a disgrace.

"And it's an issue mirrored all across Wicklow. Blessington Community College is in the same boat. North Wicklow Educate Together is another example, as is the pressure and demand for school places in the Roundwood and Ashford areas. It is unacceptable that parents have to invest so much energy and time in fighting for a place for their child, a basic right. The record of school building in County Wicklow is not something that the Department should be selling itself on."



Business Management & Administration Co-ordinator at BIFE, Sarah King, and Deputy Principal Gabriel Allen, with the BIFE Event Team at BIFE's recent Open Day.

NWETSS welcome news of permanent site

The staff and pupils of North Wicklow Educate Together Secondary School (NWETSS) have expressed their delight at the recent news that a permanent site has been found for their school. The announcement marks the culmination of a long campaign by the school in its fight for a home.

The school was first opened in 2016 in temporary premises in the old Presentation College school on Putland Rd, Bray, and has been searching for a permanent

home since then. They are currently located at Ravenswell. The Department of Education have now reached an agreement in principle on a 9.3 acre site for the

school at Fassaroe.

NWETSS Principal Billy Redmond told *Wicklow Times*, "As a school we are now in our 7th year open with students but the reality and

the dream of this school started many years before. There has been so many hours, aspirations and work put into making this wonderful school a reality. The school has been in two temporary locations, and this has left parents and students with a sense of uncertainty and apprehension, and we have done all we can over the years to alleviate this, but this news of a permanent site has created clarity for us here.

"We know that here is a long journey in front of us before we move into a wonderful new building, where the facilities and environment will allow us to offer a greater variety of choice and provision for the students and families in the community.

"The subjects we offer currently will expand, but at the moment we offer a great range including new subjects like Computer Science and Politics and Society and the new premises will facilitate others such as PE as a leaving Cert program.

"In my role as principal and with the support



NWETSS's previous location on the Putland Road

of Fiona the Deputy we work with all the staff and students to make this a school to be proud of, and we are so proud. Every day we experience so much respect and inclusion in every encounter we have with staff and students alike.

"Our goal is to be able to provide a space for every child who wants to attend NWETSS, this year we had over 170 applications for 60 places, we know in the future this will not happen as we will be able to have about 180 students

in each year group.

"We are so grateful to everyone who has worked to help make this news a reality and we will continue to build this school community as a centre of excellence for every student who attends."

Jamie Cullen, a teacher at NWETSS, said: "I think it is with feelings of both excitement and relief that we receive this news. For so long, there has been uncertainty around our future, for everyone in the school community, not just the students, but the staff,

parents and the wider community too. Despite this, the school has thrived and gone from strength to strength over recent years, but knowing we now have a positive outcome to look forward to puts all of us at ease here in NWETSS."

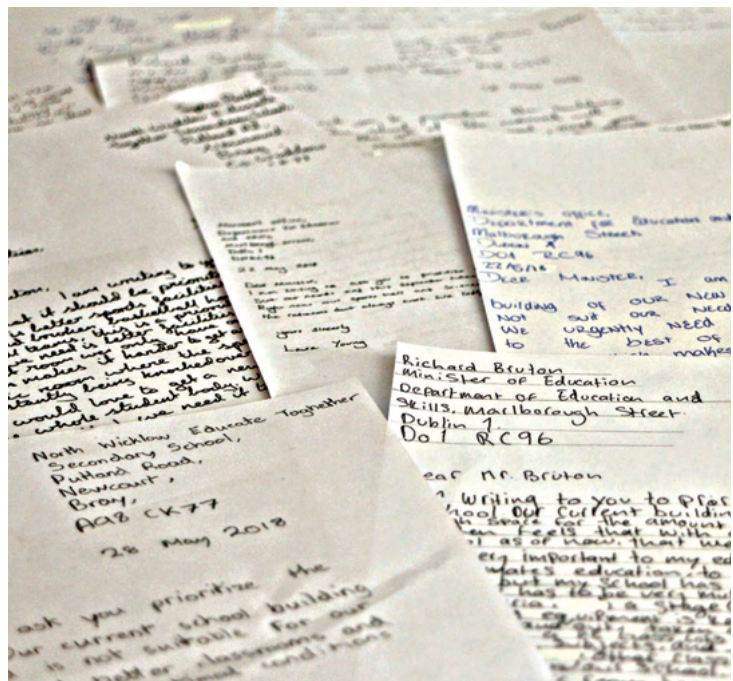
Teacher Suzanne McEneaney remarked: "We hope that as a planned development the public transport and infrastructure will be in place before opening. The NTA and local reps need to work together to make this happen and make it a

great asset for the whole school community."

Students who sit on the Student Council said they were excited by the news and are looking forward to the school getting its new facilities. 6th year pupils said "We wish we would have been able to see it."

"This is welcome progress," said parent Samantha Holman.

It's expected that it will be three to four years before the new school is fully completed and pupils are able to attend classes.



Letters written by pupils of NWETSS in 2018 to then Minister for Education Richard Bruton, pleading for a permanent home for the school



St. Mary's and St. Gerard's pupils

Wicklow schools visit the Dail

Fine Gael Minister Simon Harris recently organised tours for two Wicklow schools of Leinster House and the Houses of the Oireachtas.

6th classes from St. Laurence's National School and St. Mary's and St. Gerard's National School travelled into the city centre to take a tour of the history of Ireland's government. Speaking of the tours, Minister Harris said, "I want to thank both schools for accepting my invitations to come visit Leinster House this week. It is a strong belief of mine that young people should have the opportunity to experience and learn about our country's political system as early as possible, and I was glad to see so many students attend the tours.

"I want to thank the principals and teachers of both schools for their help in organising this important opportunity for their students, and I look forward to being able to continue running tours for many other schools across county Wicklow.

"I would urge any school who may be interested in such a tour to get in touch, as I am eager to support as many of our students as possible."



Pupils from St. Laurence's National School



As the CAO 2023 deadline of 1st February draws close, students in the south east region have an excellent range of course offerings available to them on their doorstep from the first university in the south east. Established on 1 May 2022, South East Technological University (SETU) is a multi-campus university with campuses in Wexford, Waterford and Carlow.

With a university qualification now available closer to home for many students, SETU is offering guided campus tours from Monday, 23rd January until Wednesday, 1st February ahead of the CAO closing on Wednesday, 1st February. The service will run daily excluding weekends on the Cork Road Campus Waterford, Carlow Campus and Wexford Campus from 10am - 4pm daily. Pre-booking at setu.ie/cao is required.

Pictured are Alison Moore, Jess Lawton and Katie Murphy of the SETU Schools' Liaison and Outreach Team advise all CAO applicants to get in touch with the team if they have any queries about their CAO application or SETU and the courses on offer: Carlow Campus: 059 91 75088 / Wexford Campus: 053 91 85814 / Waterford Campus: 051 845653.

Wicklow Rotary Club host information event

Wicklow Rotary Club recently held an information event for the people of Wicklow Town. Invited guests were treated to a fun presentation about Wicklow Rotary Club, what they do and how their work impacts the local community.



Rev. John Clarke and Susie Byrne at the Wicklow Rotary Club information evening in the Bridge Tavern

The event was very well attended with over 45 people, Rotarians and invited guests, turning up.

President Martina Fox welcomed speakers on behalf of Rotary who provided a short insight into what it means to be part of such a world-wide, distinguished organisation. She went on to explain “Put simply Rotarians like to meet people, socialise and have fun whilst doing good in the world”. She continued, “Rotarians apply our leadership and expertise to solve social issues. We raise funds and manage projects both locally and internationally, we aim to promote peace, alleviate poverty, support education, fight disease and support our environment through our wide range of projects.

“Rotarians are decision makers and problem solvers who want to make a difference in this world, our personal integrity and drive is what brings us together to go that extra mile, our



Denis Hipwell, PJ Sutton and Pat Kerr at the Wicklow Rotary Club's Information Evening in the Bridge Tavern, Wicklow Town

motto is 'Service Above Self'. Wicklow Rotary Club was set up in 1988 and has raised significant funds since our inception, all of which goes in the main, to local deserving charities.”

Assistant Governor Mike Connolly stated “Rotary is not just a club you join, it is an invitation to participate in endless opportunities, Rotary offers an opportunity to serve in a big project like

eradicating Polio or a small community project.” Wicklow Rotary are involved in many projects locally, namely the Remembrance Tree, Youth Leadership Competition, the Seamus Heaney Walk - a superb environmental project - and the bikes for Africa Project to name but a few.

In addition Wicklow Rotary has been at the forefront of Wicklow

Ukraine Support and has supported and helped over a 300 Ukrainians settle in our community.

Mr Connolly finished by stating “the projects we engage in are interesting, life changing and fun. We fundraise and support numerous local charities such as Cancer Care, Hillview initiative, the Way Project an intervention project for youth, in addition to several other deserving

charities.” President Martina stated “we are Rotary and there is no limit to what we can achieve, together”. She concluded by extending an invitation to guests who would like to come and have lunch, enjoy interesting and informative guest speakers, with Rotary Wicklow Club. Meetings are on Mondays from 1pm to 2pm over lunch in Wicklow Golf Club.



Michael Connolly, Fred Duffy, Margaret Kenny, Wicklow Rotary President Martina Robinson, Seamus Parle and George Roche at the Wicklow Rotary Club's Information Evening in the Bridge Tavern.

ICA Drama Festival results announced

There was a feast of drama with six one act plays and five sketches at the 67th Wicklow ICA Drama Festival in Glenealy Village Hall the weekend before last.



Members of the Balally Players Drama Group at the ICA Wicklow Federation Drama Festival in Glenealy Hall

The adjudicator Michael Mc Cabe had a hard task as the standard was very high standard. Congratulations to all the groups that took to the stage.

Delgany Dramatic Society won the Premier Award for Best Group, Best Director Peter Harrison and Best Actor Peter Robbie and Best Actress Nicola Hogan in the One Act section. Balally Players were Runner Up Group and the Adjudicator's Award went to Sean T Daly who wrote and directed their play. Ashford ICA won the May Condon Cup for an ICA Group and Brigid Cahill won the Adjudicator's Actress Award and Runner Up Actress. Corey Patton from Square One Theatre Group was Runner up Actor. Their director Claire Maguire and cast



Deirdre Keegan, Tom Keegan and Rita Byrne at the ICA Wicklow Federation Drama Festival

member Aileen O'Reilly won Merit Awards. Merit awards were also given to Oisín Murphy St Patrick's Dramatic Society and Rita Byrne and Rosaleen Mullen Delgany ICA.

The Gloria Mullalley Trophy for Best Moment in Theatre went to Aileen

Mc Loughlin Fuinneoge Drama Group. Lusk ICA won the Norah Ferns Trophy for Most Appropriate Costume. Delgany Dramatic Society won Best Sketch and Best Performance Nora Robbie in the sketch section. Runner Up Performance

was won by Maire Iremonger Fuinneoge Drama Group. Best Sketch by an ICA group was won by Lusk ICA and cast member Catherine Hagan won a merit award. Lusk ICA also won the Adjudicator's Award in the sketch sec-

tion. Merit Awards went to Peter Robbie Delgany Dramatic Society, Gavin Barrett Lucia Drama Group, Jamie Cox St Patrick's Dramatic Society and Roy Beatty Fuinneoge Drama Group. Thank you to all who supported the festival.

Ireland's leading jazz singer and guitarist at The Hot Spot

Hot on the trail of his critically-acclaimed new release, Mooney's Blues, Nigel Mooney is performing at the Hot Spot Music Club in Greystones on Saturday February 4th.

A charismatic figure on the Dublin jazz and blues scenes since the early 1980s, is a self-taught musician influenced by the blues from an early age. He has a hard-bop style of guitar playing which is expressive and melodic with a bluesy groove and possesses a warm and rich tenor voice with an almost flawless sense of pitch. His first album, 'All

My Love's In Vain' (Rubyworks) was released in 2005 to critical acclaim and has become one of Ireland's highest selling albums by a jazz artist.

Born in Dublin, Mooney began playing guitar at the age of 12 and soon joined the school band in his early teens, discovering the blues, and in particular the 50s Chicago guitar styles of B.B. King, Albert King and Buddy Guy. In 1978, Mooney joined Xanex Overchew before going on to form his first blues band while still at school.

He had his first taste of the Dublin pub gig-circuit with Xanex Overchew, his blues guitar style being influenced by a mix of progressive rock and modern jazz. In 1984, he met and befriended legendary Belfast blues pianist Jim Daly who encouraged him to start playing the blues full-time. In the summer of that year, he left the family business and formed



Nigel Mooney

The Gripewater Blues Band, soon starting a residency in Tommy Dunne's Tavern on Dublin's Parliament Street.

Although blues bands and guitarists of note had existed in Dublin, (Gary Moore, Jimmy Faulkner, Ed Deane and Pat Farrell,

to name a few), in the early 1980s there was a new and rapidly growing interest in the blues but little or no 'scene' as such. The Gripewater Blues Band filled this gap; Tommy Dunne's Tavern was packed to the rafters every Saturday night and

Mooney became the leading figure in the newly developing Irish blues movement. Mooney then moved the band into J.J. Smyth's pub on Dublin's Aungier Street. Over the following eight years, Mooney's band backed many of the Chicago

bluesmen who visited Dublin, among them Lowell Fulson, Louisiana Red, Larry Garner, U.P. Wilson and Johnny Mars, as well as opening for numerous acts including B.B. King, Bo Diddley, Hubert Sumlin and Dr. John, and playing at jazz and blues festivals in Ireland and overseas and appearing on Irish radio and television.

Meanwhile, Mooney had been listening to jazz and had added bebop and swing numbers to the set, seamlessly mixing B.B. King and Elmore James with Bird and Basie. In 1987 he hired fellow-Dubliner Richie Buckley on tenor saxophone, followed by jazz-fusion drummer Tom McDermott. Nigel Mooney's primary influences had been the iKings of Chicago; by the early nineties his guitar playing was being coloured by the influence of guitarists such as Grant Green, Wes Montgomery and George Benson, and other instrumentalists such as Charlie Parker, Stanley Turrentine, Erroll Garner and Ahmad Jamal. In the early nineties he met and befriended Georgie Fame, a kindred spirit whose musical influences were similar to Mooney's; both singers have guested with one another on many occasions since.

In 1991, jazz pianist Tony Drennan invited



Mooney to join his sextet and began a weekly residency with Mooney singing the blues numbers in a mainstream and swing band. During this time he met legendary Irish trumpeter and bandleader Earl Gill, who sat in from time to time with the sextet. In September 1994 Mooney joined the band as guitarist and occasional vocalist. In the summer of 1996 he met organist Justin Carroll and, quitting Gill's band, formed an organ trio with Carroll on Hammond C3 and sometime Gripewater member Myles Drennan, son of afore-mentioned Tony, on drums.

This new quartet (Mooney, Myles Drennan, Ruadhri O'Donovan, Shane O'Donovan) began a residency in Bray, under the name of Nigel Mooney's Hip Operation. In July 2001, this same

line-up recorded Mooney's first album, completed in 2003 and eventually released by Dublin record company Rubyworks in 2005. The album was a big success for Rubyworks and Mooney, with a sustained period of touring and critical acclaim in the minute Irish jazz scene as well as concerts in England, France and Germany and at the 'Memphis in May' Beale Street Blues Festival in Memphis, Tennessee.

In May 2013, Mooney's second album, 'The Bohemian Mooney', was released to critical acclaim, featuring as 'Record of the Week' on mainstream R.T.E. radio (a rare honour for a jazz recording); the Irish Times review awarded the album four stars before going on to award it International Jazz Album of the Year in

December 2013. Mooney has been touring the album with a quartet featuring Johnny Taylor on piano, Dan Bodwell on bass and Dominic Mullan on drums, and occasionally with a three-part horn section added which has featured Jean Toussaint and Michael Buckley on tenor saxophones and Linley Hamilton on trumpet.

Nigel Mooney has just released his latest album, Mooney's Blues, to fantastic reviews. According to Cormac Larkin's review in the Irish Times, "Dubliner Nigel Mooney's tunes offer meticulous attention to musical detail and soar above imitators and revivalists".

Nigel will be accompanied by his organ trio on Feb 4th at the Hot Spot Music Club. Tickets www.thehotspot.ie/tickets. Doors 8pm. Show 9pm

West Wicklow Chamber Music Festival returns to Russborough

Line-up of artists and programme promises to take audiences on an exciting musical voyage from Bach to Bowie and beyond.

Trail-blazing saxophonist Jess Gillam, virtuoso violinist Patrick Rafter, the dynamic Navarra Quartet and the critically acclaimed vocal ensemble Apollo5 are amongst the Irish and international artists joining Wicklow pianist and artistic director Fiachra Garvey this May.

The West Wicklow Chamber Music Festival has launched its summer 2023 edition, running from Wednesday 17th to Sunday 21st May at Russborough House and at St. Mary's Church, Blessington.

Award-winning Irish violinist Patrick Rafter opens the festival on Wednesday 17th May (8pm, Russborough House) performing with Wicklow pianist and the Festival's artistic director Fiachra Garvey. A brand new commission from Conor Linehan, written especially for this superb duo, forms the centrepiece of a lyrical programme that beautifully fuses styles, genres and cultures, from French cafe to American jazz and even Irish traditional music.

Trailblazing superstar saxophon-

ist Jess Gillam makes her Irish debut on Thursday 18th May (8pm, Russborough House) with a fabulously eclectic programme that will take audiences on a journey of musical discovery from Bach to Bowie! Jess Gillam has been forging her own adventurous path since she shot to fame becoming the first saxophonist to reach the finals of BBC Young Musician and the youngest ever soloist to perform at the Last Night of the Proms.

Jess will be joined by double bassist Sam Becker and pianist Leif Kaner-Lidström for a programme that brilliantly blends music from the 18th century right up to the present day.

The London-based Navarra Quartet has built an international

reputation as one of the most dynamic and poetic string quartets of today, with regular appearances at major venues filling up their diary. On Friday 19th May (8pm, Russborough House) the quartet will present a beautiful programme that includes a Mozart quartet and a world premiere by Irish composer Jane O'Leary, and culminates in a performance of Brahms' brooding Piano Quintet with pianist Fiachra Garvey.

Saturday 20th May features a very special outdoor (but covered!) performance from the acclaimed Jess Gillam Ensemble (8pm, Hippodrome, Russborough). Jess performs music from her classical chart-topping album TIME with an 8-piece ensemble made up of an



Saxophonist Jess Gillam

incredible group of musicians from a wide range of musical backgrounds. Their concert is designed to showcase the diversity, dynamism and versatility of the saxophone, and to inspire audiences to reflect, dance and smile!

Critically acclaimed a cappella five-piece Apollo5 is one of Britain's smallest but most

formidable vocal groups. An energetic exploration of the joy and despair of human love, their performance on Sunday 21st May (3.30pm, St. Mary's Church, Blessington) will include choral music spanning 500 years, from some of the earliest known polyphonic writing through to pop favourites like 'Your Song', 'The

Way You Look Tonight' and 'Only You'.

Tickets (€19-38 + bkg fee) for the West Wicklow Chamber Music Festival's five evening concerts are now on sale from www.westwicklowfestival.com. More details of the Festival's exciting daytime and family programme will be released in February.

Greystones Film Club presents: Official Competition

(Spain/Argentina/15A/115mins). Approx. Duration: 115 minutes.

Whale Theatre, Thursday 9th February 2023 @ 8pm (doors 7pm). Tickets €12 and available at www.whaletheatre.ie or call the booking office on 01 2010550 to book.

The kind of movie that anyone with pretensions to putting some serious art up there on the big screen might just find a tough watch, as Penelope Cruz plays an acclaimed director hired by a millionaire to make a movie to guarantee his legacy. Money is no object, which means that there are no producers with their finger on the purse, making sure budgets and egos don't run too wild.

Otherwise, the film's leading men - Antonio Banderas' box-office hunk and Oscar Martínez's earnest thespian - might have been kept apart. About a mile apart.

Who knows if there were any particular actors or directors that the makers of Official Competition had in mind here, but Mariano Cohn and Gastón Duprat have a lot of fun with their three principals here, cruising that fine line between tragedy and comedy that makes up most film shoots.



Wicklow Artists Salon: Survival

Mermaid Arts Centre, Tuesday 7th February, 7:30pm. Free - Booking is Required. Duration: 2 hours approx.

How do artists get by? What paid work do they find most compatible with their art, and which do they find least compatible? What do artists believe should be done to assist the creative community in the future?

These and other questions will be explored by Salon guests and participants in what we hope will be an informative, enjoyable and helpful evening. All welcome!

For this Salon, Susan Coughlan (Consultant, Coach, Facilitator and Trainer in the Arts and Culture sector) will be in conversation with Mia Gallagher (Writer), Yurika Higashikawa (Multi Disciplinary Artist and Writer) and Emmet Kirwan (Actor, Playwright and Screenwriter).

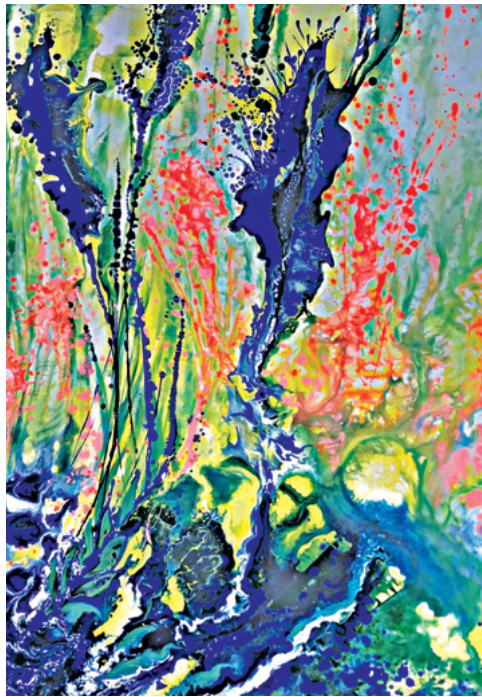


Mary Cloran Doyle and Elis O'Sullivan at the launch of Mary's 402 art exhibition in Arklow Library. 402 is a collective of local artists and creatives based in Arklow.

Meanderings of a Colourful Mind

An exhibition of paintings by Marja van Kampen, Olivia O'Keeffe and Martina Furlong

"Meanderings of a Colourful Mind" is the title of a collaborative painting exhibition by Marja van Kampen, Olivia O'Keeffe and Martina Furlong. The exhibition takes place in The Gallery of the Wicklow Library, commencing with the opening night on Thursday February 2nd at 6:30pm. The exhibition will continue throughout the month of February.



Floral Dance (H125xW95cm) acrylic on canvas by Olivia O'Keeffe

Art lovers take note as this collaboration although kickstarting in Wicklow, is expected to reach many more parts of the country throughout the year. What makes this a particularly strong collaboration has to do with both the elements that unite these three women artists as well as their differences.

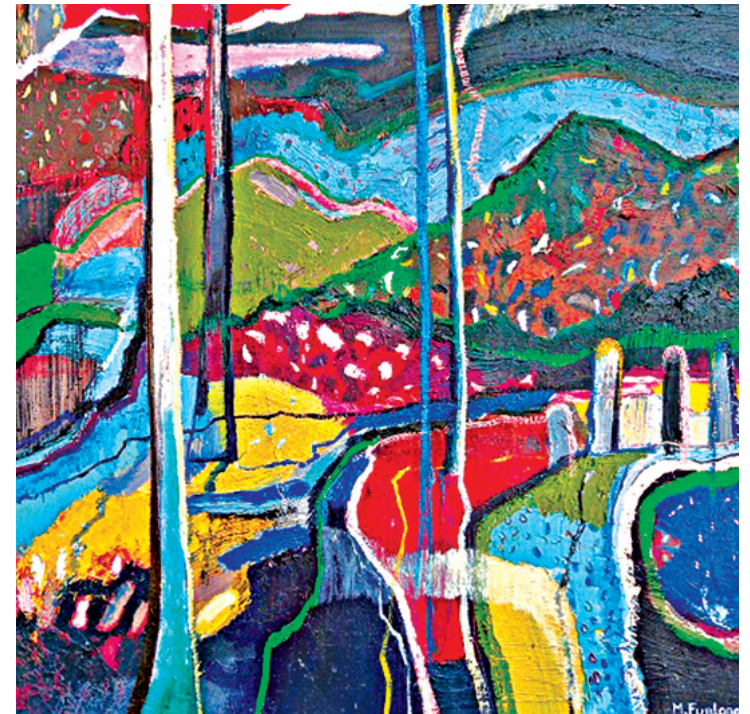
Firstly, all three are pure Colourists with a clear fascination for the relationships between colours. They have a natural ability at creating a certain mood and intensity by optimizing the effect of colours through their placement.

Secondly, all three artists are refreshingly playful in both their paint application, as well as in their imaginative depictions. These landscapes of the imagination emanate a sense of freedom and fun. All three artists have a



Make Me a Rainbow acrylic on canvas 80x60cm, by Marja van Kampen

very distinct and unique style and method of self-expression and yet they harmonize amazingly well together. All in all, this is an exhibition not to be missed. Location exhibition: The Gallery, 3rd Floor, Wicklow Library, The Mall, Main St. Wicklow A67 X504. Open daily 10am-5pm, late opening Tues./Thurs. until 8:30pm, closed on Sunday.



The Eternal And The Mortal II oil on canvas (H30xW30cm) by Martina Furlong

Marja Van Kampen is originally from The Netherlands and now lives in Enniscorthy. Recent exhibitions include a solo show at the Signal Arts Centre in Bray and an exhibition of female artists at the Art Museum in Ankara, Turkey. Her work is in the collections of the Arts Council of Ireland, Office of Public Works

and in Aras an Uachtarain. Originally from Co. Cork, Olivia O'Keeffe currently lives in Houten in The Netherlands where she runs the Olivia O'Keeffe Gallery. Recent exhibitions include at the Agora Gallery in New York as well as solo exhibitions on Sherkin Island, Co. Cork, and at the Red Door Gallery in

Newcastle West, Co. Limerick.

Martina Furlong was born in Co. Wexford and returned to live there in 2015 after living in London for 16 years. Recent exhibitions include a solo show at the Kenny Gallery in Galway and group shows at Cairde Sligo Arts Festival and Kilkenny Arts Festival.

An Idler's Life: Bray author tackles harsh realities in debut novel

Set in Bray and written by Bray author Éamonn MacCionnaith, *An Idler's Life* is an engaging Irish fiction novel that casts a harsh light on the reality of living with depression while being unemployed, and on the dire consequences of making life-changing mistakes.

When a young Irishman named Paddy Dempsey reaches the end of his school days during Ireland's booming 'Celtic Tiger' era, he struggles to find his place in a country rife with wealth and opportunity. Just as his generic life begins to induce a feeling of nostalgia towards his

adolescence and the aspirations that it harboured, the Irish economy crashes, and he becomes one of the many victims. Unemployed and disillusioned,

Paddy inevitably succumbs to living an idler's life, one that is fueled by alcohol and a growing resentment for those he deems responsible for his circumstances. Becoming increasingly disconnected from the world around him, he does his best to make a joke of it all to hide the sense of despair that he feels.

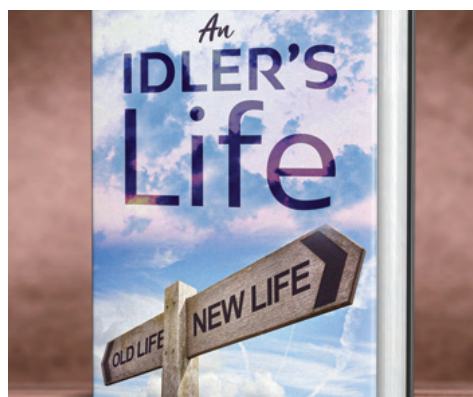
But when a tragedy befalls someone close to him, the life that he was already struggling to wrestle with, begins to spiral out of control.

Amid such economic and personal turmoil, he knows that the solution to

his problems may lie far away from Irish shores.

There's a decision to be made, and he's trying his hardest to avoid having to make it. But at his lowest point, he meets a girl who sees past the wit that he hides behind, who might decide for him. *An Idler's Life* is a stark, emotionally driven human-interest story that draws the reader into a young man's struggles with unemployment, mental health, alcoholism and loss.

Éamonn MacCionnaith is an accounting technician. *An Idler's Life* is his first novel. It's currently available in paperback for €12.99 from Amazon.



Tenders are invited for the Grazing of Cattle only (no Horses or Sheep) as indicated hereunder on IDA Ireland Lands in the following location: -

Location	Hectares	Usage
Ballynattin, IDA Arklow Business & Technology Park, Co. Wicklow	c.10.91ha	Grazing.

The lands will be let from c. 1st March 2023 to 28th February 2026 inclusive, subject to termination at one month's notice, should the lands be required in whole or in part by IDA Ireland.

The Lessee will be responsible for any fencing necessary to keep cattle from trespassing outside of the area allocated and the removal of ragwort and any other noxious weeds from the land. The lands shall be let for grazing of disease-free cattle only.

The Three-Year Agreement to be paid for in full in advance, or by Annual Payments with the Agreement renewed each year following payment.

Please e-mail your Tender with the subject line CLEARLY marked "TENDER FOR LAND LETTING, ARKLOW B&T PARK, CO. WICKLOW" to Propertytenders@ida.ie and clearly stating the price offered. The Tender deadline is 12.00 noon, Wednesday 15th February 2023.



WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL

I, Mr. Colin Rohu am applying for Planning Permission for the construction of a new 28sq.m. two storey flat roofed extension to the rear of the existing two storey semi detached dwelling and to include ancillary works at 20 Redford Park, Greystones, Co. Wicklow. The planning application may be inspected or purchased at a fee not exceeding the reasonable cost of making a copy at the offices of Wicklow County Council, County Buildings, Wicklow during its public opening hours and a submission or observation in relation to the application may be made to the authority in writing on payment of the prescribed fee within the period of 5 weeks beginning on the date of receipt by the authority of the application.

WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL

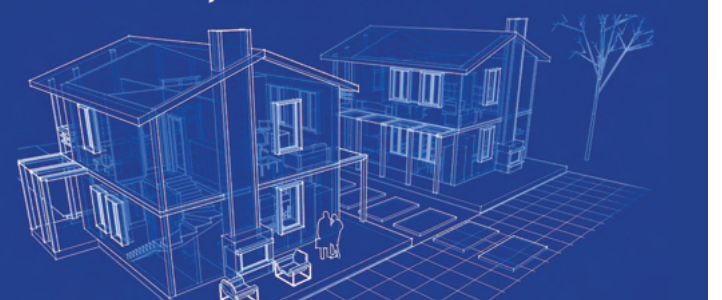
FULL PLANNING PERMISSION
Sought for:
1. Proposed 44Msq Ground Floor Extension to Rear & 133Msq First Floor Extension Over Existing Dwelling House, totalling 310Msq. Existing Dwelling 143 Msq.
2. Conversion and Extension of Existing Garage to 54Msq Granny Flat at Ground Floor. Existing Garage 28.5Msq.
3. Relocation of Existing Vehicular Entrance to provide improved sightlines onto Herbert Road.
4. All ancillary site works at 'The Falcon', Herbert Road, Bray, Co Wicklow. A98 TF65
Signed: Brendan Dunne & Yvonne Barry
The planning application may be inspected or purchased at a fee not exceeding the reasonable cost of making a copy at the offices of Wicklow County Council, County Buildings, Wicklow during its public opening hours and a submission or observation in relation to the application may be made to the authority in writing on payment of the prescribed fee within the period of 5 weeks beginning on the date of receipt by the authority of the application.

WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL

Patricia Kelly 13 Kindlestown Road Lower, Greystones, Co Wicklow A63 EY76 seeks full planning permission for:-
Construction of front porch to existing cottage with partial attic conversion to form bedroom with lift shaft. Alterations to existing entrance gates. Installation of wheelchair ramp to new front door position, including all associated site works.
The planning application may be inspected or purchased at a fee not exceeding the reasonable cost of making a copy, at the offices of the planning authority 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 in writing to the planning authority on payment of the prescribed fee, €20, within the period of 5 weeks beginning on the date of receipt by the authority of the application, and such submissions or observations will be considered by the planning authority in making a decision on the application. The planning authority may grant permission subject to or without conditions, or may refuse to grant permission.

ATTENTION Architects, Planners & Builders

Reach the widest readership for your planning notices
in County Wicklow with Wicklow Times
Call **01 286 9111** or email
pauline@localtimes.ie



Spring 2023 celebrations at Wicklow Naturally

RECRUITMENT



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.

- **ASSISTANT ENGINEER**
Salary: €42,135.00 – €65,919.00 per annum gross
(Includes 2nd LSI)
REF: 08/2023
- **TECHNICIAN GRADE I (ARCHITECTURAL)**
Salary: €43,568.00 – €51,947.00 per annum gross
(Includes 2nd LSI)
REF: 09/2023
- **TECHNICIAN GRADE I (CIVIL)**
Salary: €43,568.00 – €51,947.00 per annum gross
(Includes 2nd LSI)
REF: 11/2023
- **TECHNICIAN GRADE I (ENVIRONMENTAL)**
Salary: €43,568.00 – €51,947.00 per annum gross
(Includes 2nd LSI)
REF: 12/2023

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 23RD FEBRUARY, 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



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

- **GENERAL OPERATIVE**
For all areas, including:
ARKLOW, BALTINGLASS, BRAY, GREYSTONES,
WICKLOW MUNICIPAL DISTRICTS AND COUNTYWIDE
Salary Scale: €594.50 – 672.37 per week gross.
REF: 07/2023

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 16TH FEBRUARY, 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

Help celebrate the ancient Celtic feast day, Imbolc with Wicklow Naturally as members will mark the beginning of spring from Wednesday, February 1st to Monday, February 6th 2023 with various events and activities including a walking tour, producers market, Brigid's Day Festival and sunrise yoga while hospitality members menus will be Brigid-themed.



Imbolc is one of the four Gaelic seasonal festivals, along with Bealtaine, Lughnasadh and Samhain. The beginning of Imbolc is the first day of February, and for Christians, it is the feast day of Saint Brigid (Ireland's patroness saint).

It is believed that the word Imbolc literally means 'in belly' - (in the ewe's belly) - referring to lactating ewes and spring lambing. So, it certainly is an ideal time to celebrate the coming year and the renewal and regrowth that takes place in our farming and food business community.

St. Brigid's Day was an important Irish festival that honoured fertility, blessings, and protection. Most people are likely aware of the widespread custom of creating crosses in honour of Saint Brigid. People believed St Brigid crossed on the eve of her feast day and gave blessings and protection to homes and farms where crosses were hung in her honour. Her new Bank Holiday on Monday, February 6th, 2023, is the perfect opportunity to celebrate Wicklow's food, drink, and hospitality industries.

Events/activities highlights

- Irish weaver Sarah Jenkinson will have a variety of Irish woven St Brigid's Day crosses for sale from Wednesday, February 1st at Killruddery Farm Shop
- which is open seven days a week from 9 am to 5 pm.
- Join Gilly and Brian for a very special walking tour of Wildacres Nature Reserve on Saturday, February 4th where you will feel energised, inspired, and ready to take action for biodiversity.
- Take home a taste of Wicklow at the Wicklow Naturally Food and Drinks Producers Market on Sunday, February 5th at The Powerscourt Distillery from 12 noon to 5 pm.
- There will be a fabulous range of Wicklow Naturally produce to sample and buy including Olly's Farm, Wildacres, Wicklow Brewery, Le Paysan, Coolatlin Cheddar, Nibbed Cacao, Mic's Chilli, Caffrey's Sauces, Janet's Country Fayre and more.
- The Powerscourt Distillery Brigid's Day Festival takes place on Sunday, February 5th from 12 noon to 5 pm with folklore talks, discussion panels, whiskey masterclasses, food and whiskey pairings, mini tours and tastings, and live music from the Victory Dolls.
- Learn how to make your very own St Brigid's Cross at Beyond the Trees at Avondale. The workshops take place on Sunday, February 5th and Monday, February 6th at 11 am and 12 noon.
- Improve your mind, body and breathing with Sunrise yoga and hot cacao with Nibbed Cacao on Monday, February 6th.
- Feed your appetite with

Brigid-themed menus at many of our hospitality members including the Glenview Hotel and Leisure Club, Woodenbridge Hotel & Lodge, and the Wicklow Brewery.

• Throughout the festivi-

ties, Brigid-themed food and cocktail recipe ideas will be shared by Wicklow Naturally members across Wicklow Naturally's socials.

Places are limited on tours and selected events.

For more information about individual events please visit <https://wicklownaturally.ie/events/>. To book a dining experience at any of our members eateries, please contact the hotel or restaurant directly.

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COMHAIRLE CONTAE CHILL MHANTÁIN WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL

BEACH LIFEGUARDS SUMMER 2023

REF: 13/2023

Applications are invited for suitably qualified persons for the position of Temporary Beach Lifeguard.

CLOSING DATE FOR APPLICATIONS IS FRIDAY, 24TH FEBRUARY, 2023 AT 4.00pm.

LATE APPLICATIONS WILL NOT BE CONSIDERED.

Location: Arklow, Bray, Brittas Bay, Greystones Beaches & Wicklow Harbour

Duration: June-August/September 2023

Wages: €15.24 per hour, circa 40 hours per week

Minimum Qualifications:

1. Candidates should have as a minimum, a current Irish Water Safety "Beach Lifeguard Award" or equivalent qualification.
2. Have a thorough knowledge of the role of Lifeguard, resuscitation (incl. CPR) and basic first aid.
3. Candidates must be at least 17 years of age on May 1st 2023.
4. Candidates will be required to successfully complete a practical Beach Lifeguard examination test in basic life support (BLS), swimming ability, lifesaving techniques and a theory test. (Local Authority Test to take place in April or May 2023, subject to change).

Original certificates to prove the above requirements must be submitted with the completed application form. All original certificates will be returned.

Garda Vetting Process:

Successful candidates, when offered the position of Lifeguard, will be subject to Garda Vetting. Applicants under 18 years of age will need Parent/Guardian consent.

Application forms are available on www.wicklow.ie or from the undersigned, to whom completed forms must be submitted to not later than 4.00pm on Friday 24th February, 2023.

Phone 0404 20159 or email recruitment@wicklowcoco.ie

Lorraine Gallagher,
Director of Service,
Enterprise & Corporate Service,
Wicklow County Council,
County Buildings,
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'Let failure be the goal'

It's okay to fail. We all fail. If you're like me, it can be pretty regular! However, failure doesn't need to be viewed as a bad thing. Surely striving for success should be the goal, right?

By Micheál Penston, Transformation Coach

But what if I said success is always the goal? Would you even bother trying?

Success can represent the unknown, uncharted waters we dream of but have never ventured. Our goal may be to lose weight, build muscle or get super strong.

If we are only starting, that goal might feel a long way off into the distance and even a little overwhelming or unattainable.

The fear of trying because we might fail can become paralysing for some.

"What if I can't do it?"

"What happens if it goes wrong?"

"What if people laugh at me?"

These thought processes leave no room for error.

They can start to become all or nothing.

From here, we can begin to become stagnant and stop moving in any direction. We are not succeeding, but at the same time, we are not failing. With this comes comfort, and we humans love comfort.

If we never try, we can never fail.

And if we never fail, no one can judge us, right? So everything stays the same.

To truly achieve our goals, embrace failure. Now,

this doesn't mean we have to be useless at everything we do, but embracing failure allows us to take action, free from worries about what people will think or how good the outcome will be.

All we have to do is ACT.

If we want to change our body composition or improve our health, talking a good game won't do us good if we don't take action.

When you eventually take action, do so with patience and see it to completion. We may have given up on our last diet because we thought, "what if this doesn't work? So we cut it short and didn't give it the necessary time.

But this isn't failing; this is giving up. We jump from diet to diet, fad to fad, but commit to nothing and, more importantly, never learn from our mistakes. Then we end up making them over and over again. A successful failure will try, finish, fail, and understand why they failed.

Stop. Reflect. Learn. Readjust.

Finally, make sure to enjoy the process. If you don't, the actions required seem dull and uninspiring. Part of enjoying the process is seeking failure because with every loss comes an opportunity to reflect, learn, readjust and improve. If you enjoy training and have found a balance with your nutrition that suits you and your goals, guess what? You are more inclined to follow through on this. And more importantly, you won't let the occasional failure pull you off track. You draw a line under it and move on. So step away from perfection and focus on the try.

Focus on the FAIL.

Embrace it, learn from it and move on with those learnings.

Micheál Penston is the Head Transformation Coach and Nutritionist at FM Fitness & Nutrition based in Arklow. They specialise in helping busy people create the healthiest versions of themselves by educating and empowering them around all areas of their lifestyle: fitness, nutrition, recovery, and behaviours.



Laci-Jane Shannon, Chloe Cullen and Sarah Weeks at the Annacurra GAA/Camogie dinner dance in the Arklow Bay Hotel.

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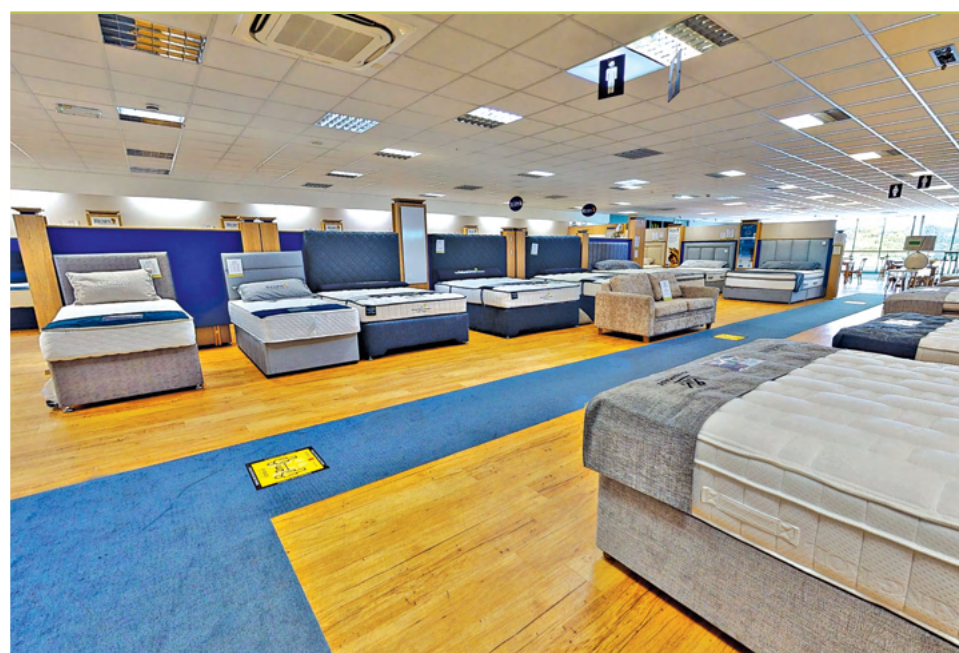
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