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Tuesday 21st February 2023 First Floor, The Boulevard, Quinsborough Road, Bray, A98 R6D7. Tel: 01 - 2869111 E-mail: wicklowed@localtimes.ie www.wicklowtimes.net

WICKLOW FORESTRY 'NOT FOR SALE'

**Cad a dhéanfaimid feasta gan adhmad?
Tá deireadh na gcoillte ar lár**

Wicklow County Council is to voice a strong objection to the deal between Coillte, which has its headquarters in Newtownmountkennedy, and UK investor firm Gresham House PLC. The deal involves the purchase of farmland and existing forestry using public forestry funds.

Independent councillors in Wicklow last put forward a motion, which was agreed to, asking that 'the members of Wicklow County Council object strenuously to Coillte's decision to partner with Gresham House in the purchase of this fund, depriving Irish people of the profits accruing and at the same time driving up the price of agricultural land which could be bought by Irish farmers. Furthermore, this Council calls on the Government to halt this arrangement immediately and ensure the assets remain in the hands of the Irish people'. The motion was proposed by Cllr Mary Kavanagh with the support of fellow Independent councillors Joe Behan, Peir Leonard and Tom Fortune. The letter of objection will be sent to the Taoiseach, Tanaiste, the Minister for Environment and other Local Authorities. Speaking last week, Cllr Behan stated, "Are



Mina Whelan-Palmer giving the thumbs up at the official opening of Greystones Community National School last Wednesday. See page 14. Pic: Michael Kelly

we becoming slaves in this country? Coillte, who are tasked with the management of an Irish asset, forestry, have joined up with the largest commercial forestry investment fund in the UK, the result of which will be that we will be like tenants. Coillte will manage the forest but the investors will take away the profits. We have a Government that either didn't know or didn't care that this was happening right under their noses, with a semi-state body. "As farmers have said, this has a way of artificially building up the price for other farmers who might want to build other forestry or do something else with the land so there's competition again for our Irish farmers in relation to that. "Also, Gresham House will be getting grants for developing the forestry. They will take the profits, the grants, and will basically own the land and we will be the servants who will run it for them. As a nation, have we no self-respect that there hasn't been a huge outcry, right across the country, about what is effectively an attack on our sovereign wealth?" Cllr Kavanagh said "Wicklow is a forestry country. It is well known for it. It is one of the things that is synonymous with Wicklow. On 18th January I attended a meeting with councillors and TDs from all over the country to discuss this particular issue. There was a huge amount of passion at this meeting and anger about what is happening, mainly from the farming community. "100,000 hectares by 2050 will need to be under forestry and there's a target of 18% of the country which has to be under forestry. The investors will be looking for land from all over the country, including the midlands, Wicklow and everywhere, which **Continued on page 3**

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Colour Club's Rachel receives Leadership Award



The winners of this year's LIFT Ireland's Leadership Awards. Rachel Tyrrell is pictured second from left.

Rachel Tyrrell of The Colour Club in Arklow received an award for 'Innovation' at the recent LIFT Ireland's Leadership Awards.

Everyday leaders across the business, sport, not-for-profit, and community sectors have been honoured in this year's awards. The annual event celebrates those people that embody values that underpin effective leadership in their communities and in Ireland.

The award categories align with the ten leadership values most in need in Ireland today, which were identified by LIFT through proprietary research via national and independently-run surveys. They are: Listening; Positive Attitude; Honesty & Integrity; Respect; Accountability; Dedication & Determination; Competence; Empathy & Understanding; Innovation & Adaptability; and Resilience.

An additional overall achievement, The Dominick Lewis

Excellence in Leadership Award, recognises a person who embodies all of LIFT's values and goes above and beyond in the community.

Rachel is a qualified yoga instructor, marketer and founder of The Colour Club is a new award-winning social enterprise based in Arklow. The club is a creativity and wellness centre for kids and grown-ups. It is a unique, visually exciting, immersive space for people to play, learn, explore, and experience art, crafts, design, music and movement. Bringing colour and creativity into everyday life.

"In her early 20s Rachel launched a series of conventions centred on motherhood which was featured in the Irish Times," a nominee of Rachel's said. "Her imagination and determination continue to this day as

witnessed in her current enterprise The Colour Club, which facilitates mothers and children in joint activities. She is a dynamic, enthusiastic leader and really inspires people around her through her leadership style."

LIFT Ireland (Leading Ireland's Future Together) is a social enterprise initiative aimed at increasing the level of positive leadership in Ireland. Only 1 in 5 Irish people believe that they can positively impact Irish society, but LIFT believe that everyone has the potential to do so. The organisation aims to deliver on this by rolling out a nationwide leadership learning programme via a volunteer facilitator network, with an overall goal of reaching 10% of the population within ten years.

Lions quiz night in Wicklow Golf Club

The longest running Quiz in the world continues in Wicklow and surrounding areas. Organised by Wicklow & District Lions Club for almost 30 years to assist local charities with vital funds.

Recently the members of the Quiz Team were in Fitzpatrick's Lounge in Wicklow which was full to the rafters with the most tables ever in that particular venue. There was huge support for the Blue Dolphin's and St Pat's National School. The winning team consisted of Fiona Duffy Anne Jones Billy O'Rourke and Seamus Jones. Close second were Pat Sheehy Declan McNerney Ray St John and Bosco Guinan. Both teams kindly donated their winnings to Blue Dolphin's. Last Thursday the quiz took place in the Bridge Tavern. Lions support will be divided between Wicklow Town Team



Move4Parkinsons and Wicklow ICA.

This week, on Thursday 23rd February, four important charities will benefit from the Lions quiz support: Wicklow First Responders, Educate Together, Ashford ICA, and Holy Rosary School. The venue will be Wicklow Golf Club thanks to the staff and members.

Delgany Thursday Group cancel outing

Delgany Thursday Group's scheduled afternoon tea at Hunter's Hotel on Thursday 2nd March has been cancelled. The hotel will be closed until 17th March. "We regret we have to cancel this event," the group said, "and we hope we will be able to hold it at a later date."

Soup & Sandwiches

A lunch of soup and sandwiches will be served up in St. Patrick's Church in Greystones on Tuesday 21st February, from 12:30pm until 2pm. This social event takes place on the third Tuesday of each month. Come along for fresh, homemade food and meet up with friends, old and new! Luncheon includes a wide variety of soups, sandwiches and cakes, specially made just for you. You will be made most welcome. Come by yourself or bring a friend. Suggested donation €7 will go to charity.

Rathdrum Cancer Support

Please support Rathdrums Cancer coffee morning by donating unwanted gifts and hamper baskets. These can be left into Avondale Sports, Main Street, Rathdrum. Your support would be much appreciated.

Greening of Greystones for St. Patrick's Day

Cllr Gerry Walsh, Cathaoirleach of Greystones Municipal District, is leading a group of volunteers to help organise the Greystones St. Patrick's Day parade. Tom O'Mahony from Greystones Town Team is helping to co-ordinate the work. Meetings continue to ensure the success of Greystones' annual event which was hit by Covid.

Lots of volunteers will be needed, our Parade will not be a success unless everyone helps out. The organising Committee is reaching out to clubs and groups to provide volunteers on the day. All clubs and community groups are welcome to participate. Commercial entries are also welcome. Businesses in the town are being asked to support parade sponsorship. Businesses can contribute and support the parade by contacting events@Greystones.ie.

Businesses and shops are also asked to help the Greening of Greystones. Decorate your shop or business to add to the festivities. Entry forms for participants can be requested at events@Greystones.ie. Deadline for all entry forms in Friday, 3rd March.

Glendalough trail closure

From now until 1st March, a section of the blue walking trail in Glendalough will be closed to walkers due to forestry works. Please follow all signage and health and safety notices. This does not affect access to the white or red walking trails.

Greystones Flower Club

The Greystones Flower Club AGM will take place on Tuesday 28th February. It will be followed by a talk by Peter Harrison, RHSI President, on his life in gardening - followed by a Q&A session. It takes place in Hillside Evangelical Church, Greystones, at 8pm



Garda Centenary Medal presented to retired Sergeant Richard Landy

On Friday, Minister Simon Harris joined Bray Superintendent Pat Connell in presenting the Garda Centenary Medal to Richard (Dick) Landy, a resident of Greystones Nursing Home. The Garda Centenary Medal is being presented to all serving and retired members of An Garda Siochana to mark the centenary of the foundation of the Gardai in Ireland. Minister Harris was invited by Richard's daughter and son in law, Fiona and Ed Keating to join them and Richard's grandchildren, James, Evan and Isobel along with Richard's brothers, Michael, Nicholas and Tom and the extended family at Greystones Nursing Home to present Richard with his medal. Richard had a long and distinguished career in An Garda Siochana including in Irishtown Garda Station, the Depot in the Phoenix Park and the Donnybrook station. He was promoted to the rank of sergeant in 1991 and served 31 years in the Gardai.

Minister Harris said "It was a great honour to join Richard and his family in Greystones Nursing Home to recognise his service to the state through his time in An Garda Siochana and to thank him for all that he has done. I think that the Garda Commissioner's idea of ensuring that all serving and retired members of An Garda Siochana receive this Centenary Medal is an important recognition of the importance of the work of the Gardai a hundred years on since their foundation. I think it is particularly fitting to be able to call to Richard in Greystones Nursing Home today with his family to thank him for his service and indeed thanking all Gardai for everything they have done and continue to do. I want to wish Richard and his family all the very best and thank them for inviting me to be part of this significant day for him."

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Concern grows over falling Garda numbers

Minister for Justice Simon Harris has told the *Wicklow Times* that he is pursuing a relentless strategy of increasing recruitment into An Garda Síochána.

Garda numbers for County Wicklow have dropped significantly in the past decade, with just over 6% less Garda in the county in 2023 than there was in 2013. Correspondingly in the period from 2011 to 2022, census figures indicate a population increase of over 13.5%, with numbers rising from 136,640 to 155,258. The worst affected areas are Bray and Greystones. In 2009, the number of Garda posted to the Bray District was 184. That number was reduced by 73 to 111 at the end of 2022. Cllr Joe Behan says that more than one hundred Gardai have been lost from Co. Wicklow in the past 13 years.

Speaking on Friday, Minister Harris said, "We are so well served by our Gardai and since becoming Justice Minister in recent weeks, I have been working to ensure we see significant recruitment this year into our Garda College. I have funded the Gardai to recruit 1000 new members during 2023. This will have a very positive impact on Garda numbers across Ireland, including in our towns and villages in County Wicklow.

"Covid saw our Garda college have to close and this has a real challenging impact on recruitment. It is now fully operational again and will be extremely busy this year. I want to thank the more than 300 Gardai who serve our county and I want to grow those numbers further. I also intend to place a real focus on the role of community gardai. I will also pass a law to help protect our Gardai by providing them with bodycams which they have been rightly seeking. I also intend to continue to invest in Garda vehicles and have funding this year to further grow vehicle numbers. There are currently 67 allocated to our county. Keeping people safe and our communities safe is my priority and supporting and resourcing the Gardai in their efforts to do so."

Sinn Féin TD John Brady said: "I find it very concerning that at a time when Garda Commissioner is on record as saying that Gardai do not have enough resources, Garda representative associations are outlining the need for more Gardai on the beat, and the Taoiseach Leo Varadkar admits that it has 'got a lot harder' to be a member of the Gardaí in recent years, that Garda numbers in Wicklow are decreasing at the same time that we witness a significant increase in the population.

"The cuts to the Garda figures in Wicklow come at a time when a quarter of Garda Stations in the state report staff reductions, and an incredible 42 Garda Stations are not staffed. In the last five years Bray has lost 23 Gardai. This despite the increasing growth of the town, and its proximity to South Dublin. In total 14 of the 17 Garda Stations in Wicklow have seen their numbers decrease over the last decade.

"It was reported before Christmas that there

are approx. 200 retirements, and approx 400 resignations from the Garda per year. Last year there were only 94 recruits in Templemore. This is clearly an unsustainable situation.

"Gardai need to be resourced. They need the numbers to carry out their role safely, and to guarantee the safety of our communities. Minister Simon Harris needs to act immediately, the running down of Garda numbers in Wicklow is unacceptable and cannot be allowed to continue."

Responding to the figures, Cllr Behan said "Successive Governments since 2011 have allowed Garda numbers in County Wicklow to fall from a figure of 360 Gardai at the end of 2009 to 253 at the end of 2022. This drop in numbers has been allowed happen while the population of County Wicklow has seen a dramatic increase over the past 10 years.

"It is striking that almost all of the decline has been overseen by Fine Gael Ministers for Justice. Fine Gael used to be described as a law and order party but obviously County Wicklow is not on their priority list. Most of the reduction has been suffered in the Bray District which includes Bray, Enniskerry, Greystones and Newtown Mount Kennedy.

"The Headquarters of the County Wicklow Garda Force has been transferred to County Wexford and the most recent Chief Superintendent and his replacement will be based in County Wexford not in County Wicklow. This has obvious repercussions for the policing of County Wicklow especially as we are so close to Dublin which is a base for all sorts of criminal elements.

"A new policing model adopted by the present FF, FG, Green Government has resulted in a shift away from a dedicated community policing model. Many people still want to see the Gardaí on the beat and visible in their community. However, the sight of a Community Garda, walking on our Main Streets is now a rare one indeed.

"I raised this matter with the Garda Commissioner, Drew Harris, at an online meeting of the County Wicklow Joint Policing Committee during Covid but I was left with the distinct impression that the community policing model of the past would not be restored. This is a huge mistake as the success of community policing relies on the Community Garda getting to know people in their area and being then able to engage in positive working relationships especially with our young people.

"It is time for the people of County Wicklow to have our Garda numerical strength restored to the levels we had before and that we once again see the benefits of having Gardaí back on the beat in all parts of County Wicklow."



John Sillery with his wife Maria and family at his retirement party from the Wicklow RNLI in the Wicklow Golf Club. See more, page 6. Photo: RNLI/Tommy Dover

Wicklow's new Chief Executive

At a special meeting held on the 13th February Wicklow County Council formally accepted the recommendation of its Corporate Policy Group that Ms Emer O'Gorman be appointed Chief Executive of the Council.

Ms O'Gorman is expected to take up the post on 1st March. She will be taking over from Brian Gleeson who was appointed interim Chief Executive a year ago following Frank Curran's appointment as Chief Executive of Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council.

The Council's consideration of the recommendation of the Corporate Policy Group is a requirement of the Local Government (Appointment of Chief Executive) Regulations 2014, following on from a recruitment process conducted by the Public Appointments Service.

Ms O'Gorman has over 28 years' experience in local government and the public sector, previously working in Fingal, Louth, South Dublin and Kildare County Councils. She is currently Director of People, Corporate & Digital Services in Fingal County Council.

The Cathaoirleach of Wicklow County Council, Cllr Tommy Annesley, commented: "The Elected Members of Wicklow County Council look forward to working together with Ms O'Gorman to

improve the quality of life for the people of the County."

Ms O'Gorman has been working in the Local Government sector since 1994, and in 2018 joined Fingal County Council as Director of Economic, Enterprise, Tourism and Cultural Development. Before that she was with Louth County Council, serving three years as Director of Corporate Services, HR, Environment and Cross Border Affairs. Before that she worked in South Dublin County Council for two decades.

Minister Simon Harris said: "I want to congratulate Emer on her appointment as Chief Executive of our local authority. I know she brings a wealth of experience to the role, most particularly from her time in Fingal County Council.

"I look forward to continuing to support Wicklow County Council through my role as a TD for our county and as Government Minister. I am particularly eager to ensure Wicklow receives its fair share from national funding streams and infrastructural investment. We live in an



Emer O'Gorman

incredible county and we must all work together for its benefit.

"Emer will join a team of incredibly dedicated public servants working in the Council and I want to thank them for all they do day in and day out. I want to particularly pay tribute to Brian Gleeson for the diligence, determination, leadership and energy he showed during his time as the interim Chief Executive. He did our county proud."

WICKLOW FORESTRY 'NOT FOR SALE'

Continued from Page 1

will drive the price of agricultural land up. They won't be going for bog-quality land, they will be going for top quality land. That will drive the cost of land out of the reach of an awful lot of the farming community. The UK fund will be available to access single farm grants, and other farmers won't be able to compete for land for agricultural purposes.

"There's a huge amount of anger against this use of our land for a UK investment firm when it could be benefiting our own agricultural community. It will also lead to the detriment of rural communities because when farming starts to go downhill, which it will, if forestry takes off at this huge pace, then rural community life will suffer."

Cllr Leonard said, "we need a model that creates incentives for our agricultural community,

rather than trying to create something that is going to compete with them for somebody else to profit from."

Quoting from the Save Our Forests campaign group, she said: "Public funds should be used to support farmers and rural communities to sustain the forestry model. As a matter of urgency, we demand the Government to intervene to stop this and similar Coillte Gresham foreign partnership equity deals, and to protect agriculture and forestry lands from vulture funds, to reform the Coillte Act and alter Coillte's mandate on climate committee recommendations in 2019."

Green Party councillor Erika Doyle said, "There should always be a lot of scrutiny of things like this but I'd like to clarify a few points. Under EU law, Coillte can't access grant payments themselves, so that's

why this has to happen. We can't really do anything about that. Coillte will manage the forests, so there's no selling off or anything going on. If a farmer or landowner wants to sell land for forestry, Coillte can buy it or plant it and manage it. Once it goes to forestry, under the Forestry Act required to stay in forestry. So, nothing can happen to it after that, whether the farmer owns it, Coillte owns it or anybody else. Also, under that law, there will be no more Sitka plantations and no more monoculture. Those days are gone and that's enshrined in law now so that can't happen anymore. The forest has to be mixed. Also, the other thing to note is that the farmers will be paid a premium for 20 years under this programme compared to other forest owners. They do have an opportunity to benefit from this."



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Details of Bray eBike scheme unveiled

Cathaoirleach of Bray Municipal District Councillor Erika Doyle has revealed details of the Bolt eBike scheme, which will launch shortly in Bray.



Up to 100 bikes will be rolled out incrementally during the year-long pilot scheme. It is hoped that the scheme will be a success, as it has proven to be in Sligo, and continue once the pilot ends.

Councillor Doyle said, "With almost half of all car journeys in Ireland under 4km, these bikes will be ideal for those short hop journeys around the town eg to the DART station or shop. Using them in this way will reduce congestion in our town centre as well as reducing emissions.

"45 docking bays will be selected around the town in conjunction with the council. They should not impede accessibility or create any kind of safety hazards and this will be continually monitored.

"The bikes themselves are sturdy, equipped with lights, a bell, an LCD

display, and an anti theft system including an alarm and remote locking. Users will sign up to an app, input their payment details, note the safety advice and rules, locate a bike and off they go. The cost will be 18c per minute or €6.50 per day for a maximum of 60 minutes. It will be geolocked around Bray, meaning the bikes will not operate outside the designated zone. I hope that, if it proves to be a success, we can look at extending it to other areas in Bray Municipal District such as Kilmac and Enniskerry.

"The scheme is due to launch in March. I urge all users to give feedback, both good and bad, to ensure the operators can react quickly to issues, and we end up with a service that enhances our town's offering, for locals and tourists alike."



Cllr Doyle with one of the new eBikes.

Contract signed to stabilise overhead rocks on Cliff Walk



Deputy Brady at the closed-off Cliff Walk

Contracts have been signed for works to be carried out on the Bray side of the Bray to Greystones Cliff Walk to stabilise overhead rocks that are at risk of falling onto the walk.

The Cliff Walk was completely closed to the public at the end of October last year following a substantial rock fall.

Sinn Féin TD John Brady said "News that contacts have been signed to allow stabilising work to commence on the Bray side of the Cliff Walk is welcome. The Cliff Walk was completely closed at the end of October last year following a very serious rock fall onto the path. The Cliff Walk had been partially closed two years ago following a landslide on the Greystones side.

"The Cliff Walk is an important amenity for locals and tourists, so getting it reopened is really important. I hope that the stabilizing work can begin as soon as possible, this will allow for the reopening of that section

of the walk.

"It is concerning that people are ignoring the warnings and are climbing over the palisade fencing that has been erected by the council to close off the walk. People are at risk of impaling themselves on the fence or getting injured by falling rocks.

"Officials from Wicklow County Council are engaged in a process of acquiring land to move the walk away for the section affected by the landslide in 2021. It is a frustratingly slow process and I hope that we will have some positive developments in the near future.

"With this positive news on getting the work done on the Bray end, there needs to be a major push in getting the entire Cliff Walk reopened as soon as possible."

Conservation and management action plan for Russborough

Wicklow Minister Simon Harris recently officially launched the Conservation and Management Action Plan (CMAP) for Russborough Parklands.

Minister Harris said, "This afternoon I am delighted to be here in Russborough and launch the Conservation and Management Action Plan for Russborough Parklands. This project, which has been funded under the LEADER programme, addresses the need for Russborough to approach the management of the landscape in an informed, sustainable and responsible manner.

"It is great to see its implementation along with both short and long-term goals to reduce Russborough's carbon footprint. Russborough will soon receive more and more visitors thanks to many developments coming down the line, such as the Blessington Greenway and a number of housing developments in nearby towns. Therefore, it is necessary to prepare Russborough for the increased footfall and take heed of any possible threats to the stieis ecosystem and biodiversity. This will help boost tourism levels in West Wicklow.

"This project falls under the government's new rural development 'Our Rural Future' which is a new

milestone in the approach to the development of Rural Ireland in the post-COVID-19 recovery.

"The LEADER programme will play a key role in locally-led initiatives exactly like the project being launched here today.

"I would like to thank chairperson Judith Woodworth, (Alfred Beit Foundation), former CEO, Eric Blatchford, current CEO, Orla Gallagher, Development Manager, Theresa Crowley and Christopher Gallagher for their work and commitment to this project."

Minister Harris also thanked the Wicklow Local Community Development Committee, the Local Action Group for Wicklow for approving the LEADER grant funding for this project, and their Implementing Partner County Wicklow Partnership for working towards developing and delivering the project.

"I firmly believe that Wicklow's natural beauty is one of our country's greatest assets, and always welcome any investment which goes towards protecting, enhancing and re-vitalising our county's landscape," Minister Harris concluded.



Minister Harris launching the conservation and management action plan for Russborough House, with councillors Pat Kennedy and Pat Fitzgerald.

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Connecting locally and promoting self-advocacy at St John of God Dublin South East



Nathan Mooney

With the United Cougars Sports Club, Artisan studio and adult groups such as Strive, Saint John of God Dublin South East (SJOG DSE) is supporting adults with intellectual disabilities to improve their quality of life, ensuring they 'Go for What They Want' in life.

It could be to start paid employment, host a radio show, go into town on the bus independently or move out of residential care. SJOG DSE provides the support to ensure everyone has the best chance of achieving their life vision. Integrating into the community is a big focus with the groups and participating in all aspects of the life in their local community.

Actively recruiting, there are lots of new opportunities in Day and Residential Services for Instructors, Key

Workers, Social Care Workers, Nurses, Special Needs Assistants and career changers. A recruitment open evening is taking place on Wednesday 1st March where it will be possible to chat with some of the team directly. Interviews will also be held on the evening. The event takes place at SJOG Dublin South East, Oasis Café, 111 Upper Glenageary Road. Register to attend at www.sjogdse.ie or get in touch in advance by sending your CV to DSERecruitment@sjog.



Elizabeth Oxley, Ryan O'Hare, Siobhan Kelly and Katie Perry at Killiney Castle

John Sillery retires from Wicklow RNLI after 34 years

John Sillery, the long serving Head Launcher at Wicklow Lifeboat Station has retired after 34 years of dedicated service to the RNLI.

John joined the RNLI on New Year's Day 1989 as a volunteer winch operator. He was appointed head launcher at Wicklow and took charge on the slip of all launching and recovery activities for the all-weather Tyne class lifeboat RNLB Annie Blaker.

In lifeboat history, John will be remembered for launching the last operation Tyne Class slipway lifeboat in the RNLI fleet, at 1:30pm on Sunday 28 April 2019 to the sound of loud applause, John Sillery, struck the pin which released the Annie Blaker down the slipway and into the water for the final time, ending an era that spanned over three decades at Wicklow and signalling the retirement of the last Tyne class lifeboat from the RNLI fleet.

2019 saw the arrival of the new Shannon class lifeboat at Wicklow and the same year John Sillery received his Long Service Award from the RNLI. This was in recogni-



John Sillery (Photo by RNLI/Nigel Millard)

tion for his commitment and dedication to the charity that saves lives at sea.

With the arrival of the new Shannon class lifeboat, John was responsible for launching and recovering operations at the South Quay berth.

To mark John's retirement, family, friends and lifeboat crew gathered at the Wicklow Golf Club to celebrate his long service as a volunteer

Wicklow RNLI Operation's Manager, Mary Aldridge paid tribute to John's commitment over the past 34 years. Flowers were also presented to Maria Sillery, John's wife, a token to say thank you for supporting John and sharing him with us over the years. Coxswain Nick Keogh also presented John with a specially commissioned lamp in the shape of a lighthouse, a gift from the crew to say thank you.

We are indebted to John for his service at Wicklow RNLI. Since 1989 he has launched the lifeboat countless times that resulted in the saving of many lives along the Wicklow coast.

Second Coxswain Ciaran Doyle best described John during a speech on the night saying "John Sillery was Solid as a rock; he was always the first person to arrive at the station during a shout ready to launch the lifeboat. Thank you for the years."



John Sillery launching Annie Blaker for the final time. Photo by RNLI/ Patrick Browne

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€353,247 for Wicklow under Local Improvement Scheme

The Local Improvement Scheme has been announced nationally with Wicklow set to receive €353,247.

Local authorities are responsible for identifying and prioritising roads for improvement works under the scheme, in consultation with residents and landowners.

Cllr Stephen Stokes stated: "I support this initiative. It will assist connections within our communities. The Local Improvement Scheme attempts to make people's lives a bit easier."

The funding provided by the Department of Rural and Community Development will be complemented by a local financial contribution from householders and landowners, as well as local authority resources.

The Local Improvement Scheme was reintroduced in September 2017, with works on over 3,700 roads since then. The total funding in this round is €12.5 million. Cllr Stephen Stokes added: "I would urge Wicklow County Council to use

this funding soon as possible."

Eligible roads under the Local Improvement Scheme include, non-public roads leading to important community amenities such as beaches, graveyards, mountains, piers etc. In addition the funding can be used for non-public roads that provide access to parcels of agricultural land, or provide access for harvesting purposes. The maximum amount that any householder or landowner is required to contribute is capped at €1,200.

The funding under the Local Improvement Scheme (LIS), will support the continued improvement of non-public roads and lanes that are not normally maintained by the local authorities.

Cllr Stephen Stokes concluded: "This funding is good news. But one thing I will continue to press for is much more Government funding for footpaths also. There are many estates and roads around Delgany, Greystones, Kilcoole, Killadreenan and Newcastle that need additional footpath funding."

New speed limits for Wicklow

Councillors last week voted to adopt new speed limit bye-laws for Co. Wicklow. The changes include the introduction of a default 30km limit outside of schools, making Wicklow the first Local Authority to introduce this measure. This was following a long campaign by public representatives, activist groups and members of the school community.

Local Authorities are required to review speed limit bye-laws on a five-year basis. A public consultation took place in October-November 2022 with over 250 submissions received.

The speed review changes come in to force on June 1st, 2023. However the periodic speed limit changes will come into effect on August 1st, 2023. Periodic speed limits usually occur outside schools.

Green Party Councillor for Bray and Cathoirleach of Bray Municipal District Erika Doyle welcomed the change in bye laws which will reduce the speed limit in several areas of Bray. Councillor Doyle made several submissions to the review based on representations from constituents and personal experiences of excess speed in residential areas. She is also said that she's pleased the speed limit around all schools will be reduced at school start and finish times, having raised the issue many times.

Councillor Doyle said, "Making our streets safer and the public realm more pleasant in Bray is one of my longstanding priorities. A huge part of this is ensuring that pedestrians feel safe in residential areas, and that children feel safe making their way to and from school whether on foot or by bike. Reducing speed from 50kph to 30kph makes for a safer, cleaner residential area. Evidence

shows that for every ten people hit by a car at 50kph, five will die. However this drops to one at 30%. Obviously zero deaths or injuries on the roads should be our aim, and reducing speed is a huge factor in achieving this. Signage will be added or changed where necessary over the coming months and the new speed limits will become operational after the summer."

The roads in Bray where speed will be reduced are: Lower Dargle Road - to 30; Sidmonton Road - to 30 for entire length; Putland Road - to 30; Kilcorney Lane - to 50 from default; Immediate areas around schools reduced to 30kph during start and finish of school day.

In Greystones, Green Party Councillor Lourda Scott welcomed the new bye-laws: "I first brought a motion to implement 30km/h speed limits around all schools within the Greystones area in October 2021. The speed of cars at the school gate is one of the reasons why people are reluctant to allow their children to walk and cycle to school. Currently roads around our schools are at 50km/h speed limit, but taking statistics from the Road Safety Authority, it is shown that lower speed limits dramatically reduce the number of people killed in a collision and reduce the severity of injury.

"However, it is not just a road

safety issue as lower speed limits also reduce air and noise pollution at our school gates. Since my motion was passed, I have been engaging with the wider community to gain even more support and pushing Council officials to ensure that the 5 yearly speed limits review would reflect this. Out of 257 public submissions on the Speed Limit review, almost two thirds were from Greystones MD and over half were in relation to reducing speeds at schools. Although there was initial reluctance to take this radical step, I took every opportunity to meet with officials and push the case.

"I am delighted that the Officials listened to the public and took action. From August 1st this year every school in the County will now benefit from these changes. We will have either periodic 30kph speed limits or permanent 30kph limits outside each school, making school zones safer, less polluted and a more attractive place to be. This is a great result for children in County Wicklow."

Cllr Rory O'Connor has welcomed the announcement of a new low-speed limit in Enniskerry village, which will take effect on the 1st of June. The new speed limit will be set at 30 kph, making the village safer for pedestrians, cyclists and motorists alike, he said.

Cllr O'Connor has been a vocal

advocate for the new limit, arguing that it will help to reduce accidents and create a more pleasant and welcoming environment in the village.

"I am delighted to welcome the introduction of the new low-speed limit in Enniskerry village," said Cllr O'Connor. "This is a positive step towards creating a safer and more livable community for everyone who lives and works here."

"I strongly believe villages are made for people and not cars. This is a big step forward to realise that vision. The safety aspect will also help create peace at mind for parents. As we have two big primary schools within the Enniskerry with kids often prevalent in the village. This will create a level of safety for them and reduce the chances of an accident "

Cllr Stephen Stokes said, "The feedback from local people was decisive. Residents largely want lower speed limits for vehicles. It is encouraging to see speeds being reduced to a maximum of 30 kilometres per hour outside schools across County Wicklow. I fully support making our roads safer, especially for children.

"This was an excellent collaborative project between Residents, Councillors and Council Officials. It should be noted that there was an especially high level of engagement from people in the Greystones area. Like many other Public Representatives, I was approached by local people with concerns. Many of these areas will soon have safer speed limits including the

Ballydonagh Road, Bellevue Hill and parts of the R761. Large parts of the built up areas in Greystones will be moving to 30 kilometre limits."

With the changes coming into effect, Cllr Stokes believes that there will be a great deal of work to implement and advertise the changes. He noted: "First and foremost we need plenty of signage. When I lived in the United Kingdom for 6 years, Councils were really pushing more signage. But what is increasingly popular there is smaller reminder signs. This is because sometimes people can miss the original sign indicating a change of speed. In addition we should listen to what local residents want, which could include traffic calming measures such as ramps."



Danielle Kavanagh and Ciaran Smyth at the Wicklow Vs Tyrone hurling match in Aughrim. Wicklow won by three points, 0-15 to 0-12.

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Fiadh Healy tries out a hurl for size during the league clash between Wicklow and Tyrone in Aghrim. Wicklow won by three points, 0-15 to 0-12.

Tiglin founder puts forward solution based response to homelessness

Tiglin founder and Chair Aubrey McCarthy has called on the government to immediately meet with Tiglin, and other charities in the homeless sector, to put in place a national action plan of response to assist the sector as it deals with record homeless numbers.

Tiglin's homeless outreach at The Lighthouse on Dublin's Pearse Street which usually serves up to 250 people with dinner saw a 30% increase in the last week of January alone. The people coming to the outreach centre are now coming from all cohorts, homelessness continues to affect all corners of society.

Tiglin Chair and founder, Aubrey McCarthy, is asking the government to identify derelict buildings, such as hotels, to immediately be pursued and retrofitted as turnkey solutions for charities in the sector.

According to Aubrey, charities like Tiglin, who have the proven expertise to run these facilities are ready and waiting to continue to step up and run these units.

"We are ready, we are doing this, we have done it already - we have a model. With some joined up thinking solutions are there to be found to ensure adequate accommodation can be provided for everyone effected by this crisis. These solutions include repurposing unused properties and

buildings, we all clearly see these properties every day, part of the answer may well be literally staring us in the face.

"Furthermore, Tiglin has scoped multiple modular home solutions on some of our own sites. We have seen other European countries readily use this proven solution with great effect. Tiglin has a proven track record on this. In March 2022 Tiglin was one of the first charities to open its doors to refugees fleeing to Ireland from war-torn Ukraine. At our Coolnagreina campus in Greystones Tiglin immediately ramped up an accommodation provision service for 120 people.

"These services very quickly extended on from just a bed and a meal to enrolment in local schools, clinics and workshops, working with the HSE to address practical, social and healthcare needs, providing trauma informed counselling & children's therapy, as well as important employment opportunities. During their stay in Greystones Tiglin has focused on helping our Ukrainian

friends to find long term stability and security in Ireland as well as providing peace and security of mind. We believe this proven model of care can be extended to every town in Ireland", Tiglin Chair and co-founder, Aubrey said.

He continued, "Tiglin has been at the coalface of the dual crises of ever-increasing homeless numbers and those seeking international protection in Ireland. We know see both these emergencies meeting head-on putting extreme pressure on all services. We implore the government to meet with Tiglin, and other charities, to see how we can help with solutions. It needs to be an all-party, all-Government, all-sector response.

"Both our homeless outreach in Dublin city centre and our refugee campus in Greystones are bursting at the seams, we know we must continue to open our doors and be an accepting society, but we simply cannot do anymore with what we have. We can't allow this become a bigger crisis than it already is."

Funding to regenerate vacant homes

A new €150 million fund will help tackle vacant and derelict homes in says Green Party TD Steven Matthews.

The fund is part of a Vacant and Derelict Homes Action Plan aimed at supporting local authorities to tackle vacancy and dereliction. "In every town and village in Wicklow there are derelict houses that should be homes," said Deputy Matthews.

"Since being elected to Dail Eireann I have been working on ways to get these properties back into the housing stock. This

URDF (Urban Regeneration Development Fund) funding will enable Wicklow County Council to propose vacant or derelict properties for regeneration. The fund can then be replenished from the proceeds received from the sale of the property, allowing for a rolling programme of regeneration.

"The Action Plan will also provide guidance on Compulsory

Purchase Orders by local authorities, the rollout of a data collection project and the continuing support of the Vacant Homes Officer. An advertising campaign is currently in place on supports for converting properties into homes. More information is available on gov.ie/vacancy.

"The greenest building is the one that already exists. It's an absolute no-brainer to target and address vacant properties, both residential and commercial, and bring them back into use."

'Boarded up houses in a housing and homeless crisis is a scandal'

Sinn Féin TD John Brady has said that having boarded up houses in the midst of a housing and homeless crisis is scandalous and that the necessary funding must be made available to Wicklow County Council as a matter of urgency.

Deputy Brady said "Having one boarded up house in the midst of a housing and homeless crisis is a disgrace, however having dozens is a scandal. I have spoken to many people who have pointed out houses owned by the council right across Wicklow that are boarded up, many for a year or more. It's difficult to comprehend how there are so many houses lying empty when thousands are lingering on housing lists, some for 14 years or more.

"At the end of November last year there were 125 vacant local authority houses across Wicklow. In Bray there are currently in the region of 45 boarded up houses. I have spoken to a number of officials in relation to the boarded-up houses, it's very apparent that the major issue is the insufficient level of funding that Wicklow County Council receives from the Government to carry out works in the houses before they are relet.

"The funding that the council receives from the Department for relets gets spent very early in the year due to backlog from the previous year, this means that houses remain boarded up until the following year's allocation resulting in the backlog getting bigger. The council are doing what they can with the limited resources they have. I have been given assurances that over the next few weeks many of the boarded-up houses will be relet to badly needed families."



Deputy John Brady outside one of the many boarded up houses in Wicklow

Cllr Dermot 'Daisy' O'Brien commented on the ongoing challenges: "What is most frustrating for people I meet every day as a Councillor is the fact that nobody can explain what the barriers are to getting this stock allocated to families in desperate need. If the Government is celebrating a surplus, and if they recognise the housing crisis, then a very tangible and straightforward action like funding refurbishments is staring them in the face, why are they not activating those funds?"

"In recent years Wicklow Sinn Féin have done analysis and research, we have proposed motions, made submissions, called for an

emergency task force on housing, but this doesn't require any deep thinking, it requires the will and commitment of those in power. Fund the refurbishments, allocate the homes, relieve some of the stress that so many families are suffering right now."

Cllr Grace McManus added "Houses being boarded up is avoidable. The lack of funding for relet works was flagged to us in Wicklow County Council last year, and Sinn Féin took the lead in campaigning at that stage for more funding to be secured from the Department of Housing to address this. Clearly these calls were not listened to.

"The fact that we are in

this situation now, where homes that could be provided to people in dire need, are instead laying idle is absolutely unacceptable, and is a moral failing. People have every right to be outraged, and to become active on this issue. Every house wasted is another family left in an emergency accommodation or a B&B."

Deputy Brady concluded "This scandal of having boarded up houses must end. The Minister for Housing Darragh O'Brien must ensure that Wicklow County Council gets sufficient levels of funding so that no houses are boarded up at any time, particularly in a housing and homeless crisis."

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NTA cut Active Travel Schemes in Bray

Councillors Melanie Corrigan (FG) and Rory O'Connor (Ind) have expressed disappointment following the announcement that several NTA Active Travel Schemes in the Bray Municipal district have been dropped for 2023.



Cllr Melanie Corrigan

Cllr Corrigan said she is disappointed that schemes dropped from the list include Vevay Road Cycle Rote, Killarney Road Cycle Route, Kilmacanogue to Bray Retail Park Greenway, Swan River Greenway, Bray Public Transport Bridge Phase 2, Southern Cross Road VRU Improvements and Scalp Improvement Scheme.

"These schemes may be

reapplied for in the 2024 allocations but the delay in the projects will be a disappointment for the Communities who have been waiting on them to be delivered," she said.

The Enniskerry Pedestrian Improvement Scheme has also been dropped. This project was delayed as a conservation engineer was needed to be appointed to assess works around the town clock which is a protected structure. NTA funding unspent last year has been withdrawn and no allocation has been provided for 2023. Cllr Corrigan has been told that a business case will be made for development levy funding to be used, along with the funds previously received from town and Village Funding.

Cllr Corrigan said "I have worked with many

Community groups and Residents groups in the District who have been looking forward to seeing these schemes progressed to improve the safety and accessibility in their areas, and it is disappointing on them, and for me to have to go back and tell them that they have been dropped for this year. I am hopeful that the funding will be looked at reapplied for and reallo-



Cllr Rory O'Connor

cated in 2024. I will work hard to ensure the safety of the people I represent".

Cllr O'Connor said, "This cut is a complete slap in the face of sustainable travel and safety for the people of Bray, Enniskerry and Kilmacanogue. The majority of these projects was to make active travel safer, faster and better. Which is what is needed in the local area. I believe many community groups will be absolutely devastated to hear this news as many were looking forward to these projects and we're promised for them to be finished and as a councillor I will do everything within my power to push for other streams of funding to get as many of these projects finished"

The total amount of NTA funding secured in 2022 was €2,950,000.



Noreen O'Donnell, Mary Phillips and Christine Ryan at the recent Wicklow Lions Club table quiz in Ernie's bar, Wicklow Town.

€7.4 million for Wicklow's national roads and Greenways

Wicklow has been allocated over €7.4 million in funding through Transport Infrastructure Ireland towards national roads and Greenways. This funding is going towards further developing and maintaining some of Wicklow's most important roads and Greenway Projects.

This includes a further €1.8 million funding for the Blessington Greenway, €500,000 for the Arklow to Shillelagh Greenway project, €250,000 provided for the Wicklow to Greystones Greenway with a further €250,000 provided to Wicklow County Council to allow for research into future funding projects.

This funding covers all across the county, from the N81 to the M11 and all the way down to Arklow and Shillelagh. The N11 is due to receive over €3m.

Discussing the Greenway funding for Wicklow, Green Party TD Steven Matthews said: "Greenways

are not just for tourism; they are for residents to use and enjoy and to provide safe routes between our towns and recreational and natural environment attractions. Investment in safe cycling routes, Greenways and Safe Routes to School are Green Party priorities and we have never seen such level of investment as we have done in the last 3 years in Government.

"I have been engaging with various resident groups, environmental groups, and Wicklow County Council consistently on Greenway routes. I am fully aware of the environmental concerns that must be pri-

oritised and the economic and recreational benefits for Wicklow from these projects. All projects will require stringent environmental impacts assessments, and the results of these assessments will inform the planning applications. The extra €250,000 funding for the Wicklow coastal trail will bring this project to full design and planning application stage.

"I am particularly pleased to see a huge investment in the Blessington Greenway. This is a wonderful amenity for the West of the County both for local residents as well as tourists. The potential positive impact for smaller villages along the route is huge in terms jobs that this Greenway will provide in areas such as cafés, recreation and tourist businesses.

"A green route from Greystones

to Wicklow has the potential to bring huge economic and tourism benefits to Wicklow Town and combined with my proposal to extend the DART to the town, these projects are examples of positive investment in Wicklow and reflects the growing population and demand for these services.

"It is a very positive announcement for Wicklow and I look forward to working with TII, the Department of Transport and Wicklow CoCo to ensure positive progress on these Greenway Routes for Wicklow," concluded Deputy Matthews.

Minister Simon Harris said, "The establishment of an efficient and well developed public transport infrastructure in Wicklow is one issue which I have taken a great personal interest in, and I am glad to

say that €2 million of this funding will go towards the creation of a Bus Priority Scheme on the N11/M11. This measure will go a long way to reducing the congestion and traffic along the N11/M11 that I know many people in Wicklow must face every single morning and evening.

"Active Travel too is included in these projects, with an Active Travel route between Kilmacanogue and the Southern Cross Road being allocated €750,000. Along with this, West Wicklow is set to receive at least €2.5 million, with €755,000 in funding for developments along the N81, such as a Hollywood Park and Ride programme and major works as part of the Hangmans Bend Realignment Scheme. However, the government have not forgotten the importance of maintaining old developments in favour of the new.

To this effect, nearly €300,000 has been allocated towards the protection and renewal of our roads, and of their assets such as public lighting.

On the Greenway funding, Minister Harris said, "I am looking forward to continuing to work on the various Greenway projects around Wicklow, as they will serve to boost Wicklow's tourism and showcase much more of our county's most important natural resource. This money goes towards fulfilling the promises made in our Programme for Government by investing in our national transport infrastructure. A priority for the Government is to help improve and create safe, clean, liveable towns and communities as part of our Town Centre First policy, and I look forward to being able to continue fulfilling the promises made to our local communities."

FF Senators call for TBESS to be improved support more Irish Businesses

Fianna Fáil Senators Ollie Crowe and Pat Casey have today called for urgent changes to the COVID-19 Temporary Business Electricity Support Scheme (TBESS) to ensure it provides sufficient support to businesses across Ireland.

Senator Crowe and Senator Casey have highlighted the need for two key changes to the scheme to ensure it is fit for purpose. Firstly, the terms of the scheme must be improved to include more businesses and cover a larger percentage of their bills. Currently, many businesses are facing pressure from high energy bills and are in need of further support from the TBESS. The Fianna Fáil Senators have called for the scheme to be revised to provide more comprehensive assistance to businesses that

are facing financial difficulties.

To date, less than €30 million of the €1.25 billion given to the scheme has been drawn down.

Fianna Fáil Senator for Galway West, Ollie Crowe said, "The process of applying for the TBESS must be simplified. In its current format, the scheme is too complicated for businesses to apply for, and this is resulting in many businesses missing out on vital support. A simpler and more straightforward application process would ensure that

all eligible businesses can access the support they need."

Wicklow Senator Pat Casey highlighted that businesses not on the main power grid are currently not included in the scheme, saying, "This is particularly concerning for businesses in rural areas, which are already facing significant challenges due to their remote locations. It is crucial that the government revises the scheme to include those rural users reliant on LPG and Kerosene form part of the scheme. Businesses within hospitality are facing huge energy costs, of which many haven't been able to receive support under the scheme. Particularly affected are those hospitality businesses reliant on LPG and

Kerosene and it's important a solution is found to include them."

Senator Crowe commented, "It is imperative that the TBESS is revised to provide comprehensive support to Irish businesses. The ongoing inflation in energy costs as a result of Putin's war in Ukraine is having a significant impact on SMEs across the country, particularly within hospitality. The current support provided by the scheme is not sufficient, and changes must be made to ensure that all eligible businesses can access the assistance they need. We must work together to support our local businesses and ensure they have the resources they need to survive and thrive."

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Council hands out Tidy Towns, Estates and Sustainable Development Awards

Tidy Towns groups, residents' associations, schools and businesses were recognised for projects and actions undertaken to promote and develop sustainability in our towns and communities at an event in County Buildings on Monday 13th February.

Presentations were made to the various groups at Wicklow County Council's annual Tidy Towns, Estates and Sustainable Development Awards.

Arklow was recognised for achieving the highest marks in the county in the national competition with Baltinglass honoured for taking the endeavour award. All towns across

the county received significant increases in marks with Arklow, Greystones and Wicklow Town taking the coveted gold medal at national level in 2022.

Cllr Aoife Flynn Kennedy, Leas Cathaoirleach of Wicklow County Council, thanked all the volunteers for their contribution to their communities and commented: "The gold medals achieved by four towns in County Wicklow - Arklow, Bray, Greystones and Wicklow - demonstrate that they are reaching the top level in the national Tidy Towns Competition, among the best in the country."

In the county competition Grange Con, Tinahely and Blessington came out top in the Main Street competition in the three size categories of small, medium and large. Ashton in Blessington and John Paul Ave in Arklow picked up awards for best kept estates.

Climate was an important theme in the awards and Greystones Tidy Towns collected the Climate Action award for their campaign of 40 actions for work with



Cathaoirleach of Wicklow County Council Cllr Tommy Annesley, presents Daniel Alvey and Jen Quinn of Newtown with a Highly Commended Award for Main Street Medium Town at the Council's Tidy Towns Awards.



Cathaoirleach of Wicklow County Council Tommy Annesley presents Richard Burke of Hollywood Tidy Towns with the 3rd place award in the Small Towns' Main Streetsection at the Council's Tidy Town Awards.



CEO of Wicklow County Council Brian Gleeson and Cathaoirleach Tommy Annesley present Julia Glass from Grangecon with the 1st place award in the Small Towns Main Street category

homeowners on assessing their energy performance. Wicklow Tidy Towns received an award for its energy awareness day in July which attracted over 400 visitors.

Wicklow Wolf Brewery in Newtown was recognised for their efforts to decarbonise their operations with resource efficiency. Servier in Arklow won the Biodiversity award with their 10-year programme to manage their grounds for biodiversity and annual planting of trees to offset carbon.

Mr Brian Gleeson, Chief Executive, Wicklow County Council, spoke about the new Climate Action fund for communities where the Council will partner with communities in delivering projects.

He added: "Following the launch of the Community Climate Action Fund we will be

looking for expressions of interest for the fund so that communities can play a strengthened role in delivering innovative climate action adapted to local opportunities and needs."

Knockananna Tidy Towns were rewarded for their new community garden while Greystones Tidy Towns picked up a landscaping award for work on a new marine themed roundabout, a new sensory garden and a stumpery in Burnaby Park.

The waste minimisation award went to Tinahely Community Projects for their revamped community recycling facility. Blessington Tidy Towns received the built heritage award for work around the square, increasing pedestrian space in this important town centre location. Baltinglass Tidy Towns was recognised for its study and mapping of invasive species in the River Slaney while the

Coastcare award went to Greystones Junior Tidy Towns.

Schools were well represented in the awards with St Mary's Junior School in Blessington; Tinahely National School, Greystones Educate Together, Scoil Realt na Mara in Brittas Bay and Blessington Educate Together among the winners. Schools play an important role in mobilising environmental stewardship and exploring biodiversity.

The 29 Tidy Towns groups in County Wicklow have done amazing work in protecting the local natural and built environment. The range of projects and campaigns they undertake benefits all. They use a huge range of skills and can always find a role for new volunteers.

Why not check out what your local group are doing and see if there's a

role for you whether it's on climate action, protecting biodiversity, awareness raising, protecting local built heritage, landscaping or litter control.

Speaking after the awards, Cllr Stephen Stokes congratulated all of those who won: "It is great to see Tidy Towns, schools, local businesses and individuals get recognition for their superb efforts. But I also want to pay tribute to all of those who make positive contributions to the community. Even if they did not receive awards, their contribution is invaluable."

Cllr Stokes also thanked Wicklow County Council Officials for organising the awards evening. He added: "It is a big task organising and judging all of the categories. I would like to thank the Council Officials for going above and beyond to make it an enjoyable evening."



Cathaoirleach of Wicklow County Council Tommy Annesley presents Ann Kavanagh and Ester Fox of Knockananna Tidy Towns with the 2nd place award in the Small Towns Main Street category.



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Modern Methods of Construction programme to provide critical skills needed to accelerate housing delivery

Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science Simon Harris TD has launched a new programme to support the industry's need to upskill in the area of Modern Methods of Construction (MMC).

This new programme, launched with the Construction Professionals Skillnet, in collaboration with Skillnet Ireland and Griffith College, is one of the essential ways of delivering on the Government's Housing for All and Project 2040 targets.

The new micro-credential in Strategic Co-ordination and Collaboration for Modern Methods of Construction was developed following intensive engagement with industry to identify the key knowledge and skill gaps in the sector when it comes to the use of this developing area of construction.

The programme is highly practical and ensures that participants acquire the knowledge and develop the necessary skills to effectively deliver an MMC project in Ireland.

This is the first of a number of micro-credentials being developed by the

Construction Professionals Skillnet and covers project critical areas such as project managing with design freeze, commercial relationships and structures, and how to create a collaborative culture.

Minister Harris said: "Modern Methods of Construction is a key component in helping the construction industry meet Government's ambitious targets for housing, as well as the broader commercial requirements of our economy. The development of this new programme will greatly boost Ireland's Modern Methods of Construction capability and support the delivery of both the National Development Plan and Housing for All strategy."

Paul Healy, Chief Executive, Skillnet Ireland said: "This new programme developed in collaboration with Construction Professionals

Skillnet and Griffith College is a major step delivering the capabilities for the roll-out of MMC projects across Ireland. It is also a powerful example of what is possible when we bring industry and higher education together to tackle complex challenges."

Tom Parlon, CEO, CIF said: "The Construction Industry Federation welcome the response to industry need that this new programme brings. Upskilling is always important, however it is absolutely critical at the moment in supporting the industry in its response to Government plans."

Diarmuid Hegarty, President of Griffith College, said: "Griffith College recently took over the programmes of the Irish Institute of Purchasing and Materials Management, and are delighted to be able to respond to the needs of the construction sector in this



Pictured (L-R) at the launch of the Certificate in Strategic Co-ordination and Collaboration for Modern Methods of Construction at Government Buildings are Paul Healy, Chief Executive, Skillnet Ireland; Professor Diarmuid Hegarty, President, Griffith College; Simon Harris, Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science; Aine McManus, Head of Faculty, Graduate Business School, Griffith College; Tom Parlon, CEO, CIF

area by working with industry partners in developing this programme."

Modern Methods of Construction are critical to meet the needs Housing

for All, Project Ireland 2040 and National Development Plan and increase the demand for a workforce with the skills and methods needed to

deliver on these targets. However, more than half of companies (54%) using MMC do not believe the right skills are currently available in Ireland,

according to a research analysis undertaken by Skillnet Ireland and the Construction Professionals Skillnet last year.

MMC covers different

types of construction which involves significant portions, or all, of the building being manufactured in a factory setting and joined together on-site.

Whitmore hosts Blessington Educate Together National School at Leinster House

The fifth and sixth class pupils from Blessington Educate Together National School along with their teacher Claire McDermott and student teacher Ciara were ready for the visit with a great variety of questions about what it was like to be a TD, are there secret tunnels in Leinster House and they even asked Deputy Whitmore for debating tips.

On their arrival at Leinster House they were taken for a tour of the houses that included a visit to the Dail Chamber and the Seanad by the ushers. A special highlight of the tour was when the school were formally welcomed to the Seanad by the Cathaoirleach while it was in session. They were then met by Deputy Whitmore for a questions and answer session in the AV room.

"I was delighted to have the opportunity to host the Educate Together National School from Blessington at Leinster House. As one of the smaller schools in Blessington, it really was lovely to meet a group of young people who are so engaged and interested in politics, how democracy works and their community. They had some wonderful suggestions about projects that

they would like to see happen in their local town and I look forward to helping them with these in the near future.

"Politics needs to be for everyone and it's something that young people should feel empowered to engage with. For too long politics has been out of reach of young people and it's encouraging to see the interest of the students of Blessington Educate Together in local issues. If any other Wicklow schools are interested in coming up to Leinster House for a tour and a question-and-answer session, I'd be more than happy to facilitate them," concluded Deputy Whitmore.



Blessington Educate Together National School pupils with Deputy Whitmore.

Blessington Community College Parents Association call for urgent action to improve facilities

Social Democrats TD Jennifer Whitmore is calling on the Department of Education and Science to publish a timeline and detailed plan for the delivery of six additional classrooms urgently needed by Blessington Community College to accommodate the September 2023 intake of 1st Year students.

This follows a meeting at Blessington Community College on February 10th hosted by the Parents Association and school staff for public representatives which outlined the chronic lack of facilities and permanent accommodation at the school.

Deputy Whitmore said: "Blessington and the surrounding area are growing, and the local infrastructure needs to grow too. Yet again we have a situation where another Wicklow school is finding itself at crisis point where the school staff simply don't know how they will accommodate all their students come September."

"The Parents Association and School Staff have done an excellent job of explaining what actions are needed to help alleviate the situation here and I fully sup-



port their call for the urgent delivery of their new school. Immediate action needs to be taken to ensure that the additional six classrooms needed are in place and ready for students starting 1st Year in September 2023. I am calling on the Department of Education and Science to take action now and publish a timeline for the delivery of these classrooms.

In addition to this, the Department must publish

a timeline for the delivery of the new permanent school for Blessington Community College, which was given approval in 2018 - five years ago. I look forward to working with the Blessington Community College school community, parents, staff and students along with other local representatives and my fellow Wicklow TDs to ensure that progress is made on the delivery of these much needed school facilities."

Arklow Primary Care Centre officially opened

Minister for Health Stephen Donnelly TD officially opened the HSE Primary Care Centre in Arklow on Friday as part of the national Enhanced Community Care (ECC) programme. The ECC programme is already making substantial progress nationally, reducing pressure on services and dependence on the hospital-centric model of care through enhanced and increased community services.

Developed as part of implementing Slaintecare, the ECC programme aims to ensure all HSE primary and community care services work in an integrated way to meet population health needs across Ireland, to reduce dependence on hospital services and provide access to consultant-led specialist services in the community.

Arklow Primary Care Centre will offer a full range of multi-disciplinary primary care and community-based services to the residents of Arklow and surrounding towns including Avoca, Red Cross, Woodenbridge and Ballycoogue.

Speaking at the opening event, Minister Donnelly said: "ECC is a significant investment in community healthcare services in the HSE, aiming to provide more services closer to people's homes, and provide extra services for older people, or people who live with long-term health conditions. 94 Community Healthcare Networks, 21 Community Specialist

Teams for Older Persons and 21 Chronic Disease Community Specialist Teams have been established, and 21 community intervention teams are now in place with national coverage. Community diagnostic services provided over 253,000 scans to patients in 2022."

The Minister added: "The national Enhanced Community Care programme is at its core a reform programme, representing an investment of €240 million to develop and enhance care in the community. It has been developed under the Slaintecare Programme to ensure all HSE primary and community care services work together effectively."

Services are currently being operationalised in Arklow Primary Care Centre on a phased basis with all services expected to be onsite within the next six months. When fully operational, it will offer a full spectrum of primary care services including Public Health Nursing, Physiotherapy, Occupational Therapy,

Dietetics, Psychology, Podiatry, Chiropody, Dental, Social Work, and Speech and Language Therapy. Senior Medical Officers and a Health Promotion and Improvement Officer will also form part of this multi-disciplinary, primary care team.

Other specialist onsite teams will include a Mental Health Team offering integrated outpatient-focused mental health care for the local community, and a Children's Disability Network Team (CDNT) to support children with complex disabilities and their families.

The Centre will also offer residents swift access to X-ray and ultrasound diagnostics services as well as a diabetes and retina screening service. A number of auxiliary and outreach services will also operate from the centre including specialist adult and YoDA (Youth Drug and Alcohol) addiction services, TUSLA Child and Family Services, and an antenatal Domino scheme

in collaboration with the National Maternity Hospital, Holles Street.

Maryville GP practice and McGorisk's Pharmacy are also onsite. In addition, Caredoc will deliver a GP Out of Hours service for South Wicklow and a Community Intervention Team Service. This is a General Practitioner led, nurse delivered, specialist team that provides nursing care to patients in the community in order to support and deliver on early hospital discharge and hospital avoidance for patients.

There are eight Community Healthcare Networks (CHNs) operational in HSE Community Healthcare East (which serves Wicklow, Dublin South and Dublin South East),

two of which cover County Wicklow. Arklow Primary Care Centre is part of Community Healthcare Network 8 and is Community Healthcare East's largest CHN geographically serving over 60,000 people (based on projected growth from the 2016 Census).

Martina Queally, Chief Officer, HSE Community Healthcare East said: "An essential theme underlying the ECC Programme is developing a new, integrated model of care, delivered through Primary Care Centres and Integrated Care Hubs, which is responsive to the needs of local communities. HSE Community Healthcare East recently launched the first Integrated Care Hub in

Ireland in Bray, County Wicklow, to support the provision of community specialist services for older persons and people living with chronic diseases. We are in the process of expanding this model of care through the development of more Integrated Care Hubs and Primary Care Centres across the region. These facilities will help us to deliver a much more patient-focused and integrated model of care in each locality. I would like to acknowledge and thank the Managers and staff in HSE Community Healthcare East, the GP and Consultant leads, and our colleagues in Ireland East Hospital Group, St Vincent's, St. Michael's and St. Columcille's Hospitals for the time and

commitment they've provided to the development of the ECC programme so far. I would also like to thank the large number of people that have been involved in the development of infrastructure and services at Arklow Primary Care Centre for the ongoing care and support they are providing to the local community."

Niamh McAlinden, Acting Head of Service Primary Care for HSE Community Healthcare East, added: "Arklow Primary Care Centre is one of the largest in County Wicklow. Along with Bray, Wicklow town and Rathdrum Primary Care Centres, it is another example of the significant, and much valued, investment in County Wicklow's health infrastructure.

This investment has enabled Community Healthcare East to support the vision articulated in Slaintecare to provide the right care, in the right place at the right time. Centres like this one in Arklow, facilitate a collaborative healthcare system, where primary care services are integrated with other community services such as Local Sports Partnerships, County Wicklow Partnership and Local Community Development Committees. By working together we can help keep people well in their homes, provide healthcare services closer to home, and improve the overall health and wellbeing of the local population."



Senator Pat Casey, Minister for Health Stephen Donnelly, Cathaoirleach of Wicklow County Council Tommy Annesley, Niamh McAlinden, Acting Head of Service Primary Care for HSE Community Healthcare East, and Cathaoirleach of Arklow Municipal District Pat Kennedy are pictured at the official opening of Arklow's Primary Care Centre.

Penneys officially announces Bray store

Wicklow County Council and Bray Municipal District have welcomed Friday's announcement that the town of Bray will become home to Penneys first store in the county.

Penneys made the official announcement that it will be opening up a new store in Bray, their 38th store in Ireland. It's expected that the new store, located in the 'Bray Central Shopping centre', will be opening this summer.

It is envisaged that the opening of Penneys will create an increase in economic activity and local employment within the town of Bray.

Cathaoirleach of Bray Municipal District Cllr Erika Doyle stated: "I'm delighted that Penneys has confirmed that they will occupy the anchor unit in Bray Central. The people of Bray have been vocal in their desire to see a Penneys in Bray for many years. It's undoubtedly good news for local employment and will enhance Bray's retail offering."

"Bray Central will rejuvenate the Main Street and keep people shopping local and this is excellent news for our local economy. I'm also pleased to note the inclusion of the 'Primark Cares' range which uses recycled or sustainably sourced materials and aims to reduce the brand's carbon footprint."

Mr Brian Gleeson, Chief Executive, Wicklow County Council, said: "I welcome this positive news of Penneys opening their

first County Wicklow store in Bray. Penneys is a major contributor to employment in Ireland, and their continued progression in opening new stores brings much needed footfall back to our towns. I wish to express my congratulations to Oakmount and Penneys in successfully achieving this agreement and to wish Penneys every success when they open their store here in Bray this summer."

While there are currently a number of units occupied and open for business in Bray Central, other tenants will be commencing their fit-outs in the coming weeks. The shopping centre's underground car park is also opened with 250 car parking spaces, 16 disabled bays and 10 electric charging bays.

The opening of these new stores and leisure facilities will complement the existing retail offering in Bray and will reinvigorate the shopping experience in Bray both for existing businesses and the public.

Damien O'Neill, Head of Penneys Ireland and Northern Ireland, said: "We are delighted to confirm the opening of our new store in Bray; we know our customers in Wicklow have been waiting for a Penneys for a long time and we are excited to finally

bring our unique offering to the area. Works will commence on the new store in the coming weeks, and we look forward to opening the doors and welcoming customers later in the year. We are proud to support and invest in Irish towns and communities and this announcement today reflects our ongoing commitment to Irish retail."

Lisa Rocca, CEO of Oakmount - Bray Central Developer, said: "We are delighted to welcome Penneys as an anchor tenant to Bray Central. Penneys is a fantastic addition to Bray, Wicklow and the development."

Sinn Féin TD John Brady has welcomed the official confirmation: "After many months of speculation, it's great news that Penneys have officially confirmed that they are to become the anchor tenant in Bray Central. It is hoped that work on fitting out the 19,600 sq. ft shop in Bray Central will commence soon and that it will be open before the year is out."

"This is a welcome announcement and is a major vote of confidence in Bray and something the people from Bray and across Wicklow will broadly welcome. I hope it will become a catalyst for the town that will increase footfall and result in more retailers coming."

"After 25 years of false starts with the Florentine Centre which has held up the retail growth of the town, having a major retailer such as Penneys opening on Bray Main Street along with a new cinema will invigorate the shopping experience in Bray. I hope that work on fitting out the store commences as quickly as possible and that contracts will be signed for the remaining space in Bray Central."

Minister Simon Harris said, "This is a



Bray Municipal District Cathaoirleach, Cllr Erika Doyle, at Bray Central Shopping Centre

great vote of confidence in Bray and County Wicklow. It will help bring jobs to the town of Bray. It will also help bring more people into Bray which is a great thing in terms of the overall business footfall in the town. I am looking forward to meeting with Penneys in the coming weeks to get more details about this investment

for Bray and about the number of jobs it will bring to Bray.

"I know that people in Bray and in Wicklow have been waiting for a Penneys for a very long time to locate in our county and indeed for an update on the shops that will be in the new centre in Bray. This is real progress today."

Greystones Community National School officially opened

Greystones Community National School was officially opened on Wednesday 15th February.

Chair of the school's Board of Management, Alice O'Donnell, said "Community National schools have inclusion and equality of opportunity at the heart of everything they do. Great credit is due to the staff, pupils and parents in their work preparing for today. The pupils who were at the grand opening will remember this day forever and the values that they learn here, the fun and the friendships will stand to them in the future. Special mention to the first 20 pupils whose

families took a chance on a new school without a building. This is a very happy day for them. The facilities in the school are second to none with a superb library as well as an excellent Special Education accommodation. Every success to the whole school community."

Minister Simon Harris said, "I am glad to welcome the official opening of Greystones Community National School. The opening of this state-of-the-art building will be a great benefit to every student

that attends the school, and with twenty-four classrooms, it will be well able to accommodate many of Greystones students. Greystones Community National School and its staff clearly demonstrate their commitment to providing the highest standard of education to their students, having received a stellar rating in their Literacy Evaluation from the Department of Education, and I know that this new building will serve a vital asset in continuing the school's

great track record. After many years, Greystones Community National School can continue to plan for their exciting future, with the foundation of a permanent home on which they can rely on.

"I want to commend and congratulate everyone who has worked so hard on this project. Principal Rory Kinane, Deputy Principal Tara Darcy, the Department of Education and the Kildare and Wicklow Education and Training Board," Minister Harris concluded.



Chloe and Anne McNerney at the official opening of Greystones Community National School. Chloe designed the invitations for the opening.



Principal Rory Kinane, Leo Cullen, Faye Morrissey and Deputy Principal Tara Darcy officially opening Greystones Community National School.



Alice O'Donnell, Principal Rory Kinane, Deputy Principal Tara Darcy, Dr Deirdre Keyes (Chief Executive, KWETB), and Cllr Tom Fortune at the official opening of Greystones Community National School.

Celebrating women and girls in science

The Green Party celebrated the enormous contribution women have made to our scientific knowledge and encouraged more girls to join the field on International Day of Women and Girls in Science on February 11th.

This year had a particular focus on the impact of Women and Girls in Science on the Sustainable Development Goals. Scientific research and the development of new technology will play a crucial role in meeting Ireland's climate targets. "It is crucial that we unlock the potential for

women to contribute new solutions and strengthen ties between science, policy and development as we move forward," said Greystones Green Party Councillor Lourda Scott.

"Science is an important part of our lives and a crucial tool in the fight against the climate crisis. All members of society will have to pull together to find new solutions, which is why it is essential that everyone have an opportunity to explore everything science has to offer. As someone who has studied and worked in different scientific fields, I am particularly passion-

ate about encouraging more women to get involved in this area.

"For me my scientific training has opened up many different job opportunities and equipped me with skills which are transferable

across many different areas. This year I was fortunate to meet the wealth of female talent representing our local schools in the Young Scientist Exhibition. I believe that it is critical that we continue to support this young talent and work to help them play a leading role in the next wave of scientific advances.

"Many Irish women throughout history have left their mark on science, such as Edith Anne Stoney who developed one of the first x-ray services in a London hospital in 1901 and Jocelyn Bell Burnell who helped discover the first radio pulsars in 1967.

"In Co Wicklow, Lucinda Sullivan was born in Bray in 1831. She trained as a nurse at institutions in Germany, Switzerland and London. These trailblazers are an inspiration for the next generation of female scientists."



Grace Cullen, Aisling Doyle, and Ava Smith McGarry from CCA Kilcoole, with Cllr Lourda Scott at the recent Young Scientist & Technology exhibition.



Pictured at an event to mark the transformational impact of the Engage and Educate Fund, a partnership with Rethink Ireland and Mason Hayes & Curran, are (l-r): Deirdre Mortell, CEO, Rethink Ireland and Will Carmody, Managing Partner, Mason Hayes & Curran LLP. Four non-profit organisations have delivered transformative educational programmes under the Engage & Educate Fund in 2022, enabling 211 young people and adults to progress their education. The €1.2 million three-year Engage & Educate Fund was created by Rethink Ireland in partnership with Mason Hayes & Curran LLP and the Department of Rural and Community Development via the Dormant Accounts Fund, specifically to empower people from marginalised communities through education. Picture Jason Clarke

Long-time friends and writers both launch books in the same week

Two well-known county Wicklow writers are having their books launched this week: *Awkward Women*, a collection of short stories by Maryrose Callaghan, and *When Things Come to Light*, a novel by former Wicklow TD Liz McManus.

Liz and Maryrose are long-standing friends whose books are being published by the renowned Dublin publishing house, Arlen House, headed up by Alan Hayes. "This is my third novel and Maryrose has had many books published already but it is still exciting for both of us to see our work in print once more," says Liz McManus. "The book is the story of my grandparents. Sadly there was a family quarrel before I was born so I never knew them. Nobody can relive the past but anyone can write about it. For me, writing the book is a voyage of discovery, at times, literally so, as I had to travel to Northern India to learn about my grandparents."

After years living in America, Bray is home again for Maryrose Callaghan. "Due to my father's illness when I was a child, we had to move often, to stay one step ahead of the landlords!" she says, "In 1960 Bray offered us sanctuary for a while and two elderly women rented us the top flat of their house on the Meath road. My memories are of summer and the sea; nearby school cricket games, walks on the prom, the bumpers, the cliff walk and climbing Bray Head. Although my collection is not autobiography, I have used some of my own life experiences for the stories." Writer Maryrose Callaghan was winner

of the first Arlen House competition. Her first novel was published as a result. She went on to write twelve books, two of which are translated into German and Danish. Her biography of Kitty O'Shea was a best seller. Her memoir, *The Deep End*, is due out later this year. Liz McManus won the Hennessy award, Listowel award and the Irish PEN award for her short stories. Her first novel was short-listed for the Aer Lingus/Irish Times award. She was TD for county Wicklow, Minister for Housing and Urban Renewal in the Rainbow Government and a member of Bray UDC and Wicklow Co Council.



Authors Liz McManus and Maryrose Callaghan outside Dubray's in Bray. Photo by Sean Lenihan

Carnew gears up for 16th South Wicklow Drama Festival

St. Brigid's Hall Carnew, Saturday 18th - Sunday 26th March

The 16th South Wicklow Drama Festival will take place in St. Brigid's Hall, Carnew from Saturday the 18th of March to Sunday the 26th of March, 2023. The Committee once again has a wonderful and varied line up of plays lined up with many of the local groups taking part along with Drama Groups from Counties Tipperary and Armagh.

The South Wicklow Drama Festival committee is delighted to welcome Anna Walker to adjudicate in Carnew this year. She is a member of ADA since 2008, and has relished the opportunity to adjudicate at numerous festivals throughout of Ireland. She had adjudicated at a number of All Ireland Drama Finals including, The One Act Drama Finals in Ennis in 2011, The Confined Drama Finals in Castleblayney in 2016, The All Ireland Drama Finals in Athlone in 2018 and The One Act Drama Finals in Rossmore in 2019.

Anna has an M.A. in Drama and Theatre

Studies from U.C.D., and a diploma of Associate and Licentiate from the Royal Irish Academy. Her working life embraces a wide range of Drama disciplines and activities. She is Senior Drama Examiner with the Royal Irish Academy, tutors Drama students, adjudicates Festivals and Feiseanna, and has directed for a number of Acting Companies. She is also Secretary of ADA.

Her love for Drama was recognised by her parents, who sent her to drama classes. By joining The Olivian Players, the magical world of Amateur Drama was revealed, where she won

a host of Best Acting Awards. The professional stage beckoned, and she relished the opportunity to work on stage, screen and television. Her favourite roles include, Hedda in Hedda Gabler, Woman in To, and Dr. Martha Livingstone in Agnes of God.

Anna says it is a privilege to adjudicate and to witness the hard work, energy, creativity and fearlessness of the many Amateur Groups who perform throughout the Country.

The committee said, "We take this opportunity of thanking our Main Sponsor, Altura Credit Union Ltd., Carnew and all of our Sponsors,

patrons and advertisers without whom we could not host a festival."

The sponsors are Candy's, Kenny's Corner House, Quinn Property, McCreas, Jim Byrne's, Osborne's Centra, South East Security and Safety Ltd, Boggan Motors, Fitzgerald Kitchens and K&K Windows.

Patron Tickets for the Festival are available from any of the Festival Committee, from Mark Kennedy in Hall's Shop, Main Street, Carnew; Carnew Training & Consultancy Centre and from Candy's, Carnew. Purchasing a patron ticket enables you to see all nine of the following plays for just €45. The



Debbie Furlong, Rory Kinsella, Lorna Doran McEvoy, Kevin McEvoy and Mary Doyle at the launch of the South Wicklow Drama Festival in Jim Byrne's.

standard of amateur drama throughout the country is very high and it is once again a privilege to bring quality performances to the stage in Carnew.

The festival was launched in Jim Byrne's Lounge by Rory Kinsella, Chairman of Bunclody/Kilmyshall Drama in with whom and present were members of Kilmyshall Drama Groups and Wayside Players all of whom will be participating in the South Wicklow Drama Festival. Also present were some patrons, sponsors and the Festival Committee. Chairman, Eamonn Doran announced the varied and interesting line up of plays for the Festival.

In association with the Festival, Carnew Community Art Group will hold an Art Exhibition in Roberts' Garage Adjacent to St. Brigid's Hall.

Line-up

Plays Nightly at 8pm except final night - 7.30pm start.

Saturday 18th March Lislea Dramatic Players, "See How They Run" by Philip King
Sponsor: Jim Byrne's Bar & Lounge

Sunday 19th March: Wayside Players "The Field" by John B Keane
Sponsor: Boggan Motors

Monday 20th March Enniscorthy Drama Group "Farsiders" by Fintan Kelly
Sponsor: Quinn Property Ltd

Tuesday 21st March Kilmyshall Drama Group "Sive" by John B Keane
Sponsor: McCreas Bar & Lounge

Wednesday 22nd March Bridge Drama "Big Big Sky" by Tom Wells
Sponsor: Osborne's Centra

Thursday 23rd March Bunclody/Kilmyshall Drama Group "The Night Alive" by Conor McPherson
Sponsor: Kenny's Corner House

Friday 24th March Kilrush Drama Group "The Beauty Queen of Leenane" by Martin McDonagh
Sponsor: Candy's Costcutter

Saturday 25th March Thurles Drama Group "The Seafarer" by Conor McPherson
Sponsor: K&K Windows

Sunday 26th March Wexford Drama Group "The Father" by Florian Zeller
Sponsor: SouthEastSecurity & SafetyLtd



Eamonn and Mary Doran with Lar Duffy at the launch of the South Wicklow Drama Festival



Zita Fitzgerald, Chijioke Obi, Gemma Losack, Amy Nolan, Mary Doyle, June Fitzgerald, and Darren Fitzgerald are pictured at the recent Comedy Night in the Brass Fox in Wicklow Town.

All the Beauty and the Bloodshed

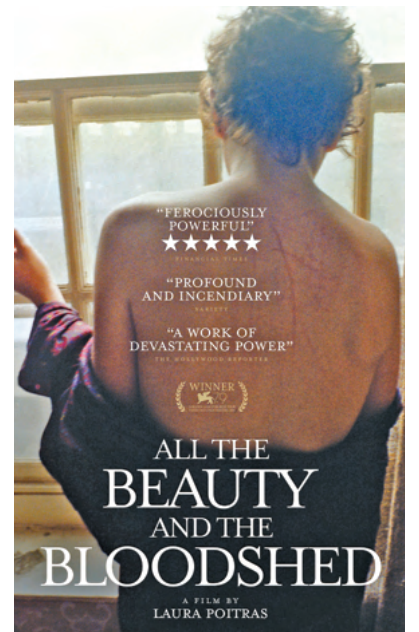
Cinema at Mermaid Arts Centre, Monday 27th February, 8pm, €9 / €7, English with Open Captions (English Subtitles). Duration: 117 mins

Laura Poitras' Golden Lion winning documentary chronicles the life and work of artist Nan Goldin. Since the 1970s, Goldin has been an acclaimed photographer of NYC's LGBT and new-wave communities.

Following her own battles with addiction, she has devoted recent decades to activism - in particular efforts to address America's opioid crisis.

The film follows her years-long efforts to hold the Sackler family - owners of OxyContin manufacturer Purdue Pharma - to account. Poitras documents how Goldin and her fellow activists took their fight to the prestigious museums & galleries that accepted many millions of dollars in donations from the Sacklers.

All the Beauty and the Bloodshed is a vital piece of documentary filmmaking: a portrait of an extraordinary artist and an urgent rallying cry for justice.



'I'm shocked. I'm really happy with how it's all gone'

Wicklow singer-songwriter Noel Boland looks forward to his appearance on the Glór Tíre Grand Final

Noel Boland has reached the Grand Final of TG4's Country Music series, Glór Tíre. It marks another big step forward for a songwriter who already worked with some impressive names. It will be broadcast live on TG4 on Tuesday 21st February at 9:30pm.

In a keenly fought semi-final broadcast on TG4 last Tuesday, Noel's renditions of 'Chicken Fried' and 'Stop The World and Let Me Off', saw him make it through to next week's Grand Final, and a chance to be crowned Ireland's Glór Tíre Country Music champion.

"I'm shocked," he says. "I'm really happy with how it has all gone so far and the massive amount of exposure I've gotten out of it, so to be progressing further is amazing."

Noel will perform in the Grand Final which will be broadcast live on TG4 on Tuesday February 21 at 9.30pm. He is now hoping he will get support from the three different counties he can call home!

"I've had great support throughout the whole competition," he says. "I'm from Carlow originally, and some papers are saying I'm from Carlow, others are saying I'm from Wicklow - I'm based in Blessington, although my house is actually in Kildare, so I have three catchment areas. I hope everybody from each of the counties votes for me!"

Even before making it through to this week's semi-final, and next



Noel Boland

week's Grand Final, Noel's time on Glór Tíre already produced two unforgettable highlights - both on the same night.

"Getting to do my original song, 'This Thing', on Glór Tíre, was pretty cool," he says. "It was written with Johnny Brady, and

on the recorded version, Chris Leuzinger, Garth Brooks guitar player for the last 30 years, played on it! After I did the song on the show, I got a video message from Chris. I posted that message on Facebook and that got a crazy reaction. It was an honour for me

as I'm a massive Garth Brooks fan."

Whatever happens at the Grand Final, the fans Noel has gathered on this season of Glór Tíre will be thrilled to know he has plenty of new music coming out this year.

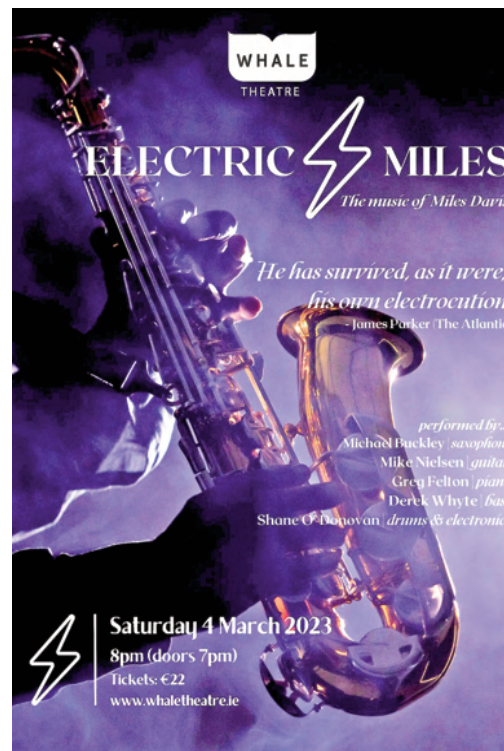
"I have a duet coming out next week with Bernie Heaney, 'Everybody's Reaching Out For Someone'," he says. "It's an old song from 1971. It was Bernie's idea and we've revamped it and made it a bit more modern; my album is in the works, ten original songs and it's nearly done; I'm writing with Johnny Brady; I've written with John Farry, Nathan Carter's manager; I'm over in the UK a couple of times this year as well and Malta as well; so there's lots of things in the pipeline."

In the meantime, Noel is encouraging other aspirant Country musicians to enter the show and take advantage of the great opportunities it presents.

"I was that person last year, so I would say go for it," says Noel. "It's a great platform. You can't go wrong and you're getting national TV exposure. You can't pay for that kind of exposure, so absolutely go for it."

Electric Miles - The Music of Miles Davis

Whale Theatre, Saturday 4th March, 8pm (doors 7pm) - Tickets €22.
www.whaletheatre.ie or call the booking office on 01 2010550



Miles Davis is recognised as one of the most influential jazz artists of the 20th century. Spanning 50 years, his musical career explored a variety of different styles, from "cool jazz" to "hard bop" and everything in between.

In the mid-1960s, Davis transitioned into what became known as his "electric years" and during this time, he incorporated rock and funk styles, experimented with African rhythms and employed an increasingly diverse range of electronic instrumentation and sounds.

This period in Davis' life culminated in the seminal 1970s recording "Bitches Brew" and subsequently, his more controversial 1975 live concert recording titled "Agharta". Featuring an all-star line-up with some of Ireland's finest jazz talent, "Electric Miles" is an adrenaline fuelled evening of virtuosic music-making which explores and celebrates the music of Miles Davis' "electric years".

This show's line-up has a unique connection to Miles Davis himself through the American saxophonist David Liebman, who played with Miles during the 1970s and with whom saxophonist Michael Buckley and guitarist Mike Nielsen have also performed.

Michael Buckley | saxophone
Mike Nielsen | guitar
Greg Felton | piano
Derek Whyte | bass
Shane O'Donovan | drums & electronics

Bray Active Retirement Group exhibition

Signal Arts Centre, Monday 6th March to Sunday 19th March

The Bray Active Retirement Art Group meets weekly to share, stay connected and inspire one another with art.

It is a relaxing group where the interchange of ideas and creativity are combined and this diversity is reflected in the resulting art. The group works in different media including oils, watercolour, acrylic and pencil.

"The joy of painting is reflected in the art on display here today and we look forward to sharing this with others."

All welcome!
Opening Reception: Sunday 12th March, 3pm - 5pm



Gold in the Water

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

Mermaid Arts Centre, 25th February - 5th March.

Tickets: €26 /Concession: €23 / Group of Four: €85.

Age Suitability: 8+ Years. Duration: 2 hrs 30 mins approx. with interval

The story of Bart and Harvey and the unexpected arrival of a mysterious goldfish Gold in the Water is a quirky, funny, life-affirming extravaganza for musical theatre lovers, thrill seeking pet-owners, and audiences young and old!

Bart and Harvey have never been happier. They have just celebrated their first wedding anniversary with all their friends. When a mysterious goldfish lands on their doorstep, leading them to meet a very angry and righteous pet shop owner, their perfect lives are upend-

ed, and their world is changed forever. Gold In The Water is the fabulous, funny and heartfelt new Irish musical from Shane O'Reilly with Paul Curley, composed by Denis Clohessy and directed by Ronan Phelan, debuting at Mermaid Arts Centre, Bray, Wicklow from

February 25th for six performances, before opening at Project Arts Centre, Temple Bar, Dublin on March 10th for a two-week run.

Gold in the Water is a flamboyant theatrical extravaganza, with original music by award-winning composer Denis Clohessy and

performed with full live band, starring Matthew Malone as Bart, Domhnall Herdman as his husband Harvey, Clare Barrett as the ferocious Pet Shop Owner and Oliver Flitcroft, Kate Gilmore and Rachel O'Byrne as their gang of friends. This hilarious tale looks at how we deal with the unexpected, and our ability to handle something new that has come out of the blue. With a tap-dancing rabbit, a singing terrapin, a magical goldfish and a stellar cast of people, fish, birds and pets, Gold in the Water is a quirky, funny, life-affirming spectacular for musical



theatre lovers, thrill-seeking pet owners and audiences young and old!

Produced by One Thousand Pieces, in a co-production with Mermaid Arts Centre, Project Arts Centre and The Ark, Gold in the Water is directed by Ronan Phelan and designed by Maree

Kearns, Catherine Fay and Sarah Jane Shiels, music direction by Danny Forde with movement by Philip Connaughton. Supported by The Arts Council, Mermaid Arts Centre, Cork Opera House, Dublin City Council, Press Up Hospitality Group, Wicklow County Council and St. Patrick's Festival.

Created by Shane O'Reilly with Paul Curley

Composed by Denis Clohessy and Directed by Ronan Phelan

Starring Clare Barrett, Oliver Flitcroft, Kate Gilmore, Domhnall Herdman, Matthew Malone, Rachel O'Byrne, and more

'GomBean' by Niamh McGrath

Directed by Seamus O'Rourke

Courthouse Arts Centre, Friday 3rd March 8pm.
€18/€16

GomBean is a comedy set in a sleepy town in Sligo. Delivering a lockdown dose of caffeine fuelled fun GomBean opens a lid on Grace O'Malley's new coffee van venture, but a blast from her past, wrestling rival Ruby Stephens arrives in town, decades after making it big.

Her arrival literally turns Grace's world upside down, as she contends to win back her title which she lost at the U18's Community Games in '94. Some dreams can't be stomped on!

Niamh was an original cast member of Alone it Stands, which toured internationally with over 500 shows. She had much critical acclaim as the co-writer of Looking Deadly, a Show in a Bag initiative with Dublin Fringe in 2017, which enjoyed an all-Ireland tour.

Niamh last performed in the Hawk's Well in Livin'Dred and Nomad Theatre Network's touring production of Patrick Kavanagh's Tarry Flynn, directed by Aaron Monaghan. Through that play, she became friends with the director of GomBean, Seamus O'Rourke.



Mike Wozniak: Zusa

Whale Theatre, Friday 3rd March 2023 @ 8pm - Sold Out,
register for return tickets at www.whaletheatre.ie or call the booking office on 01 2010550

Ever wondered how Mike's Great-Aunt Zusa made it from Poland to Luton with a war nipping at her heels? Here's your chance to find out. Mike Wozniak will be touring across the UK and Ireland in 2023 with his brand new show Zusa.

Due to the popular demand, with shows selling out within minutes of being announced, the tour has already been extended throughout 2023.

Mike Wozniak is a writer, performer and stand-up comedian. Mike was a member of the principal cast of Man Down (Channel 4) for which he also co-wrote in series 3 and 4. In 2015 he wrote Ruby Robinson - a physical comedy short film for Sky Arts starring Kim Cattrall and a troupe of acrobats from across Europe.

Alongside Henry Paker and Benjamin Partridge he is a co-creator and co-writer of Small Scenes - a sketch show which has had four series so far on BBC Radio 4. He is a regular contributor to the Beef and Dairy Network Podcast and has recently launched the St Elwick's Neighbourhood Association Newsletter Podcast with Dotdotdot Productions.

In 2021, Mike charmed the nation with his appearance on the 11th series of Taskmaster on Channel 4. He then went on to guest on Sky's revamp of Never Mind The Buzzcocks, and was the weekly winner on Richard Osman's House of Games.

Bray guitarist's bid to get support slot with rock legends

Bray musician Kelan Hughes, guitarist in the Dublin-based band W.A.L.K.E.R., is delighted with the online response so far to his band's daring plan to get an opening slot at a major gig alongside some rock legends.

On Saturday February 11th, W.A.L.K.E.R launched an ambitious initiative. In a YouTube video that has now been viewed over 44,000 times, the band asked legendary bands Def Leppard and Motley Crue for the chance to open their upcoming gig in Marlay Park, on July 4th.

Hoping to attract the attention of gig promoters MCD, Def Leppard and Motley Crue, The band unveiled a large banner with the caption "LET WALKER OPEN FOR DEF LEPPARD AND MOTLEY CRUE IN DUBLIN".

The band say "It's a stupid idea, but not stupid if it works". And it just might, with hundreds of positive comments and well wishes from hopeful fans.

"In 1980, Def Leppard had the opportunity to open for AC/DC," they say in the video. "In 1984, Motley Crue opened for Ozzy Osbourne."

Now W.A.L.K.E.R. are hoping for the same big break. The Dublin-based rock band formed six years ago. Add your support to their campaign with the hashtag #Walker4LeppardandCrue.

The video can be viewed at <https://youtu.be/yKD4yCHT4cQ>



CLASSIFIEDS
CLASSIFIEDS
CLASSIFIEDS

Newtown to represent Wicklow in Comórtas Peile Páidi Ó Sé Football Festival

THE MIRACULOUS PRAYER

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

M.O'R.

THE MIRACULOUS PRAYER

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

M.D.



Kerry footballers Cait Lynch and Gavin White with Comortas hairman Pádraig Ó Sé at Inch Beach in West Kerry for the launch of the competition

Newtownmountkennedy will line out in the Ladie's Intermediate Cup as part of the Lidl Comórtas Peile Páidi Ó Sé. Football Festival taking place all across the Dingle Peninsula from the 24th to the 26th of February.

The four team knockout competition sees them up against Kerry club Dingle ladies in a straight semi-final while on the other side of the draw Kerry's Anascaul/Castlegregory play Westmeath's Cill Oige who have current Rose of Tralee Rachel Duffy on their team.

13 counties from the four provinces of Ireland as well as one UK club will take part in the 34th edition of the competition with 22 adult men's and ladies club teams coming for a weekend of competitive football and social events including popular Irish band Super Ceil at Páidi Ó Sé's

pub in Ventry, West Kerry.

The intrigue of the Páidi Ó Sé legend and the draw of the rugged Dingle Peninsula has always been a big attraction to celebrities like Dolly Parton and Tom Cruise over the years. Last year saw Corona's frontman Danny O'Reilly toting out at the GAA tournament with his club Templeogue Synge Street.

The football festival, which was founded by eight-time All-Ireland winner Páidi Ó Sé has attracted over 18,000 club players since it was founded in 1989.

Full details available on www.Paidiose.com

RECRUITMENT
RECRUITMENT
RECRUITMENT

Suzuki S Cross full hybrid boosted by 0% finance

It's a funny old motor world in Ireland today, where supply constraints are the order of the day and market shares between brands are more about who can snag a ship load of product ahead of the others. Suzuki Ireland are fairly fortunate in having a steady supply from factories in Japan, Hungary and India, and hence are free to introduce their first full hybrid version of the successful S Cross SUV.

By Martin McCarthy



It has a bigger 1.5 litre petrol engine coupled with a semi-automatic gearbox. Suzuki Ireland have done well to get this new product - as globally the brand is powering ahead with sales topping 3 million units last year.

In Ireland last year they sold over 1,400 units ñ almost all to private buyers and this year they offer 0% finance across all their range ñ a major attraction.

On dealer development, they have added the Windsor Group as a main dealer.

The standard S Cross is a manual, 1.4 litre with a mild hybrid (48 Volt) systems. The full Hybrid is a much more sophisticated machine ñ giving better fuel economy and lower emissions ñ despite the more powerful engine.

I drove it recently on a test route around Lough Ree and Co. Westmeath - a good mix of motorway and regional roads, not unlike Wicklow. It drives like a fully automatic - with the option of a manual mode and paddle gearchange, if preferred.

The S Cross Full Hybrid comes 'fully loaded' as they used to say in the USA. This includes the Suzuki Connect IT system which brings all sort of useful features to your phone ñ including one that locates the car for you if you can't remember where you left it. Despite the general, very high, new car price inflation in Ireland, Suzuki have pegged the S Cross Full Hybrid at a very competitive €31,895 with metallic paint as the only optional extra - at a modest €375. The 0% finance arrangement involves a €6,459 deposit and €323 per month for three years - which will be attractive for many.

The S Cross is a perfect size for Ireland ñ with five good seats, and decent boot and high driving position of the SUV. The 140 V electric system allows 40Km electric driving - enough for many for driving into Bray or other towns close by. Cost of ownership is sure to be low as Suzukis are designed to make maintenance and servicing as straightforward and simple as possible. Armed with this new machine and an expanded dealer network, Suzuki have high hopes of getting up to or maybe past the 2% market share of Ireland incredible competitive car market in 2023.

PLANNING
PLANNING
PLANNING

WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL

I, Oliver Whelan, seek permission for alterations, including the provision of an additional floor within the envelope of the existing building, incorporate a new mansard-style roof extension with two velux-style windows to the West, one velux-style window to the North, and one fixed window to the South and East, and one rooflight at Apartment 6, Oakdown Court, Convent Avenue, Bray, Co. Wicklow A98 V525. 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

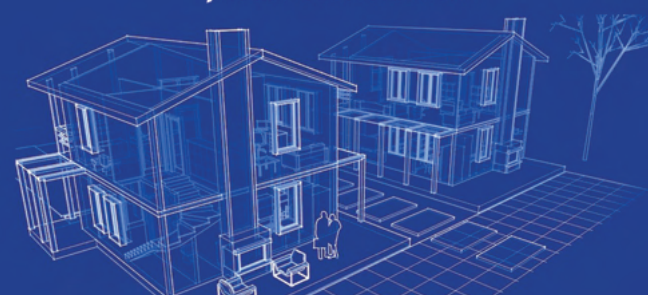
I, Marcella Byrne seek planning permission for a single storey dwelling, septic tank and percolation area, bored well, a new entrance on existing lane and all assorted site works at Hillbrook Lower Carnew Co. Wicklow. The planning application may be inspected or purchased at a fee not exceeding the reasonable cost of making a copy at the offices of Wicklow County Council, County Buildings, Wicklow during its public opening hours and a submission or observation in relation to the application may be made to the authority in writing on payment of the prescribed fee within the period of 5 weeks beginning on the date of receipt by the authority of the application.

WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL

We, ITC PRSA TRUST, intend to apply for Planning permission for development at Belton House, 1 Castle Street, Bray, Co. Wicklow. The development will consist of the front & rear of building alterations, proposed change of use for one commercial unit on ground floor level to residential unit, replacement of existing single door and window in proposed ground floor one bedroom apartment, with new brick frontage as indicated, other ground floor unit to remain as a commercial unit. Proposed change of use from commercial unit to two bedroom apartment on first floor level and associated site. 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 Building, 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.

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COMHAIRLE CONTAE CHILL MHANTÁIN
WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL

Applications are invited from suitably qualified persons to form a panel from which vacancies may be filled on the following fire brigade:

• PART-TIME RETAINED FIRE FIGHTER, GREYSTONES FIRE BRIGADE

REF: 14/2023

Candidates should not be more than 55 years of age on the latest date for receipt of applications.

Candidates should reside and work within a maximum of 5 minutes distance to the Fire Station as there are strict requirements regarding availability to attend fire calls.

Remuneration: Retainer starting at €8,696.00 per annum gross (paid on a quarterly basis) plus hourly rates for attendance at fires.

Candidates will be subject to Garda Vetting.

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

• ASSISTANT PLANNER

Salary: €42,135 – €65,919 per annum gross (Includes 2nd LSI)

REF: 15/2023

• PERMANENT CRAFTWORKER FITTER

Salary: €702.39 – €818.55 gross per week

REF: 10/2023

Candidates will be subject to Garda Vetting.

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 ON
THURSDAY 16TH MARCH, 2023 AT 12 NOON SHARP.

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

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Lorraine Gallagher, Director Of Services,
Enterprise & Corporate Services,
Wicklow County Council,
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Phone: 0404 20159
Fax: 0404 20112

e-mail: recruitment@wicklowcoco.ie

Events announced for Local Enterprise Week

Small businesses and budding entrepreneurs will have the opportunity to sample a number of events aimed at helping them to start or grow their business as part of this year's Local Enterprise Week in Co. Wicklow. The initiative of the Local Enterprise Offices nationwide, supported by Enterprise Ireland and the local authorities, takes place from the 6th-10th March this year across the country.

While there are hundreds of events taking place nationally during the week, including 5 Spotlight events that are available for free online, there are plenty of events in County Wicklow open to all. These events will focus on Greening your Business and reducing overheads, digital marketing and trading online.

A flavour of those taking part in Local Enterprise Week includes Kathleen O'Regan, Sustainability Expert with Enterprise Ireland to

speak about the advantages for businesses to reduce their carbon footprint and the supports on offer from the LEO and Maevae O'Rourke of SEAI will highlight the supports from the SEAI.

Digital Marketing Expert Aisling Hurley will deliver one to one online marketing clinics and building on that Michael Keogh of the Entrepreneurs Academy will deliver the Trading Online Voucher Seminar, to highlight the Trading Online support towards

enhancing your business website.

Vibeke Delahunt, Head of Enterprise said: "Local Enterprise Week is a fantastic marker in the road for any business. It's an opportunity to take stock of where you are, see where you can grow, where you can innovate or maybe become more sustainable and see what resources are available on your doorstep. There is something for everyone and those who maybe always had that ambition to start on



Wicklow LEO launching this year's Local Enterprise Week

their own, or a great idea, this is the week to see how to get started and make it happen.

"There are hundreds of events taking place all over the country covering everything from exporting and digital to going green or growing that idea. We also have 5 National Spotlight events taking place online and open to everyone that include experts from a range of industries. So online or on your

doorstep, I would encourage everyone to check out the schedule of events and get involved."

Each of the 31 Local Enterprise Offices will be running a full programme of events in their area that will tackle a variety of areas relevant to small businesses and starting up. The events are open to all from budding entrepreneurs to established businesses and gives them the opportunity to get expert

advice on key areas of business from financial skills, raising funds, exporting and boosting your business online to future trends such as sustainability and digitalization.

Details for all the events taking place in County Wicklow during Local Enterprise Week, from March 6th to 10th, are available at www.localenterprise.ie/Wicklow/EnterpriseDevelopment/Local-Enterprise-Week-2023/

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