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Tuesday 25th July 2023 First Floor, The Boulevard, Quinsborough Road, Bray. A98 R6D7. Tel: 01 - 2869111 E-mail: wicklowed@localtimes.ie www.wicklowtimes.net

ZERO REFURBISHMENT GRANTS

As towns across County Wicklow reach their target population numbers as set out in Government Development Plans any new house building becomes prohibited. So the only way of increasing homes for young people is to bring derelict house back to livable status.

However, despite a government grant scheme to do this nothing is happening. Sinn Fein TD John Brady has called for urgent action from the Government following revelations that not one single vacant home refurbishment grant has been issued in Wicklow since the scheme opened last year.

Brady said: "Across the whole of Wicklow, some 46 people have applied for the vacant home refurbishment grant. Of those

applications, a mere half have been approved. However, not one single grant has actually been drawn down despite the scheme opening a year ago. Talking to applicants across the constituency, I am hearing a lot of complaints about the scheme. Many lenders are still concerned with the treatment of the council clawback, and are delaying mortgage drawdown.

"We are also hearing of long processing times as councils are struggling

with the staff time required to deal with the application process. There are also inconsistencies in how Councils are applying the conditions of the grant.

"Despite all the promises from Darragh O'Brien, just four grants have been drawn down across the state and none at all in Wicklow. The Minister needs to step in, end the inconsistencies, provide councils with the staff and ensure that all bank lenders are up to speed with the scheme.



Pictured are super supporters of the Irish Ladies Soccer team - Enniskerry's Aine O'Gorman's little cousins: Billy Byrne, Rosie Byrne and Ella and Jack McGraynor. See page 11 for more on Wicklow's World Cup women



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Prospective buyers are taking on a big enough risk purchasing and renovating a derelict or vacant home. They should not have to deal with all of the issues arising from a scheme that was badly designed, announced before the details were cleared up and is slow to process."

Meanwhile The Land Development Agency (LDA) has outlined new plans to purchase privately-owned sites to build affordable homes. The state delivery body for affordable housing is seeking expressions of interest from landowners who would be willing to sell their sites. The strategy will be initially focused on large sites that could be utilised for the construction of higher density housing projects in Dublin, Cork, Limerick, Galway and Waterford. It is targeting sites that have existing planning permission for 200-plus

homes. The LDA said it would assess the suitability of the sites based on criteria including transport links, development viability and building cost efficiencies. The agency said sites close to existing state-owned lands will be of particular interest. As we continue to grow and maintain a steady pipeline of affordable housing, it makes sense to also look at potential opportunities involving the outright purchase of privately-owned land and we are now seeking expressions of interest from landowners in this regard."

The LDA is also responsible for delivering affordable housing on existing state-owned lands. It has further been tasked with running Project Tosaigh, where it can step in to purchase and complete stalled or unviable housing projects in partnership with developers. Once completed, the agency makes those

homes available through affordable purchase or cost rental schemes. John

Coleman, chief executive of the LDA, said the agency was seeking to

maximise every opportunity to deliver affordable housing.



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Kathleen celebrates 50 years in Greystones

This summer, Kathleen Kelleher is celebrating her 50th year living in Greystones. Kathleen and her family recently gathered in BoHELLIS to mark the occasion. Kathleen moved from Boston to Ireland in 1969 and then moved to Greystones in 1973.

Throughout her five decades here Kathleen has contributed much to the local community, serving Greystones as a Town Councillor for 15 years, including five years as a County Councillor. She was Chair of the Greystones Town Council Community Affairs Committee for 15 years and has served on the Wicklow County Tourism, Cliff Walk and Greystones Harbour Liaison committees, and was Chair of the County Wicklow Joint Policing Committee. In the field of Education she was a member of the Board of Management for St. Kevin's National School, was Chair of the Garden Committee for St. Brigid's NS, and was a member of the St.

David's Parents Association.

Over the years Kathleen has been involved with numerous community groups and organisations such as Greystones Cancer Support (for 25 years), Toastmasters International and Meals on Wheels to name but a few, and has also been involved with Delgany Golf Club, Greystones Lawn Tennis Club and Eire Og. Today she is still active with the County Wicklow Older People's Council Executive, the Public Participation Network, Co. Wicklow Joint Policing Committee and the Greystones St. Patrick's Day Parade Committee, and also compiles the Weekly Greystones Calendar of events.

Reflecting on her time here, Kathleen says: "What a time those 50 years have been! When I arrived, La Touche Park, Mountainview Park and Grattan Park were already built. They were as you see them now. Rathdown Park, where we settled, Applewood Heights and Kindlestown Park were under construction. Everything else that you see now was just green fields.

"Shopping in Greystones was minimal, cottages lined both sides of Church Road in the village. Flynn's Supermarket was open beside the old Ormonde cinema. Major supermarket shopping was done at Dunnes Stores in Cornelscourt. Shops still had a half day on a Wednesday, even in Bray.

"St. Brigid's National School has just been built, boys and girls through First Class. Girls only from Second Class. Scoil Chaomhln, the Christian Brothers national school, was still all boys, Second through Sixth class. St. David's Secondary School had just gone co-educational.

"St. Patrick's National School was a prefab on La Touche Place. St. Laurence's National School was just a speck of chalkdust in the eye of the Department of Education.

"Slowly, but surely, over the years Greystones grew and grew as more people came to love living here. Greystones is now a town with superb facilities, still with a village atmosphere.

As a parent with four children, I tried to help out in the community as best as I could. Joining and helping many organisations and serving as an elected Public Representative. Greystones Town Council for fifteen years, including five years as a Wicklow County Councillor.

"For those who were in Greystones before I came to live here, thank you for the welcome. And special thanks to those who had worked so hard to make Greystones such a great place. We arrived with two little boys, I was expecting a third in two months, with a fourth to come in a few years.

"We were so grateful to have a roof over our heads and good schools for the children. To those who arrived around the same time as we did, thank you for good company and friendship. Over many years, we have had many enjoyable experiences. Coffee mornings, lunches, dinners, working together on many committees for the good of the town.

"To those who have just arrived recently, welcome to you. I urge you to get to know your town, read the local newspapers, listen to the local radio.

"Keep up with our online Greystones news, stay informed. Make your voice heard, help on the various groups who are always seeking volunteers. Any effort you put in will be rewarded back to you many times over.

"I look forward to many more years living in our lovely town. Lots still to do and lots still to be involved in. Right beside the sea, with the mountains behind, friends and family around me. What more could I ask for?"



Kathleen (front row centre) celebrating 50 years in Greystones, with (Front row), Roisin Kelly, Helena Kelleher, Domhnall Kelly, Kathleen Macadam, Rebecca Kelleher and (Back row); John Kelly, Kate Macadam, Fin Kelleher, Colette Kelleher, Andrew Macadam, Ewan Macadam, Benjamin Kelleher, and Daniel Kelleher

Delgany Thursday Club

The next outing of Delgany Thursday Club is on Thursday 3rd August, to Kilkenny Castle and The Ros Tapestry. Depart time: 10.30am from Christ Church, Delgany. Cost E50 to include coach transport, light lunch, viewing of the Tapestry & guided tour of the Castle. Due to the increased cost of coach transport,

a minimum of 20 participants is needed for each outing to proceed. If the number of 20 is not reached, those who have pre-booked will be notified. To book contact Peter (086 830 7644), Violet (087 756 0153) or John (086 356 6527).

The Delgany & District Horticultural Society Dahlia Show

The Delgany & District Horticultural Society is holding the Dahlia Show as an ending for the 2023 season.

"The show will be held at our usual venue in St Patrick's Primary School on Church Road on the 26th August next. If you would like to exhibit, please email your entries to the Show Secretary at ddhs.showentries@gmail.com on or before Thursday 24th of August next. A full schedule can be viewed on our Facebook page.1.com"

Staging will take place on Friday evening between 6.00 pm and 7.30 pm and on Saturday between 9.00 am and 11.30 am.

The show will be open to the public from 3.00pm to 5.00pm. Exhibits that are not collected following the closure of the show will be disposed of as the Committee decides.

All visitors are welcome. There will be the usual entry fees and teas can be purchased.

We look forward to meeting with you all at our final show of the year.

Run the Ridge 2023

A 20 km mountain and trail run up across the spectacular Derrybawn Ridge. This 10 km trail

only option available in Derrybawn Woods. Starting in Laragh, Co. Wicklow. WICKLOW ATHLETICS RUNNERS: You should register separately through MyRunResults (link open shortly) as these races count in the Wicklow Athletics Off-Road Championship 2023. Details on <https://worldsmarathons.com/>.

The 'Run the Ridge' race series consists of a 20 km mixed mountain and trail run, and a 10 km trail run.

This race is set up to raise funds for local club Laragh GFC and organised with the help of experienced runners and organisers from Glendalough AC and MyRunResults. The race is a UTMB 20k qualifier race.

Wicklow Way Re-Route

A minor reroute has opened on the Wicklow Way. When heading South just after passing the Mullacor saddle and start to descend into Glenmalur a new path has been built through Coillte land. This is an effort to create a more sustainable trail and remove some difficult/sensitive muddy and hard to maintain terrain.



Pauline and Walter Merry are pictured at the launch of the 042 Art Collective's 'Heritage of Arklow' exhibition in Arklow Library. The 042 collective, are a cultural collective of artists and creatives living the Arklow area.

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'Young people locked out of home ownership by Government'

Social Democrat TD Jennifer Whitmore has criticised the Government for a housing policy which is not delivering homeownership for young people across Wicklow.



Jennifer Whitmore TD

This follows the publication of a report from the Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI), which has found Ireland has one of the biggest gaps in homeownership between younger and older people in Western Europe. The report found that less than one-third of people under 40 in Ireland own their own home, compared to almost 80% of people over 40 years old. This is one of the biggest gaps in homeownership between younger and older people in Western Europe.

Deputy Whitmore said: "This report is a damning commentary on the way governments are allowing a generation of young people to languish without affordable housing. When I talk to people in County Wicklow, I find two main groups of people. There are those people who already own their own homes and those who are struggling to buy or rent. And, even amongst homeowners, they are worried about where their children will live and whether they can afford to live near them or if they will end up emigrating."

"A common theme emerges when speaking to people living back home with their parents. They are not homeless, but they are feeling very hopeless. This Government is draining the hope

out of young people. It is draining the optimism for the future. In County Wicklow, a single person would need a salary of €99,000, and a deposit of €38,000 on top of that, to be able to afford their own home.

"I was listening to Arklow teacher Aoife Ni Cheileachair on Pat Kenny's show this week. She was talking about the reality of being stuck in housing limbo and not being able to. Having rented for seven years, she was evicted, despite being employed as a teacher, and she has had to move back in with her parents. She rightly points out that the supports on the table for first-time buyers are only there for new builds, which many people buying alone will not be able to afford. Unfortunately, Aoife's story is not unusual and is indicative of so many stories I have heard from constituents of mine. Far too often, the last option left to young people is to move back in with family and two or three generations living in the

same home while they desperately try to save for a deposit on a house. There has never been a tougher market for housing in Ireland, and the collateral damage of government policy is that we are robbing a generation of young people of the ability to start their lives."

"This has been a major issue for people in Wicklow for a number of years now. In the last election, I spoke to many voters who were either moving home to their partners or getting ready to have their adult children move back in. It has put a huge strain on many families."

Deputy Whitmore concluded: "Government must reassess its approach to housing policy in order to bridge the gap in homeownership for people under 40. Being able to buy an affordable home in the community in which you grew up, near to your support networks, should not be out of reach for so many people."



Lara Moran, Ava Molloy and Ollie Ryan at the Arklow Seabreeze Festival

1,294 homes in Wicklow prevented from bulk sale in last two years

The Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage, Darragh O'Brien, has published a progress update on the planning measures he introduced two years ago to increase home ownership and restrict the practice of the bulk purchasing of homes.

The update shows that 1294 homes in Wicklow received planning permission with conditions restricting the bulk buying or multiple sales to a single purchaser in the two-year period between May 2021 and May 2023, with the number of homes in Wicklow recorded in May 2023 more than doubling from the 559 units recorded in May 2022.

Nationally, over 31,000 homes have been prevented from bulk sale in last two years. The Ministerial Planning Guidelines are part of a series of government measures designed to prohibit the bulk buying of houses and duplexes in order to increase housing stock for home ownership.

Other measures include a 10% stamp duty levy on the cumulative purchase of 10 or more residential houses in a 12-month period.

Commenting on the data, the Minister O'Brien, said: "The government is committed to supporting homeownership and to supporting first-time buyers. This data demonstrates that we have made the

right interventions while continuing to point investment to where it is needed. As well as restricting bulk buying, we are also boosting supply through our plan, Housing for All, with recent data for new home commencements and completions at record levels. The dream of owning a home is becoming a reality for more and more people and we intend to keep this momentum going as we meet - and exceed - our annual targets."

The breakdown of the 31,000 restrictions includes cases where An Bord Pleanála applied the planning condition prohibiting multiple sales (12,893 house and duplex units across all planning permissions) and where Local Authorities permitted schemes to proceed with a condition attached to prohibit multiple sales (18,111 residential units).

In May 2021, Ministerial Guidelines for Planning Authorities Regulation of Commercial Institutional Investment in Housing were issued to planning authorities, in order to prevent multiple

housing and duplex units being sold to a single buyer. Apartments were not included in this measure as the focus was on protecting traditional family homes while continuing

investment where it is needed i.e. apartment developments which have viability constraints.

The Guidelines included requirements that a condition be inserted in appli-

cable new planning permissions, to the effect that all houses would have to be made available for sale and for occupation by separate, individual households.

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Have Your Say: Join the National Conversation on Employment



Senator Pat Casey

In a groundbreaking move, the Department of Enterprise has initiated a nationwide call to action, launching an unprecedented public consultation with the aim of reshaping the future of employment in Ireland. Fianna Fail Senator Pat Casey has recently announced and encouraged sector representative bodies and passionate stakeholders to actively engage and provide their invaluable insights and feedback through the designated form. The submission deadline has been set for 5 pm on Friday, August 18th.

This transformative public consultation presents an extraordinary opportunity for stakeholders to shape the destiny of our nation's workforce. With skill and labor shortages weighing heavily on industries, this pivotal moment calls for expertise, information, and diverse perspectives to inform the crucial assessment and determination of occupation statuses. The Department eagerly awaits the invaluable contributions that will chart the course for a vibrant and thriving economy.

Stakeholders are urged to focus on sectors where skill or labor shortages,

as well as surpluses, exert significant influence. By delving into the intricate nuances of recruitment efforts, retention challenges, training incentives, business impact, and expansion plans, stakeholders can ensure

comprehensive adjustments to occupational lists that accurately mirror the industry's pressing needs. The Department warmly welcomes supporting evidence, including industry surveys, reports, and sector-specific viewpoints, to fortify the foundation of this historic undertaking.

Senator Casey emphasizes the pivotal role of stakeholder involvement, affirm-

ing, "We deeply value the contributions of stakeholders and interested parties in this historic public consultation.

Your input is instrumental in shaping occupational lists that truly reflect the needs and challenges faced by various sectors. Together, we can address the pressing issues of skills and labor shortages, propel industry growth, and cultivate an environment where businesses thrive."

Every submission received will undergo a meticulous review, bearing testament to the Department's unwavering commitment to a comprehensive evaluation of occupation statuses. As

the updated Occupational Lists for Employment Permits take shape, they will become the catalyst for the recruitment of skilled individuals and the foundation for a robust, dynamic workforce poised to spearhead national progress.

To seize this remarkable opportunity to shape the future of employment, and to be a driving force in shaping Ireland's destiny, visit the submission form linked EMPU@enterprise.gov.ie. For the latest updates and additional information on this groundbreaking review process, please visit the official Department of Enterprise website.

New hidden disability parking spaces to be provided in Bray

Minister Simon Harris has confirmed that new hidden disability parking spaces will be available soon in Bray. Signing and lining has been ordered for three parking spaces at Eglinton Road, Novara Avenue, and Herbert Road Car Park.

Minister Harris said, "I am pleased to confirm that Bray will soon be providing hidden disability parking spaces, a resource that I know will be instrumentally useful to many people in our community. I am always delighted to hear of and support initiatives to support those with additional needs in our community and look forward to the new parking spaces being made available."



Minister Simon Harris

'Strategic Rail Plan needed to improve Wicklow line'

"The Wicklow Rail line to Kilcoole and Wicklow Town provides the worst service of any in the Greater Dublin Area," says Cllr Derek Mitchell, who is calling for a strategic rail plan to improve the situation.

"There are only two trains at rush hour, both short. I see that a Strategic Plan is to come before Cabinet, I am urging that a proper Plan is produced for these fast expanding towns. It makes more sense to get existing lines to work than to dream about lots of new lines in less populated places. There has been publicity about battery operated DARTs but no suggested Plan or schedules. It is difficult to arrange a frequent service on the single-line track and a Plan is needed. In 2018 I produced a Plan to provide three rush hour services with longer trains but this seemed to get rejected. The Strategic Plan must include a Wicklow rail improvement plan."

Brady co-authors Bill to give Comptroller & Auditor General oversight of RTE accounts

Sinn Féin TD John Brady has stated that following weeks of meetings scrutinising RTE's use of public funds at both the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) and the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Tourism, Culture, Arts, Media and Sport, he along with a number of other Sinn Féin TDs have submitted a Bill to the Ceann Comhairle and the Bills Office to give the Comptroller and Auditor General full oversight of RTE accounts.

The Bill is a collaborative effort from a number of Sinn Féin TDs who have been working on the Public Accounts Committee, the Media Committee, and others who are spokespersons for relevant areas of work.

Deputy Brady said: "The Bill is designed to work towards re-establishing trust in the ability of RTE... to exercise corporate governance and due diligence in the use of public funds has been lost in light of recent events. The current system, whereby oversight is conducted by the Board of RTE by commissioning the audit of accounts, is clearly unsatisfactory."

"Other public bodies, including the other national public service broadcaster TG4, are subject to oversight and auditing by the Comptroller and Auditor General. RTE should be subject to the same oversight."

The purpose of this Bill is to amend the Broadcasting Act 2009 to remove the special rules allowing RTE to avoid the same oversight by the Comptroller and Auditor General that applies to TG4.

"The Bill will seek to amend section 109 of the Broadcasting Act 2009 in two places to ensure that both public service broadcasters, RTE and TG4, are subject to the same oversight by the Comptroller

and Auditor General (C&AG), by deleting the wording that sets out different treatment for each body.

"It would also amend the Schedules of the Comptroller and Auditor General (Amendment) Act 1993 by removing RTE from the list of bodies exempt from oversight and including it explicitly in the list of bodies under the office's remit."

Deputy Brady concluded: "Having attended every single one of the Oireachtas Committee Meetings concerning RTE, there is no doubt in my mind that this legislation is required. As a member of the Public Accounts Committee, I work closely with the office of the Comptroller and Auditor General and their office. And witness on a weekly basis the insight offered, and accountability demanded by their forensic auditing of the finances of public bodies."

"The amount of public interest in the RTE scandal has been both overwhelming and highly critical of the organisation and its senior executives. It is very clear that RTE has a lot of work to do to win back the confidence of the public. I believe that this Bill has the potential to offer important progress in that regard, and I would urge all TDs in Wicklow to give their full support when it comes before the D-Il in the Autumn."



Fiona Redmond and Fiona Molloy at the Arklow Seabreeze Festival

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Temporary classrooms for Temple Carrig School

Social Democrats TD Jennifer Whitmore has welcomed the delivery of four temporary classrooms for Templecarrig Secondary School in Greystones. These classrooms are necessary for the school to allow for new admissions in the coming school year.

Deputy Whitmore said: "I am delighted to see the work finally begin on these temporary classrooms for Templecarrig. The process for the school to get these classrooms has been a long one, and one which began a couple of years ago. Unfortunately, despite commitments made by the Department of Education and the work put in by the school community to get these delivered on time for the intake of September

2023, by last July, there was still no sign of them arriving. As a result, I raised it in the Dail with the Minister for Education, and I'm delighted to see that progress has finally been made onsite.

"Templecarrig Secondary School is reflective of many of the schools in Wicklow. The need for additional classrooms in Wicklow schools has been a consistent issue for me since my election as a TD, and

before that, as a Councillor.

"It has become all too normalised that local schools heading into the summer months are unsure if they will have the classrooms that they need in order to keep pace with their rates of admissions. For example, Blessington Community College only found out a few weeks ago that promised accommodation would not be delivered on time for September.

"This is unacceptable,

and the Department of Education must find a way to streamline the process for temporary school accommodation allocation and delivery. They also must ensure that promised permanent buildings are built in time for schools so that schools do not need to rely on temporary accommodation. I will continue to work with Templecarrig, along with other schools across the county, to deliver what our students and schools need."



Patricia Doyle and Bernie Tyrrell at the recent graduation awards ceremony at the KWETB Carnew Further Education & Training Centre

Planning application submitted for new building for Newtownmountkennedy Primary school

A planning application has been submitted for the construction of a new single and two storey primary school building for Newtownmountkennedy Primary School, with ten classrooms, 2 special needs classrooms, and ancillary accommodation.

If successful, the new school will be built following the demolition of the existing school building. Sinn Fein TD John Brady has acknowledged the long running efforts of both the school and parents to get the project this far.

Deputy Brady said: "I absolutely want to welcome the announcement that a planning permission application has been submitted for the much needed, long awaited, and overdue new school building for Newtownmountkennedy Primary School. I

think it is important also to acknowledge the role of the school and parents who have been pushing for the new school for years. I want to wish them every success in this latest chapter in their efforts.

"We now need to see a definitive timeframe that will guarantee delivery of this importance project. We need to see deadlines in place for the tendering, alongside, start dates, and finish dates for the construction of the new school building.

"Newtownmountkennedy is also the fast-

ing growing village in the state. Its growing population needs, and changing demographics means that there is a real need to see plans be put in place for a secondary school in the area to deal with future demands. Changing population trends will require new infrastructure, new public amenities, alongside the expansion of existing health, education, and creche facilities.

"This is the time when planning and forethought are needed to ensure that the growth of the village of Newtownmountkennedy is managed in a way determines that the area reaches its full potential as a community and a place the people of Newtownmountkennedy call home."



Deputy Whitmore outside Temple Carrig School in Greystones

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Wicklow Rugby Club President Graham Burleigh with Leinster Coach Leo Cullen at the Leinster Rugby Team's training session in Wicklow Rugby Club

Ambulance for Ukraine

Wicklow & District Lions Club has been supporting displaced people from Ukraine since the war started in early 2022. With the help of the very generous local community throughout the past year Lions members have been in a position to help families and give them some form of normality in every way possible.

The local club has also received financial help from Lions Ireland due to the club's commitment to the Ukraine crisis. As a result of this and local support the club has purchased a secondhand ambulance to send to Ukraine.

The ambulance looks very impressive with the very distinctive signwriting created by Wicklow Print Solutions and is fully fitted out. Wicklow Lions Ireland has been printed on both sides which will make it very visible as it travels from Ireland on its human welfare journey to troubled Ukraine. It will receive world recognition through TV social media and the press.

Also featured on the ambulance is the Irish and Ukrainian flags as well as the AURI (Ukrainians in Ireland) logo.

Lions District Governor Gerard Cashman was on hand to officially launch this exciting project before it headed off to war torn Ukraine to rescue people and save lives.

The ambulance was originally based at Galway Airport before it was purchased by its



Wicklow Lions members Sean Olohan, Maurice Corr and Ethna Neiland with Lions District Governor Gerard Cashman as Leo the Lion takes the wheel of the ambulance for a test drive

recent owner in Wexford who also donated a large amount of money towards the project.

In recent days the ambulance was shipped from Ireland. The first stop was Rotterdam, then to Amsterdam and from there it was transported directly to Krakow in Poland.

Another charity group based in Poland/Ukraine called Jeeps For Peace collected the ambulance

from Krakow and brought it in a convoy of rescue vehicles mostly from the UK across the border into Western Ukraine near Lviv.

Jeeps4Peace charity is led by Scottish businessman Stuart McKenzie. Many of the jeeps are donated and some are purchased from the farming communities throughout the UK and now from Ireland. They travel via Poland where they are

repaired and sprayed in military colours before they are driven by brave volunteers to the frontline in Ukraine.

The Wicklow ambulance will serve along the frontline supplying medical supplies and rescuing the many injured civilians and soldiers and helping to save people's lives.

At the time of going to press the Wicklow Lions Ambulance is currently being repaired

and strengthened for the long arduous and extremely dangerous journey that lies ahead. Manned by Ukrainian soldiers it will carry out its major rescue mission and save valuable Ukrainian lives. It will serve along Ukraine's counter-offensive regions in places like eastern Donetsk and south-eastern Zaporizhzhia areas, and around the city of Bakhmut.



Wicklow Lions Sean Olohan and Jim Molloy preparing the ambulance for its departure to Ukraine.



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Brady supports retained firefighters in renewed battle over recruitment

Sinn Fein TD John Brady has stated his support for the 82% of SIPTU retained firefighters who voted to reject the recommendations from the Labour Court.

The recommendations failed to come close to the answers needed to address the recruitment and retention crisis in the retained fire service. This will result in Retained Fire Service members recommending the strike action which they suspended in order to allow discussions between SIPTU and the Labour Court to take place, from July 26th.

Deputy Brady said: "The proposals brought forward fail to address the core issues at the heart of the recruitment and retention crisis in the retained fire service. The reality is that retained fire fighters are underpaid, they are working and are on call for extraordinary long hours and are being paid so poorly that many are forced to supplement their salary through social welfare payments.

"In addition, they face the challenge of being understaffed to the point that crewing levels represent a danger to both fire fighters and the public. How the government, and Minister Darragh O'Brien in particular remain prepared to



John Brady TD

stand over this unworkable, and unacceptable situation is inexplicable.

"I find it disingenuous that the proposals brought forward by the Labour Court were couched in percentage terms, which represent a misleading attempt by the government to obscure the ridiculous-

ly low remuneration starting point from the retained fire fighters are operating.

"With accelerating staffing losses due to mandatory retirement, and the mass exodus of experienced fire fighters who are no longer able to cope with the financial and familial challenges and restraints that the job places on their lives, the moment is fast approaching where the retained fire service could well cease to exist as a workable entity.

"The onus is now on Minister O'Brien and his government colleagues to intervene immediately, and I repeat my calls for Minister Darragh O'Brien to act to end the dispute by authorising the introduction of a credible offer, that is genuinely designed to address the core pay issues in the Retained Fire Service.

"Responsibility for the commencement of the strike scheduled for July 26th rest entirely with the Minister. The retained fire fighters must be granted a fair deal from the government."

Wicklow RNLI assist anxious pet owners as dog gets into difficulties in the water

Both Wicklow RNLI lifeboats were launched at teatime on Friday 14th July following reports of a dog in the water south of Wicklow harbour.

The alarm was raised by Wicklow Garda Síochána, who were concerned that the dog owners would instinctively try to rescue their pet and risk injury. At 6.32pm the Inshore lifeboat launched and was followed a short time later by the all-weather lifeboat, both proceeded south to the foot of cliffs at Wicklow golf course.

The Inshore lifeboat was on scene four minutes after launching in a position two hundred metres to the south of Travelahawk beach. In challenging sea conditions, helm Alan Goucher was able to get the lifeboat ashore and locate the dog.

The Inshore lifeboat volunteers made repeated attempts to retrieve the dog, but it retreated into caves on the shoreline each time. The dog eventually made its own way back up the cliff where it was

retrieved by its anxious owners. With the dog back in safe hands the lifeboat crews were stood down by the Coast Guard and returned to station.

The call out was a milestone for trainee Liz Thomas as she went to sea on her first 'shout' as an all-weather lifeboat volunteer.

Speaking after the callout Wicklow RNLI Press officer, Tommy Dover said: "We were happy to help and would remind dog owners to ensure to look after their own personal safety and do not get into danger trying to attempt a rescue themselves. Always keep your dog on a lead when you're close to cliff edges or fast flowing rivers. Don't go after your dog if they go into the water. If you are worried about your dog, call 999 or 112 and ask for the Coast Guard."



Wicklow RNLI All-weather and Inshore lifeboats at the scene. Photo: Wicklow RNLI/ Tommy Dover



SSE Renewables recently supported St Vincent De Paul, St Peter's Conference, Arklow with a donation to its charity golf classic. Deirdre Keogh, Community Engagement Manger, SSE Renewables said: "As a company we are delighted to support the St Vincent De Paul charity golf classic. We have previously supported donations to a number of charitable causes through our Arklow Bank 2 Sponsorship Fund. St Vincent De Paul in Arklow has worked quietly in the community for decades, supporting individuals and families who at various times, may find themselves needing some extra help and support. The volunteers who give of their time are to be commended for their ongoing commitment. SSE Renewables is delighted to support St Vincent De Paul in its fundraising event at Arklow Golf Club."

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Justine Nesme, Antoine Confavreux and Isabelle Veau-Cahon enjoying themselves at the Arklow Seabreeze Festival

Blow to Wicklow tourism as Celtic Routes project to end

Unique project due to run out of money at the end of August

Wicklow tourism and hospitality interests are set to lose out as the unique Ireland-Wales Celtic Routes project is in danger of collapsing because of Brexit. Celtic Routes was launched in 2019 and has seen a range of successful tourism initiatives between Wicklow, Wexford and Waterford and Carmarthenshire, Pembrokeshire and Ceredigion in Wales.

The project was designed to foster links between the three South East counties and their Welsh colleagues with the objective of increasing visitor travel between them and other links.

An indication of how successful Celtic Routes has been is a recent report which showed that from its inception in 2019 to the end of March 2023 almost 300 million people around the world through different formats have checked out information on Celtic Routes.

Initial funding of €2 million was provided under the European Territorial Co-operation Programme and then in 2020, the Welsh Government announced new funding arrangements to replace those previously administered by the EU. In all close to €4m has been invested in the project.

But now after four successful years the entire project's future is threatened because of Brexit and the UK leaving the European Union with the Project Officer warning that Celtic Route will close at the end of August unless new funds are found.

Celtic Routes Project Officer, Oonagh Messette, stated: "As a direct result of Brexit, there will be no continuation of the Ireland Wales Cooperation Fund. While there may be considerable willingness on the part of all stakeholders, without the funding to administer activities, much will be lost. Our partnership, our networks, our collaboration and our immense marketing and promotion power essentially comes to a close at the end of August this year."

Project Partner Michael Nicholson, Director of Service with Wicklow County Council, commented: "Celtic Routes has been one of the most successful Projects that has ever crossed my desk. It has brought our counties closer together and Wicklow tourism has benefited immensely from this collaboration. Between Brexit and the Pandemic it may be a little while before we see quantifiable results but just having 300 million people view our area is extraordinary, none of our Partners could have achieved that result on their own. We as a partnership have many ideas for continued alliances but that is all now in jeopardy."

The objective of Celtic Routes is to encourage visitors to explore new areas of South East Ireland and West Wales en route to their final tourist destination. It aimed

to transform less well-known areas from transit zones to new touring sites, increasing the time visitors spend in these regions and capitalising on the opportunities to boost local economies.

An underlying aim of the Celtic Routes project was to convert potential visitors transiting through our cities into staying visitors. Another objective was to increase sustainable economic developments by maximising visitor spend, income retention, adding value to the combined tourism offerings within the region through a tailored marketing and promotional campaign for both visitors and tourism providers, supported by the three Local Authorities.

The ending of the Celtic Routes initiative would be a severe blow to tourism and hospitality in the South East which is still recovering from the Covid shut down.

Ms Messette pointed out that over five years of cross collaboration between Ireland and Wales - and importantly between Waterford, Wexford and Wicklow - the Celtic Routes brand has reached almost 300 million viewers all over the world. Through a combination of social media, print media, Out of Home and programmatic advertising, analytics showed peaks of interest from the Indian Sub-Continent and Southern Europe as well as traditional markets such as the UK, USA, Germany and France.

Through various thematic networks, businesses in all six counties have teamed up and assisted each other in a practical and constructive way with 140 businesses engaging on an ongoing basis. In another practical demonstration of Celtic Routes value, over some 200 businesses are using the project's asset library of 13,000 photographs, cinegraphs and videos for promotional purposes.

A TV series was filmed across all six counties last summer and has since been shown on S4C in Wales and will be screened on TG4 here this month while it is also available on the BBC iPlayer.

"The cross-county and cross-national benefits of Celtic Routes are obvious at this stage and for such a valuable resource for the tourism and hospitality industry in both countries to be lost would be nothing short of a disaster," said Ms Messette, adding: "A way has to be found to save this unique venture."

Increased funding for sports clubs under Sports Capital & Equipment Programme

Increased funding has been made available for sports clubs and communities that apply under the Sports Capital & Equipment Programme. The Programme has increased its available funding from €150,000 to €200,000, and for projects deemed to be of regional significance, from €300,000 to €500,000.

Minister Simon Harris said the focus of this year's Programme is on climate action and sustainability, and that for the first time in the Programme's history, projects can only receive funding if access is guaranteed to men and women equally.

Minister Harris said, "I am extremely pleased to confirm new increased funding for sports clubs and community sports projects with a particular focus on climate action and gender equality under the Sports Capital & Equipment Programme. Sport has long been and continues to be a vital way of connecting our communities and staying in good physical and mental health. I want to encourage as many community projects as possible to apply for this new funding opportunity."

HER Wicklow, HER Outdoors Week encourages outdoor recreation

HER Wicklow, HER Outdoors Week, the annual event dedicated to celebrating and encouraging women to embrace the outdoors, is back for 2023.

From August 14th to 20th, Wicklow will come alive with a week-long list of events designed to highlight the opportunities for women and girls to engage in outdoor recreation and inspire them to try something new.

Wicklow has such a diverse range of outdoor recreation activities available there is sure to be something available for everyone.

HER Wicklow, HER Outdoors 2023 is scaling to new heights with a vast array of activities covering land, sea, and air. Airplane gliding has been introduced as an activity for 2023 with snorkelling and climbing also new additions. These activities will join hiking, biking, walking, swimming and many others to really showcase what Wicklow has to offer in

the outdoor recreation sphere.

Wicklow Sports Partnership is also delighted to welcome two national events to the county in the run up to the HER Wicklow, HER Outdoors Week. Volleyball Ireland will host their beach tour in Brittas Bay on Sunday, 13th of August, while Sport Ireland will open the weekend on 12th August with a Her Outdoors Adventure Festival in Russborough House. There will be outdoor recreation activities to book, a picnic zone, yoga area and guided walks of the Greenway.

Cathaoirleach of Wicklow County Council, Cllr Aoife Flynn Kennedy, highlighted the significance of the programme stating: "HER Outdoors Week is a very special week. It not only

highlights the range of exciting activities that are available in Wicklow but it gives women and girls the confidence to step out of their comfort zone and try something totally new. I would encourage everyone 'find your outdoors' during the week."

Emer O'Gorman, Chief Executive, Wicklow County Council, added: "We are proud to support HER Outdoors Week which aims to provide equal opportunities for all women to immerse themselves in the outdoors. This year's event covers a wide range of outdoor activities, from cycling, hiking, snorkelling, kayaking and gliding - there is something to suit every woman's interests and abilities and really showcase what Wicklow

has to offer."

Director of Services, Michael Nicholson, emphasised the significance of HER Outdoors Week in embedding Wicklow as a leader in outdoor recreation in Ireland, stating: "This event aligns perfectly with our ongoing efforts to promote Wicklow as a premier destination for outdoor enthusiasts, inspiring women to engage with our remarkable landscapes and reinforcing our position as a leading hub for outdoor recreation in Ireland."

To learn more about HER Wicklow, HER Outdoors 2023 and to register for events, visit our website at www.wicklowsp.ie or follow @ActiveWicklow. Early registration is recommended, as spaces are limited.



Pictured at the launch of HER Wicklow, HER Outdoors Week were: Back - Carol Coad, Rosie Coad, Isla Coad and Aisling Hubbard. Front - Alannah Grace, Sadhbh Mooney and Teagan Mooney.

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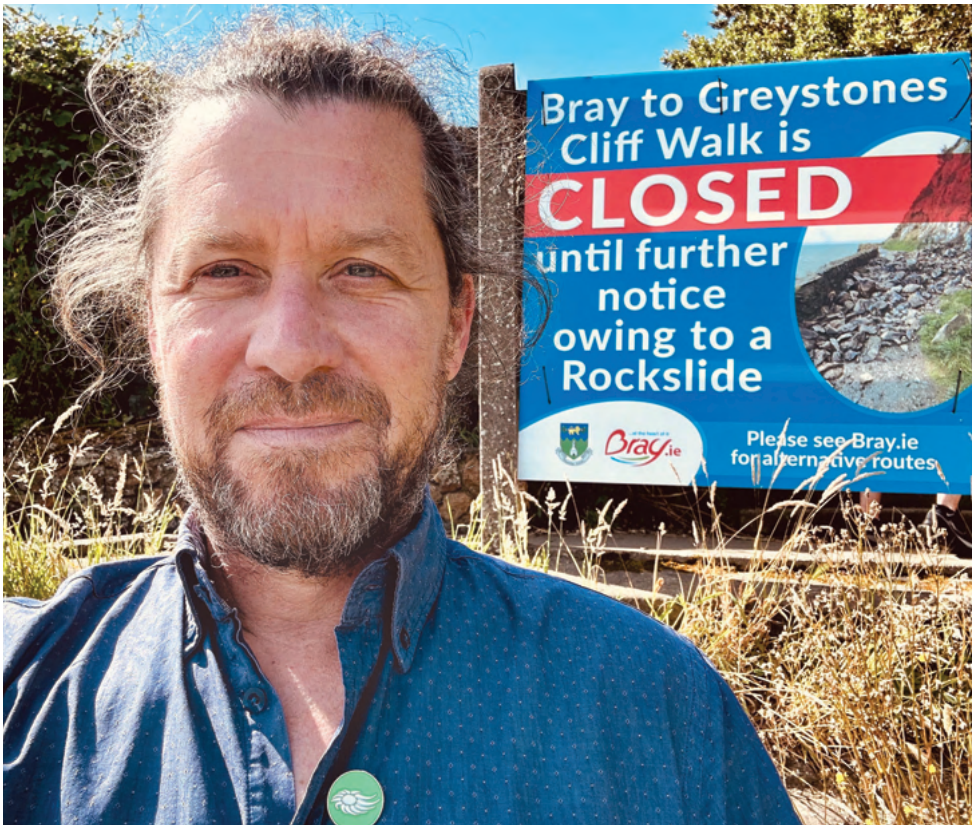
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Matthews requests urgency from Council to open the Cliff Walk



Deputy Steven Matthews

Green Party TD for Wicklow Steven Matthews has requested faster action to repair and reopen the hugely popular Bray to Greystones Cliff Walk.

"It has been closed for far too long," said Matthews. "I have been in touch with the Chief Executive of Wicklow County Council and the engineers in Bray and Greystones to seek faster action and offer my assistance with reopening the popular walking route.

"I served on the Cliff Walk Management Committee over the years when I was a county councillor and we carried out some great improvements to drainage, fencing and surfacing to improve accessibility so it's deeply disappointing see no action over the last few years to address the current issues. I understand that there is significant engineering and possible re-routing required and I have offered to assist the Council with my support through working with Government departments and Irish Rail where necessary.

"There is rock stabilisation work required at the Bray side above the walk and substantial slippage on the Greystones side below the walk which will require repair or possible rerouting. The route has been closed for over two years and whilst I don't underestimate the works required, I do question why it has taken so long to employ the engineering solutions to give us back access to the most popular local and tourist attraction in North Wicklow.

"The Cliff Walk is a stunningly beautiful walking route that thousands of people enjoy on a weekly basis and it is unacceptable that it has been left abandoned and closed for too long. I am offering every assistance to the Council and I am confident that we can work together to get it reopened sooner for all the residents of Greystones and Bray to enjoy again," concluded Deputy Matthews.

'Greystones infrastructure needs to catch up with population'

Cllr Derek Mitchell, following Cairn's application for 98 houses in Greystones being refused, has called for more infrastructure in the area to meet the population growth.

"The refusal was primarily because Greystones is over the population target for 2028 of 21,727," said Cllr Mitchell. "The April Census last year show the population is 22,009. Since then at least 500 houses have been occupied and 500 are being built which will give a population of 24,500 next year, 10% over the target for 4 years ahead of that.

"Cairn also applied for 586 houses and apartments in Blacklion. This section being part of the larger site but no decision has been made by Bord Pleanála in the 18 months since application.

"I support the refusal as the infrastructure needs to catch up with this growth of 36%. Greystones has the lowest amount of people employed locally of any town in Wicklow so everyone commutes. However local jobs have not appeared, neither have the planned improvements in DART, the N11 nor Bus Connects. Dublin City expanded by only 6%. Growth should be in the centre."



Cllr Derek Mitchell

Summer chess sessions return to Burnaby Park in Greystones

Cllr Stephen Stokes has announced the return of the Greystones Summer Chess Sessions in the Burnaby Park, Greystones. This free activity will take place every Saturday in August, from 10am - 12pm.

Cllr Stokes stated: "The summer chess sessions were a great success in 2022. As such we are hoping to build on this in August 2023. People are free to come and go as they like. Beginners and families are welcome to attend. We will have a learn the rules seminar from 10am - 10.30am, each Saturday."

According to Cllr Stokes, chess has undergone a renaissance in recent years. During Covid chess moved online seamlessly, and underwent a boom. This was boosted further by The Queen's Gambit on Netflix, which was a big hit for the platform. Cllr Stokes added: "Some people may remember Bobby Fischer (USA) v Boris Spassky (USSR) for the World Championship in 1972, during the Cold War. The recent boom in chess probably rivals those golden days of the 1970s."

The organisers are hoping to attract new players to chess in the Burnaby Park.



Cllr Stephen Stokes with Bernadette Stokes in Burnaby Park

all to enjoy. Last year we discovered a very talented young player who went straight in to the first team of the Bray-Greystones Chess Club. So we would also love to discover more talented players in the area, especially those that normally only play online."

Seating for the Greystones chess sessions is limited. Anyone with a folding chair is encouraged to bring their own. All chess pieces will be supplied. The chess sessions are being organised by Bernadette Stokes and Cllr Stephen Stokes. Anyone seeking more information can email stephenstokes101@gmail.com for further guidance. The Bray-Greystones Chess Club is actively seeking new players ahead of the new chess season in the Leinster Leagues.



COMHAIRLE CHONTAE CHILL MHANTÁIN
WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL

SECTION 75 – ROADS ACT, 1993 PROVISION FOR TEMPORARY CLOSURE OF PUBLIC ROAD

Wicklow County Council hereby gives notice of the temporary closure of the following public road.

Road to be closed
R764 from the junction at Roundwood Church to the junction of the L1076 Roundwood Park.

Period of closure
4.00 pm on the 6th August until 4.00 am on the 7th August 2023.

Alternative Routes
R765 Knockraheen to Diamond Hill R764 to L1076 Roundwood Park.

Reason for Closure
This road closure is necessary in order to facilitate the Roundwood Village Festival.



Patricia Clyne-Kelly, Derek Larkin and Cllr Peir Leonard at the launch of the 042 Collective's 'Heritage of Arklow' exhibition in Arklow Library. The 042 collective, are a cultural collective of artists and creatives living the Arklow area.



Well done the Wicklow girls!

World Cup fever has gripped the nation yet again as the 2023 Women's World Cup kicked off last week in Australia, and nowhere more so than Co. Wicklow, with two players from the Garden County in the squad. People around the county were glued to their TV screen last week as Ireland got their campaign underway against Australia. Unfortunately the result didn't go our way but it's not over yet and attention is now turning to Wednesday's game against Canada.



Aine O'Gorman and Louise Quinn in their local club colours; Enniskerry FC and Blessington FC. Pic: Stephen McCarthy/Sportsfile

Wicklow is being represented at the World Cup by Aine O'Gorman from Enniskerry and Louise Quinn from Blessington. Between them the two defenders have racked up 28 goals and well over 200 caps for the national team and will be relying on that experience over the next two games.

Louise currently plays for Birmingham City, and previously played for Arsenal, Fiorentina in Italy, Peamount Utd and Sweden's Eskilstuna in 2013, helping the club win promotion and a league title in her first season there. That was also the year she was named Ireland's Player of the Year. In 2015 she helped the Eskilstuna secure Champions League qualification by finishing runners-up in the top division.

Aine O'Gorman broke into the Irish Senior Team at the age of just 16 in 2006, and held a place in the team until her retirement from international football in 2018. Two years later she came out of retirement and is now playing in her first World Cup.

Aine captained the national team for the first time in 2015 and scored a hat-trick against Monenegro in 2016. At club level she's also had great success. She's played for Doncaster Belles and

UCD Waves, and currently plays for Shamrock Rovers.

Enniskerry FC told *Wicklow Times*: "Aine continues to have a tremendous link with Enniskerry FC, even though she left the club for higher things almost twenty years ago. All one has to do is ask and Aine will gladly help out at either a training session or promoting an event at the club. She continues to be in regular contact with her former teammates at the club - and indeed with both past and present coaches and managers there. A total ambassador for not only Enniskerry FC, but also the entire village of Enniskerry as a community."



Aine O'Gorman launching the Teqball table at Arklow Sports Hub



Aine's family out in Oz: L-R Joe Gaffney, Laura Griffin, Sophie, Seamus, Mairead, Aine, Jimmy, Ava and Laura O'Gorman



The Kingfisher Restaurant, Enniskerry

The Kingfisher Kitchen has been in Enniskerry for the past 23 years and in 2010 Patricia fulfilled her own dream and turned the chipper into this popular cafe, which is open throughout the day serving fresh, homemade, locally sourced food and great coffee.

Kingfisher is facing the monument in the heart of the village, and you can't miss the distinctive stone facade and an outdoor eating area to the front of the cafe. As you enter you come in through the deli/takeaway area. The restaurant itself opens out to the left and has all original features in place from tile floors to stone walls and open fireplace. The walls are dotted with an array of paintings by local artists and the seating is casual and comfy.

The menu caters for all from their all day breakfast menu including full Irish to scones and bagels to an a la carte menu offering a selection of appetisers and mains, salads and pizzas and a full selection of sandwiches and Panini.

We regularly drop in for tea and some of their brilliant, packed-full-of-filling sandwiches after a walk in merry Powerscourt. The lunch menu is an entirely bigger affair, and its alfresco dining is perfect for sunny summer days.

Enniskerry is a pretty village at anytime, but it really looks at its best in a summers glow. The beautiful houses dotted around the perimeter look especially lovely and an American visitor asked us about the chimney pots, which only caused us to notice them. Enniskerry has some fine chimney pots, who knew?

Wishing Aine O'Gorman the best of luck in the World Cup

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Wishing all the best to Aine O'Gorman in the World Cup

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Best of Luck to Louise Quinn in the World Cup

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Wicklow RNLI volunteer takes to pitch at Croke Park to highlight water safety ahead of GAA hurling semi-final

RNLI representatives from across Ireland, including Wicklow native Stephen Kenny; took to the pitch during Sunday 9th July's All-Ireland senior hurling championship semi-final at Croke Park, to promote the charity's water safety partnership with the GAA.



Before the throw-in at the Clare and Kilkenny decider and in front of thousands gathered at the stadium, RNLI volunteers dressed in their full lifeboat kit, unfurled a giant flag showing an all-weather lifeboat in action.

A second group of RNLI crew wearing county jerseys unfurled a flag with a water safety message, calling on everyone to Float to Live. Wicklow RNLI crew member Stephen Kenny also flanked the tunnel where the players came onto the pitch.

Now in its sixth year, the RNLI and GAA water safety partnership serves to raise awareness of drowning prevention and to educate communities

on how to stay safe in and around the water. The partnership is part of the GAA Healthy Clubs' programme and has seen RNLI lifeboat crew visiting GAA clubs around Ireland to deliver water safety talks to all age groups.

Speaking about the event in Croke Park, Stephen Kenny, Wicklow RNLI Crew Member said: "Our partnership highlights the shared values between ourselves in the RNLI and the GAA, notably volunteerism and the importance of communities. It was a privilege to be invited as a representative for Wicklow RNLI to Croke Park on such a big day in the GAA's championship calendar and to have the opportunity to promote a key drowning prevention message, float to live.

"If you find yourself struggling in the water unexpectedly, your instinct will tell you to swim hard. But cold water shock could make you gasp uncontrollably. Then you could breathe in water and drown. Instead, we want you to float to live. Tilt your head back with ears submerged, Relax and try to breathe normally. Move your hands to help you stay afloat. It's ok if your legs sink. Spread your arms and legs to improve stability."



Wicklow RNLI volunteer Stephen Kenny lining up in Croke Park

Wicklow RNLI volunteer Stephen Kenny



Commodore Karen Kissane was on hand recently in Wicklow Sailing Club to welcome the 2023 Sailing Instructor Team lead by Senior Instructor Ella Healy. Karen was delighted to present them with their new instructor jackets. Sailing courses are very busy this summer with many new children trying sailing for the first time. Wicklow Sailing Club said, "We wish Ella and her team the very best of luck for a great summer". Pictured from left to right are George Godden, Rumo Best, Alex Costello, Ben Lawless, Sam Cummins, Emma Sheeran-Purcell, Commodore Karen Kissane, Senior, Instructor Ella Healy, Jessica Healy, Simon St. John, Benjy, Billington, Arthur Kenny

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Young people welcomed into Oireachtas for Digital Youth Showcase

Young people, volunteers and staff members from Foroige were welcomed into the Oireachtas on Tuesday 4th of July 2023 for a Digital Youth Showcase. The showcase focussed on how we can mitigate the risks associated with digital technologies and social media platforms, while empowering young people to use technology to their advantage safely and securely.

Members of both Houses of the Oireachtas engaged with young people from around the country who demonstrated youth work in virtual reality, coding, robotics, engineering, artificial intelligence and much more. Foroige is committed to supporting young people to develop the skills, knowledge, and confidence to navigate the digital world safely, responsibly, and creatively, and contribute to thriving communities online and offline. To this end Foroige is launching a new digital youth brand called Foroige Go - Digital skills for what's now and next - which was displayed at the showcase.

As part of the Digital Youth Showcase members of the Oireachtas used virtual reality headsets to join a ForÚige Club taking place in the virtual world and spoke directly with young people in North Donegal, West Cork and Arranmore Island. Alongside

VR, young people introduced TDs and Senators to a variety of digital innovations, from podcasts created using cutting-edge audio technology to products designed and manufactured using 3D printing technologies. Creative learning technologies were also on display like using artificial intelligence for good and the many ways online safety and resilience underpins ForÚige approach to digital youth work.

Ceann Comhairle, Mr. Sean O Fearghail, addressed the young people and staff members at the event stating "We are pleased to welcome Foroige into Leinster House to hold a Digital Youth Showcase. There is no doubt that technology is somewhat of a double-edged sword, with so many opportunities and so many challenges. The young people here today will show us all the future of the digital world and instil in us the

confidence to embrace it.

The exhibition outlines the risks associated with digital technologies and social media platforms, and looks at how these risks can be mitigated, to empower young people to use technology to their advantage in a safe and secure manner. The young people we see here today and throughout the Foroige network will be our future leaders."

Sean Campbell, CEO of Foroige, commented at the event "Foroige and the young people, volunteers and staff engaged in the organisation are honoured to have the opportunity to showcase recent innovations in digital youth work and non-formal education, and the value of empowering young people with the skills and mindset they need to actively shape the digital realm for the better. Digital youth work has been a part of Foroige for over 20 years. The scope of our digital youth work takes many



Jennifer Whitmore TD, Margaret Murphy, Molly Murphy (aged 15 from Wicklow), and Jane McDonnell (Big Brother Big Sister Programme Officer)

forms and they are now all wrapped together under our new umbrella brand of Foroige Go - digital skills for what's now and next. All of our digital youth work programmes are designed to facilitate young people to grow their empathy, critical thinking, and digital citizenship."

He continued "These skills are essential not just to young people's engagement with digital technologies, but also in their day-to-day

lives and relationships, supporting their personal and social development, their values, and their ability to connect with others positively. This work will secure the future of Ireland at the forefront of innovation, enterprise, and digital transformation, by creating a generation of highly skilled entrepreneurs and leaders."

Anna Finnegan, a participant in the Foroige GoSafely programme

aged 16, spoke from a youth perspective on navigating the digital world safely: "I suppose you could say that I started on the internet young, around six years old, and since then I have seen the advantages and disadvantages. That's why I feel so passionate about this GoSafely programme, my peers are crying out for open conversations and a clear toolkit to navigate through it."

President awards young man from Wicklow with Gaisce Gold Award Medal

07 July 2023: President Michael D. Higgins recently presented Leo Micklem from Wicklow with the Gaisce Gold Award in a ceremony at Áras an Uachtaráin. The ceremony awarded 98 young people for their outstanding commitment to personal development and contribution to society.

This year's participants took on a range of activities and projects, from Meals on Wheels, to playing the bagpipes, learning a new language,

participating in Parkruns and refining their leadership skills.

Gaisce - The President's Award, is a self-development programme for

young people aged 14-25 which has been proven to enhance confidence, resilience, and well-being through participation in personal, physical, com-

munity, and adventure challenges. This year's Gold Awardees have committed two or more years to completing various challenges, resulting

in a total of 37,000 hours spent achieving personal goals and volunteering within their communities.

Gaisce's vision is an Ireland where every young person, no matter their circumstances, has access to participate in the President's Challenge. Gaisce consistently works to achieve this vision, delivering key initiatives to ensure equality of access and opportunity.

Speaking prior to the Awards, President of Ireland, Michael D Higgins said: "Young people possess immense potential, creativity, and a perspective that can shape our world in profound ways, demonstrated through this year's recipients of the Gold Award. We must value and empower our youth, ensuring access to education, opportunities, and programmes such as Gaisce to allow them to express their ideas and make a positive impact in the communities in which they live. I would like to congratulate the 98 awardees across the country today, and hope



Leo Micklem from Wicklow receiving the Gaisce Gold Award medal from President Michael D. Higgins, and Avril Ryan, CEO of Gaisce

that they will continue to actively engage in their communities to build a brighter, more inclusive society for all."

Avril Ryan, CEO of Gaisce - The President's Award said: "I am thrilled to celebrate the huge achievement of each and every Gold Awardee at this very special event. This occasion is particularly special as the Awardees are being welcomed and presented with their Gaisce Award by President Michael D. Higgins in the historic surrounds of Áras an Uachtaráin. This group of young people have not only stretched themselves to learn new skills, meet new people

and develop talents and skills, but have also made a tremendous contribution to communities in every corner of Ireland. The diversity of recipients at this year's Gold Awards Ceremony highlights inclusion and equality at the heart of Gaisce as an organisation, supporting its vision to ensure young people aged 14-25 have every opportunity to participate in the Gaisce Awards, fulfilling their potential and discovering lifelong passions and pathways to positive change, learning, and employment. These young people are here today thanks to the tireless dedication of our wonderful President's

Award Leaders (PAL) whom I look forward to celebrating at our forthcoming PAL recognition event."

Rosemary Vincent, Recipient of Gaisce Gold Award in 2023 added: "I strongly believe that one of the predominant reasons that I was able to go through the transition from a teenager to an adult with ease was because of Gaisce. I have learned to balance my emotions and prioritise my overall well-being, by becoming more active in my community. I truly feel like a more mature and grounded person as a result of completing Gaisce."



Alison Delaney, Kathleen Barnes and Rebeca Fleming are pictured at the recent KWETB Carnew Further Education and Training Centre Graduation awards.

Wicklow woman honoured by Minister for European Affairs

Minister for European Affairs Peter Burke recently honoured Ireland's first European citizens, known as the Eurobabies, at a special event held in Government Buildings. The event, titled 'Celebrating EU Values', was hosted by European Movement Ireland.

One of those honoured was Edwina McDonnell Dawson who lives Greystones. She was born on January 1, 1973, coinciding with the day Ireland joined the then European Economic Community. To commemorate this historic moment, the then Irish Council of the European Movement (now European Movement Ireland) commissioned special medallions for the newborns. These medallions symbolised their unique status as Ireland's first European citizens. On the occasion of the 50th anniversary of Ireland's EU membership, the Eurobabies were presented with new medallions to mark this significant milestone.

The Minister for European Affairs expressed his appreciation for the Eurobabies' symbolic status as the first European citizens of Ireland.

He commented: "This occasion allows us to reflect on the immense progress Ireland has made within the European Union over the past 50 years. The Eurobabies represent a unique generation who have witnessed Ireland's journey as a member of the European Union since its inception. They have grown up with the opportunity to live, work, and study across the EU, benefiting from the freedom of movement and the diverse cultural experiences it brings."

The Eurobabies were honoured in front of politicians, guests from

across Ireland's business and public sectors as well as young people who took part in the Government's MyEU50 youth competition.

Noelle O Connell CEO, European Movement Ireland said: "This event marks the culmination of our programme of events and outreach work marking Ireland's 50 years of membership. Today, we reflect on how EU values and rights has changed Ireland and shaped Irish citizens' lives - all while celebrating our Eurobabies."

"As Ireland's first European citizens, the Eurobabies have been witness to the transformative impact of EU membership on our country. They represent a generation that has experienced the many social, cultural, and economic advantages that stem from being part of the European Union. We were thrilled so many were able to join us today for what was a truly special event."

The event also reflected on the impact of EU values on Irish citizens with each of the speakers reflecting on the impact within their lives.

One of the founders of the then Irish Council of the European Movement (now European Movement Ireland), Neville Keery, who played a pivotal role in the 1972 referendum campaign, spoke at the event.

He said: "Today, as we celebrate 50 years of Ireland's membership of the EU, we can reflect on all of the

progress that we have made as both a people and as a nation. Joining the ECC did more than open up the markets, it also opened up our minds. We have been transformed from a nation that looked inward to one that has opened up to be a major force on the European stage."

Speaking from the event, Dr Bryan Mac Donald, one of Eurobabies born on the 1 January 1973, said: "As a Eurobaby, membership of the EU has provided me and my friends with fantastic educational opportunities and supported us through our educational journey. Travel and access to education throughout Europe has had a transformative effect on the lives of many of my friends and family."

Favour Ochoyima, who was the Third Level winner of the nationwide MyEU50 youth competition to mark 50 years of Ireland's EU membership, said: "As a young black second-generation migrant in Ireland, EU values have transformed my life, providing economic opportunities, legal protections, and a sense of belonging. Celebrating these values is crucial as they empower individuals like me, fostering inclusivity, and creating a society where everyone's voice matters."

This event is part of the European Movement International's Together for Europe project. The project has been funded with support from the European Commission.



Pictured is Minister for European Affairs Peter Burke with Edwina McDonnell Dawson who lives Greystones at the 'EU Values and Ireland' event hosted by European Movement Ireland in Government Buildings, Dublin to celebrate 50 years of Ireland's membership of the EU. She is being presented with a commemorative medallion as she was born on Jan 1st 1973, the first day of Ireland's membership of the then European Economic Community, making her one of Ireland's first European Citizens - Eurobabies.

Two not-for-profit organisations in Wicklow receive €15,000

The Ireland Funds, the global philanthropic network, has awarded €15,000 to two not-for-profit projects serving Wicklow through its Heart of the Community Fund, which each year provides critical funding to a wide range of community organisations and charities on the island of Ireland.

The Ireland Funds recognises the challenges organisations face in securing funding to build their capacity or meet their core costs, so the Heart of the Community Fund 2023 has provided grants to meet these needs. The grants awarded by the Heart of the Community Fund have been made possible by philanthropic gifts and fundraising events of The Ireland Funds America, the largest of The Ireland Funds' global chapters. Among the Wicklow recipients of this year's Heart of the Community Fund are Glencree Centre for Peace and Reconciliation and Teen-Turn.

This year's grant round will provide a total of €930,000 in funding to 94 organisations in 24 counties across the island of Ireland under The Ireland Funds' four pillars of support for Arts & Culture, Community Development, Education and Peace & Reconciliation. Caitriona Fottrell, President and CEO of The Ireland Funds, said: "The not-for-profit sector in Ireland is the engine on the ground delivering

vital services every day, in every community. We understand the significant challenges organisations face, in particular, to meet their core costs to keep that engine going. We believe in each organisation we fund. We believe in what they do, and how they do it. We know that by investing in them, we are positively impacting the communities they work with. The Heart

of the Community Fund is supported by our events and our committed donors, and we are grateful their generosity will enable great work across the island of Ireland." Naoimh McNamee, CEO of Glencree Centre for Peace and Reconciliation, said: "Glencree Centre for Peace and Reconciliation is absolutely delighted to have been awarded this Heart

of the Community Fund grant by The Ireland Funds. This grant will allow us further develop our site, peace building, and business activities as we move one step closer to establishing our campus as a Centre for Peace Education and Learning Exchanges. We are extremely appreciative of The Ireland Funds ongoing support with this endeavour."



Pictured L-R are Jenny Courtney, General Manager of Belvedere Youth Club; Teddy Doyle; Adam Harris, CEO of ASIAM; Archie McMahon; Siobhan Gallagher, Executive Director of The Ireland Funds; Kayden Kavanagh.

R.Hendy & Co. Bookkeeping Services

R Hendy & Co. are Personal Insolvency Practitioners, Chartered Accountants and Statutory Auditors located in both Enniscorthy and Arklow. At present they are the only Personal Insolvency Practitioners in Wicklow and Wexford. They have clients throughout the country.

"Our two Personal Insolvency Practitioners are Eric Hendy and Kerry O'Neill. We call them PIPs. Eric was former chairman of the APIP Committee. Kerry was former secretary of APIP and still remains a committee member."

"We work with referrals from MABS and clients can also come to us directly. We normally deal with Personal Insolvency Arrangements and Debt Settlement Arrangements. When you owe money you are called a Debtor. Personal Insolvency Arrangements are where you have debts that you cannot pay and are secured, a mortgage or car loans are good examples. A Debt Settlement Arrangement is where you have debts you cannot pay that are not secured on anything such as credit card debts."

"When you appoint us, we stand in the middle between you and the person you owe the money to and negotiate to get the best deal for both of you. We cannot agree anything without your permission and the best thing about our plans is that the Courts actually make sure that they proceed as planned. We do all the Court work for you. Don't worry as you shouldn't have to go to the Courts at any stage."

"In fact, the Courts can ensure that you get to see a PIP before anyone can take the home you own from you. If you happen to

be in that position, just ask the Judge if you can see a PIP if you haven't already seen one, the Law says you can and so will they."

"We have seen time and time again that if you get to a PIP sooner than later, the final amount you have to pay is less. In fact, as house prices keep rising apace, if you enter into an Alternative Repayment Arrangement with your lender, you will probably end up paying a lot more in a settlement than if you came to a PIP as soon as you got into difficulty."

"So don't worry. If you are in a pickle now, the sooner you get to us, the sooner we can work on a plan for you. There is always a solution."

Some of their recent cases:

Debt Settlement Arrangements:

"We completed a Debt Settlement Arrangement where the debtor owed €1.3 million and a settlement was reached for €19,000. Please remember that each case is different and depends on the debtor's affordability."

Personal Insolvency Arrangements and Repossession:

"We recently had a case where a Repossession Order had been granted and a date was issued for the Sheriff to take repossess a home. We put a Personal

Insolvency Arrangement in place and the Debtor will now stay in the family home and all unsecured debts were written off for a small sum paid over a 12 month period."

Personal Insolvency Arrangements and Mortgage Write-downs:

"Another completed Personal Insolvency Arrangement involved a single man who had a home worth €155,000 and he owed €399,000 on his mortgage. The PIP negotiated with his lender and got a plan approved in Court. The Debtor got a write down of €244,000 bringing his mortgage balance to what his home was worth. He was paying €1,870 towards his mortgage before his PIA and after the PIA this was reduced to €830 per month."

Personal Insolvency Arrangements and Mortgage Re-Structures:

"A retired couple in their late 60's contacted the office as they were struggling with their mortgage repayments. The repayment due was €650 per month. We worked with their lender to extend the mortgage term and reduced the mortgage repayments to €250 per month making it more affordable."

Funding announced for creative, cultural and artistic initiatives

Biodiversity initiatives in Nephin, sustainable tourism community projects in Bunratty, creative coastal resilience proposals for the Maharees, community engagements in Carlingford - these are just some of the 43 creative projects nationwide included in the €5.8 million Creative Climate Action Fund announcement made today by the Taoiseach Leo Varadkar, Ministers Catherine Martin and Eamon Ryan.

This Creative Ireland initiative supports creative, cultural and artistic projects that build awareness around climate change and empowers citizens to make meaningful behavioural changes. The Creative Ireland Programme, in collaboration with the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications is funding 40 recipients. A further 3 recipients are funded as part of the Shared Island initiative of the Department of the Taoiseach.

Co. Wicklow projects include:

1) 'Envisioning the Uplands' (the cultural element of Hometree's 'Wild Atlantic Rainforest' project, bringing artists to the Uplands to facilitate community engagement); 2) Plan-it-Play (hosting a series of educational and fun workshops through the Wicklow Library service to consider how we can move from a linear or even recycling toy economy towards a circular toy economy)

3) Kilcoole Creative Little Tern Colony Project (an artist-led project celebrating Kilcoole's Little Tern conservation scheme along

the Dublin-Rosslare railway line in Wicklow).

Wicklow will also benefit from a number of nationwide projects such as the initiative to bring together immersive storytellers to explore ways of engaging with the public on climate action.

An Taoiseach Leo Varadkar TD said: "The inclusion of three significant cross-border projects in the Creative Climate Action Fund, under the Shared Island initiative, signifies the ongoing Government support for ambitious activities which benefit the whole island and bring people together around common concerns. In this instance the funding will help to develop awareness, through creativity, of climate change, the single greatest threat facing humanity today. We must

be the generation that turns the tide on climate change and biodiversity loss. The ongoing Shared Island dimension of the Creative Ireland Programme will harness the power of cultural creativity to bring communities together across the island."

Commenting on the announcement Minister Martin said: "The success of our inaugural Creative Climate Action initiative is hard to deny. The first 15 projects were in equal parts exciting, thoughtful and ambitious. The ambition of the artists and the communities involved were made manifest by dramatic light installations that demonstrated rising sea levels in Galway and Wexford, immersive agricultural programmes in Dingle and Tipperary, decarbonising projects in Limerick and Waterford, and the regeneration of repair and reuse culture in Westmeath.

"However the real value of the initiative was the unrelenting desire for meaningful change amongst all those involved. I believe the projects that we are launching today will drive that momentum for change even further. I want to congratulate the breadth of imagination and considered thinking involved in each of these 43 initiatives. It is wonderful to witness and a real privilege to support."

The Creative Climate Action



Artist Lisa Fingleton of Brilliant Ballybunion, Minister Catherine Martin, and Minister Eamon Ryan at the Creative Climate Action Fund II: Agents for Change projects announcement. Pic: Barry Cronin

Fund II: Agents of Change is unique in that it pairs creative minds with experts in climate science, sustainability and biodiversity, all with the aim of connecting the public to the profound changes that are happening in our environment, society and economy arising from climate change and can transform that connection into behaviour change or climate action. The fund received 239 applications from an array of disciplines and industries; Architecture, Creative Facilitation, Film, Participatory Design, Visual Arts, Cultural Heritage, Theatre, Service Design, Dance, Literature, Music, Traditional Arts, Festivals, Circus,

Publishing and Press, and Animation and Augmented Reality.

Welcoming today's announcement Minister Ryan said: "Climate change can be such a huge issue that people can too often feel overawed, or that it's something they can't do anything really meaningful about. This change can be achieved through fully exploring avenues for innovative and creative ways to inspire people to take action. Once again the Irish cultural sector and our enterprising communities have responded with initiatives that will challenge us all to make the changes needed to secure a better future for us all. This is exciting and important work and I

wish to commend everyone involved." The 43 successful awardees will establish projects spanning the island of Ireland, including 3 Ignite projects funded under the Shared Island initiative (Antrim, Down and Fermanagh). The fund supports projects under two strands. Strand 1, Ignite, will support 19 large-scale interdisciplinary projects with extensive public engagement on a national level these will run until 2025. Strand 2, Spark, will fund 24 projects to pilot new ideas for public engagement at a local, community, or community of practice scale. These projects will be completed by the end of 2024.

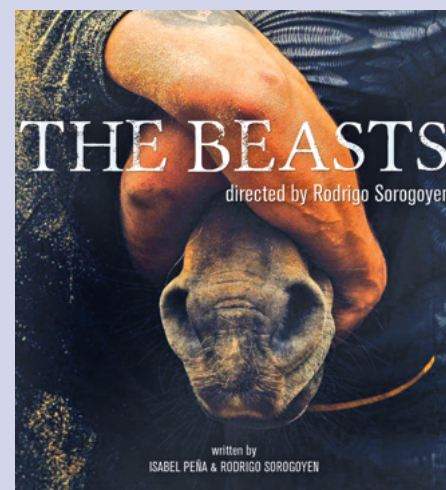
Film at Mermaid

The Beasts (TBC)

Monday 24th July, 8:00 pm, €9/7 French, Spanish and Galician with English subtitles

French couple Antoine and Olga have fulfilled their lifelong dream of moving to the Galician countryside to set up their own small farm. Their refusal to sell their land to developers has created tensions with their neighbours, who want the development money. Rodrigo Sorogoyen's engrossing thriller is a slow-burn in the best possible way.

"Here is a fierce, bitter tale with a flinty sharpness: partly a social-realist drama of class and xenophobia, and partly a rural noir horror, a Euro-arthouse twist on *Straw Dogs* or *Deliverance*. It's inspired by the true story." - Peter Bradshaw, The Guardian



Return to Seoul (15A)

Monday 31st July, 8:00pm, €9/7, French, Korean, English with English Subtitles

Born in Korea but raised by her adoptive parents in France, 25-year-old Freddie is at an uncertain time in her life when she impulsively travels to her birth country.

She discovers there's an agency that works to connect adopted children with their biological parents. Mere days later, Freddie meets her birth father. However, she quickly discovers her own crisis of identity won't be so easily resolved... Following Freddie during several different visits to Korea over the course of a decade, Davy Chou's *Return to Seoul* is a fiercely intelligent film about the messiness of identity and the uncertainty of what home means. It's anchored by remarkably raw yet nuanced work by Park Ji-min in her extraordinary debut screen performance.



Eleanor O'Reilly and Ella Kelly at the launch of the 042 Art Collective's 'Heritage of Arklow' art exhibition in Arklow Library. The 042 collective, are a cultural collective of artists and creatives living the Arklow area.

Cows in the Hood: An exhibition by Kelly Hood

Signal Arts Centre, Monday 2nd October to Sunday 15th October

Kelly Hood showcases her new collection of cows on canvas. While Ireland has had its fair share of sacred cows in recent times, the spiritual nature of cattle and their aesthetic beauty is now captured on canvas in a unique solo show by artist Kelly Hood. In this show she draws out the individual characteristics of her bovine subjects to humorous, affectionate and dramatic effect.



Sheep II, by Kelly Hood

Hood investigates; The Good and the Bad & Ugly behind 'Selfie' Culture. 'Selfie' is defined as a photograph that one has taken of oneself, typically taken with a smartphone and shared via social media. Opinions surrounding selfies have always been divided. Some believe that taking

selfies can be harmful as it could promote narcissism, unrealistic physical expectations, and eventual comparisons. Others believe that selfies can empower, as we are able to freely express ourselves.

"I decided to explore this phenomenon further and invited the herd on a Tour of Ireland. Inviting them to #mooselfie," Hood explains. "We hope to welcome you aboard this tour & look forward to showing you the best of our little green island."

Opening Reception: Friday 6th October 2023, 7pm to 9pm



Moo Selfie in Kilkenny, by Kelly Hood

Experimental Circus Showcase at Mermaid

Awardees of the Experimental Circus Award will showcase new performance pieces being developed as part of the award, through bursary and residency opportunities, in the Mermaid Arts Centre on Saturday 29th July (8pm). At this special exhibit of new work, audiences can expect to find the physicality of circus arts combined with conceptual, material and design experiments.

Experimental Circus Award 2022/2023

The Experimental Circus Award is a new initiative directed by artist Emily Aoibheann to facilitate intellectually engaged, experimental circus practice among Irish and Ireland based artists. The award recognises the authority of the artist as distinct from institutional, government and corporate authority. The award centres peer-to-peer and artist led exchanges, bursary and residency opportunities in partnership with a variety of arts venues including: Dance Ireland and Project Arts Centre, Dublin; Courthouse Arts Centre and

Mermaid Arts Centre, Wicklow. The pilot programme was funded by the Arts Council and emerged from Creation Aerial Research and Ideas Studio (2014 - 2020).

The four artists in receipt of the award in 2022/ 2023 are Monika Palova, Seve Feathers, Gill Byrne and Lunar Tzu a.k.a Aoife Kavanagh. Two artists are Wicklow based and two are Dublin based.

Seve Feathers: *Fleshed*

"Fleshed" is a mesmerising and poetic exploration of the imaginative and emotional space emerging from the relations between a body and a piece of fabric: lines are

blurred; the fabric and the body move and move each other. They balance and contort according to the rules of an eerie world in a committed quest for unexpected images that offer themselves to the audience's imagination for interpretation and associations. "Fleshed" gently invites the audience to share a compelling journey of renewed curiosity for the seemingly mundane, an unsuspected opening into the depths of a world of oneiric qualities where the intangible becomes visible.

Monika Palova: *Snow Little Woman*

Within the realm of artistic creation, an old new performance unfolds: "Snow Little Woman." Monika delves into the depths of her Slovak roots, intertwining the threads of her cherished homeland and customs. Having voluntarily departed and spent a lifetime in

Ireland, her journey emerges as a poignant ode to connection. Drawing from her ancestral lineage and the profound impact of historical events on one family's history, she employs the dance of aerial rope, hair suspension, and the alluring attire of traditional Slovak garments. Infused with the echoes of her grandmothers' voices, captured in tender recordings, this performance becomes a mesmerizing tapestry of heritage, resonating with the timeless reflection of identity and belonging.

Gill Byrne: *Untitled*

An early stage piece currently in research and development exploring the impact of technology and urbanization on the human psyche.

Aoife Kavanagh: *HyperBlue*

Drawing inspiration from the body's somatosensory circuit, digi-

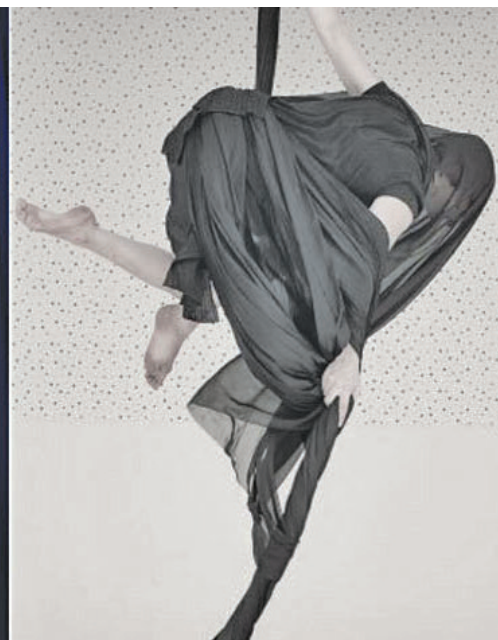
tal exposure, response triggers and the idea of happiness, HyperBlue is a new work of multidisciplinary transmedia circus art. We are the targets of competing tech & marketing companies that strategically provoke addictive behaviour online. Tragically for the body, this equates to a chemical attack on contentment i.e disrupted serotonin release or a feeling of unfulfillment. Through the digital experience, the physical body's chemistry, neurology, psychology, sociology and physiology are changing. HyperBlue positions these questions in the body of a redundant 'other' who seeks disintegration, degrowth and unwanted. It looks for a way to return to the vast beauty of the natural world, the joy of being known to only a few, the alchemy of the physical body and the forgotten experience of being content.

Award winning artist Emily Aoibheann, uses aerial dance and

circus arts as tools to explore contemporary ideas of all kinds: philosophical; social; ecological; historical; magical. Her varied background and practice lead to highly creative and collaborative integrations of multiple art forms. The work is often realised with a broad artistic and technical team, necessary to realise the significant ambition, scale and quality of productions. Emily's recent work concerns bodies without context and 'dances of dissolution'; transience and trace making; the heart and spine; presence, embeddedness, dwelling, and death.

Her work in 2022/ 2023 is supported by the Arts Council, Screen Ireland/ Animation Ireland, as a Markievicz Award recipient, Fingal County Council, Dance Ireland, Project Arts Centre, Courthouse Arts Centre and Mermaid Arts Centre.

This is a free event but booking is essential





Jordan Lamour with Sasha Van Dijk at the Leinster Rugby team's training session at Wicklow Rugby Club

New Nissan Xtrail ePower - a car for all seasons

SUVs continue to be very popular - for the simple reason that we all have a huge amount of 'stuff' and during the summertime especially, we want to bring a lot of it with us.

by Martin McCarthy

Why the Green Warriors dislike SUV is somewhat of a mystery, as generally SUVs don't take up any more road-space than the saloon or estate car. They are taller for sure but the aerodynamic / fuel penalty for that is small - less than 5%.

Even families with just one baby have to transport an immense amount of 'truck' if packing up for a holiday in the west. Strollers, baby seats, cots etc. are all bulky and not to mention clothes, changing gear,

food prep etc.

Even an estate car with a Halford's Roof box struggles to fit it all in and so with a family of three or four kids there really is no option except an SUV.

In that context, going fully electric with the Irish Charging network in its present state of development would just be a stress inducer, as who knows when you might have to rush to the doctor if the little ones get ill.

Nissan have fitted their top of the line ePower

system to the latest Xtrail and it is an impressive option, immensely practical for the larger family.

It has an optimized petrol engine that charges the batteries which in turn drives either the front wheels or all four wheel via twin motors.

The Xtrail ePower is not a plug-in hybrid and does not have a big heavy battery pack. It runs on petrol alone but gives a fantastic driving experience. At low speeds it is like a fully electric car - with sparkling acceleration, if needed. The fuel economy is impressive -

6.4l/100km.

The Xtrail comes with either 5 or 7 seat configuration and because it has not a big battery pack there is plenty of luggage space. This is the top of the line model in the Nissan Europe family and so all the finishes are of the best quality. But the lasting impression of the Xtrail is of a commodious, substantial vehicle that is immensely practical of every front with probably the most sensible electrification regime on the market today. A car for all seasons - but especially holiday time.



The Nissan Xtrail ePower

HiiKER makes Offline maps free to help people hike safely

Irish-Founded hiking app, HiiKER, is making Offline maps freely available to its 850,000+ users worldwide to help them hike more safely.

In 2021 over 21% of Mountain Rescue call-outs were due to the hiker being inadequately prepared for their activity. Access to offline maps would help ensure that all hikers can be best prepared for their hike.

"Hiker Safety is our absolute priority. Offering hikers Free Offline maps on HiiKER, means that everyone can feel confident that they're on track, regardless of mobile service," said Paul Finlay, CEO and Founder of HiiKER.

HiiKER has been working with Mountain Rescue teams across Ireland and the UK, as well as trail organisations to ensure that the data it has collected is accurate. Mountain Rescue teams have also rigorously field-tested the app and regularly use it in rescue operations. Fiona Kelly from Dublin Wicklow Mountain Rescue recently spoke on the HiiKER podcast about how so many people are still not adequately prepared while out hiking

and hillwalking.

"Dublin Wicklow Mountain Rescue use powerful tools such as HiiKER to enable our volunteers to reach those that are in need of our services. Likewise, hikers and walkers should be as prepared as possible before heading into the mountains. We are delighted that HiiKER is now offering hikers free offline maps to promote safety in the mountains," said Fiona Kelly of Dublin and Wicklow Mountain Rescue.

RECRUITMENT

HSE

MINIBUS DRIVER

HSE Community Healthcare East (CH06)

We are currently recruiting for a Minibus Driver for our services in St Colman's Residential Care Centre based in Rathdrum, Co. Wicklow. The current vacancy is permanent, part-time (23.4 hours per week). For further details please contact Orla Doran, Centre Manager by email:

orlae.doran@hse.ie or by telephone **087 1167978**.

To apply for this role you must complete a application form on Rezoomo before Wednesday 9th August, 2023, no later than 12 noon, through the following link:

www.rezoomo.com/job/51381/

Irish Guide Dogs for the Blind appeals for volunteers

Irish Guide Dogs for the Blind is looking for volunteers in a number of areas.

Volunteer opportunities include:

Puppy Raisers

Puppy Raisers support pups in their initial stages of training fostering from age 9 weeks until approximately 13-14 months. During this time, they learn structure and basic rules of obedience. The charity's Puppy Raising Programme has been extended to Wexford (within 1.5hrs of New Ross), Galway (within 1.5hrs of Galway City) and Athlone (within a 1.5hr radius).

Temporary Boarders

The role of a Volunteer Temporary Boarder is to provide essential support to the Irish Guide Dogs for the Blind trainers in meeting the care and welfare needs of their dogs. Some dogs require boarding to try to work on a particular training task, others do not cope with being in kennels and do better training from a home envi-

ronment and some are already qualified and in need of a holiday home as their Puppy Raiser is going away. Temporary Boarders are required in Wexford (within 1.5hrs of New Ross), Galway (within 1.5hrs of Galway City) and Athlone (within a 1.5hr radius).

Fundraising Volunteers

Volunteers give of their time to plan and run a variety of fundraising events in their local communities.

There are opportunities available to work alone or as part of a team. Fundraising Volunteers required in all areas nationwide but particularly in Carlow, North/West/ East Cork, Kildare, Mayo, Offaly, Tipperary and Wexford.

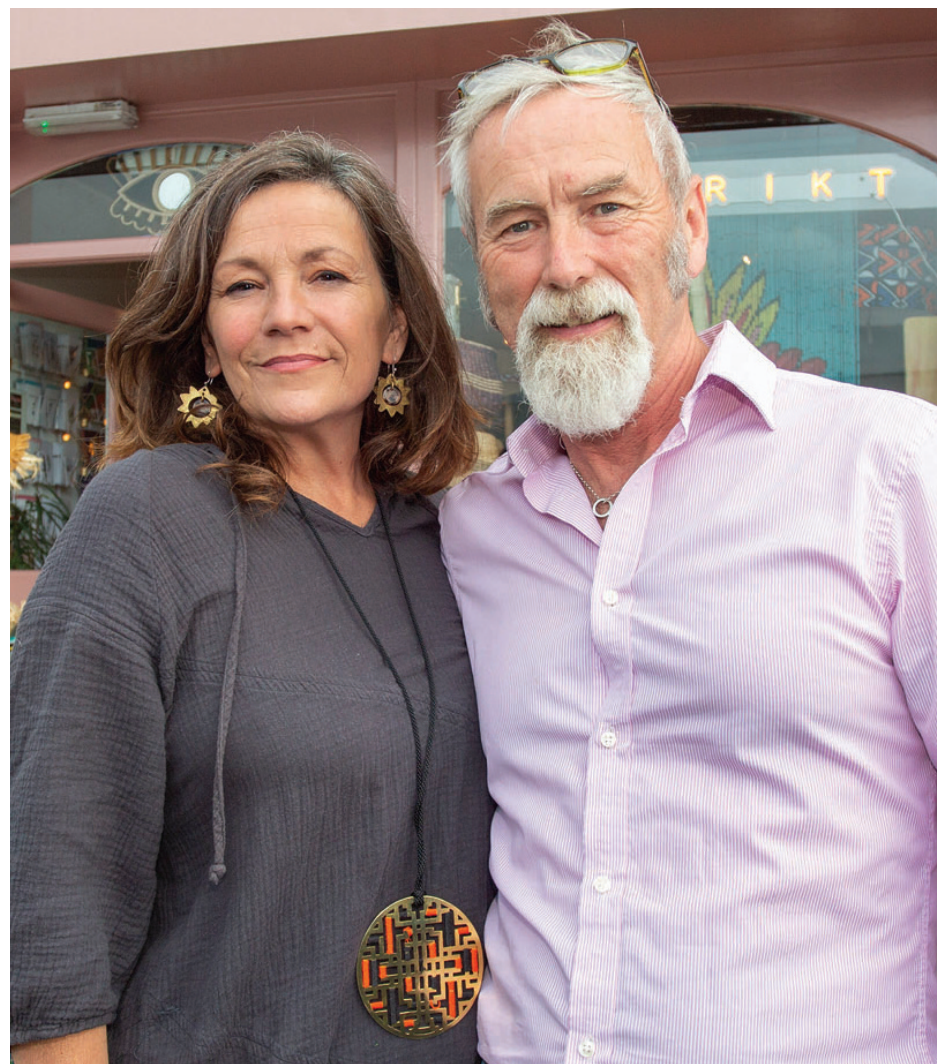
Ciara Canning is a volunteer in Donegal; "I moved back to Ireland during the Covid pandemic after 20 years living abroad. Becoming a Temporary Boarder

and Puppy Raiser helped me discover and feel part of a community. The unique thing about having a puppy in training is you can bring them everywhere. I meet new people every time I go out with the pup. I see the joy it brings to people's faces and it's made me a happier, more confident person."

Bill Murphy is Puppy Raiser; "It was a year after my wife passed away that I decided I needed some purpose in my life so as a dog lover all my life and a sponsor of Irish Guide Dogs for the Blind for many years it seemed a like a natural thing for me to do."

The charity is urging people to get in touch if: you're open to new experiences and learning new skills; you're looking to widen your circle of like-minded friends and acquaintances; you want to give back and make a difference; you want to have fun!

See GuideDogs.ie for further information or email Communications @GuideDogs.ie



Mia Parsons and Mark Meakin at the recent 2-year anniversary celebration to mark the opening of Distrikt by Mia at Wicklow Town South Quay

'Industry must end rip-off increases to home insurance'

Sinn Fein TD John Brady has said that rip-off increases to home insurance must end. His comments follow a warning by the Consumers' Association of Ireland that premiums have jumped by almost 22 per cent in the last year.

Deputy Brady said: "I welcome the intervention by the Consumers' Association of Ireland and share their concerns. I know that many homeowners in Wicklow have been shocked by excessive increases in their home insurance.

"This is an issue that we in Sinn Fein have raised directly with the representative body of the industry, Insurance Ireland, in recent weeks. This is happening at a time when households in Wicklow are already under huge pressure from the cost of living crisis. Mortgage interest rates, childcare costs, grocery bills and more are mounting up and families simply can't afford another crippling cost.

"Homeowners in Wicklow feel ripped-off and they need to know that these high bills won't continue. The Minister must intervene directly with the sector to ensure that costs come down without delay. Government must act to ensure that workers and families in Wicklow get a break from the cost of living crisis urgently."



Ciara Canning with dogs Honey and Valerio.

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