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Tuesday 1st August 2023 First Floor, The Boulevard, Quinsborough Road, Bray. A98 R6D7. Tel: 01 - 2869111 E-mail: wicklowed@localtimes.ie www.wicklowtimes.net

'A DAMNING INDICTMENT'

The latest Census Housing Report has been branded by Sinn Féin TD John Brady as "a damning indictment of seven years of failed Fianna Fail and Fine Gael housing policy in County Wicklow".

The CSO 2022 Census housing report, published last week, "highlights some very worrying trends," said Deputy Brady. "Average rents in Wicklow have increased by 36% since 2016, despite the existence of Rent Pressure Zones. This is more than double the increase that was witnessed between 2011 and 2016."

The number of older renters has increased by nearly two thirds during the same period.

Meanwhile workers and families continue to struggle to secure accommodation.

"3,334 homes were vacant in the county from 2016 to 2022. These figures are a damning indictment of seven years of failed Fianna Fail and Fine Gael housing policy. Despite two housing plans and three housing ministers, an even greater number of people are unable to access secure and affordable

accommodation. Younger people cannot afford to buy and are left paying rip-off rents or forced to move back home with parents. A growing number of older people are trapped in a rental market that is expensive and insecure.

"All the while, 3,334 homes in Wicklow, out of 48,000 homes across the state have been lying vacant for over seven years, despite all the Government's talk of tackling vacancy. These



Emily and Grace Mulhall get a surprise as a deer walks into their picture during a photoshoot in Glendalough for Wicklow camogie club captains. Pic: Michael Kelly

figures show what you get when Fine Gael and Fianna Fail are left in charge of housing."

Between April 2016 and April 2022, housing stock in the Co. Wicklow grew from 54,986 to 59,629. The number of vacant dwellings decreased slightly from 3,414 to 3,334 and the number of holiday homes fell from 1,040 to 986. In April 2022, 38,473 of homes were owner-occupied in Wicklow, compared with 35,105 in April 2016. There was a significant increase in the number of over 65s renting from a private landlord in Wicklow, at 497 (a 59% increase). In the 60 to 64 age group, it was also up by over half.

Renters have continued to face large increases in the amount of rent they pay. Between the 2016 and 2022 censuses, the average weekly rent paid to a private landlord

in Wicklow in April 2022 was €282, which was a 36% increase on 2016. The average weekly rent paid to a private landlord (at national level) rose to €273, up €73 (37%). This was more than double the rate of increase (17%) between 2011 and 2016.

The report notes that many properties classed as vacant in the census may only be vacant for a short period of time and for a wide variety of reasons including homes for sale, rent, new build or renovation, owner in a nursing home, etc. However, there were more than 667 dwellings classed as vacant both in the 2016 and 2022 censuses in Wicklow, which could be an indication of a longer-term vacancy status.

Census 2022 included new household questions on the number of working smoke alarms and how we use renewable

energy sources in our homes. Wicklow had 2,057 homes with no

smoke alarms. Homes with solar panels amounted to 4,297

which was 8% of occupied dwellings in the county.

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Liam and Dylan Wolohan with Ava Doyle at the Arklow Seabreeze Festival

Podcast supporting bereaved parents

National Child Bereavement Charity, Anam Cara, has launched the second instalment of its award nominated podcast series, 'Conversations in Grief', aimed at supporting parents who have lost a child. The episodes share the unique stories of parents who have experienced the death of a child, and how they have moved through the journey of grief, while holding the memory of their child with them.

Each podcast focuses on a different theme, shared through the stories of parents who have been involved with Anam Cara, including the death of a child abroad; through long-term illness; the loss of an only child; bereavement from suicide; and the death of a child at birth. In one episode of the podcast, Martina Woodlock, shares the story of losing her son Ben just shortly after birth, and thinking of the life that could have been. "Starting school, first communion, all those challenges, all those new little things, that you never got to experience. So, the loss is continuous. You're not just grieving the loss of the baby, you're grieving the loss of that life that could have been."

The podcast series, which can be found at www.anamcara.ie and on all major podcast apps, is part of a range of resources that Anam Cara has developed to support parents, including information sheets, video resources, amongst others. Anam Cara hosts group meetings and bereavement sessions around the country and online, and also provides one to one support.

Shankill first Saturday book sale

The August First Saturday Book Sale, which supports the Shankill Old Folks Association, will take place on Saturday August 5th in the Shankill Day Centre, Lower Road, Shankill, from 10am to 1pm and all are welcome to attend.

This will be an excellent opportunity to obtain some first class reading material for the Summer months. Donations of books, which must be in a clean and good condition, will be appreciated and gratefully accepted.

Brockagh market & car boot sale

The Brockagh Market & Car Boot is once a month on the second Sunday (except Jan/Feb). Open to the public from 10am to 3pm. Come and enjoy shopping with stallholders on Sunday 13th August. Tea, coffee and food snacks, free parking and customer toilet facilities.

The barrier will be locked from 6pm Saturday evening until 8am Sunday morning. You can contact organisers by phone 0404 45600 (Wed-Fri 9am to 2pm) or email carboot-brockagh@gmail.com. All stallholders must pre book their space or no entry on the day. www.brockaghresourcecentre.ie.

Glendalough Visitor Centre

As part of the OPW's 2023 programme of Irish Sign Language Tours at their Heritage Sites, they are delighted to offer an ISL interpreted guided tour of Glendalough on August 6th at 10.30am. Tickets are free, but places are limited and must be booked in advance by emailing glendaloughbookings@opw.ie.

Greystones First Responders free CPR courses

There will be two free courses in CPR by Greystones First Responders on Saturday 12th August (10am & 2pm), in the Dr. Ryan Centre, Kenmare Heights. Each course will last approximately 90 minutes. This is a great opportunity to learn CPR techniques which could save someone's life one day. Or tickets see eventbrite.ie.

Wicklow musician bringing Scooter tour to Bray

Wicklow singer-songwriter (now Berlin-based) Caoi de Barra has been making waves in the music industry after leaving her mark as a member of the acclaimed alternative-pop trio Wyvern Lingo. On August 17th she will play the Harbour Bar in Bray as part of her 125cc Scooter Tour, which kicked off last week and sees her travelling from venue to venue on her scooter.

With her unparalleled talent and unique style, de Barra is quickly becoming a notable presence in the music world. With an artistic style influenced by the likes of Jeff Buckley and Joni Mitchell, de Barra released her highly anticipated debut EP 'Thicker' in August 2022.

De Barra recently toured as drummer for Grammy-nominated singer songwriter Allison Russell, (which included an appearance at Glastonbury), and is currently embarking on her own solo tour of Ireland, throughout July and August, traveling from town to town on a trusty 125cc scooter.

So far on her route, Caoi has performed at Frank's Place, Wexford; IMMA's Summer party; Live at 1868, Dungarvan, the Woodfield Café, Birr; Poppy Lane Sessions, Kinvara; Pot Duggan's Ennistimon, and Coughlan's Cork.

Speaking on the journey, she says: "It's such a rewarding adventure, it's actually a bit surreal. So far the venues have varied from wine bars to garden



Wicklow singer-songwriter Caoi de Barra . Pic: Ellius Grace

centres, even house shows, and they've all been transformed into gorgeously intimate and unique gig locations with amazingly warm audiences. There's so much magic around this country. I feel extremely fortunate, and a little bit rain-

drenched, but I just bought wet gear, so things are looking up!"

De Barra recently shared a new single 'Treehouse' - a captivating disillusioned-summer-bop, where the Irish housing crisis leaves de Barra feeling trapped in a perpetual

state of adolescence, and the concept of being a self-sufficient artist seems as lofty as building a dwelling up a tree - "It's really letting my petulant inner child do the problem solving", de Barra says.

For tickets see <https://campsite.bio/caoidebarra>

New book recounts Wicklow man's travels and adventures in 1970s Europe and Asia

In the 1970s a young Irish man called 'Moon' set off with his friend 'Clob' to travel around Europe, hoping to reach India. Their journey would prove to be the first of many throughout the decade, sometimes with friends and sometimes solo, but always inspired by curiosity and filled with adventure. These travels are the inspiration behind Moon's new book 'Travel with Moon: Overland to the Back of Beyond', which is being launched in Dubray books in Bray on Thursday 10th August at 6pm.

In the book Moon recounts his encounters with bandits, shepherds, wild horsemen and many hospitable people. He undertakes many jobs for his bed and board, and makes many friends along the way.

Tony 'Moon' Flood was born in 1950 and spent his early years living in the Wicklow Gate Lodge on Small Sugarloaf, until the family moved to Avondale Park near Bray in 1962. He was educated at Kilmacanogue National School and went on to serve an apprenticeship in Dublin and Dun Laoghaire attending Bolton Street College, qualifying as a sheetmetal worker and Coppersmith.

He and his friend Robert 'Clob' Kehoe travelled extensively around Europe in the early 1970s, and Moon went on to travel into Asia. This book is an account of those journeys.

He returned to Ireland regularly between trips and married Roisin in 1975. They lived in Copenhagen where he worked in the shipyard Burmeister and Wain until 1977 when they returned to live near Carnew in South County Wicklow and raise their family.

He worked in Arklow Engineering for a number of years before starting his own business based in Carnew, initially serving the farming community and also designing and making decorative wrought iron goods, eventually turning to fabricating stainless steel goods for the catering trade.

He is now retired and keeps a small flock of Jacobs sheep, three donkeys and a pony on the hillside in County Wicklow where he and Roisin still live.



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WICKLOW
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is published by Wicklow Times,
First Floor, The Boulevard, Quinsborough Road, Bray. A98 R6D7. Tel: 01-2869111

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Council owed €400k by developers for vacant land

Social Democrats TD Jennifer Whitmore described the outstanding payments due from developers of over €400,000 for vacant site tax in Wicklow as 'unacceptable'. This follows revelations that nationally, less than 2% of the money developers and property owners owe local county councils for leaving sites idle last year has been collected.

Deputy Whitmore said: "While Wicklow County Council has accounted for the outstanding funds, it is unacceptable that €404,155 worth of vacant site payments from 2022 are outstanding. The lack of urgency in collecting this tax in Wicklow, and from so many other councils around the country, is very worrying.

Government introduced this tax to serve as an incentive to stop land hoarding.

"We can see now that it is not

even being effectively collected. This laissez-faire attitude of developers and land owners to paying their fair share of tax is very disappointing and cannot be allowed to become standard. The lack of action from government to ensure its collection before now is in keeping with their policy of paying lip service to the issue of vacant properties and land hoarding.

"The Residential Zoned Land Tax is due to replace the Vacant Sites levy next year. The charge

will revert back to 3% and will be collected by revenue instead of local authorities. We in the Social Democrats called out the government at its introduction because we believed it was too low to be effective.

"We are also clearly in a situation where developers treat this tax as optional. If it were being meaningfully imposed and collected, we could see sites coming on stream nationwide. However, that is not materialising."

Concern over failure of Local Authorities to agree cover plan for firefighter strike

Sinn Féin TD John Brady has expressed concern at the refusal of Local Authorities to co-operate with the protocols agreed by SIPTU and the strike committee.

The Union and the strike committee had set out in detail what cover would be provided, and what actions would not be undertaken by the striking fire fighters. The failure of local authorities to agree an emergency cover plan is seen as an attempt to undermine the striking fire fighters.

Deputy Brady said: "I am very concerned at the failure of management to agree an emergency cover plan for the strike by retained fire fighters. The retained fire fighters are attempting to put in place a high level of cover for emergency situations. But the continued refusal of local authorities to engage is undermining efforts by

the fire fighters.

"82% of retained fire fighter SIPTU members voted for strike action following the failure of the Government to bring forward anything approaching a serious offer to address the recruitment and retention crisis that continues to threaten the future viability of the retained fire service.

Attempts to disrupt emergency cover, to undermine the strikers is shocking and must immediately cease. Ultimate responsibility for the whole affair continues to rest with Minister Darragh O'Brien. And I am once again calling on him and his government colleagues to intervene.

To bring forward meaningful proposals that can end the strike by addressing the core issues at the heart of the dispute."

Aontu Leader Peadar Toibin TD has described the removal of social welfare benefit from striking retained firefighters as 'abhorrent' and demanded the Department for Social Protection reinstate payments immediately.

The Meath West TD said: "I am appalled at the callousness of the Government in engaging in this abhorrent action against people who put their lives on the line for the community at a moments notice.

"These fire fighters who are currently

engaged in industrial action are being told that due to the part-time nature of their work and the implications of the strike, they are not deemed to be looking for employment and have had payments stopped. The retainer fee for new members of the service is only around €8,500, requiring most to either have another job or seek social welfare to top up their income. At a time when so many are experiencing the sharp end of the cost of living crisis, this action by the Department is totally unacceptable and I will be engaging with officials without delay to seek to rectify this situation."



Pictured is Sinéad O'Connor's former residence on Bray Seafront, where people last week left flowers and other items in her memory. At the request of local Bray Green Party councillor Erika Doyle, Wicklow County Council has opened an online Book of Condolence, which can be found at www.wicklow.ie/living/your-council/customer-care/books-of-condolence. Photo by Joe McQuillan

Just two derelict sites in Wicklow on register

There were just two derelict sites in Wicklow included on the Derelict Sites Register at the end of 2022.

Deputy Robert Troy recently submitted a Parliamentary Question to the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage asking if there is a register for derelict properties on a county-on-county basis.

Under the Derelict Sites Act 1990 (the Act), local authorities are required to maintain a derelict sites register, which includes the name and address of each owner and occupier, where these can be ascertained by reasonable enquiry, of any land which, in the opinion of the local authority, is a derelict site. Members of the public can engage with their local authority in relation to addressing individual derelict sites in their local areas.

The two derelict sites in Wicklow on the register at the end of 2022 were The Bayview Hotel, Upper Mall, Wicklow; and the Corner of Church Hill and Weaver's Square, Baltinglass.

Wicklow was among the counties with the least number of derelict sites on the register, with neighbouring counties Wexford and Kildare having 64 and 27 sites on the register respectively. Limerick City and County had the most derelict sites on the register at 386.



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Izzy Fagan, Erin Power, Shanon Hctor and Tanya Sunderland at the launch of the Avoca Ladies GAA Queen of the Vale fundraiser in the Arklow Bay Hotel.

'Glimpses': a prose and poetry publication in aid of RNLI

SSE Renewables recently supported Arklow Writers Group in publishing 'Glimpses': an anthology of short stories and poetry. The anthology of original stories and poetry was launched in aid of Arklow RNLI on Tuesday, 25th July in Arklow Library. All proceeds from the sale of the book will go to support Arklow Lifeboat Station.

The book's contributions are diverse and provide entertainment for all readers including tales of a farmer who has a date with a vegan, a time travel tale, and a piece about the regeneration of Arklow.

Mary Dillon, Arklow Writers Room, said, "The Writers Room would not have been able to publish this book without the support and generous funding from SSE Renewables and Arklow Library."

Although our group is small in number, our members include those who are native to Arklow and others from as far afield as the UK and South Africa who've chosen to make Arklow their home. Our members have really enjoyed the adventure of publishing this book and hope that its purchase will be widely supported given it's for a very good cause."

Deirdre Keogh, Community Engagement Manager, SSE Renewables, said, "We were

delighted to play a small part in helping with funding towards the publication of 'Glimpses'. The application from The Writers Room was a novel and imaginative way to raise funds to support Arklow Lifeboat Station whilst keeping up the tradition of original prose and poetry writing and encouraging story-telling and literacy."

'Glimpses' costs €10 each and can be purchased at the Lifeboat Shop during the Arklow Maritime Festival and is available from local retail outlets i.e. Paul Doyle Newsagent, Main Street; Burke's Spar Shop, Lower Main Street; and Kavanagh's Shop, Wexford Road, Arklow.

For further information on The Writers Room contact mdillon21@hotmail.co.

For information on the SSE Renewables Arklow Bank Wind Park 2 Sponsorship Fund contact deirdre.keogh@sse.com.



Deirdre Keogh (SSE Renewables Community Engagement Manager) with Arklow Municipal District Cathaoirleach Tommy Annesley, members of the Arklow Writers Group and members of the Arklow RNLI at the launch of 'Glimpses', a prose and poetry publication in aid of Arklow RNLI in Arklow Library.

'Wicklow Mountains trails assessment is a vital study'



Pictured is Minister Malcolm Noonan, Deputy Steven Matthews and Helen Lawless of Mountaineering Ireland.

Green Party Minister Malcolm Noonan and TD for Wicklow Deputy Steven Matthews recently attended an onsite inspection and briefing on the comprehensive Wicklow Uplands Paths Assessment report.

Speaking after the event Deputy Matthews said, "Our Wicklow Mountains National Park is a fragile ecological treasure that must be protected from over grazing and excessive recreational use. The wild and natural beauty of our uplands is what attracts so many users but many of the popular trails are across sensitive and fragile land that is being heavily eroded in places."

The large scale study which covered 167km of 50 paths over 350 sections, was carried out by expert path surveyor, Chris York from eWalking the Talk! and was supported by a range of stakeholders including the NPWS, the Wicklow Uplands Council, Mountain Meitheal, Mountaineering Ireland and Wicklow County Council.

Deputy Matthews added, "The presentation provided us with good

research to decide how best to protect sensitive areas, manage tourism sustainably and rehabilitate areas that have been impacted. There is real damage being done and it has severe implications for ecology, water quality, climate and for hill farmers and recreational users so we need to act collaboratively to

manage and stop the damage. The Wicklow Uplands Council state that, aside from managed trails such as the Wicklow Way, there is an extensive network of informal paths that criss-cross the Wicklow and Dublin Uplands, connecting routes, peaks and popular points of interest for hikers and walkers. Evolved through common usage over the decades, the impact of the ever-increasing footfall on these paths contribute to soil erosion and the loss of vegetation and

sensitive habitats. Often scarring the landscape, the paths frequently cross fragile peat soil, leading to a loss of carbon and water runoff that affects the water quality of upland streams.

"I look forward to acting on this research and working with my Green Party colleague, Minister Noonan who has shown more commitment and funding to protect nature than ever seen before. The NPWS is being supported and restructured to address our biodiversity loss and to manage our Wicklow Mountains National Park. There is a fantastic collaboration between all

the uplands stakeholders and there is no more time to waste in protecting nature, water quality and restoring our bogs and peatland carbon sinks," concluded Deputy Matthews.

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Sheep cause a traffic jam on the Callowhill Road Upper, Newtownmountkennedy, photographed by Shane Phelan

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K. McKart, from Ravenswell Primary School, meeting Colm 'The Gooch' Cooper at Croke Park recently for the INTO Mini Sevens

'Government needs to act to prioritise LUAS to Wicklow'

Sinn Féin TD John Brady has reiterated his call for the government to amend the National Development Plan and prioritise the extension of the LUAS Green line to Wicklow.

He was speaking following a meeting with senior members of the National Transport Authority (NTA), where it was revealed that the NTA plan to put in place a design team to commence the process of scoping out the steps towards the extension of the LUAS Green line to Wicklow, which will involve the updating of the service to provide a specific route to the County. With the N11 running at close to peak levels, the necessity for building greater public transport capacity for Wicklow has never been more important.

While there is an urgent need to expand public transport services to Wicklow, the government did not include the extension of the LUAS service to Wicklow in the National Development Plan, which runs up until 2030 - this needs to change. Wicklow cannot afford to wait until 2030 for a LUAS service.

Deputy Brady said: "Public transport levels across the state, and in Wicklow in particular have recovered to the point where they are now operating at a higher level than the pre-covid period. Road transport in Wicklow, with the N11 in particular is operating at close to peak levels."

Deputy Brady recently met with Anne Graham the CEO of the National Transport Authority, along with her colleague Hugh Creegan, the Director of Public Transport Services to discuss the growing need for public transport investment in Wicklow.

"One of the areas we discussed was the extension of the LUAS Green line to Wicklow. And I was encouraged by the positive response towards the project by the NTA," said Deputy Brady.

"The first step towards the realisation of the goal of getting the LUAS to run to Wicklow will be the appointment of a design Team, which will hopefully be in place next year. While such is the volume of passengers on the Green line, that currently to add the service to Wicklow would see considerable additional pressure placed on the Green line as it approached Dublin City Centre.

"And although there are limits on the number of LUAS services which can run through the city centre per hour, this can be remedied by terminating some of the Green line services at Stephens Green, which will reduce the turnaround time, allowing more journeys per hour."

Brady added: "What is abundantly clear here is that whatever logistical or engineering problems may arise, the expertise is in hand to overcome these obstacles. The real difficulty is that I have raised this issue at every level repeatedly, the government did not see fit to include it in the national development plan which runs up to 2030. This despite the fact that there are three government TDs, including two senior Ministers in Wicklow.

"I am calling on the government to amend the national development plan, to prioritise the extension of the LUAS into Wicklow, as just one of the number of measures that need to be taken to address the travel congestion in Wicklow."

N11 speed limit at Kilmacanoge raised to 100 kph south bound

Cllr Derek Mitchell has confirmed that the speed limit at Kilmacanogue South Bound carriageway has been raised to 100kph.

Cllr Mitchell said, "A number of people contacted me as they were confused about the disappearance of the speed limit sign on the South bound carriageway of the N11. I checked this and can confirm the limit is now the 100 kph National limit for the two through lanes and 50, as signed, for the inner off lane. The North bound limit remains 80."



The N11

Minister Ryan calls for acceleration of delivery of offshore wind energy

At the first Offshore Facilitation Forum in Dublin recently, Minister for Transport Eamon Ryan underlined the vital role of ports in delivering the Government's targets of 5GW Offshore Wind Energy by 2030, with an additional 2GW to be in development by 2030, which may include projects available for green hydrogen production and other non-grid use, and the importance of developers and ports to engage in meaningful commercial discussions in order to underpin the commercial viability of the significant investments required.

The purpose of the Forum is to bring the port companies, developers, financing bodies and Governmental departments together, to update on the breadth of work undertaken across the government system to facilitate ORE development, as well as highlight the opportunities available to ports and developers. The Forum provides for further engagement and exchange across key stakeholders at a critical juncture of ORE implementation and project development.

Opening the forum, Minister Ryan said "We need to accelerate the important mission of delivering offshore wind energy in Ireland over the coming decade at a scale and scope that we perhaps haven't seen since the electrification of the country. I am very encouraged to see that our ambition as a nation is being supported enthusiastically by ports and developers. We have already had our first successful off-shore wind auction and we are already making plans for phases 2 and 3. We are about to launch MARA, the specialised Maritime Area Regulatory Authority, which will play a central role in the new streamlined consenting system for the maritime area. It is vital that robust and supported port ORE infrastructure plans move at the same ambitious pace.

"It is now vital that robust port ORE infrastructure plans move at the same ambitious pace, supported by developer engagement and commitment. These plans are critical to demonstrating not just the technical and commercial viability of our ports, but also to support them in their applications for funding, to secure financial investment, as well as facilitating the progression of port projects through required consenting and planning processes."

The Forum was attended by developers who recently took part in the Offshore Renewable Electricity Support Scheme (ORESS 1) auction and ports that are progressing plans to facilitate ORE, the Irish Maritime Development Office (IMDO), the Irish Strategic Investment Fund (ISIF), the European Investment Bank (EIB), Wind Energy Ireland, the Marine Renewables Industry Association, and officials from a number of departments in the Offshore Wind Delivery Taskforce.



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‘Green Minister reduces Wicklow rail plans and is not funding the N11/M11 upgrade’

Fine Gael councillor Derek Mitchell is calling for the Wicklow Rail improvements from his 2018 Plan to be implemented, for €3m to be provided to move the N11 plan forward for the next two years and for the Bus Connects project to be implemented. He last week criticised Green Party Transport Minister Eamon Ryan for halting the N11/M11 Upgrade project and for proposals in the All Ireland Strategic Rail Review which Cllr Mitchell says will result in a worse service for Wicklow.

The Wicklow Rail line to Kilcoole and Wicklow Town provides the worst service of any in the Greater Dublin Area. There are only 2 trains at rush hour, both short. The recent All Ireland Strategic Rail Review does not provide much improvement. It says the direct Commuter

Services will be maintained and there will be an hourly shuttle from Wexford to Greystones.

It says that passing loops were considered but rejected. €30Bn spending is proposed but none in Wicklow.

"The Minister of Transport Eamon Ryan has also stopped work on

the N/M11 upgrade in 2022 & 2023. This would have provided bus lanes and would be safer for all. My belief, and that of Fine Gael, is that providing better public transport is the way to reduce car commuting. The Greens want to create traffic jams but not to make the rail line work

for people. Many of the rail proposals are in low density places whereas North Wicklow's population is growing rapidly.

"My 2018 rail plan provided a 3km double tracking north of Greystones allowing 50% more trains. This was validated by a Jacobs Study and I thought included in the DART+ plan. Also it provided more direct trains to

Kilcoole & Wicklow Town which probably needs passing loops. The Strategic Study seems to reject this as they are not mentioned. Also The Bus Connects Plan was prepared 6 years ago but is not implemented.

"I call for the Wicklow Rail improvements to be implemented, for €3m to be provided to move the N11 plan forward for the next two years and for Bus Connects implementation. This is the way to provide good public transport and reduce car commuting."



Cllr Mitchell launching his Rail Improvements Paper in 2018, with TDs Andrew Doyle and Simon Harris



Olive Byrne and Mary Crean at the Avoca Senior Citizens Summer Party in the Woodenbridge Hotel.

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Full house for Bog Meadow public meeting

Thursday night, 20th July, saw a packed room in St. Marys and St Gerard National School where the Bog Meadow User Group CLG presented the results of the independent study of the facilities in the Bog Meadow to the Community. Leader funding had been obtained by the Committee to ensure that there was independent engagement with all the stakeholders, and the findings were collected and correlated.

The Committee which was formed when the lease between Wicklow County Council and the User group was agreed, is made up of representatives of the Enniskerry FC, Tennis Club, Playground committee, Community games, Nature trail as well as Community Reps and Reps from Wicklow County Council. At the meeting Presentations were given on the history of the Bog Meadow, A playground update, the environmental assessments that have been undertaken so far and future assessments were discussed that will need to ensure the sensitive area is protected and made sustainable into the future, and funding options. The process of engagement with Repucon, Leader Funding and the Consultation findings. The main findings of the Report have recommended improvements to the Pitch area that will allow for all year use, a full sized Multi Use Games Area, improvements and repositioning of the tennis courts, and a new purpose built hall for the Community.

Cllr Melanie Corrigan who is community rep on the committee thanked everyone present for attending the meeting, and the presence of the other public reps, Staff of Leader and County Wicklow Partnership, and committee members from Wicklow County council who attended was acknowledged. Cllr Corrigan commented on the constructive engagement that ensued with the community members who attended after the presentation, and all the feedback is invaluable to the committee before they proceed to the next stage.

There is currently over 400 children in the Enniskerry Football club, and 100 adult players, Community games have nearly 150 children who participate in the training and activities, as well as a growing tennis club and the demand for an improvement in facilities in the Bog meadow area as well as a fit for purpose Community hall was very evident both from the findings of the Repucon report and from the discussion on the evening.



Attendees at the public meeting in St. Marys and St Gerard National School



The vision for Bog Meadow Enniskerry

Mitchell and independent visual expert ask Codling wind farm to reduce impact

Cllr Derek Mitchell recently met the Codling Wind Farm staff with an independent Visual Expert to discuss the visual aspects of their turbines meeting the Dublin Array windfarm.

"The experts' report showed that Greystones would have the worst visual impact of any place in Ireland," said Cllr Mitchell. "He agreed with my view that a large visual gap should be left between the two wind farms. The Codling is the least intrusive of the two because it is a bit further offshore. They agreed to consider carefully where the turbines are placed in relation to the other turbines but gave no commitments."



Sadie Doyle and Josephine Rohe at the Avoca Senior Citizens Summer Party in the Woodenbridge Hotel

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Residential Vacancy Rate was 3.5% in June

The residential vacancy rate in Wicklow was 3.5% in June 2023, which was lower than the national average of 3.9% according to the latest GeoDirectory Residential Buildings Report released last week.

The report, prepared by EY, found that the national residential vacancy rate stood at 3.9% in June 2023, representing a decline of 0.3 percentage points from June 2022. This is the lowest residential vacancy rate recorded by the GeoDirectory Residential Buildings Report to date.

Dublin was the county with the lowest residential vacancy rate in June 2023, at just 1.0%, with Kildare (1.2%), Waterford (2.3%), Meath (2.3%) and Louth (2.5%) all registering rates of 2.5% or lower.

The highest vacancy rates were reported in Connacht, with Leitrim (12.2%), Mayo (10.8%) and Roscommon (10.6%) the only counties with rates above 10.0%.

In Ireland, a total of 21,134 residential properties were classified as derelict in June 2023, representing a fall of 3.5% compared to June 2022. The highest concentration of derelict properties was located on the west coast of the country, with Mayo registering 13.5% of national total, followed by Donegal (11.8%) and Galway (8.8%).

Residential Property Prices

The average residential property price in Wicklow was €470,779 in the twelve months to May 2023, higher than the national average of €366,291. There was a total of 1,759 residential property transactions in Wicklow in the twelve months to May 2023 and 33.8% of these were new builds.

The highest average property prices were recorded in Dublin, at €538,168, followed by Wicklow (€470,779) and Kildare (€387,046) as the only other counties above the national average.

At €174,436 Longford was the county with the lowest average residential property price. Leitrim (€178,571), Roscommon (€181,402) and Donegal (€192,679) were the only other counties where the average price was below €200,000.



New Address Points and Buildings Under Construction

1,447 new residential address points were added to the GeoDirectory database in Wicklow in the twelve months to June 2023, while 1,094 residential buildings were under construction in Wicklow in June 2023.

Nationally, 22,842 residential buildings were under construction in June 2023, representing only a modest increase of 2.0% compared to the same period in 2022. Dublin was the county with the highest proportion of residential buildings under construction at 17.2% of the national total, followed by Kildare (15.0%), Cork (10.7%) and Meath (6.7%).

In total, the Greater Dublin Area, consisting of Dublin, Meath, Kildare and Wicklow, accounted for 43.7% (9,965 buildings) of the total number

of buildings under construction nationally in Q2 2023.

Commenting on the findings of the Q2 2023 Residential Buildings Report, Dara Keogh, Chief Executive of GeoDirectory said, "While the latest report highlights a decrease in the number of new address points recorded in the last year, we have seen increased utilisation of the housing stock and an increase in the pipeline of new housing stock under construction. The drop in output over the last 12 months may be due to material supply issues, inflationary pressure on the construction sector along with rising interest rates. As a result, supply in the housing market remains tight, and demand is high, which has forced the national vacancy rate below 4.0% for the first time since GeoDirectory has started tracking residential vacancy rates."

Annette Hughes, Director of EY Economic Advisory Services said, "The latest GeoDirectory Residential Buildings analysis finds a significant reduction in the national residential vacancy rate, which at 3.9% (81,712) is the lowest figure recorded to date. Moreover, the number of addresses reported as derelict was down 3.5% reduction to 21,134. These are significant reductions, indicating that key policy settings and incentives are beginning to have impact. However, there is clearly scope for further utilisation of this existing residential stock. National policies such as the Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant and the Croí Cónaith (Town's) Fund, as well as changing working and living patterns post pandemic could play an important part in delivering this."

€400K for Wicklow roads

Fine Gael Minister Simon Harris has announced that County Wicklow will receive over €400K under the Local Improvement Scheme 2023. This funding will support non-public roads and laneways not typically maintained by local authorities yet still represent a vital piece of infrastructure for many rural residents.

Speaking last week, Minister Harris said "I am delighted to announce funding of €424K to improve our roads and laneways in towns and villages across County Wicklow. Good roads are absolutely vital for our rural communities and this investment will benefit so many families, farmers and businesses across our county. We all know families and farmers in County Wicklow that can be difficult to reach because their road or laneway is in need of repair.

"The Local Improvement Scheme is all about making people's lives that little bit easier by ensuring we have good access to our homes, farms and local communities. I am really delighted to have worked with my colleague Minister Heather Humphreys to deliver this investment for County Wicklow.

"This announcement brings the total funding secured for County Wicklow under the Local Improvement Scheme to €777K in 2023. This investment is so important for our county and represents the Government's commitment to supporting rural families and rural communities through our five year rural development plan, 'Our Rural Future'. I know that this Scheme has had a fantastic impact on the lives of many families across Wicklow and look forward to being able to continue working to support our rural infrastructure into the future," Minister Harris concluded.

The Local Improvement Scheme (LIS) was reintroduced in September 2017 and over €113 million has already been provided for works on over 3,700 roads. The addition-



Minister Simon Harris

al funding announced today will bring that total to almost €130 million.

Eligible roads under the Local Improvement Scheme are:

- Non-public roads that provide access to parcels of agricultural land, or provide access for harvesting purposes (includ-

ing turf or seaweed) for two or more persons.; or

- Non-public roads leading to important community amenities such as graveyards, beaches, piers, mountains, etc.

Non-eligible roads include:

- Roads serving only houses or buildings occupied or used by persons not engaged in agriculture.
- Roads leading to commercial enterprises.

The financial contribution provided by the household/landowner is set at: 10% of the estimated cost for eligible roads with up to and including 5 households/landowners; 15% for those roads with 6 or more households/landowners.

The maximum amount that any household/landowner is required to contribute is capped at €1,200.



Susan Langrell and Lisa Doyle at the launch of the Avoca Ladies GAA Queen of the Vale fundraiser in the Arklow Bay Hotel.

Pharmacists to be allowed prescribe medication

Green Party TD Deputy Steven Matthews has welcomed progress that will allow Pharmacists to prescribe medicines for common and minor illness.

"This is a sensible move," said Deputy Matthews. "It will reduce pressure on GPs and use the huge expertise and professional training of our pharmacists to help people with medical needs without having to attend a doctor. It will assist people to get the assistance they need closer to home, without having to wait, for long periods in some cases for a doctor's appointment.

"Pharmacists are well trusted in our communities and offer a huge range of services. By expanding their ability to prescribe certain medications it provides an efficient use of local medical services and can also reduce the pressure on

GP practices, clinics and hospitals.

"I met with The Irish Pharmacy Union (IPU) last year and this was something they were seeking but I understand fees for pharmacist will also need to be improved. Their fees were cut in the past and have never been fully restored. This expansion of services now provides an opportunity to address the issue and I'm fully in support of our pharmacists' requests to restore their fees.

"Our Pharmacists are medicines experts, trained to Masters level and subject to a mandatory system of Continuing Professional Development and this move will optimise that expertise. The use of the appropriate medication at the right time in the right way by the patient is one of the most effective health care interventions available and empowers patients to live healthier lives," concluded Deputy Matthews.



Olivia Coey, Clodagh Phillips and Erin Tobin at the Arklow Seabreeze Festival

ROUNDWOOD STREET FESTIVAL

Sunday 6th August



A big attraction this year is the return of the Scarecrow competition

The Roundwood Festival is a family fun event in the heart of the beautiful Wicklow Mountains. There's something for every taste with dancing, music sessions and side shows including origami for children and Japanese hand massage, Tug of War, family attractions and the downhill ball race to name but a few. It is an event that is open to anyone to attend.

A big attraction this year is the return of the Scarecrow competition. The most amazing prize is up for grabs in the form of a weekend family ticket to Kaleidoscope Festival 2024 so get working on your masterpiece. Call John on 086 8225705 and he will happily get you your supply of straw. Bring along your scarecrow on the day and position it at the fence of the festival field where it can be viewed by the many visitors and the judging panel.

Sunday the 6th of August is a dedicated Family Street Festival from 2pm til late with field day events suitable for all age groups with music and dancing on site. The Sunday festivities will begin with piper led parade. The field events will start immediately thereafter with various sideshows including Tug of war, Bottle stall, Fair Day attractions, Kids Corner with face painting, bouncy castles and obstacle courses and Teddy Bears' Picnic. There are plenty of competitions including hang tough, bar person's race, nappy hanging and the ever popular dog show! There will be some vintage cars and other



The downhill ball race in Roundwood

vehicles to view too and a fresh cuppa to be had in the tea tent with entertainment including singing, ukelele choir, drumming and more. Visit pets corner and grab a selfie with an alpaca from K2 Alpacas who are making a trip especially for the day!

When you start to get hungry the BBQ onsite makes a great pit stop to recharge before the next activity. The cooks will be waiting to give you the best burger you have ever had!

There will also be two local bakery tents. Annie's Treats will have an array of home baked goods on offer while Plant Box will be there with vegan muffins and other goodies. Whichever takes your fancy you are in for a tasty treat.



Dancing at the Roundwood Festival

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ROUNDWOOD STREET FESTIVAL

Sunday 6th August



Local band Florence Road will perform

Pay a visit to the craft tent where you can view and maybe even purchase a handmade craft from some budding entrep-

reneurs. There will be tie dye clothing and accessories, resin craft, jewellery, personalised bracelets and cards. If

you didn't get a trip to the sun this year and return home with a hair braid, then don't worry as on site there will be the best

hair braider in Wicklow. Emily can do French braids, Dutch braids and hair wraps so form an orderly queue at her table!

Trying to give the junior crafters a run for their money are approximately twenty local small businesses showcasing some amazing handmade items. Knitted novelty tea cozies including Michael Tea Higgins of Gogglebox Ireland fame is one of the star attractions. There's natural home and car fragrance products, soaps, skincare, cbd products, balloon creations, ceramics, stationary, sustainable 3D printed plant pots, hand sewn children's aprons and hats. These can all be seen in the craft market in the festival field. You can also stop by the plant stall and purchase some gorgeous plants for your garden and pay a visit to the beekeepers where you can buy some delicious local honey.

Sunday evening's street events will close with the festival raffle and downhill ball race at Roundwood Bank.

Wind down after all that activity by checking out some of the local bars or if it is more music and partying you want, head to the grand finale with music by up and coming local band Florence Road, as well as Trousers and The Varty Party on the street outside Kavanagh's Varty House and Woods & Byrne.

There's something for everyone at the Roundwood Festival weekend so do come



There will be some vintage cars and other vehicles to view

along this August Bank holiday weekend. Raffle tickets for fabulous prizes donated by the always supportive local business community are on sale on the run up to the festival and throughout the weekend. They can also be purchased on the festival Facebook page.

The Festival is a community event. Charges to events are kept to a minimum, as the sole aim of the event is to cover the running costs and just have a good time so do come along and join the fun!

For further information on the Festival please check out the Roundwood.ie Facebook page or see the www.roundwood.ie website or the dedicated Facebook page 'Roundwood Street Festival'.

SENATOR
Pat Casey
Representing the people of Wicklow
Wishing everybody a wonderful day at the Roundwood Festival

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Irish dancing school brings World Championship titles back home to Bray

There's a chance for aspiring Irish dancers to step out with the stars this summer, as Bray's award-winning dancing school stages it's Summer Dance Camp for the second year running.



Some of the Claddagh dancers with their trophies.

The Claddagh School of Irish Dancing in Bray has just returned from the CRN World Open Irish Dancing Championships with three championship titles and a glittering haul of trophies and medals.

Some of the school's successful young dancers will be showcasing their skills when they join in the fun of the upcoming Summer dance camp, in Ballywaltrim Community Centre, Bray.

The Summer Dance Camp comes at the end of the most successful year in the 12-year-history of the Claddagh School. The teaching team - all former champion dancers - are Bray natives, twin sisters Elisa and Jennifer Billington, Bryan Coughlan, Anne



McGlone and Sam Max McGlone (2nd under 15), Aoife Reily (2nd under 19), Kirsty O'Neill (2nd under 21), Lucy Grant (3rd under 11), Katie Byrne (3rd under 18), Ailbhe Byrne (3rd, Under 23). In total, over 70 World Championship medals for solo and team performances were won by the school at this year's World Championships, held in Killarney, Ireland.

Jennifer Billington said: "It was a weekend we will never forget, and we are incredibly proud of each and every one of our amazing dancers. We are very excited to see what the future holds and to run the summer camp for the stars of the future."

€130,000 funding boost for small-scale cultural events

Minister for Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sports and Media, Catherine Martin, has announced a funding allocation of €131,036 for 30 events to support Small Scale Local Festivals and Summer Schools taking place around Ireland in 2023.

The scheme is designed to assist local cultural events which may not be eligible under funding criteria for larger scale events such as those supported by Fílte Ireland, the Arts Council and similar bodies. Closing date for applications was 1pm on the 9th June 2023. Funding was allocated following a competitive appli-

cations process, with a maximum grant of €5,000 available.

Minister Martin said: "Culture and arts add hugely to our lives and to our community and supporting the Festivals and Summer Schools around Ireland and locally is a crucial part of the work of my Department.

"These projects make a very significant contribution to the development and promotion of Ireland's cultural tourism offering, to the benefit of both the domestic and foreign tourist. I wish the organisers every success; and I hope that the public will enjoy the wonderful programmes of events around the country over the coming months."

Heritage Week in County Wicklow

A variety of events will be held across County Wicklow as part of National Heritage Week 2023 which takes place from Saturday, 12th August, to Sunday, 20th August.

Amongst the events are:

- Biodiversity walks and historical house tours at Altadore Castle
- Two days of Wicklow Crafts demonstrations at Enniskerry Schoolhouse for Art
- Hands-on archaeological 'Big Digs' for kids at Tinahely and Glendalough
- Meet Our Native Trees walk and talk at Castleruddery Organic Farm
- Ballyknockan Village walking tour and stone cutting demonstration
- Wicklow Head Lighthouse open day
- Basket making demonstration and Lego workshops at Glendalough
- Talks on the 'Treasures of Nuns Cross Church'
- The Archives at Killruddery and
- Guided walking tours at Bray Head, St Peters Graveyard, Kilcoole, and Glen of The Downs

Cathaoirleach of Wicklow County, Cllr Aoife Flynn Kennedy, said: "Heritage Week is a fabulous opportunity for communities around County Wicklow to showcase their local place, activities and events and celebrate of our traditions, skills, history and natural heritage. I am delighted to see the range of events taking place all over Wicklow and I commend all the volunteers and heritage enthusiasts involved."

Emer O'Gorman, Chief Executive, Wicklow County Council, welcomed the Heritage Week programme saying: "Heritage Week is a highlight of the Wicklow cultural heritage calendar, encompassing nine days of events, the majority of which are family-friendly and free-of-charge. The Council is delighted to support Heritage Week through the co-ordination of our Heritage Office and in association with our Libraries, Archives and other services."

Anybody interested in hosting an event or a digital project can register it up to the beginning of National Heritage Week on

August 12th and even during the week itself right up until the final day on Sunday August 20th. They can do so via the Organisers' Portal on www.heritageweek.ie.

Heritage Week 2023 was formally launched last Tuesday by the Minister of State for Heritage and Electoral Reform, Malcolm Noonan, TD. A colourful range of events and projects celebrating all aspects of Ireland's heritage will take place across the country as communities, families, holiday makers and people of all ages and backgrounds are encouraged to get out and explore their heritage.

Over 1,000 FREE events and projects have already been registered with that figure expected to reach close to 2,000 before the festivities kick off. Galleries, gardens, historic houses, barnyards and studios will play host to events covering everything from architecture to archaeology, film to foraging, philosophy to genealogy and music to storytelling. Walks, talks and workshops will satisfy the heritage curious who can search for events taking place in their area either by county or by topic.

The theme for National Heritage Week this year is 'Living Heritage' which is defined as the practices, knowledge and skills that have been passed from one generation to the next and are still in use today. As such, many events and projects will focus on the keeping alive of these crafts and skills, and this year's launch took place at the workshop of Tom McDonnell and James Collins, two of the last remaining men practicing the dying trade of Traveller tinsmithing.

At county level, National Heritage Week is co-ordinated and supported by local authority Heritage Officers, their colleagues and with numerous local heritage groups and organisations



Jim Rees, Cllr Peir Leonard, Yvonne Whitty, Sean Penston, Deirdre Keogh from SSE Renewables, Irene Plazewska and James Burke are pictured at the recent launch of the Heritage of Arklow art exhibition in Arklow Library, by the 042 Art Collective group.

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400 strong audience lifts the roof at annual Sunbeam Variety Show

Almost 50 acts take to the stage in The Arklow Bay Hotel



The Annual Sunbeam Variety show a wonderful selection of performers take to the stage for the Thursday 20th July evening performance at the Arklow Bay Hotel.

With musicians, singers, Vikings and Musicmen aplenty, the hits rolled on for over two hours with hit after hit winning the hearts of the audience.

A moody Viking scene opened the show accompanied by the Bodhran and it wasn't long before the stage was alive with drums, voices and instruments telling their story.

The show moved from Norsemen arriving on new shores right through to the Christy Moore classic 'The Voyage', John Lennon's 'Imagine' a sprinkling of Sinatra and topped off the evenings entertainment with a full house rendition of 'Molly Malone'.

With performers and audience members travelling from across the county to take part, the atmosphere in the room was electric with many of the well known songs getting the audience joining in and clapping along.

Show Producer Tommy Breen, an accomplished musician himself has been running the Sunbeam music programme for some years now and shared his delight at the number of performers who took to the stage this year.

"Five or Six of the students now want to take up Ukelele as they were so impressed with the performances on the night," said Tommy.

A Feast of Irish Folk of



SSE Renewables gets on board with Arklow Sailing Club for rib vessel purchase

Leading renewable energy owner, operator and developer SSE Renewables, supports Arklow Sailing Club with the part-purchase of a replacement Gemeni Rib vessel.

Arklow Sailing Club has announced that SSE Renewables has come on board to support the part-funding of a replacement Gemeni Rib vessel. The club successfully applied under the Arklow Bank Wind Park 2 Sponsorship Fund for financial support to part-purchase the rib vessel to replace the existing rib which was no longer fit for purpose.

Rooted in Arklow's proud maritime tradition, Arklow Sailing Club was founded in 1970 by residents interested in sailing with an appreciation and love of the sea. Over the decades, the club has grown to a membership of 120 and welcomes new members.

Deirdre Keogh, Community Engagement Manager, SSE Renewables said, "Arklow Sailing Club's application for support under the SSE Renewables Sponsorship Fund represented a good fit with our fund criteria. The rib vessel will benefit the club and its outreach within the community. The vessel will provide support as a rescue boat

for club regattas and water-based activities/events. It will help support the Club's 'Try Sailing' outreach programme, which encourages the community to try out sailing at no cost; and should support the future expansion of the youth participation at the club in the short and longer term, ultimately making sailing a sport accessible to all".

Seamus Cramer, Commodore, Arklow Sailing Club expressed appreciation to SSE Renewables. He said, "As a marine-based club, the importance of water safety is always paramount. With the improvements coming in the Avoca River and our desire to encourage new members

from the community, Arklow Sailing Club is well positioned to grow and develop its potential as a guiding center for water sports in Arklow. Having a rib out on the water as a support safety boat is a huge benefit to everyone partaking in events, regattas, and other types of youth sailing and/or marine-based training activities. We are very grateful to SSE Renewables for its support".

For further information about Arklow Sailing Club contact sandm-cramer@eircom.net

For information on the SSE Renewables Arklow Bank Wind Park 2 Sponsorship Fund, contact deirdre.keogh@sse.com



Arklow Sailing Club Commodore Seamus Cramer and SSE Renewables Community Engagement Manager Deirdre Keogh, pictured with the Gemeni Rib at Arklow Sailing Club

Shortt to comept at European Kickboxing Championships

Young teenager Louise Shortt, already a national kickboxing champion, will represent Ireland at the European Kickboxing Championships in Istanbul in August.



Champion Louise Shortt

Louise is 13 years old and the daughter of Brian and Elaine Shortt, and the granddaughter of well-known Wicklow people Peadar Shortt and Philippa Shortt.

The well-known Wicklow family are no strangers to the competition world and have competed in many events including including GAA, Equestrian, Irish Dancing and Ploughing.

Louise started kickboxing in Bushido Martial Arts (BMA) Clondalkin at the age of 8. She quickly moved up the grades and despite a lack of competitions during the Covid pandemic Louise continued training online. She was dedicated and determined to succeed in her sport.

In April 2022 Louise competed at her first competition in Cork at age 11 and won Gold in the Under 11 age category and silver in the Under 13 category.

Louise has continued to compete successfully winning 8 gold, 9 silver and 2 Bronze at the Intermediate and Advanced levels in 10 competitions. In May this year at the National Kickboxing Championships in UCD she won Gold, qualified and was selected for the Irish Team.

Head Coach Sensei Ilija Salerno says he is very proud of his student and looks forward to her future success.

There will be a Fight Night on August 12th in the Clayton Liffey Valley fundraising for Fighters from Louise's club going to the European Championships in Istanbul for Team Ireland with Louise. There will be a raffle on the night and great prizes are to be won.



Louise with her grandparents Peadar and Philippa Shortt

A wonderful All-Ireland Final experience for Glenealy boy

Simon Lynch, a 5th class pupil at St. Joseph's National School in Glenealy, recently had a great experience at the All-Ireland final in Croke Parke, playing in front of the crowd at half-time.

Speaking about his experience, Simon said, "I was very excited when I was told by Ms. Mulhall, my teacher, that I was going forward to the skills competition in Ballinakill. The 24th March was the coldest, windiest day ever, I thought to myself, I have to work extra hard. I was over the moon to get through and when I returned to school, St Joseph's NS Glenealy, everyone was clapping and cheering, such a feeling.

"In June news came through from Ms. Ryan, Cumann na mBunscol that I would attend the All-Ireland, I was beside myself. Then on 17th July the tickets arrived and the itinerary for the day from Ms. Harte. Even better when I found out that John Keenan was the referee, I was very happy. I went to David Moran Hurl and picked out a new hurl for the day. I made sure it had a red grip to represent my club, Glenealy.

"On Sunday morning I was up early and in the Barbara Ward Community Centre I met my teammates for the day. Lads, from Offaly, Laois, Longford, Mayo and Limerick. We were brought over to Croke Park. We got a lovely meal and were kitted out. I was given the Kilkenny Jersey No.

2. It was so exciting! At this point, I couldn't eat, I just wanted to get out on the pitch. "We sat for the first half in our teams, I had great craic with the lads, shouting for Limerick. The atmosphere was electric and then best part, we walked out onto Croke Park and played in front of 82,000 people! What a great feeling and pitch

was perfect, it felt so good, like carpet.

"The rest of the day was brilliant too, the second half was fantastic, it was great to be there to see Limerick win their fourth All-Ireland final, they were class. Hard luck to Kilkenny.

Thanks to John Keenan for taking the time for a photo after the match.

"I had such an amazing day and will have the memories forever. Thank you so much to Ms. Mulhall and all at St Joseph's NS, Glenealy, Cumann na mBunscol, INTO, the lovely ladies in the Barbara Ward Community Centre, Croke Park staff and stewards, Glenealy Hurling Club and Wicklow GAA."



Simon Lynch in Croke Park



Film at Mermaid: The Unlikely Pilgrimage of Harold Fry

Mermaid Arts Centre, Monday 28th August

€9 Full Price / €7 Concession Price. English with Open Captions (English subtitles). Duration: 107 mins

Harold (Jim Broadbent) is an ordinary, unremarkable, retired man who lives quietly with his wife Maureen (Penelope Wilton). One day a letter arrives from an old friend who is dying and wants to say goodbye. Harold writes his reply but when he goes to post the letter he doesn't... he just keeps walking, leaving his seaside town in South Devon to deliver a message to his old friend, Queenie, some 500 miles away in her hospice in Berwick-upon-Tweed. Harold embarks on a walk of hope, determined to travel the length of England to save his friend: as long as he walks, Queenie must live. Based on Rachel Joyce's novel, this is an uplifting tale of self-discovery and redemption.

Sophie Monks Kaufman, *Little White Lies*, said, "It is a tremendously moving concept, powered by a deep belief in our human desire to help each other to make progress. Jim Broadbent and Penelope Wilton drum up a weather-beaten type of love that holds both suffering and grace."

Harry Guerin, of RTE Entertainment, said, "Broadbent is brilliant throughout and there is superb support from Penelope Wilton as the stay-at-home Maureen, shackled to routine, riddled with anxiety and weary from suppressed rage - but now with her own opportunity to break free."

One Fine Morning

Mermaid Arts Centre, Monday 14th August 8pm, €9 Full Price, €7 Concession Price. French with English Subtitles. Duration: 113 minutes. Cert: 15A

Léa Seydoux plays Sandra - a young, widowed mother who juggles her job as a translator with caring both for her young daughter and ailing elderly father (Pascal Gregory). As her father's condition dramatically deteriorates, Sandra and her family fight to access the care he requires.

Struggling to balance the emotional needs of her parents, her child, and herself, Sandra unexpectedly reconnects with an old friend, Clément (Melvil Poupaud), and although he's married, their friendship soon blossoms into a passionate affair.

Mia Hansen-Løve (*Bergman Island*) romantic drama, is a deceptively simple film of great beauty and quiet power. Weaving a heartfelt story of familial and romantic relationships, Hansen-Løve's poignant drama is a profoundly moving portrayal of love and loss.

Director
Mia Hansen-Løve

Cast
Léa Seydoux, Pascal Greggory, Melvil Poupaud, Nicole Garcoa, Camille Leban Martins

Festivals
Cannes, Director's Fortnight 2022
New York Film Festival, 2022
BFI London Film Festival, 2022

Awards
Winner, Best Film, Europa Cinemas Label,
Cannes, Director's Fortnight 2022



Evolution: an Exhibition by Papillon Art Group

Signal Arts Centre, Monday 21st August to Sunday 3rd September



'Room with a View' by Aisling McMorrough

Papillon Art Group is an eclectic group of artists from a wide range of artistic backgrounds and practices. They meet in the Signal Arts Centre on Saturday mornings, and work on their own projects and subjects of interest.

The group was originally founded by artist and tutor Gill Mac, who sadly passed-away in 2019. Being a socially close-knit team, the artists decided to continue painting together at Signal and to invite other artists to give occasional workshops in different disciplines.

The Exhibition will represent the group's transformation from having a much-missed friend and tutor to individual learning and exploration within the framework of a supportive and motivational team.

Being a group show it will contain a diverse range of content. It draws on memories of iconic images & captures movements in nature, showing the extraordinariness of the ordinary. It moves seamlessly from the abstract to the quirky, awakening an imaginative and magical illusion of what surrounds us. It will be colourful and vibrant, depicting various subjects, such as marinescapes, landscapes, still life, abstract and nature.

The exhibiting artists are: Aisling McMorrough, Carol McMorrough, Catherine Finn, Catherine Russell, Ciara Nolan, David Swai, Mark Diggin, Declan Vaughan, Gerry Parle, and Jennifer Moran.

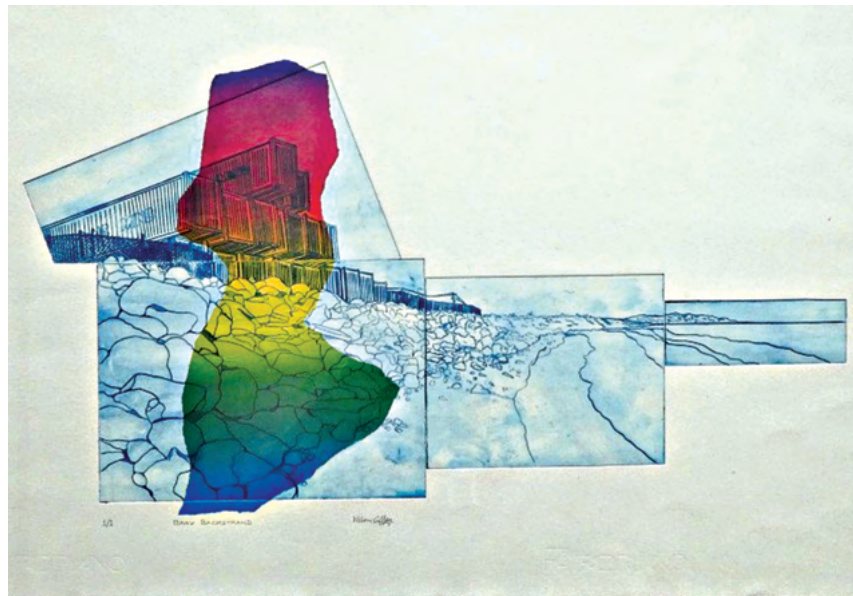


'Flight' by Gerry Parle

11th Annual Signal Open

By various artists, Signal Arts Centre, Tuesday 8th August to Sunday 20th August

Over the last 250 years 'Open Submission' exhibitions have become established as an essential element of Arts infrastructure. They act as one of the most accessible routes for artists to have their work seen by the public and are almost invariably amongst the stepping stones in an artist's career.



Bray Backstrand by William Caffrey. Best in Show 2022

These exhibitions provide an opportunity for artists to come together as a community to show and sell their work and provide the public with an eclectic insight into what's happening in the arts both locally and nationally.

A founding tenet of Signal Arts Centre is the belief that there is a huge amount of talent that goes unrecognised and that an opportunity should be there for all artists to exhibit their work. The Signal Open is just such an opportunity.

The Signal Open Exhibition is now in its 11th year and has become an annual event in artists' calendars.

"We have been delighted by the response and the quality of work submitted each year and we are very grateful to all of the artists for their support," the Signal Arts Centre stated.

The 11th Annual Signal Open Exhibition takes place at the Signal Arts Centre from Tuesday 8th - Sunday 20th August. The 'Best in Show' winner will be awarded €1,000 and will be announced at the Exhibition Opening Reception on Friday 11th August 2023 from 7pm to 9pm. All Welcome! Opening Reception: Friday 11th August, 7pm to 9pm



Fanta, Lemons' by Michael O'Leary. Best in Show 2021

What's on at The Courthouse Arts Centre

MEDITATION

7.30pm to 9.30pm
Free class (donations welcome)
1st Wednesday every month

Discover, Experience, Transform. Join this class to relax, sit comfortably and learn techniques to reduce stress, increase happiness, enhance focus and achieve calmness. Facilitator: Ann Keary

THE COURTHOUSE WRITERS GROUP

7.30pm
1st Thursday every month

The writer's group meets once a month in The Green Room at The Courthouse Arts Centre to exchange ideas and skills. New members welcome.

ICA

7.30pm - 9.30pm
FREE
3rd Monday every month

ICA returns 16th September. It brings women together in fellowship and through co-operative effort, to develop and improve the standard of rural and urban life having regard for our Irish culture and to encourage the use of the Irish language in the affairs of Bantracht na Tuaithe.

TOASTMASTERS INTERNATIONAL

4th Thursday every month from September 22nd
7.30pm to 10.00pm

Toastmasters International teaches public speaking and leaderships skills. It has helped people from diverse backgrounds become more confident speakers, communicators and leaders. New members welcome

TINAHELY WOMEN'S CHOIR

11am to 12.30pm
€5
Wednesday, Weekly

The women's choir returns to The Courthouse Arts Centre 18th September. New members welcome. Facilitator: Ann Keary

At Mermaid Arts Centre... Theatre: Mother of all the Behans

From the book by Brian Behan. Adapted & directed for the stage by Peter Sheridan

To mark the centenary of the birth of Brendan Behan, this new production of Mother of All the Behans is the story of his 'inspirational' mother Kathleen, a fascinating record of a remarkable life.

Inspired by the songs and stories handed down through generations, this retelling is an entertaining journey through the social history of Dublin and the Behan family history. Imelda May will be playing the role of Brendan's mother Kathleen.

"I'm excited to announce today, on the centenary of our beloved Brendan Behan's birth, that I'll be playing the role of his charismatic and magnificent mother Kathleen Behan in Peter Sheridan's wonderful play Mother Of All The Behans," she said. "Kathleen's historical songs, colourful stories and lust for life resonate with me deeply. She's a true Dub full of wit, wisdom, knowledge and humour that I feel I know from every woman that raised me. I love to learn, I love a challenge and for my growth, both personally and as an artist, I feel it's imperative to leave my comfort zone often and swim a little deeper each time. I'm terrified and thrilled by this project but I feel passionately about this play, this story, this period of our history and culture and most importantly this woman."



PLANNING

WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL

I Ellen Conally seek a retention planning permission for a new garden outbuilding containing the following 1. A domestic shed/storage room circa 15 Msq. 2. The retention of a Dog Grooming area circa 16 Msq. All together with a connection to the existing septic tank/percolation system and associated site development works at Redkite Rest, Ashtown Lane, Co. Wicklow. The planning application may be inspected or purchased at a fee not exceeding the reasonable cost of making a copy at the offices of Wicklow County Council, County Buildings, Wicklow during its public opening hours and a submission or observation in relation to the application may be made to the authority in writing on payment of the prescribed fee within the period of 5 weeks beginning on the date of receipt by the authority of the application.

WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL

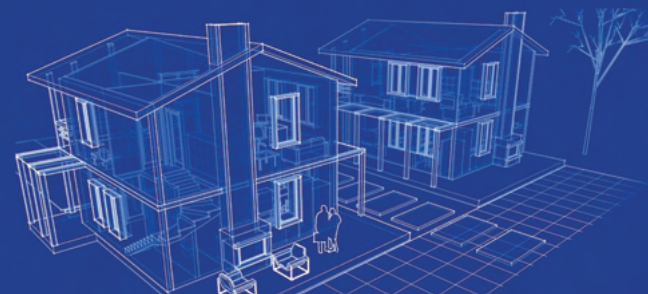
I Jacinta Mandym wish to apply to Wicklow County Council for permission for the construction of a dwelling not exceeding 130.7 sqm and not overlooking neighbouring properties. Proposed works at 80 Wheatfield, Boghall Road, Bray, Co Wicklow. The planning application may be inspected or purchased at a fee not exceeding the reasonable cost of making a copy at the offices of Wicklow County Council, County Buildings, Wicklow during its public opening hours and a submission or observation in relation to the application may be made to the authority in writing on payment of the prescribed fee within the period of 5 weeks beginning on the date of receipt by the authority of the application.

WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL

Carlos Leonardo Rosario seeks planning permission for: New Frosted Glass Window to Existing Gable Wall at Attic Level Along with Rooflights to Front Slope of Roof at 37 Archers Wood Drive, Delgany, Co. Wicklow. The planning application may be inspected or purchased at a fee not exceeding the reasonable cost of making a copy at the offices of Wicklow County Council, County Buildings, Wicklow during its public opening hours and a submission or observation in relation to the application may be made to the authority in writing on payment of the prescribed fee within the period of 5 weeks beginning on the date of receipt by the authority of the application.

ATTENTION Architects, Planners & Builders

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South East Venue Network bursary awarded to Palestinian circus artist

Palestinian circus artist Fadi Zmorrod has been announced as the recipient of the 2023-24 South East Venue Network (SEVN) artist bursary. Fadi, who completed his professional training in Italy's Circo Vertig and has toured for many years with circus and dance companies internationally, has resided in Ireland since late 2021, and recently moved to Wellingtonbridge, Co. Wexford.

The Arts Council-funded bursary includes €14,000 in financial support towards the development of artistic practice, as well as support in-kind from venues across the network. These are Wexford Arts Centre, Theatre Royal Waterford, Courthouse Arts Centre, Tinahely, Co. Wicklow, Mermaid Arts Centre, Bray, Wicklow, Garter Lane, Waterford, National Opera House, Wexford, Visual, Carlow and Watergate Theatre, Kilkenny.

Fadi plans to use the

supports provided to him through the SEVN bursary to research and develop a new work inspired by the 'tales of caution' that we are told in all cultures as children, and the many ways these affect our subconscious. He will work with a number of communities in the region, including residents of a Direct Provision centre in Waterford and members of the Travelling community in Wexford, as well as engaging with other performers to envisage their role in his new work.

"This bursary comes at



SEVN Artist Bursary recipient 2023-24 Fadi Zmorrod. Photo by Alaa Aliaballah.

a pivotal time in my career and life, as a first time parent and also as a new member of the local community of the South East of Ireland", Fadi explained. "I am extremely grateful for this opportunity, and am very excited to explore the potential of each venue in the network. There is nothing more valuable to an artist than being given time and

resources to develop practice, and for this I thank the SEVN network." Julie Kelleher, Director, Mermaid Arts Centre, Bray, added: "It's a terrific story that the South East region can welcome exciting new artists into the fold as well as offer continued support to longstanding residents."

The South East Venue Network (SEVN) was

formed in 2019 and provides an informal support network for strengthening arts centre/venue operations and programme development that aims to further support artists and programme delivery in the region. Previous recipients of the SEVN Artistic Bursary are Beth McNinch (musician) and Rachel Brennan (dance theatre artist).

RECRUITMENT



COMHAIRLE CHONTAE CHILL MHANTÁIN
WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL

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

- EXECUTIVE SOLICITOR –
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REF: 35/2023

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

CLOSING DATE FOR RECEIPT OF COMPLETED
APPLICATION FORMS HAS BEEN EXTENDED TO
THURSDAY 24TH AUGUST 2023 AT 12 NOON SHARP.

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

Wicklow County Council is an Equal Opportunities Employer.

Lorraine Gallagher,
Director Of Services,
Enterprise & Corporate Services,
Wicklow County Council,
County Buildings,
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A panel will be created for the filling of other Cleaner positions
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2023/2024 school academic year.

Please refer to: www.kcetb.ie

for job application form and further details

Closing Date: Monday, 14 August 2023 (12 noon)

Shortlisting may apply

Kilkenny and Carlow ETB is an equal opportunities employer



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ó dhaoine atá cáilithe go cuí do na poist seo a leanas:

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GLANTÓIR PÁIRTAIMSEARTHA

Conradh ar Théarma Seasta – 10 uair an chloig sa tseachtain

Gaelcholáiste Cheatharlach

GLANTÓIR PÁIRTAIMSEARTHA

Conradh ar Théarma Seasta – 21 uair an chloig sa tseachtain

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Chainnigh agus Cheatharlach a d'fhéadfadh teacht chun cinn le
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Téigh le do thoil chuig: www.kcetb.ie

le haghaidh foirm iarratais agus tuilleadh sonraí

Dáta Deiridh: Dé Luain, 14 Lúnasa 2023 (12 meán lae)

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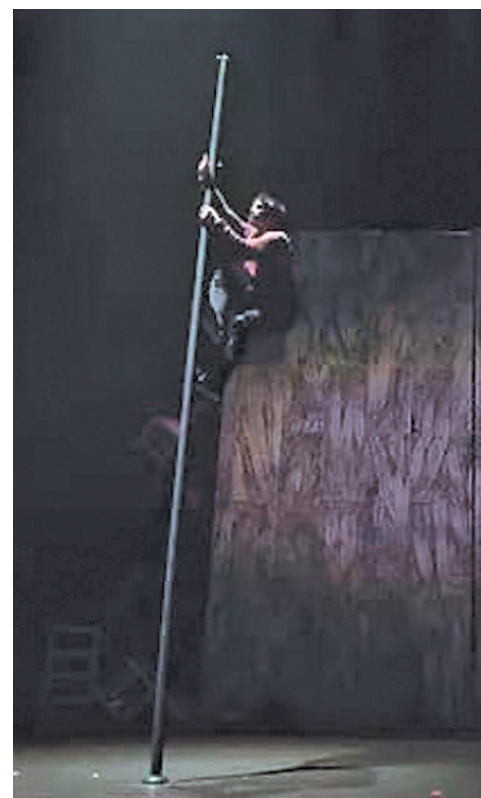


Photo by Francesca Cerri/ Movements by Cirkus Cirkör.

New Dun Laoghaire café celebrates inclusion

Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council and Happy Out officially launched the new café at the Dun Laoghaire Baths last week. The vision for the café is to create an atmosphere of fun, empathy, and inclusion, where locals and visitors can enjoy delicious food, superb coffee, and receive wonderful service from a team of dedicated young adults with Down syndrome.

At the official launch, Councillor Denis O'Callaghan, Cathaoirleach, Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Council said: "By partnering together, we can see the benefits for the staff and the local community of this new innovative café at Dun Laoghaire Baths. This new café is a social enterprise that offers something really unique, helping to dispel prejudices & concerns that people may have about people with disabilities."

Happy Out and Together Academy were chosen to operate this unique new café at the Dun Laoghaire Baths, following a public tender process earlier this year.

Frank Curran, Chief Executive, Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council, and for-

mer Chief Executive of Wicklow County Council, said: "The Happy Out Café promises to be a vibrant addition to Dun Laoghaire. Not only will it delight customers with its menu and exceptional service, but it will also be a driving force behind promoting inclusivity and breaking down barriers. Visitors can expect a warm and welcoming environment where everyone can come together to have a swim, followed by coffee or lunch."

The Together Academy was set up by parents of children with Down syndrome and is a unique social enterprise in Dublin, supported by the Down syndrome centre, that provides young adults with Down syndrome certified training, practical

work experience, employment opportunities and a critical social and support network.

Brian Hanratty, Happy Out, Together Academy said: "Happy Out are delighted to open our new café in partnership with Together Academy. This has been something we have been working on for a very long time and we have put everything into this to make it a spectacular café, fitting the already spectacular building. We are very grateful to Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council for bravely awarding us the opportunity to give this café model a chance. Not only is it going to be the warmest and most wholesome café but we will also be bringing the best coffee, toasties, breakfasts as

well as a beautiful wine and nibbles menu to this amazing location!"



Lisa Doyle and Susan Langrell with the 2023 contenders for the Queen of the Vale and their little buddies at the launch of the Avoca Ladies GAA Queen of the Vale fundraiser in the Arklow Bay Hotel.



Paul Kennedy, Director of Services, Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council, Councillor Denis O'Callaghan, Cathaoirleach, Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council, Brian Hanratty, Co-Owner, Happy Out, Together Academy, and Frank Curran, Chief Executive, Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council

Wicklow firms to see solar energy payback 'two years ahead of schedule'

Wicklow businesses switching to solar power can expect their new energy system to pay for itself in three years - two years ahead of government predictions, an expert has said.

Funding packages of between €2,700 and €162,600 have been introduced to encourage more businesses to install a solar photovoltaics (PV) panel system, which generates electricity when exposed to light.

According to the Department of Environment, Climate and Communications, the grants, operated by the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland, will support 20-30% of the investment cost, reducing payback to as little as five years.

But Adrian Casey, the co-founder of Swyft Energy, said some businesses could see payback in three years. He said a medium-sized business consuming 42,000 units per year at a rate of 36 cent per kilowatt/hour (kWh) could reduce their energy bills by up to €8,000 per year by installing a 30 kilowatt (kWp) system.

Amendments to the grants unveiled by Environment

Minister Eamon Ryan on July 4th, reduced the cost of install of such a system to €23,400 - meaning firms paying the 36c rate could expect payback in three years, Mr Casey said.

"On average, small-to-medium sized businesses are installing 30kWp Solar PV systems, equivalent to 64 panels, covering 128 square metres," Mr Casey explained. "This type of system generates roughly 26,000 units of electricity per year, and - depending on the business's electricity consumption pattern - 70 to 80% of this power would be used on site, with the excess electricity sold back to the grid."

Larger premises - such as warehouses consuming 200,000 units per year at a 23 cent electricity rate - could generate around 135,000 units with a 150kWp, 320-panel system, he added.

"This type of system costs €145,000 and would reduce

annual energy bills by around €25,000," Mr Casey said.

Previously, businesses of this size could expect payback in six years.

"With the new announcement, a 150kWp system will receive a grant of €32,600, reducing the cost to €112,400 and the payback to four-and-a-half years," Mr Casey said.

Firms which decide to install a new solar PV system can also benefit from the Accelerated Capital Allowances (ACA) scheme, whereby the cost of the system can be offset against profits to reduce companies' tax bills.

"Solar PV is one of the only purchases that a company can claim 100% of the ACA in the year of purchase," Mr Casey said.

Switching to solar power also helps businesses improve their carbon footprint and environmental, social, and governance (ESG) profiles, he added.

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